

Mexico Foreign Press Chatter

March 20th, 2026

Foreign Press Coverage

The most buzzworthy headline of the week in foreign coverage of Mexico came from The Wall Street Journal, which reported that a US citizen has succeeded El Mencho's throne and now runs "Mexico's top drug cartel", the CJNG. The report says that California-born Juan Carlos Valencia González, El Mencho's stepson (already considered a top contender by security experts in the line of succession) "now appears to be in charge" and lays out how this could present legal challenges for the United States in going after the kingpin, who has a US \$5 million DEA bounty on his head. But if Trump does decide to start unilaterally assassinating cartel operatives (now designated as terrorists) on Mexican soil, would the administration really get squeamish just because Valencia is a US citizen? As noted in the piece, it wouldn't be the first time the government has killed its own citizens in counterterrorist operations.

Another story sure to make noise is McKay Coppin's page-turning narrative piece in The Atlantic about "The Cartel Olympics" and how stereotypical images of Mexico as a "permanent, untamable dystopia just beyond America's southern border" can lead even seasoned journalists astray.

Meanwhile, the NYT published another investigative piece this week on gun smuggling into Mexico, reporting that there has been a surge in demand (smugglers claim they're moving twice as many guns as they did a year ago) because of the ongoing war between rival factions of the Sinaloa Cartel. A report in AP about a vigilante group in Guerrero also referenced smuggled "military-grade weapons" stamped with Made in the USA.

In business and economic news, the cash-to-digital transition was covered both in a Bloomberg report on Mexican banks' efforts to push digital payments and in a Los Angeles Times piece on digital remittances overtaking cash for the first time in 2025. Reports on the launch of the bilateral US-Mexico talks ahead of the USMCA review brought Mexico's trade goals into focus in AP and The Financial Times. Domestic politics got less international coverage this week, though Bloomberg reported on AMLO's break from retirement reticence to fundraise for Cuba and on the new bill Sheinbaum sent to Congress to promote investment in infrastructure, which she also presented at the annual banking convention in Cancún on Thursday night.

On the cultural front, Reuters talked to vendors about the hot demand for Omar García Harfuch merchandise (will Harfuchitos be as popular as Amlitos?), AP covered the growing thirst for mezcal and its environmental impact, and The Guardian frowned at teens posting AI-generated photos of themselves as 1970s-era DFS agents on TikTok.

Notable blogs about Mexico in English

This week, the Mexico Political Economist brought historical context to the Mexico-Cuba relationship and AMLO's plea for aid, showing that both ideology and strategy have influenced how Mexican governments view the island's Communist regime. Ioan Grillo published a report on cartel cash and its penetration of the Mexican economy, part four of a series on cartel-onomics in his CrashOut newsletter. In Materia Gris, Eduardo García followed up on his piece about social mobility and education last week with an analysis of the controversial tenure of the recently ousted Marx Arriaga, and what his departure could mean for educational policy.

Foreign Press Coverage

[A U.S. Citizen Now Runs Mexico's Top Drug Cartel-and Targeting Him Is Complicated](#)

18/03/2026, The Wall Street Journal, José de Córdoba, Santiago Pérez and Steve Fisher

[Inside the Supply Line Delivering American Guns to Mexican Cartels](#)

17/03/26, NYT, Paulina Villegas and Paul Ratje

[The Incredible Story of the Cartel Olympics](#)

20/03/26, The Atlantic, McKay Coppins

[Ecuador Drug Lord Tied to Fernando Villavicencio's Murder Caught in Mexico](#)

18/03/26, Bloomberg, Steven Kueffner

[Mexican Banks Are Working to Boost Digital Payments in Tech Push](#)

18/03/26, Bloomberg, Michael O'Boyle

[Digital remittances to Mexico overtake cash for first time](#)

17/03/26, LA Times, Maria Clara Cobo

[EV Startup Olinia Powers Up in Mexico Thanks to State Help](#)

17/03/26, Bloomberg, David Alire Garcia

[US and Mexico launch review of trade deal with Canada](#)

15/03/26, Financial Times, Ciara Nugent and Aime Williams

[Tricky negotiations begin Monday to renew a trade pact between the United States, Mexico and Canada](#)

15/03/26, AP, Paul Wiseman and María Verza

[Sheinbaum Proposes Bill to Bolster Infrastructure Investment](#)

19/03/26, Bloomberg, Alex Vasquez and Gonzalo Soto

Mexico's Lopez Obrador Rallies Support for Cuba During Widespread Protests

15/03/26, Bloomberg, Jim Wyss

More Mexicans were deported annually under Biden than by Trump

15/03/26, LA Times, Steve Fisher

This doctor treated migrants' severe injuries at the US-Mexico wall: 'Political decisions made it as violent as possible'

14/03/26, The Guardian, Aaron Nelson

Mexico's heartthrob security minister now available as miniature doll, shirtless or dressed as batman

13/03/26, Reuters, Lizbeth Diaz, Diego Delgado, Sarah Morland

Mezcal's popularity is booming. That comes with a growing environmental cost in Mexico

16/03/26, AP News, Claudia Rosel

Glamming up 'dirty war': Teens in Mexico glorify 1970s secret police on TikTok

19/03/26, The Guardian, Oscar Lopez

In Mexico, Bread Is the Heart of Daily Life

16/03/26, NYT, Rick Martínez

Mexico Wins Guinness World Record for Largest Soccer Class Ever

15/03/26, Bloomberg, Amy Stillman

Notable blogs in English on Mexico

- Mexico Political Economist - [Why does Mexico care so much about Cuba?](#)
- Materia Gris – [Marx Arriaga May Have Been a Minor Official —but Not in the Damage He Caused](#)
- CrashOut Media – [Cartel Cash in the Community - CrashOut by Ioan Grillo](#)

Photo of the Week



Armando Martínez Ruiz, 52, mezcal producer in Oaxaca. AP/Claudia Rosel