

Immigration and Refugee Board of Canada

[Home](#) > [Research Program](#) > Responses to Information Requests

Responses to Information Requests

Responses to Information Requests (RIR) respond to focused Requests for Information that are submitted to the Research Directorate in the course of the refugee protection determination process. The database contains a seven-year archive of English and French RIRs. Earlier RIRs may be found on the UNHCR's [Refworld](#) website.

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Mexico: The Durango State elite anti-kidnapping group Unit Against Organized Crime (Unidad Contra el Crimen Organizado, UCCO) and the State Bureau of Investigation (Dirección Estatal de Investigación, DEI); requirements for joining the units; whether members of these police units colluded with drug cartels and organized crime; reports of mistreatment of citizens by members of these units; whether members of these units were targeted by drug cartels, specifically the El Chapo Guzman Cartel and Los Zetas (2005-2009)

Research Directorate, Immigration and Refugee Board of Canada, Ottawa

The Mexican newspaper *El Siglo de Torreón* reports that in September 2006 the Ministerial Police (Policía Ministerial) became the State Bureau of Investigation (Dirección Estatal de Investigación, DEI) (7 Sept. 2006). In May 2009, a local Durango news source reported that implementation of the new Law of Restorative Justice (*Ley de Justicia Restaurativa*) resulted in the transformation of the DEI into the State Agency of Investigation (Agencia Estatal de Investigación, AEI) (*El Siglo de Durango* 3 May 2009).

As part of an article reporting the death of three DEI officers, Mexican news agency NOTIMEX mentions that the Unit Against Organized Crime (Unidad Contra el Crimen Organizado, UCCO) is a section of the DEI (22 Apr. 2007). However, online news source Durango al día indicates in an article about Durango police SWAT training, that the UCCO is [translation] "extinct" (Durango al día 7 Sept. 2007). One year later, in a November 2008 article, national newspaper *Milenio* reports that the Attorney General's Office of Justice in the State of Durango (Procuraduría de Justicia en el Estado de Durango, PJE Durango) has created a [translation] "new elite group to replace the now-defunct Unit Against Organized Crime (UCCO); the new group will have better equipment and weapons" (16 Nov. 2008). Information on the name of the new group could not be found among the sources consulted by the Research Directorate.

Specific information on the requirements for joining the UCCO and the DEI could not be found among the sources consulted by the Research Directorate within the time constraints of this Response.

Police collusion with drug cartels and organized crime

An article in the weekly news magazine *Proceso*, which was republished on the website of the online business content provider Goliath Business News, states that [translation] "the police operate in the service of the cartels" (*Proceso* 14 Oct. 2007). The article, which discusses what it calls "narcopolitics" in Durango state, also notes that a Federal Investigation Agency (Agencia Federal de Investigación, AFI) officer participated in the kidnapping and murder of a UCCO commander (ibid.). Corroborating information could not be found among the sources consulted by the Research Directorate within the time constraints of this Response.

Targets of drug cartels (including El Chapo Guzman and Los Zetas)

According to *Proceso*, Joaquín El Chapo Guzmán Loera controls Durango, the capital of the state of Durango (*Proceso* 14 Oct. 2007). The news magazine article also notes that a national survey published in the journal *Reforma* ranks Durango as tenth nationally for the most homicides against police officers; ranking does not take into account hijackings, kidnappings and executions of civil servants (ibid.).

News sources report the kidnapping and murder of Sergio Muñoz, a commander in the DEI, and, during the subsequent confrontation, the killing of two police officers (*La Jornada* 22 Apr. 2007). The media reports identify Muñoz as a UCCO commander (NOTIMEX 22 Apr. 2007; *El Siglo de Durango* 23 Apr. 2007; *El Universal* 22 Apr. 2007).

The two officers killed during the attempt to rescue Muñoz were also identified as UCCO agents (Agencia EFE 21 Apr. 2007; *La Jornada* 22 Apr. 2007; *El Siglo de Durango* 23 Apr. 2007; *El Universal* 22 Apr. 2007).

Two news sources also reported that the group responsible for the crimes was Los Zetas (*La Jornada* 22 Apr. 2007; *El Siglo de Durango* 23 Apr. 2007); other newspapers mention that those responsible might have been drug traffickers, without specifying any particular group (Agencia EFE 21 Apr. 2007; *El Sol de Laguna* 21 Apr. 2007). Online news source Univision.com reports the Durango state governor as saying that Los Zetas members were not the culprits in the crimes; the state Attorney General said that one of the kidnappers had been identified as a member of the drug-trafficking group Los Pizarros (Univision.com 23 Apr. 2007).

In a separate incident, news sources report the unconfirmed death of José Quiñónez, a UCCO commander, at about the same time that Muñoz was kidnapped and killed (*El Siglo de Durango* 23 Apr. 2007; Univision.com 23 Apr. 2007). *Proceso* also reports a missing UCCO commander by the name of José Jimenez, who was kidnapped just days before Muñoz outside the state attorney general's office (14 Oct. 2007).

More recently, *El Universal* reports that, in August 2009, presumed drug traffickers shot at an AEI patrol in Durango (27 Aug. 2009). The same source also reports that in December 2009, five AEI officers were decapitated and their heads left in front of a church in Durango by groups linked to drug-trafficking (*El Universal* 17 Dec. 2009). The governor of Durango sees the violence as a warning to the three levels of government agents investigating the drug trade (ibid.).

Mistreatment of citizens by UCCO and DEI members

Information on the mistreatment of citizens by police officers from the UCCO and the DEI in the state of Durango could not be found among sources consulted by the Research Directorate within the time constraints of this Response.

This Response was prepared after researching publicly accessible information currently available to the Research Directorate within time constraints. This Response is not, and does not purport to be, conclusive as to the merit of any particular claim for refugee protection. Please find below the list of sources consulted in researching this Information Request.

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Additional Sources Consulted

Oral sources: Representatives of Amnesty International (AI), Durango-Comisión Estatal de Derechos Humanos (CEDH Durango), and Durango-Procuraduría General de Justicia did not respond within the time constraints of this Response. Representatives of the Instituto de Capacitación y Profesionalización en Procuración de Justicia Federal (ICAP) were unable to provide information for this Response.

Internet sites, including: Advocates for Human Rights, Amnesty International (AI), Durango-Congreso del Estado de Durango, Durango-Procuraduría General de Justicia del Estado de Durango, Durango-Secretaría de Seguridad Pública del Estado de Durango, European Country of Origin Information Network (ecoi.net), Freedom House, Human Rights Watch, Instituto Ciudadano de Estudios sobre la Inseguridad A.C. (ICESI), Mexico - Procuraduría General de la República, Mexico - Secretaría de la Defensa Nacional, Mexico - Secretaría de Seguridad Pública, Mexico - Suprema Corte de Justicia, United Nations (UN) Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights, United States (US) Department of State.

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