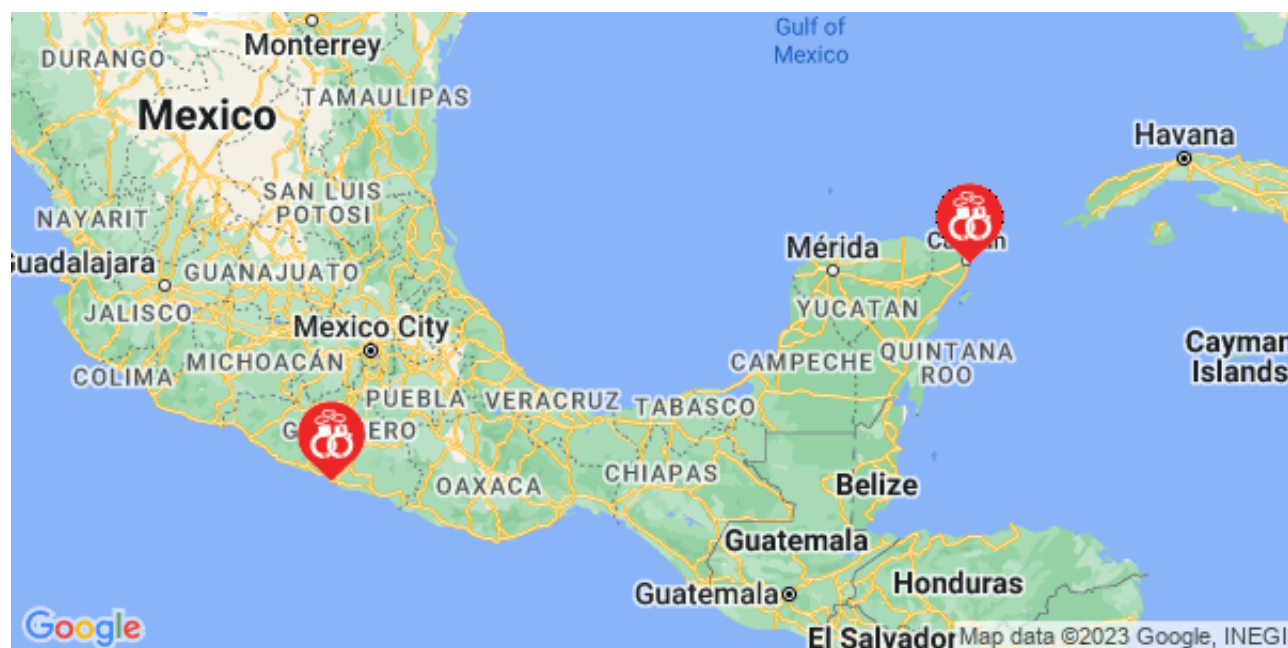


Organized Crime



04

APR
11:30 UTC

Mexico Alert: Multiple individuals killed in two separate shootings in Acapulco in Guerrero, Cancun in Quintana Roo on April 3; reflects heightened threat of spillover violence in resort cities

Please be advised

Recent security incidents

- Two separate shooting incidents were recorded in the tourist resort cities of Acapulco in Guerrero and Cancun in Quintana Roo on April 3.
- In **Cancun**, Quintana Roo, unidentified suspects opened fire and killed four individuals near a prominent 4-star hotel located on the Boulevard Kukulcan at approximately 09:00 (local time) on April 3. Preliminary reports indicate that both the victims and perpetrators were involved in drug dealing. Authorities later detained two suspects involved in micro-trafficking of drugs. No tourists were injured in the incident.

- Separately, armed individuals shot to death three individuals and injured at least two others near a hotel on San Martin street near Playa Caleta in **Acapulco**, Guerrero at approximately 17:50 on April 3. At least two of the victims, including a minor, were tourists. Four suspects were detained by police forces on Avenida Costera Miguel Aleman following the incident.
- This follows the recent shooting of a US national tourist in the port town of Puerto Morelos in Quintana Roo during an attempted robbery by multiple suspects on March 28.

Security measures amid Easter holidays

- These incidents follow a bolstered deployment of over 7,000 security personnel nationwide under the Plan Semana Santa 2023 starting from April 1-16 amid the high influx of Mexican and foreign tourists during the easter spring break. Security measures will be reinforced across roads, highways, and airports across states with high tourist footfall nationwide. In Quintana Roo, security will be bolstered especially in Isla Mujeres, Cancun, and Puerto Morelos, with the state expected to receive over 1.25 million tourists. In addition, authorities deployed over 1,600 personnel to tourist hotspots in Guerrero, including 620 of them to Acapulco.
- Separately, on March 3, the US State Department reissued [alerts](#), warning travelers to “exercise increased caution,” (Level 2 on a four-tier scale) when traveling in Cancun, Playa del Carmen, and Tulum of Quintana Roo due to increased gang violence during the spring break. Meanwhile, for Acapulco, Zihuatanejo, and Ixtapa tourist cities in Guerrero, the US State Department issued a “do not travel” (Level 4 on the same scale) alert.

Assessments & Forecast

1. Considering that both the victims and arrested suspects in the Cancun attack were allegedly involved in drug-related activities, the incident was likely an escalation in a drug-related dispute. As such, the incident is reflective of the rampant presence of drug-related violence by criminal gangs operating across coastal tourist hotspots nationwide including in Acapulco, Playa del Carmen, Cancun, Tulum, and Puerto Vallarta. This is evidenced by authorities in Acapulco attributing the sustained violence to turf wars between Los Rusos, Cartel de Caborca, and Cartel Independiente de Acapulco (CIDA) in Acapulco, as well as conflicts between factions of Cartel do Golfo (CDG), Cartel de Jalisco Nueva Generacion (CJNG), and Cartel de Sinaloa (CDS) among others across Quintana Roo.
2. **FORECAST:** As such, with gangs attempting to capitalize on profits from the hospitality sector and rise in drug sales amid increased tourism, inter-gang conflicts will likely prompt targeted assassinations and shootings in tourist areas such as Caleta, Caletilla, and Manzanillo beaches in Acapulco and the Hotel Zone and Isla Mujeres in Cancun. In addition, armed robberies, extortion, and kidnappings of local businessmen and tourists can be expected to increase in the coming days across all tourist-frequented resort towns, including in Cancun and Acapulco. This is further buttressed by the aforementioned March 28 attack on a US national in Quintana Roo, the kidnapping and murder of a businessman by members of Cartel de Caborca in Chetumal on March 19, and the Council of Industrial and Business Chambers of Guerrero denouncing the highest threat from extortion in Acapulco on March 31.
3. Although tourists are rarely targeted, turf wars between criminal gangs carry a heightened threat of spillover violence to civilians and tourists in the vicinity of such attacks. This is further evidenced by the latest attack in Acapulco and the shooting attack which caused injuries to four individuals, including three Canadian nationals at a dining facility in Mazatlan, Sinaloa on [March 29](#). **FORECAST:** This threat will remain particularly elevated in resort cities nationwide, including Acapulco, Cabo San Lucas, Cancun, Ciudad Madero, La Paz, Playa del Carmen, Mazatlan, Punta Maroma, Tulum, and Queretaro, among others.

- 4. FORECAST:** Similar armed attacks are anticipated to prompt security reinforcements and vehicular checkpoints in search of suspects, temporarily disrupting pedestrian and vehicular traffic over several hours. This was similarly witnessed by the closure of Kukulcan Boulevard for at least three-six hours and security operations across the Benito Juarez municipality in Quintana Roo on April 3 immediately following the recent incident.
5. Overall, the latest incidents highlight the increased threat of violence across coastal towns and tourist hotspots along the eastern Yucatan peninsula in Quintana Roo and the western Baja California peninsula during the tourist season. This is further evidenced by over 260 homicides recorded in Quintana Roo between January-February alone, in addition to Acapulco being considered as the second most violent city worldwide, with a rate of 110.5 homicides per 100,000 people. This is also buttressed by the [March 11](#) attack, whereby one individual was killed, and a tourist was injured in Acapulco. Moreover, the four similar attacks recorded in Acapulco alone, despite the bolstered security measures across Mexico since April 1, highlight the inefficiencies of the existing security apparatus and enforcement.

Recommendations

1. Those operating or residing in Mexico at least through April 16 are advised to maintain heightened vigilance due to violent crime, including gang-related, in tourist-frequented coast towns during the Easter holidays.
2. If a potential shooting or similar incident manifests, it is advised to leave the area immediately, if possible, or take shelter at a secure location.
3. MAX Security has strong on-ground capabilities in Mexico to facilitate contingency planning or provide custom travel risk assessments to meet your needs. Contact us at intel@max-security.com or +44 20-3540-0434.