



## HX-HARARY SECURITY

# Mexico Intelligence Report for April 2023

Date of Report: May 12, 2023

### Overview

Various measures indicate no significant change in public safety patterns this month. The number of attacks against governmental authorities reported was similar to the monthly average of 2022. The number of battles was lower than the previous month as well as lower than many months in 2022. In contrast, attacks on civilians in public venues and kidnap-executions continue to be prevalent. The same is true for general attacks on individuals in public thoroughfares and homes. There was also a slight increase in the number of regional crime bosses this month, partly facilitated by the capture of numerous members of the Gulf Cartel.

### Attacks against Governmental Authority

There were at least 42 attacks directed at governmental authorities reported during April. This figure is a significant drop from March but still on par with most months of 2022. The number of assassinations of government and party officials was also similar to the monthly average of 2022. There were five such incidents reported this month. Among the victims was the regional director of the *Secretaría de Bienestar*, who was executed in Tlapacoyan, Veracruz. The ex-mayor of Juquila was assassinated in Oaxaca. A former municipal official was assassinated in Jalpan, Puebla. A municipal official was killed in Chinicuila, Michoacán. A municipal leader of the *Movimiento Ciudadano* was ambushed and killed in Tuxtepec, Oaxaca. There was also at least one incident in which assailants attempted to assassinate an official. In that case, a judge and his daughter were injured when *sicarios* (hitmen) fired at their vehicle in Tijuana, Baja California.

Forty-nine soldiers, marines, and police officers were killed in these attacks this month. Among the victims were the operational subdirector of the police and his bodyguard, who were executed in Encarnación de Díaz, Jalisco. Three military patrols were attacked in Chiapas, Michoacán, and Tamaulipas. A soldier was killed in the attack that occurred in Maravatio, Michoacán. Another soldier was killed, and four more were injured during an attack in Juárez, Chiapas. Four patrols of the Guardia Nacional (GN) were attacked in Edomex, Michoacán, Nuevo León, and Veracruz. A member of the Guardia Nacional was killed in an attack in Michoacán. An attack against the GN left a commander dead and a police officer seriously injured in San Andrés Tuxtla, Veracruz.

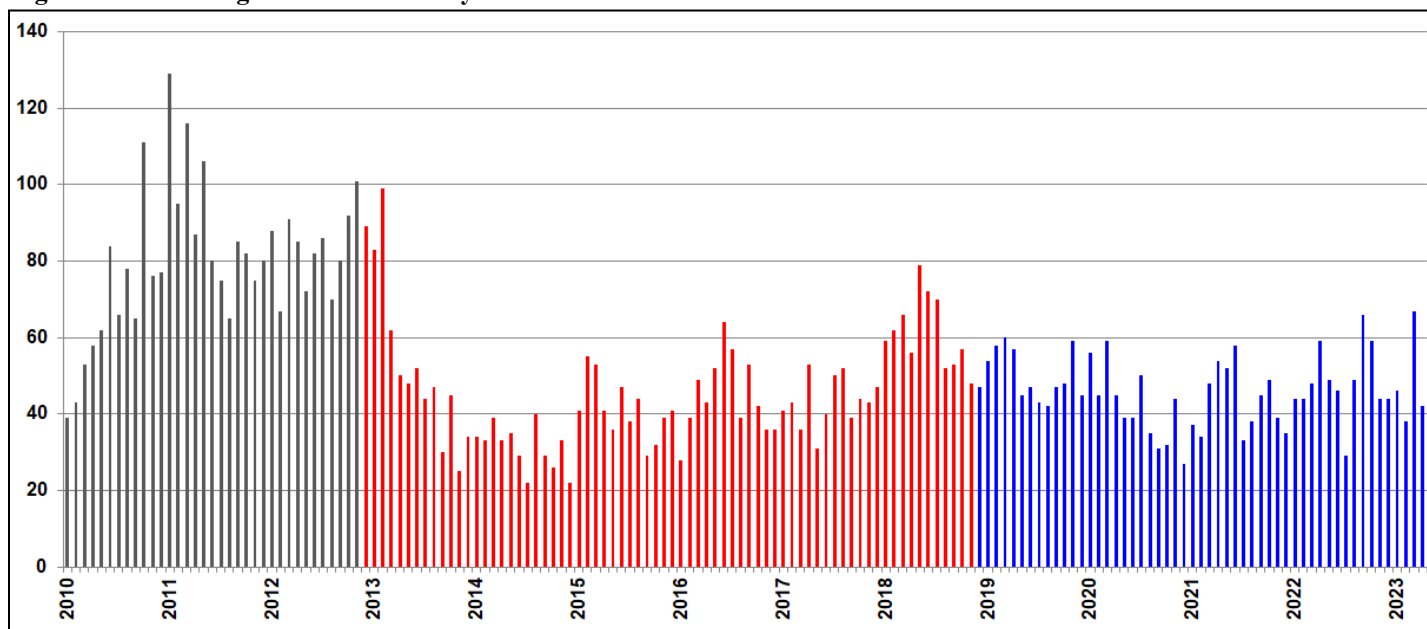
Nine state police patrols were attacked in Colima, Edomex, Guanajuato, Michoacán, Puebla, and Tamaulipas. Veracruz, and Zacatecas. A state police officer was killed, and two others were injured in an ambush in Zacatlán, Puebla. A state police officer was killed in an armed attack in Coquimatlán, Colima. During a 3-hour shootout with *sicarios*, two state police officers were killed in Morelia, Michoacán. State police repelled an ambush, killed five *sicarios*, and seized weapons in Genaro Codina, Zacatecas. Hitmen from *La Familia Michoacana* beat and doused 13 investigative police officers with gasoline in Coatepec, Edomex.

Nine municipal police patrols were attacked in Coahuila, Colima, Guanajuato, Jalisco, Michoacán, Nuevo León, Oaxaca, Veracruz, and Zacatecas. Three municipal police officers were killed in an ambush while driving in their patrol car in San Pablo Coatlán, Oaxaca. Two police officers were ambushed and killed along a highway near Zuazua, Nuevo León. *Sicarios* killed a police officer and injured two more officers in Linares, Nuevo León. A police officer was killed in another attack in central Veracruz.

There were also several attacks directed at fixed targets. In one case, an armed attack on a police station left two police officers dead in Cotija, Michoacán. Hitmen fired at a surveillance booth and killed a female police officer in Celaya, Guanajuato. Gunmen attacked another municipal police command center in Trancoso, Zacatecas. No injuries were reported.

Other attacks this month include kidnap-executions or attacks resulting in the death or injury of law enforcement personnel. For example, *sicarios* executed a former transit police director and his bodyguard in Chilapa de Álvarez, Guerrero. A former commander of the Michoacán prosecutor's office was executed in Morelia, Michoacán. Four more attacks resulted in police fatalities. The former director of public safety was injured by assailants in Valle de Santiago, Guanajuato. Finally, in a clear case of intimidation, armed men burned the police chief's patrol car in Nogales, Sonora.

**Figure 1: Attacks against Authorities by Month<sup>‡</sup><sup>λ</sup>**



<sup>‡</sup> Note: These figures should be considered minimum counts as numerous incidents are not reported by the media or government officials.

<sup>λ</sup> President López Obrador took office on December 1, 2018 (columns in blue).

### Geographic Pattern of Attacks

Attacks on governmental authorities occurred in 16 states, which is similar to most months in 2022. These attacks occurred in Baja California, Chiapas, Coahuila, Colima, Edomex, Guanajuato, Guerrero, Jalisco, Michoacán, Nuevo León, Oaxaca, Puebla, Sonora, Tamaulipas, Veracruz, and Zacatecas.

**Table 1: States Hit Hardest by Attacks on Authorities**

State	Number of Attacks
Michoacán	7
Oaxaca	5
Guanajuato	4
Nuevo León	4
Tamaulipas	3
Veracruz	3

### Governmental Operations

Mexican federal authorities reported the capture of eight regional leaders of the major cartels during April. This number is significantly higher than the monthly average for 2022. Of those arrested, perhaps the most significant was Juan de Dios “*El Caballero*,” a key leader of the Gulf Cartel, who was captured in Río Bravo, Tamaulipas. Hugo Armando S. “*La Cabra*,” another plaza boss of the Gulf Cartel, was captured in Miguel Alemán, Tamaulipas. Ricardo Cortes Mateos “*El Billeton*,” a regional leader of the Gulf Cartel, was arrested in Xilitla, San Luis Potosí.

David Fernando Vásquez, “*El Acelerado*” from *Los Rusos* and regional boss of the Sinaloa Cartel, was arrested in Mexicali, Baja California. Another regional leader of the Sinaloa Cartel, José Renato N. “*La Sinaloa*,” was arrested. Rodrigo Omar Páez Quintero “*El R*,” a nephew of Rafael Caro Quintero (former leader of the Guadalajara Cartel, was arrested in Zapopan, Jalisco.

Also, the leader of the *Mara Salvatrucha*, “*El Indio de Hollywood*,” was arrested in Cuauhtémoc, Mexico City, after being wanted in the United States.

Several key leaders were killed by rivals this month. In one case, Benjamín Mollinedo “*El Pantera*,” a key leader of the *Cártel de Jalisco Nueva Generación* (CJNG), and his driver were executed in Veracruz. Ricardo Solares, “*El Niño*,” who was responsible for purchasing weapons and munitions for the CJNG, was executed in Guadalajara, Jalisco. A member of the Arellano Felix Cartel was executed at a Starbucks in Plaza Carso, Miguel Hidalgo, Mexico City. Four women and “*El Tartamudo*” (the leader of the regional criminal organization *Cártel de los Hermanos Sánchez*) were executed on a ranch in Tequisquiapan, Querétaro.

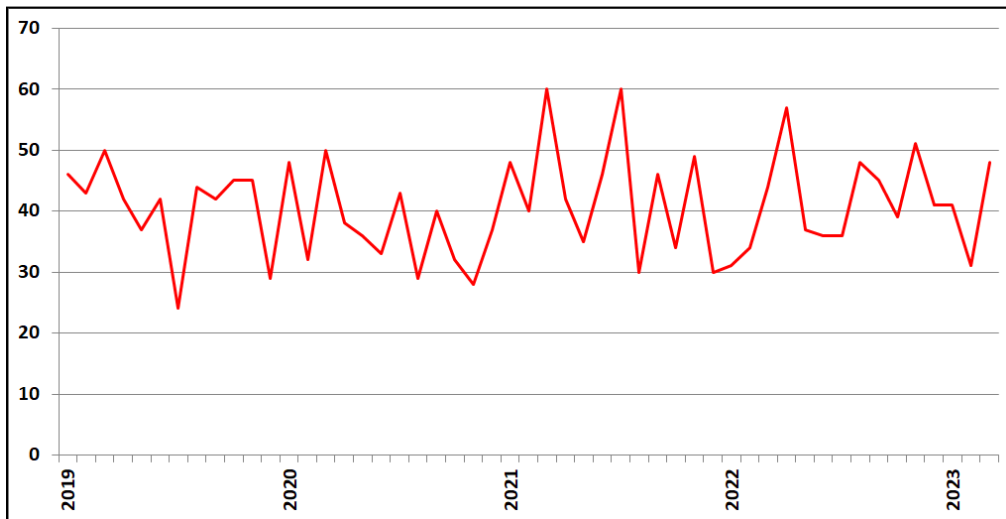
Numerous corrupt political leaders and police officers were also arrested on various charges. In one case, the chief of the municipal police was arrested for the alleged possession of drugs in Matehuala, San Luis Potosí. Eight police officers involved in kidnapping and extortion were arrested in Apodaca, Nuevo León. Four *Secretaría de Seguridad Pública* police officers are arrested for kidnapping and extortion in Tlalpan, Mexico City. Two members of the GN were arrested for extorting businesses in Tijuana, Baja California. Four police officers accused of kidnapping and robbery were arrested in Cautlancingo, Puebla. Two police officers were arrested for selling drugs aboard their patrol vehicle in Salinas de Hidalgo, San Luis Potosí.

Mexican authorities reported the seizure of weapons, munitions, and tactical equipment at 11 sites in Baja California, Chiapas, Chihuahua, Colima, Durango, Michoacán, Nuevo León, Sinaloa, Tamaulipas, and Zacatecas. In one case, marines detained seven CJNG (Jalisco New Generation Cartel) hitmen with an arsenal in Colima. The *Fiscalía General de la República* (FGR) seized an arsenal during a raid on a safe house in Juárez, Chiapas. Weapons were seized at a safe house in Ensenada, Baja California. Weapons and tactical equipment were seized at another safe house of the Gulf Cartel in Reynosa, Tamaulipas. Three vehicles, weapons, ammunition, and a Bengal tiger were seized on the Maxipista Culiacán-Mazatlán in Sinaloa. Police arrested a woman with weapons, tactical equipment, and false security corporation insignias in Ciudad Juárez, Chihuahua.

**Street Battles (*Enfrentamientos*)**

At least 33 street battles were reported during April. This figure is slightly lower than the monthly average for 2022 and a significant drop from March. These battles occurred in 12 states (Edomex, Guanajuato, Guerrero, Hidalgo, Jalisco, Michoacán, Nuevo León, San Luis Potosí, Sonora, Tamaulipas, Veracruz, and Zacatecas). A bystander was killed during a battle in Magdalena de Kino, Sonora. Another bystander was killed in Ciudad Mante, Tamaulipas. A police officer was killed during a battle in Aqualulco, San Luis Potosí. Two state police officers were injured in a clash with armed civilians in Genaro Codina, Zacatecas. Several houses were burned down after a clash between the CJNG and the Sinaloa Cartel in Teocaltiche, Jalisco.

**Figure 2: Major Street Battles Reported by the Media**





**Table 2: States Hit Hardest by Street Battles**

State	Number of Battles
Tamaulipas	6
Zacatecas	6
Michoacán	4
Nuevo León	3
Sonora	3

### Hazardous Overland Travel

There were numerous reports of criminals targeting travelers. In one case, armed men set up a checkpoint on the Veracruz-Puebla highway and robbed drivers in Veracruz. Elsewhere, gunmen set up a checkpoint in Los Mochis, Sinaloa. An armed attack on a vehicle left four people injured near Hermosillo, Sonora. Hitmen pulled two women out of a vehicle and executed them in Ciudad Juárez, Chihuahua. Two people were intercepted and killed while traveling near Poza Rica, Veracruz. Two Colombians and two Mexicans were killed in an armed attack on Highway 54 near Villa de Cos, Zacatecas. Assassins shot an Uber driver in the head and kidnapped a passenger in Chihuahua. Armed robbers also victimized passengers on numerous buses this month. In one case, robbers killed a young man who resisted robbery inside an urban bus in Boca del Río, Veracruz. Hitmen shot at a bus and set it on fire on Route 181 in Guadalupe, Zacatecas.

#### *Narcobloqueos (Illegal Street Blockades)*

- April 1 - Zacatecas
- April 10 - Nayarit
- April 11 - Zacatecas
- April 29 - Guerrero
- April 30 - Tamaulipas

### Violence

The number of felony homicides has not yet been reported for April. However, the *Secretaría de Gobernación* reported 2141 felony homicides during March, a figure which is higher than the previous month but still on par with the monthly average for 2022. There were numerous attacks on civilians in public venues such as restaurants, bars, shopping areas, markets, and repair shops. There were 28 such incidents in April, resulting in 59 fatalities. The number of distinct incidents is higher than the monthly average of 2022 but lower than that of the first quarter of 2023. However, the number of fatalities was the highest since October 2022. These attacks occurred across 14 states (Baja California, Chihuahua, Edomex, Guanajuato, Guerrero, Mexico City, Michoacán, Nuevo León, Oaxaca, Puebla, Quintana Roo, Tabasco, Veracruz, and Zacatecas).

In one incident, six people were gunned down in a bar in Tihuatlán, Veracruz. Three people were killed in a bar in Salina Cruz, Oaxaca. Hitmen carried out armed attacks on several bars in Acapulco, leaving seven injured in Guerrero. Gunmen fired on the facade of a bar in Ciudad Juárez, Chihuahua. A bar related to at least ten disappearances was burned down by gunmen in Mexicali, Baja California. Five people were killed in a barbershop in Juárez, Nuevo León. Two men were executed at a barbershop in Acapulco, Guerrero.

An ex-police officer was executed in a restaurant in Huimanguillo, Tabasco. An armed attack on a restaurant left two dead in Morelia, Michoacán. One of the victims was a businessman. A businessman was murdered inside a Starbucks in Tulum, Quintana Roo. Two minors and a woman were executed inside a car wash in El Carmen, Nuevo León. Two people were killed and two injured in an armed attack at a sandwich shop in Iztacalco, Mexico City. Another attack on a store left four dead in Purísima del Rincón, Guanajuato. Gunmen killed four people and injured six on a beach in Acapulco, Guerrero. Hitmen entered La Palma water park and executed seven people in Cortázar, Guanajuato. Three men were executed during a cycling competition in Ojo Caliente, Zacatecas.

There were numerous additional incidents in which gunmen attacked families inside their homes. For example, gunmen executed three women and two men inside a residence in Dolores Hidalgo, Guanajuato. Three women and a male minor were murdered in a home in Tihuatlán, Veracruz. Three bodies with gunshot wounds are found inside a residence in Tijuana, Baja California. Hitmen executed



three members of a family in Tarimoro, Guanajuato. Gunmen entered a home and shot three men, one of whom died in León, Guanajuato. A man and a woman were executed inside a house in Tlaquepaque, Jalisco. An armed attack inside a home left two women dead and two injured in Jacona, Michoacán. Armed men attacked a home, killing two people in Ciudad Juárez, Chihuahua. An elderly couple was murdered inside their home in Veracruz. Two men and a woman were executed inside a home in Ciénega de Flores, Nuevo León. Two people were killed and one injured during an attack on a residence in Guadalupe, Zacatecas. Another attack on a home left two men dead in La Purísima, Guanajuato. Two men and a woman were executed in Ciénega de Flores, Nuevo León. A person was killed, and another was kidnapped from a home in Ciudad Obregón, Sonora. They both were sons of the deceased former police commander. An armed group stormed a house and killed two women and two girls while sleeping in Apaseo El Grande, Guanajuato.

An armed attack on a residence left a 12-year-old girl injured with a gunshot to the head in Escobedo, Nuevo León. A seven-year-old child died, and an adult male was injured in an attack in San Francisco del Rincón, Guanajuato. Sicarios executed a man and his 4-year-old daughter in Ciudad Juárez, Chihuahua. *Sicarios* entered two houses and kidnapped residents in Tamuin, San Luis Potosí. Two houses were shot at, and one was burned down, but no injuries were reported in Xonacatepec, Puebla. A shooting attack against a home's facade left two people injured in Puebla. Six vehicles were set on fire by hooded individuals in the Juana Pavón Infonavit housing development in Morelia, Michoacán.

Many of the victims this month were women and children. At least 48 women were killed across 16 states. In one incident, a 14-year-old girl was gunned down while riding her bicycle in Tecolutla, Veracruz. A woman was executed on the street in Comalcalco, Tabasco. A woman was gunned down in a park in Coquimatlán, Colima. A woman was shot and killed in Tijuana, Baja California. Two women were gunned down in Cuernavaca, Morelos. A woman's body was hung from a bridge over the Salvatierra - Celaya highway in Rincón de Tamayo, Guanajuato.

Other victims this month include the brother of a local official who was abducted and executed in Xochitepec, Morelos. The father of the mayor of Ahuehuetzingo was shot and killed in Chietla, Puebla. A nurse was murdered in Xalapa, Veracruz. A businessman who owned a vehicle armoring facility was shot and killed in Tlaquepaque, Jalisco. A transportation leader was executed in Acapulco, Guerrero. An indigenous activist and an opponent of local mining operations was murdered in Michoacán. Assassins executed four Nahua indigenous people in Aquila, Michoacán.

A secondary school teacher was murdered in Tlaxiaco, Oaxaca. Another secondary school director was murdered in Córdoba, Veracruz. Another teacher was murdered while giving classes at the *Instituto Gnóstico de México* in Ixtapaluca, Edomex. A professor and a pedagogy student were shot to death in Naranja, Veracruz. A teacher was murdered while arriving at his home in Córdoba, Veracruz. A preschool teacher who was also a government official's wife was murdered in Chilpancingo, Guerrero.

Media reports indicate that at least 156 bodies were left in groups across 44 sites during April. These collections of victims' bodies are usually the result of kidnap-execution by rival cartels. These figures are similar to the average of the last 15 months. Overall, these mass deposits were located across 20 states (Baja California, Baja California Sur, Chihuahua, Colima, Edomex, Guanajuato, Guerrero, Hidalgo, Jalisco, Mexico City, Michoacán, Morelos, Nuevo León, Oaxaca, Puebla, Sinaloa, Sonora, Tabasco, Veracruz, and Zacatecas).

Three men and a woman were executed, and their bodies were abandoned on the Morelia-Salamanca highway in Cuitzeo, Michoacán. Three bodies were found in plastic containers in Guadalupe, Nuevo León. Three men and a woman were executed in Tijuana, Baja California. Two bodies were found inside a coffin in Zinapécuaro, Michoacán. More than 40 clandestine graves were also found in Cordoba, Veracruz. Twenty-six bodies were recovered from clandestine graves in Tecomán, Colima.

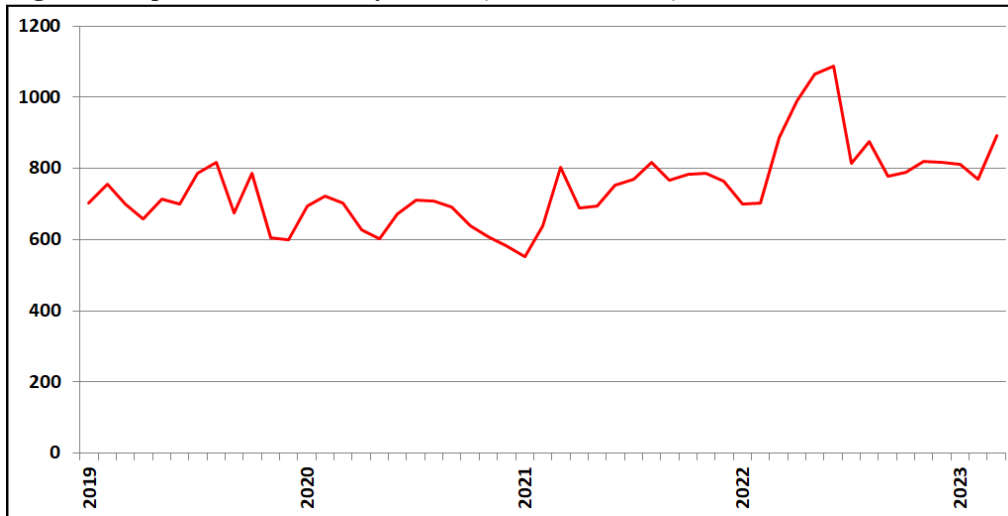
At least 14 of these victims across eight states had been decapitated or otherwise dismembered. Most of these incidents were in Oaxaca. In one case, a human head with a narco-message threatening the police was found in Cancun, Quintana Roo. Another human head and an alleged threatening message are found near a prison in Oaxaca. The CJNG left a *narcomanta* with a human head in San Juan del Río, Querétaro. A human head was found in Ciénega de Flores, Nuevo León. Three men were executed and dismembered in Madera, Chihuahua.

## Extortion, Kidnapping, and Armed Robbery

### Extortion

There were no confirmed fatal extortion-related incidents reported during April. However, there were numerous cases in which law enforcement apprehended or disrupted extortion operations. For example, 18 people were arrested in an operation targeting two call centers that specialized in phone extortion in Nezahualcoyotl, Edomex. Two extortionists from the Union of Tepito were arrested in Acapulco, Guerrero. Another group of extortionists was arrested in Comalcalco, Tabasco. Several extortionists who posed as police officers were arrested in Apodaca, Nuevo León. Six gang members dedicated to drug dealing, extortion, and robbery were arrested in Puebla. Finally, extortionists set fire to a business in Venustiano Carranza, Mexico City, causing one injury.

**Figure 3: Reported Extortions by Month (Source: SEGOB)**



### Kidnapping

Mexican authorities reported the disruption of two kidnapping operations this month. These law enforcement operations were focused on human trafficking organizations and were located in San Luis Potosí and Sonora, releasing almost 200 migrants. At least 35 migrants (including 23 individuals traveling from Guanajuato) were rescued in San Luis Potosí. There were also several cases in which authorities were able to rescue kidnap victims. For example, seven kidnapers were arrested, and two victims were rescued in Fortín de las Flores, Veracruz. A kidnapped minor was rescued, and the perpetrators were arrested in Huimanguillo, Tabasco. A kidnapping victim was rescued, and six hitmen were arrested in Tepetongo, Zacatecas. Police freed a kidnap victim from a house in Cosamaloapan, Veracruz. A kidnapped child was rescued, and two people were arrested in Metepec, Edomex. A woman kidnapped from a vehicle on the Mexico-Puebla highway was freed in Puebla a week later. Police rescued four kidnapped people and recovered a body at a house in Reynosa, Tamaulipas. Five alleged kidnapers were arrested in Zumpango, Edomex. Six men accused of kidnapping and murdering a woman were arrested in Almoloya de Juárez, Edomex. The wife and daughter of a soldier, who were kidnapped since April 3rd, were released in Fresnillo, Zacatecas. Also, a kidnapped man escaped and guided the police to a location where five other kidnapped people were in Encarnación de Díaz, Jalisco.

There were also numerous kidnappings reported in which the victim's condition is currently unknown. For example, a journalist was kidnapped in Poza Rica, Veracruz. Assaultants kidnapped an elderly woman from her business in Irapuato, Guanajuato. An armed group kidnapped two security guards from a location where trailers were stored in Córdoba, Veracruz. Finally, an American citizen who was reported missing two months earlier was found dead in a clandestine grave in Todos Santos, Baja California Sur.

The media has also reported a notable increase in the number of women being kidnapped and murdered across Mexico in the last few years. In a pattern similar to that of Ciudad Juarez (Chihuahua), it appears that many of the victims are being targeted as a part of sexual-related crimes. Most of these incidents involving female kidnap victims have been in Edomex and Puebla. In one case, a woman



who went missing in Mexico City in early April was found dead in Guanajuato, Guanajuato. A woman's body was found in a ravine on the Tehuacán-Orizaba highway in Veracruz. The body of a murdered woman was found in San Jerónimo, Guanajuato. The body of a woman in a bag was found on the side of Highway 2 in Hidalgo, Coahuila. Another woman's body was found in Tuxtla, Chiapas. The body of a woman wrapped in bags was found on the Rancho Enmedio highway in Chihuahua. A woman's body was found on a dirt road in San Juan Tianguismanalco, Puebla. The body of a woman missing since early April was discovered in General Bravo, Nuevo León. The charred body of a woman was found next to the central market in Ciudad Obregón, Sonora. The tortured body of a 16-year-old girl who had gone missing a day earlier was found in Acapulco, Guerrero.

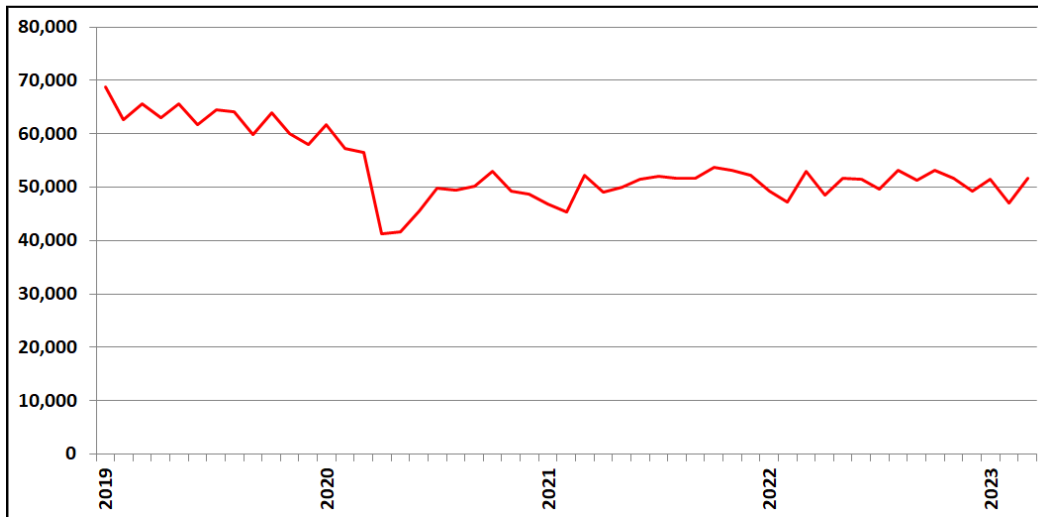
**Armed Robbery**

Trucks transporting commercial cargo and fuel continue to be targeted by organized crime groups. There are no official figures for April yet, but the *Secretariado Ejecutivo del Sistema Nacional de Seguridad Pública* (SESNSP) reports that there were more than 3357 robberies of travelers or transport across Mexico during March, and 25% of these occurred on commercial cargo vehicles. Also, 61% of these robberies involved violence. The final numbers for April will likely be similar.

Numerous businesses and individuals were robbed this month. In one case, assailants robbed 800,000 pesos from the La Providencia Sugar Mill Union in Cuichapa, Veracruz. Criminals robbed a business and injured a worker in Puebla. Armed individuals stormed a Bancomer and stole 600,000 pesos from a customer in Cárdenas, Tabasco. Another customer was robbed of 80,000 pesos in Paraíso, Tabasco. An employee of BanBajío was robbed of more than 150,000 pesos while leaving the branch in Ruiz Cortines, Veracruz. Two robbers hijacked an armored truck transporting nine million pesos in Hermosillo, Sonora.

In other cases, individuals were victims of armed robbery. In one case, a woman was shot and injured during a violent robbery after withdrawing money in Juchitán, Oaxaca. A woman was shot during a robbery and injured in Minatitlán, Veracruz. A violent robbery attempt left four people seriously injured by gunfire in Comalcalco, Tabasco.

**Figure 4: Total Reported Robberies by Month (Source: SEGOB)**



## Attacks on Authorities (April 2023)

