

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.

11 August 2011

MEX103799.E

Mexico: The anti-crime operation launched in June 2011 by the National Conference of Governors (CONAGO) Research Directorate, Immigration and Refugee Board of Canada, Ottawa

Purpose of the Operation

The National Conference of Governors (Conferencia Nacional de Gobernadores, CONAGO) launched an anti-crime operation known as Operation CONAGO-1 in Mexico's 31 states and the Federal District in June 2011 (*Latin American Herald Tribune* 19 June 2011). The Mexico City government's news portal reports that the First Joint Mega Security Operation (Primer Mega Operativo Conjunto de Seguridad), or CONAGO-1, started on 13 June 2011 at 12:00 a.m. and ended on 19 June 2011 at midnight (Mexico City 12 June 2011).

In a statement highlighting the results of the operation, CONAGO wrote that the operation aimed to [translation] "enhance the coordination and cooperation between federal entities beyond their everyday work" (20 June 2011). The *Latin American Herald Tribune* reports that the six-day operation was initiated "in support of the federal government's strategy for fighting drug traffickers and other criminal organizations" (19 June 2011). The newspaper cites CONAGO and Mexico City officials as saying that the main objective of the operation was "'to prevent and fight crime, such as vehicle theft, robberies of passengers during transport, kidnappings, the recovery of arms (and the) dismantling of criminal gangs, as well as actions intended to ensure compliance with judicial orders'" (*Latin American Herald Tribune* 19 June 2011). In total, 310,000 police officers in Mexico's states took part in CONAGO-1 (*ibid.*).

Results of CONAGO-1

According to the final report on the CONAGO-1 operation, authorities detained 3,918 people, recovered 1,534 stolen vehicles, enforced 892 arrest warrants, and seized 170 weapons, including 96 handguns, 41 assault rifles and 3 grenades (CONAGO n.d.). The CONAGO-1 report also mentions that authorities disbanded 37 gangs engaged in robbing pedestrians and businesses, stealing vehicles, cloning credit and debit cards, and corrupting minors (*ibid.*). In addition, the operation permitted the consolidation of the CONAGO Database for the Registration of Criminal Incidents (Base de Datos CONAGO para el Registro de Incidencia Delictiva) (CONAGO n.d.).

In its summary statement, which was issued the day after the operation ended, CONAGO also notes that the operation improved the cooperation between Mexican states and municipalities in coordinating operations and intelligence (CONAGO 20 June 2011). The operation further contributed to the creation of standardized reports across states and a list of high-impact crimes (*ibid.*). The statement also indicates that throughout the operation, [translation] "[h]uman rights were safeguarded at all times" and that "[n]o complaints were registered before the different Human Rights Commissions across the states" (*ibid.*).

El Sol de México, a newspaper based in Mexico City, reports that President Calderón recognized the importance of the results and quotes him as saying that [translation] "we have to go beyond this point" (*El Sol de México* 1 July 2011). During a CONAGO meeting, the President called on the state and Federal District governors to continue to work together to reduce those crimes that most affect the public, such as vehicle theft, violent robbery, extortion and kidnapping (*ibid.*).

However, the Mexican news agency NOTIMEX reports that the National Action Party (Partido de Acción Nacional, PAN) alleged, in the Legislative Assembly, that [translation] "there is the suspicion that acts of corruption and extortion were committed by security forces operating within CONAGO-1" (25 June 2011). According to the National

Human Rights Commission (Comisión Nacional de Derechos Humanos, CNDH), the Mexican Commission for the Defence and Promotion of Human Rights (Comisión Mexicana de Defensa y Promoción de Derechos Humanos), and Teresa Inchaústegui, a member of the Chamber of Deputies, [translation]

the failure to comply with regulations regarding the use of force by security forces...during operations such as CONAGO 1, heightens the risk of the population suffering violations of their rights and not having a reparation for such violations. (*Reforma* 16 July 2011)

National newspaper Milenio writes that although low-level crimes such as burglary and vehicle theft have dropped since CONAGO-1, crime rates for more serious crimes have been increasing (15 July 2011). Cases of extortion, kidnappings and homicides have reportedly been growing in Veracruz, Oaxaca and Coahuila (*Milenio* 15 July 2010). In correspondence with the Research Directorate, a professor and researcher at the National Institute of Criminal Sciences (Instituto Nacional de Ciencias Penales, INACIPE) questions whether, statistically, the operation yielded significant results in light of the amount of resources invested (Professor 20 July 2011). An academic at the Juridical Studies Division of the University of Guadalajara (División de Estudios Jurídicos de la Universidad de Guadalajara), stated that CONAGO 1 [translation] "'does what it should not be doing,'" since it widely publicizes the plans of the operation ahead of time thus affecting its efficacy (qtd. in *La Jornada de Jalisco* 15 June 2011).

New Phase of CONAGO-1

According to the CONAGO statement of 20 June 2011, the CONAGO-1 operation will continue focusing on high-impact crimes such as homicide, extortion, vehicle theft, violent robbery, kidnapping and human trafficking (CONAGO 20 June 2011). The statement also pledges to carry out [translation] "surprise operations ... in specific zones of the country" and to focus on criminal organizations operating in more than one state (ibid.).

El Universal reports that the CONAGO-1 operation has been relaunched to focus on employment opportunities and scholarships for youth to help deter them from crime (11 July 2011). The EFE news agency reports that academic scholarships and a national employment service will receive financing from the Inter-American Development Bank (ibid.). EFE also reports that the National Conference of Governors, which met in the city of Chihuahua on 12 July 2011, also adopted a "unified classification of serious crimes to fight illegality in Mexico" (EFE 12 July 2011). *El Universal* notes that at the meeting in Chihuahua, the governor of Tabasco asked that the federal forces focus on the southern border of Mexico to tackle the trafficking of arms, drugs and people (11 July 2011).

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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Oral sources: Attempts to contact representatives at the Instituto de Investigaciones Sociales and the Instituto de Investigaciones Jurídicas at the Universidad Autónoma de México, the Instituto Ciudadano de Estudios sobre la Inseguridad, the Asociación Alto al Secuestro, the Universidad de Guadalajara, and the Procuraduría General de la República were unsuccessful.

Internet sites, including: European Country of Origin Information Network, Factiva, Gobierno del Distrito Federal, Instituto Nacional de Estadística y Geografía, Instituto para la Seguridad y la Democracia.

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Date modified: 2013-07-17 [Top of Page](#)

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