

Mexico Violent Crime Report

March 2019 (6th Edition)

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Mexico Violent Crime Report:

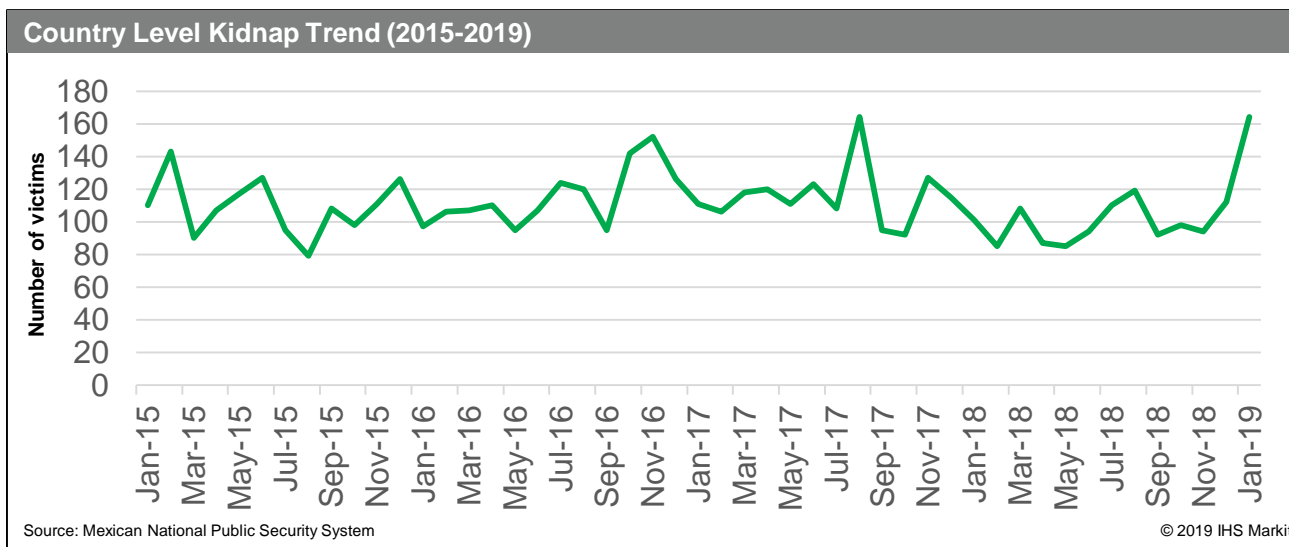
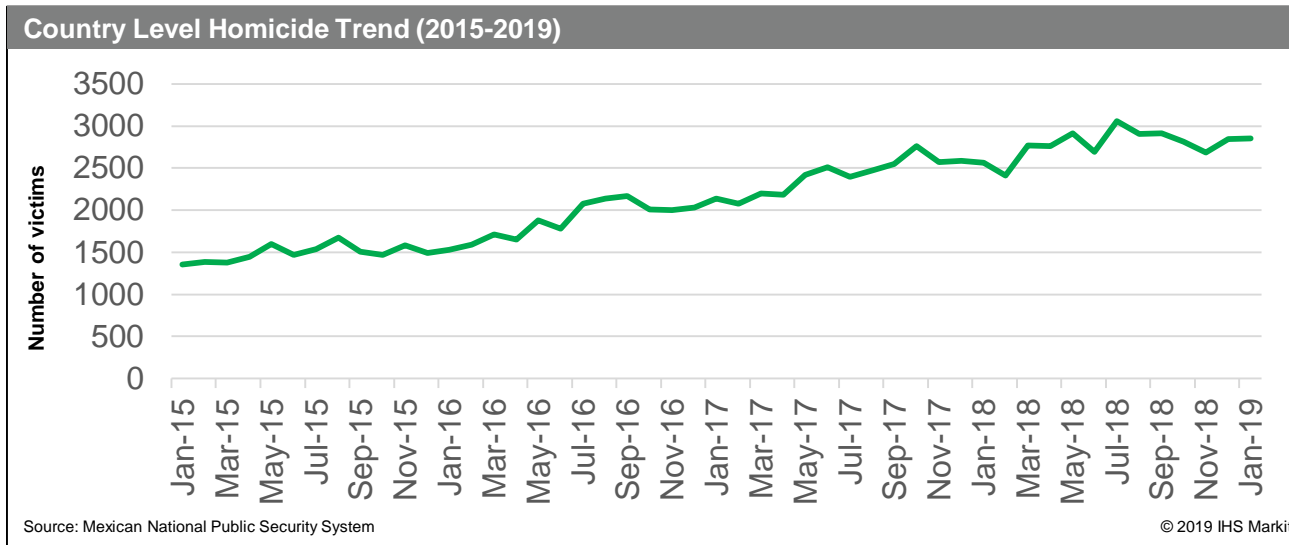
- This report, the sixth in a series of Mexico security-related assessments, contains analysis and forecasts of how organised crime trends affect the operating environment in Mexico.
- Data is drawn from IHS Markit's Mexico Violent Crime Monitor, an intelligence analysis project that aggregates key violent crime indicators related to Mexico's security environment from official sources, media, social media, and local human sources.
- This intelligence is integrated into our Mexico Violent Crime Model, a geospatial layer that differentiates the relative risk of violent crime to operators in Mexico at a high spatial resolution.
- Previous versions of this report can be found in the links below:
 - > [First edition \(April 2017\)](#)
 - > [Second edition \(August 2017\)](#)
 - > [Third edition \(November 2017\)](#)
 - > [Fourth edition \(March 2018\)](#)
 - > [Fifth edition \(September 2018\)](#)

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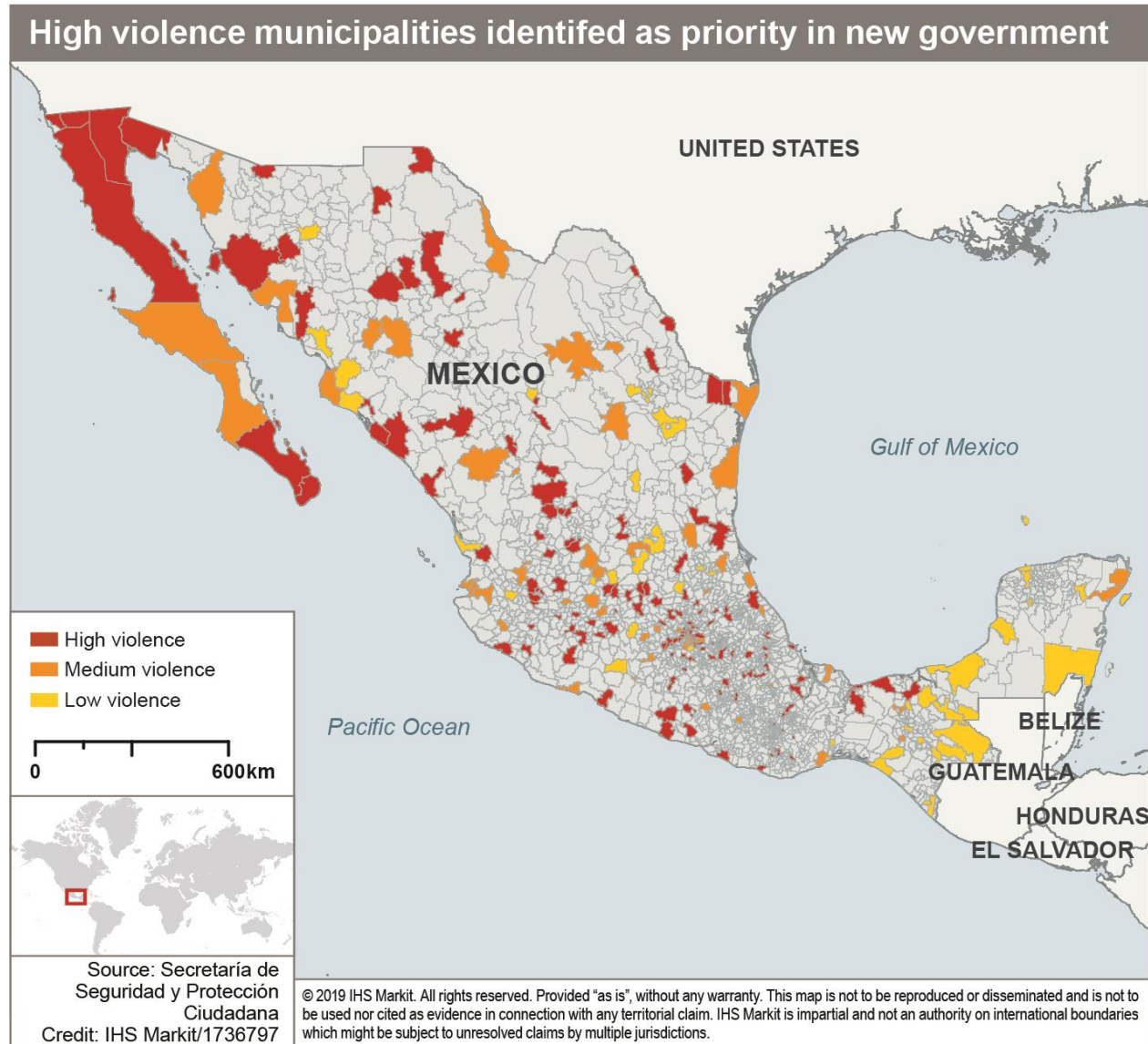
Homicides continue on an upward trend, with no indication of this changing significantly over the next year

- The first two months of Andrés Manuel López Obrador's (AMLO) government (December 2018 – January 2019) had 5,699 reported homicides, or 10.6% higher than the same two months a year earlier.
 - > This follows a 15.4% increase in homicides in 2018, compared to 2017, with 33,334 homicide victims, the highest number since records began in 1997.
 - > The states with the highest homicide rates in 2018 were Colima (82 per 100,000), Baja California (77 per 100,000), Guerrero (61 per 100,000), Chihuahua (47 per 100,000), and Quintana Roo (45 per 100,000).
 - > During AMLO's first two months in office, Guanajuato, Baja California, Estado de México, and Guerrero experienced the highest number of homicides nationwide.
 - > Most victims are gang or cartel members, although **civilians living in or visiting drug-cartel hotspots** such as Guerrero in Michoacán state face collateral death and injury risks if caught in armed confrontations.
 - > The number of reported kidnapping victims nationwide increased by 38.45% in January 2019 to 164 over the same month in 2018. The three-month period November 2018–January 2019 also saw a 7.3% increase over the same period the previous year, indicating a likely reversal of downward trend between 2017 and 2018.



President-elect Andrés Manuel López Obrador's security strategy update

- Despite pledging to demilitarise the state response to organised crime, AMLO has continued to rely on the armed forces to provide domestic security, deploying the army and navy on multiple occasions.
- Congress and a majority of states have approved the creation of a 60,000 strong National Guard, initially formed of 35,000 military police, 18,000 federal police, and 8,000 naval police officers.
- Responsibility for the national guard has been given to the Secretaría de Seguridad y Protección Ciudadana: SSP).
- AMLO's security plan also entails security forces focusing on 266 "priority" regions, with 153 regions categorised by the government as having "high" levels of violence, 63 with "medium", and 50 regions with a "low" levels of violence.
- Half of the "priority" regions are located in eight states: Ciudad de Mexico, Veracruz, Ciudad de Mexico, Jalisco, Oaxaca, Michoacán, Chiapas, and Puebla.
- The multipronged counter-fuel theft strategy includes temporary deployment of armed forces to refineries and supply centres (see next page).
- Publication of a 'moral handbook' containing a proposal to improve public ethics in Mexico and to fight against corruption; 2.5m copies of the handbook will be distributed.
- Amnesty Law proposal rolled back; the government is to consider amnesty on a case-by-case basis. Potential recipients include "political prisoners", those accused of property damage during protests, minors co-opted by organised crime, marijuana and opium poppy farmers and those stealing fuel out of economic necessity.



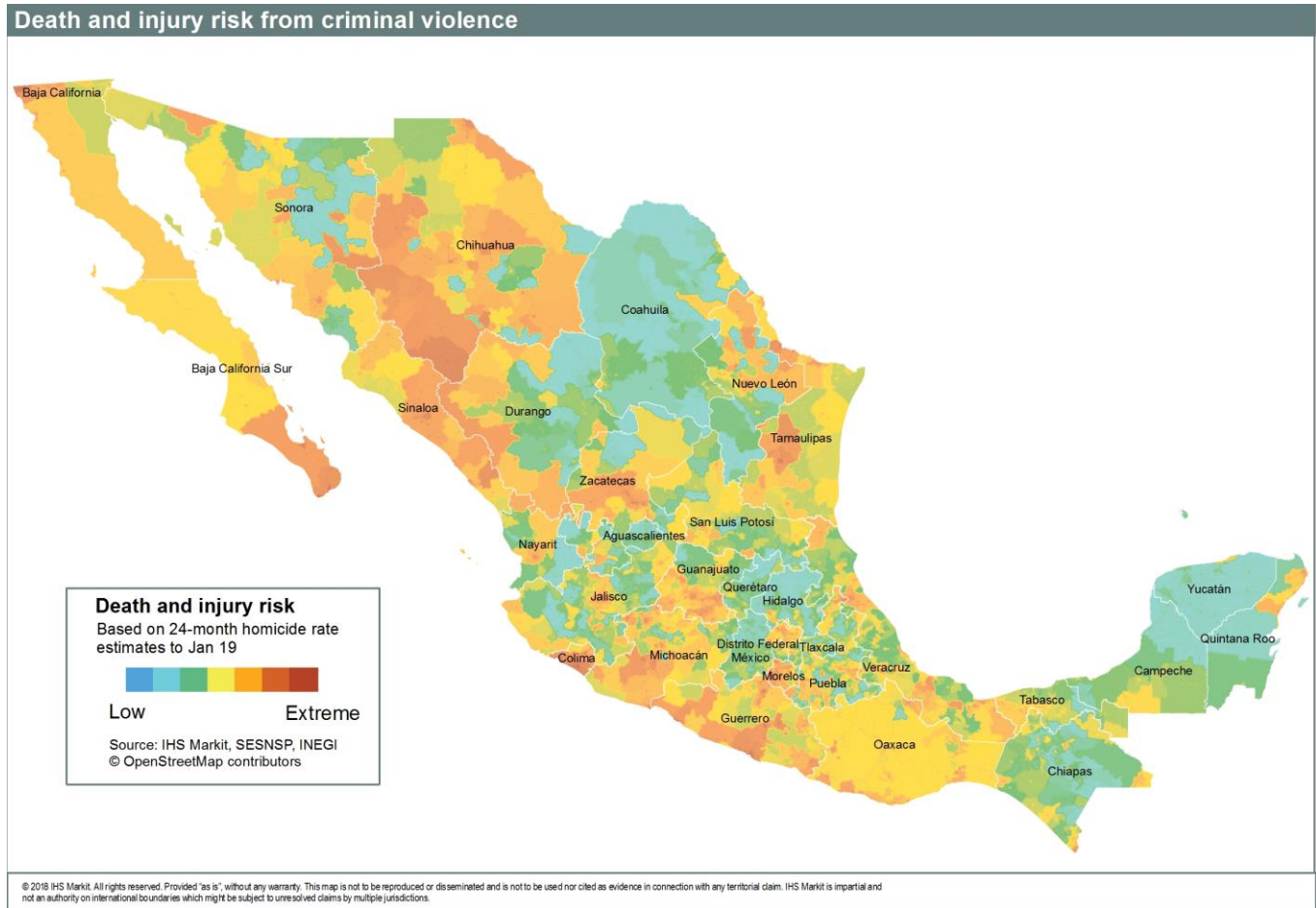
Mexico's new anti-fuel theft strategy

- **On 27 December, AMLO announced an administration-wide plan to fight fuel theft in Mexico.** Pemex lost MXN66.3 billion (USD3.4 billion) in 2018 due to theft, a 100% increase when compared to 2016.
- The plan, which received 80% popular support in recent polls, includes:
 - > Temporary closure of several pipelines, switching to road and rail transport.
 - > Launch of judicial investigations into Pemex administrative officials in key posts regarding fuel distribution.
 - > Deployment of 4,000 army and navy troops to Pemex facilities country-wide, including 6 refineries and 39 distribution centres.
 - > Deployment of approximately 9,000 troops in 94 municipal hotspots.
- **Pemex has reported dramatic fuel theft reductions since December, from an average 74,000 barrels per day over 2018 to 8,000 barrels per day in February 2019.**
 - > Industrial Chambers Concamin reported losses of USD1billion in two weeks of shortages caused by implementation of the plan.
 - > Services and retail sector indicated related losses amounted to USD237 million.
 - > The closure of pipelines is unlikely to be sustainable due to additional costs associated with road and rail transport. Criminal groups will likely switch from pipelines to the targeting of oil tanker trucks.

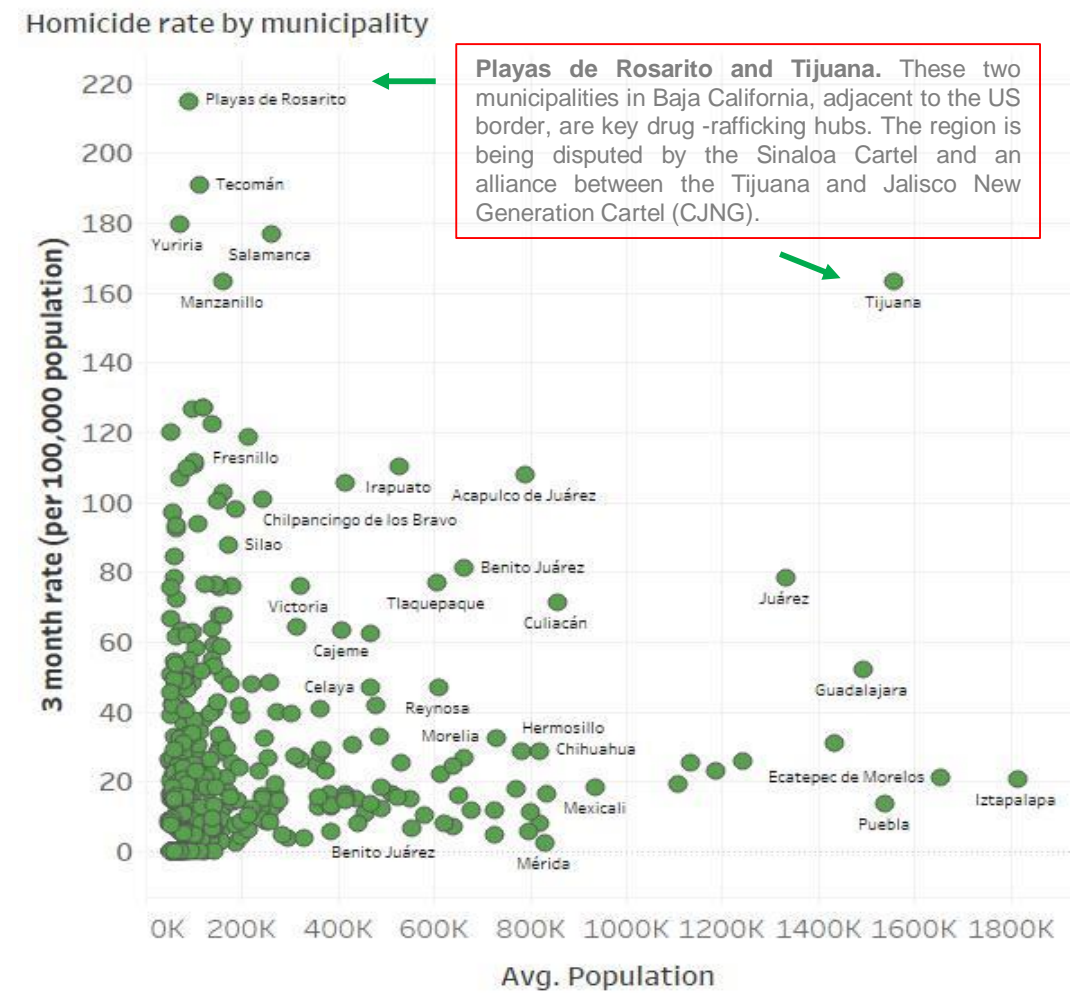


Mexican President Andres Manuel Lopez Obrador announced a plan to 'rescue' Mexican oil company Pemex on 8 February 2019. (ALFREDO ESTRELLA/AFP/Getty Images)

Guanajuato, Baja California, Estado de México, Jalisco, and Chihuahua states had the most homicide incidents over the first months of AMLO's administration



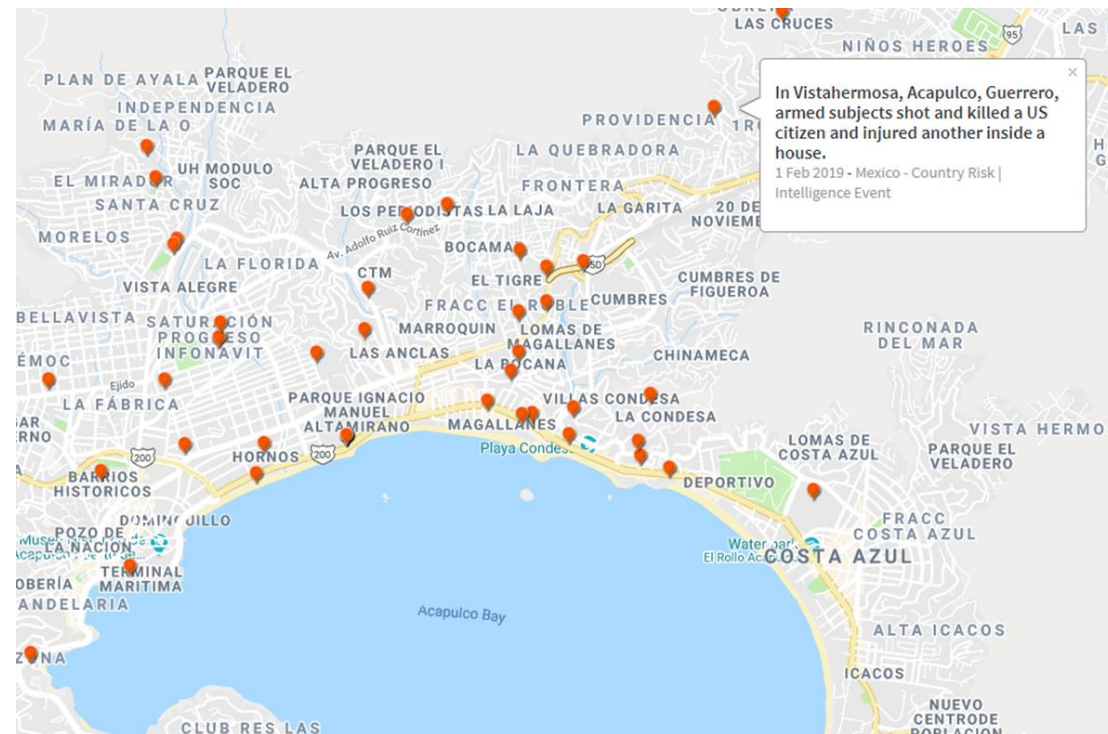
Death and Injury Risk: IHS Markit's Crime Model estimates the current level of death and injury risk to individuals as a result of criminal violence at the municipality level. Risk scores are based on official data sources, which are used to calculate 24-month homicide rate estimates that are converted into a 0-10 global scale. Sources include Mexico's National Public Security Secretariat, statistics agency INEGI, and OpenStreetMap. For full methodology documentation, please contact the Country Risk team.



The location of drug-related violence hotspots is fluid, often varying as a result of drug-cartel turf wars or confrontations between security forces and cartels

Security forces have concentrated most of their operations over the past months in: Baja California Sur, Chihuahua, Guanajuato, Hidalgo, Jalisco, Quintana Roo, Sinaloa, and Tamaulipas.

- In February, 1,100 military personnel were sent to reinforce security in Cancún and Playa del Carmen, Quintana Roo, after a rise in shooting incidents.
- The government announced a 10,000-surge deployment of existing personnel to reinforce public security in 17 high-crime regions by April, including Tijuana, Ciudad Juárez, Culiacán, Irapuato, Tlajomulco, Acapulco, and Guadalajara.
- On 5 January, 600 members of the Army and the Federal Police deployed on anti-crime operations in Reynosa, Tamaulipas and 300 military police in Tampico area.
- **Turf wars**
- Criminal organisations have left narco-messages, messages threatening rivals, throughout the whole of Mexico. They have appeared in states such as:
 - > Baja California, Chihuahua, Estado de México, Guanajuato, Guerrero, Jalisco, Morelos, Oaxaca, Puebla, Tamaulipas, and Veracruz.
 - > Near Salamanca, Guanajuato, in January 2019 the Santa Rosa de Lima cartel issued narco-messages threatening incoming President López Obrador over his anti-fuel theft strategy.
 - > The Grupo Zombra and 35Z criminal organisations have intensified their turf wars in locations such as Coatzacoalcos and Minatitlán.
 - > The Tlahuica Command has also made threats against the state in Morelos, and has attempted to take control over water supply.



Selected geocoded Intelligence Events for Acapulco, Guerrero, on the Connect platform

For further geocoded Intelligence on Mexico or other locations worldwide, visit the Map tool on Connect <https://connect.ihs.com/map>

Spotlight on Coatzacoalcos, Veracruz

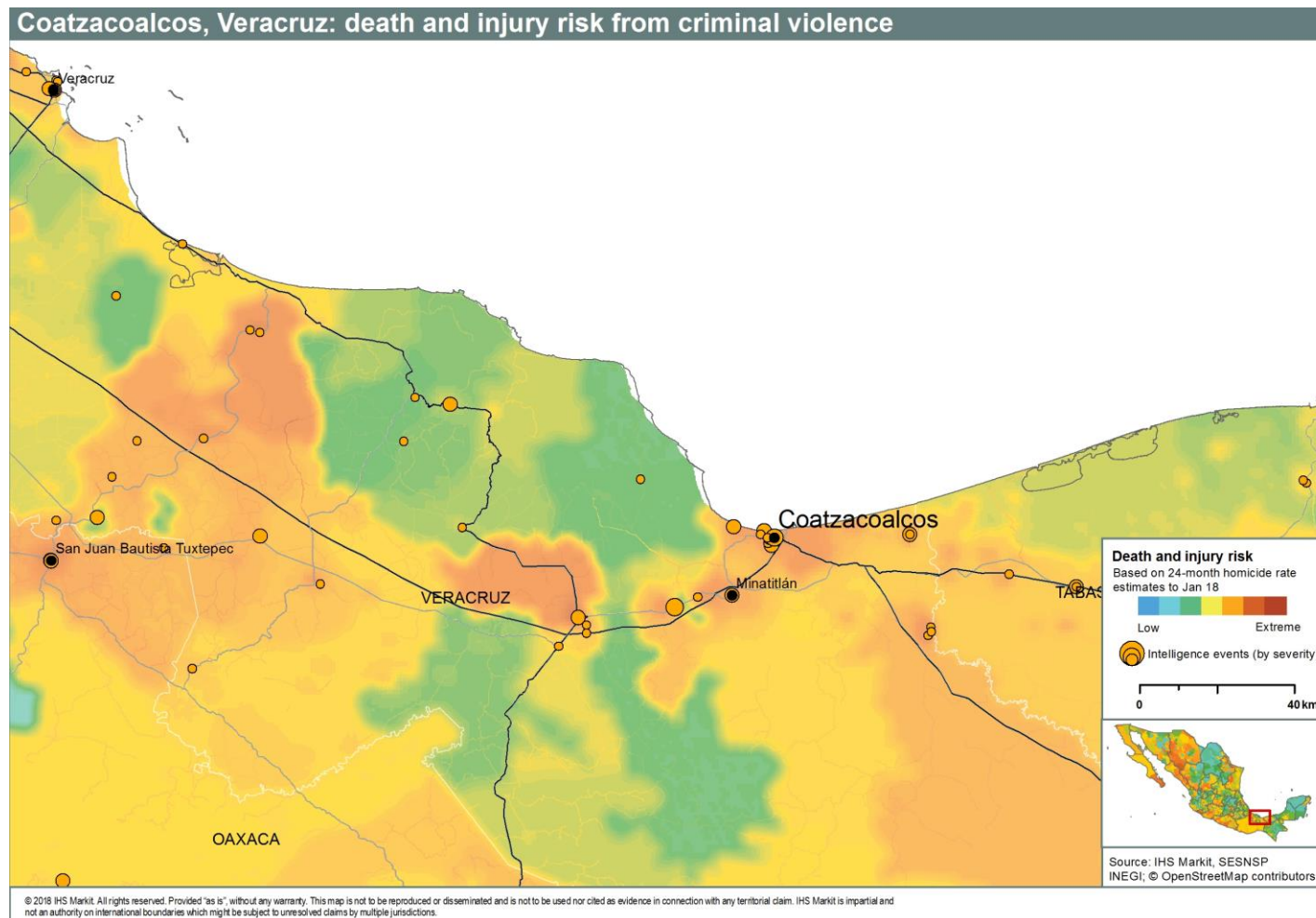
Security Assessment

Coatzacoalcos is a port city located in southern Veracruz state. The port is of strategic importance to the agribusiness, cement, chemicals, metals, and petroleum industries.

The area had been historically dominated by the Zetas, which have now fractured into different cells. The Zetas Vieja Escuela cell is also fighting at the same time against members of the New Generation Jalisco cartel, and there is a dispute between Grupo Zombra and 35Z group.

Besides drug-trafficking, criminal groups also dedicated themselves to hydrocarbons theft and have kidnapped or killed oil industry personnel in the past. Kidnapping risks are also high, with medical doctors being a target, likely due to their comparative wealth.

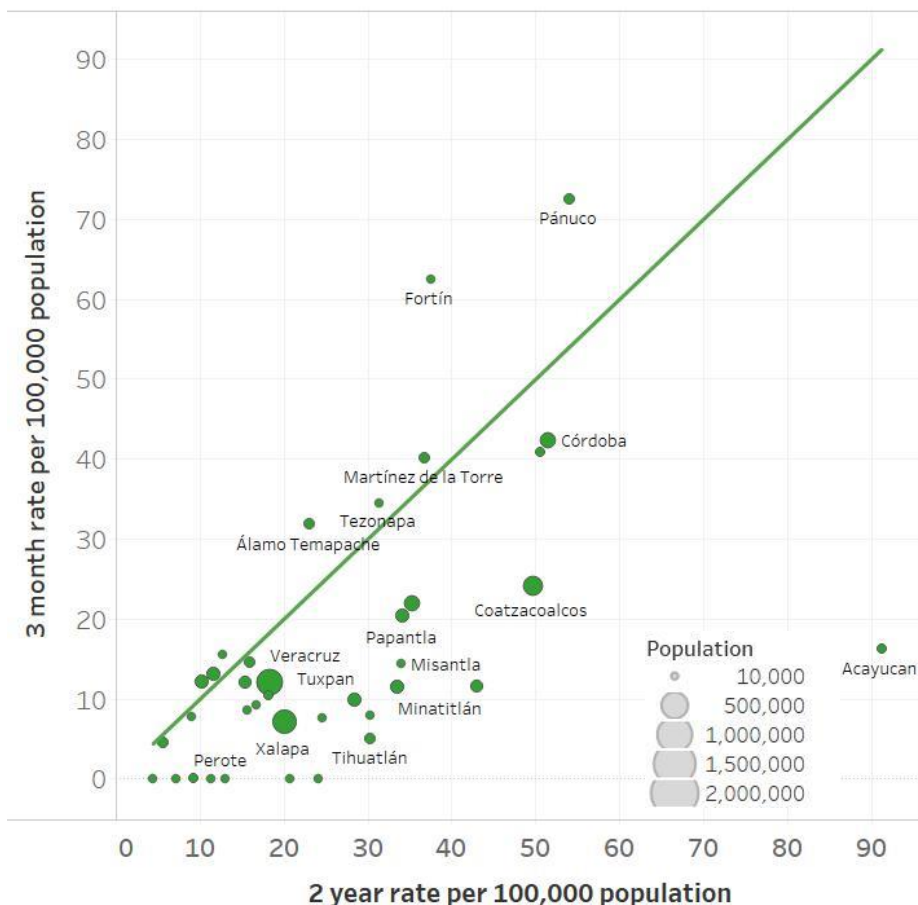
Extortion risks in the port are high. In November 2018 the National Chamber of Commerce (CANACO) stated that some of its members had left the port city after receiving extortion-related threats. Theft risks are also high in locations such as Benito Juárez Norte, Adolfo López Mateos, Lomas de Barrillas, Francisco Villa, Puerto México, Centro, Petroquímica, and María de la Piedad.



For the latest click on: [In Coatzacoalcos, Veracruz, the Navy assumed the lead in the implementation of the public security strategy in the city, with 450 marines and police officers.](#)

Spotlight on Coatzacoalcos, Veracruz

Homicide rate by municipality; 3 month vs 2 year baseline



Source: Mexican National Public Security System

State level homicide trend



Source: Mexican National Public Security System

The chart above shows the overall trend in homicides across the state. However, criminal violence dynamics are volatile and significant variation is evident even within states. As such, the chart on the left identifies any significant deviation in each municipality's recent security environment (measured in terms of its annualised rate over the past three months of recorded data) away from its two-year baseline (the annualised rate over the past 24 months of recorded data). Municipalities that sit above the diagonal line are those that are experiencing a deterioration in their risk profile.

Spotlight on Tuxpan, Veracruz

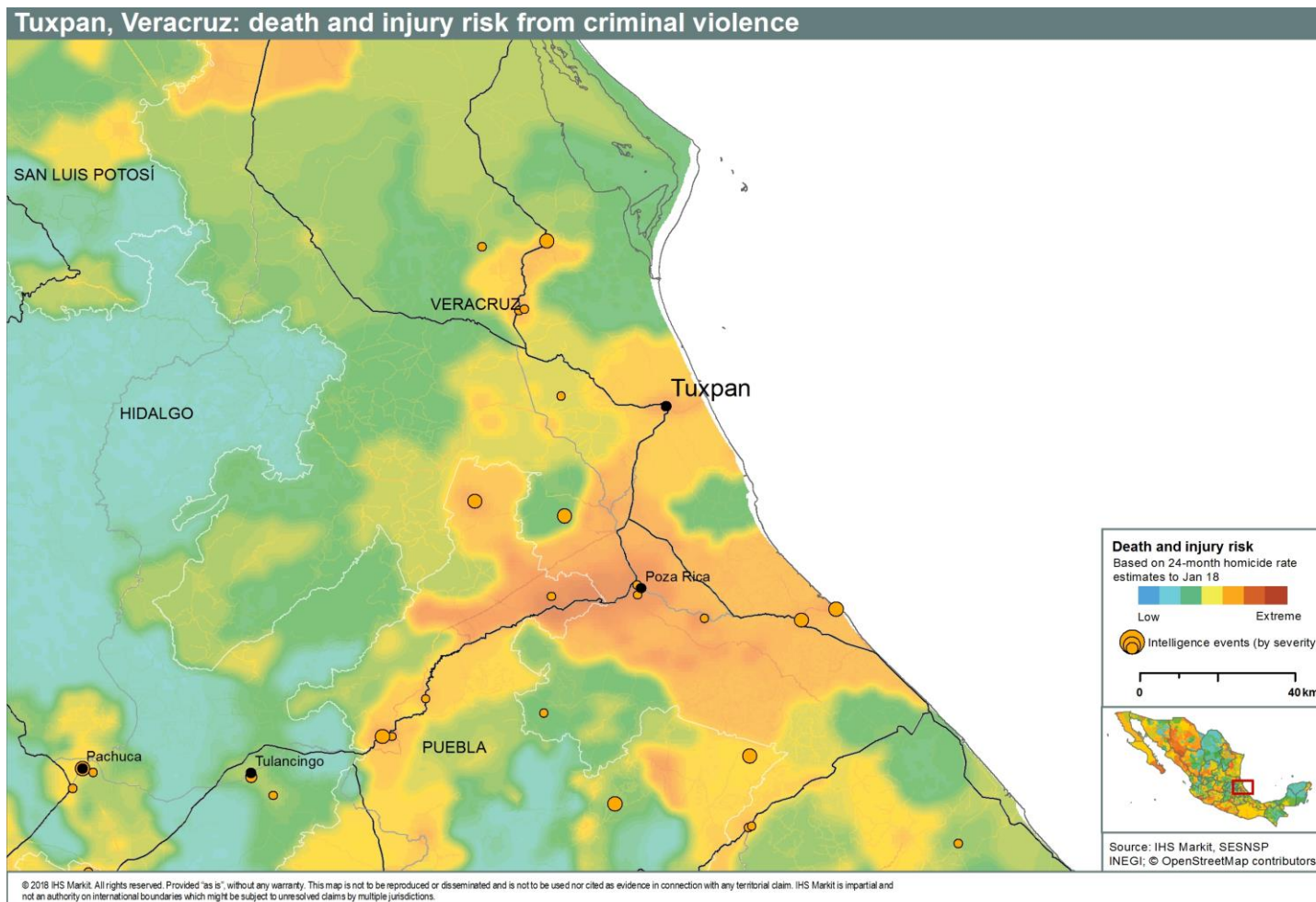
Security Assessment

The port of Tuxpan, the closest Mexican port by road to Mexico City in the country (roughly three hours), is also a key logistic hub for the general supply chain, including the energy, energy services, construction, agribusiness, and metal sectors.

An organised group calling itself Grupo Sombra, an armed cell of the Gulf Cartel, placed narco-messages in the city, as well as in El Higo, Amatlán, Pánuco, and Tantoyuca, in October 2018, threatening violence. No major confrontations, however, have taken place since.

The city has seen an increase in the selling of drugs at street level, an indicator that highlights growing risk of low-level criminality (petty crime), and confrontations if disputes between distribution gangs emerge.

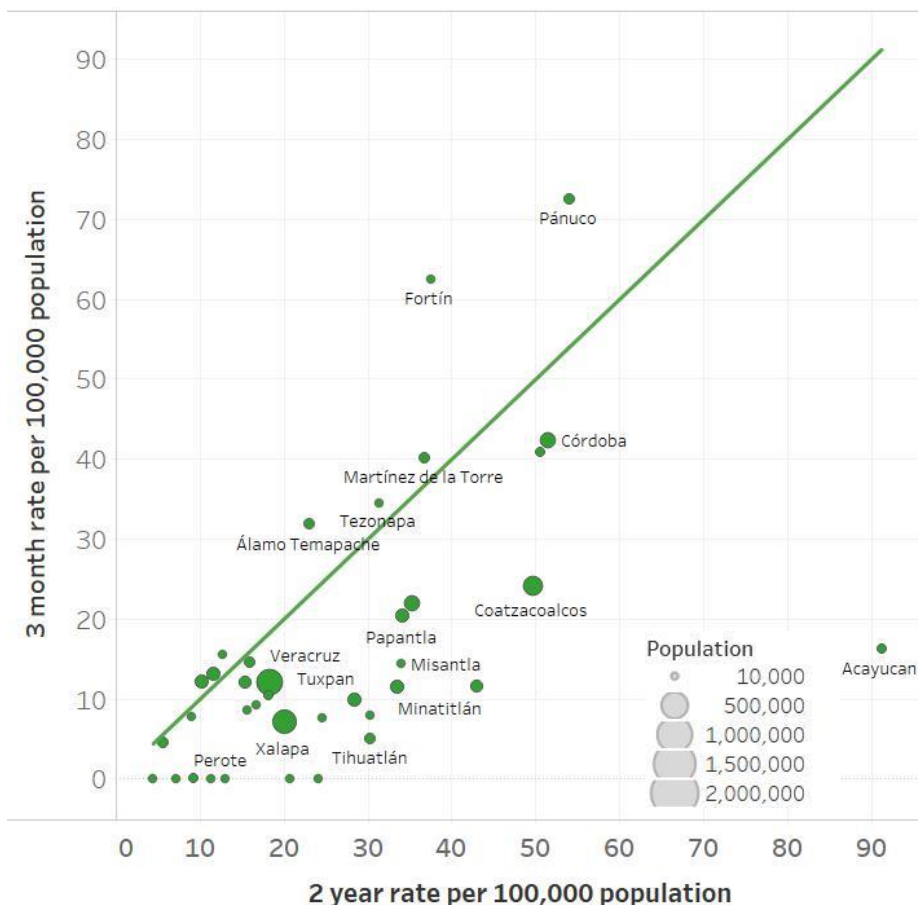
There are criminal groups targeting vehicles and cargo along the México-Tuxpan highway, particularly around Tulancingo, Hidalgo, Xicotepec, and Huachinango, Puebla. IHS Markit, sources, however, indicate that cargo theft risks are lower than along the Mexico-Veracruz highway.



For the latest click on: [In Rojo Gómez, Tulancingo, Hidalgo, residents blocked the Mexico-Tuxpan motorway in protest of poor security following an attempted lynching of four extortion suspects.](#)

Spotlight on Tuxpan, Veracruz

Homicide rate by municipality; 3 month vs 2 year baseline



Source: Mexican National Public Security System

State level homicide trend



Source: Mexican National Public Security System

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Spotlight on Tampico, Tamaulipas

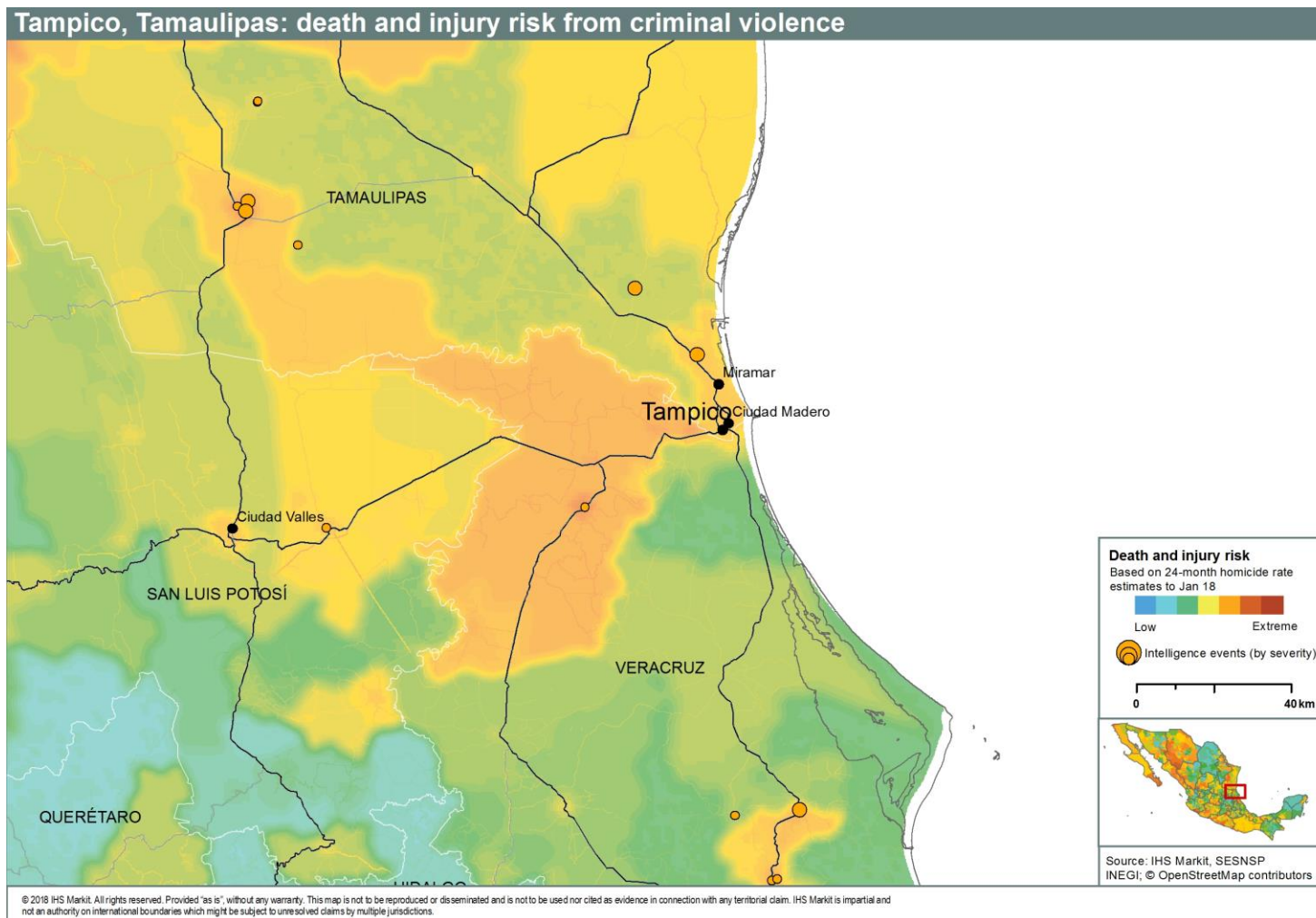
Security Assessment

Tampico, together with neighbouring Altamira and Ciudad Madero, is a logistics and industrial hub in southern Tamaulipas, serving companies that operate in the petrochemicals, energy, metals, and textiles industries.

Organised crime groups have used the area to traffic cocaine, precursor chemicals, and stolen hydrocarbons. The area was one of the top extortion, armed confrontations, and kidnapping hotspots in Mexico prior to 2017 but security has improved. The presence of gunmen belonging to the now fractured and weakened Gulf and Zetas cartels has decreased with many opting to relocate north of the state to dispute the control of Reynosa and Nuevo Laredo against the North Eastern cartel.

Theft risks are higher in areas such as Unidad Nacional, Ampliación de la Unidad Nacional, Primero de Mayo, Ricardo Flores Magón, Jardín 20 de Noviembre, and Zona Centro

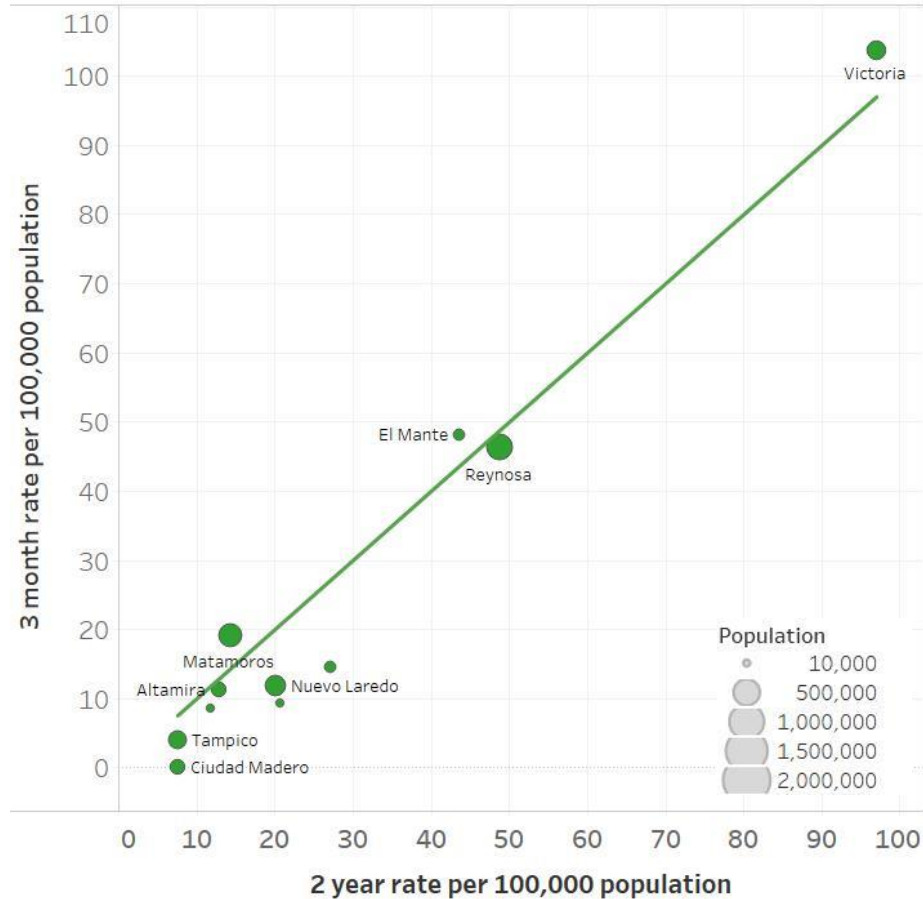
Organised crime groups are likely to resume extortion and kidnapping in the area if the government deprives them of revenue obtained through hydrocarbons theft. Back in 2015, liquefied petroleum companies temporarily suspended operations to protest against extortion demands. Prior to that, petrochemical firms had also raised concerned about petrochemicals theft.



For the latest click on: [The Eighth Military Zone reported that the federal government had deployed 400 military police to Reynosa and 300 to Tampico, Ciudad Madero and Altamira in Tamaulipas state.](#)

Spotlight on Tampico, Tamaulipas

Homicide rate by municipality; 3 month vs 2 year baseline



Source: Mexican National Public Security System

State level homicide trend



Source: Mexican National Public Security System

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Spotlight on Cancún, Quintana Roo

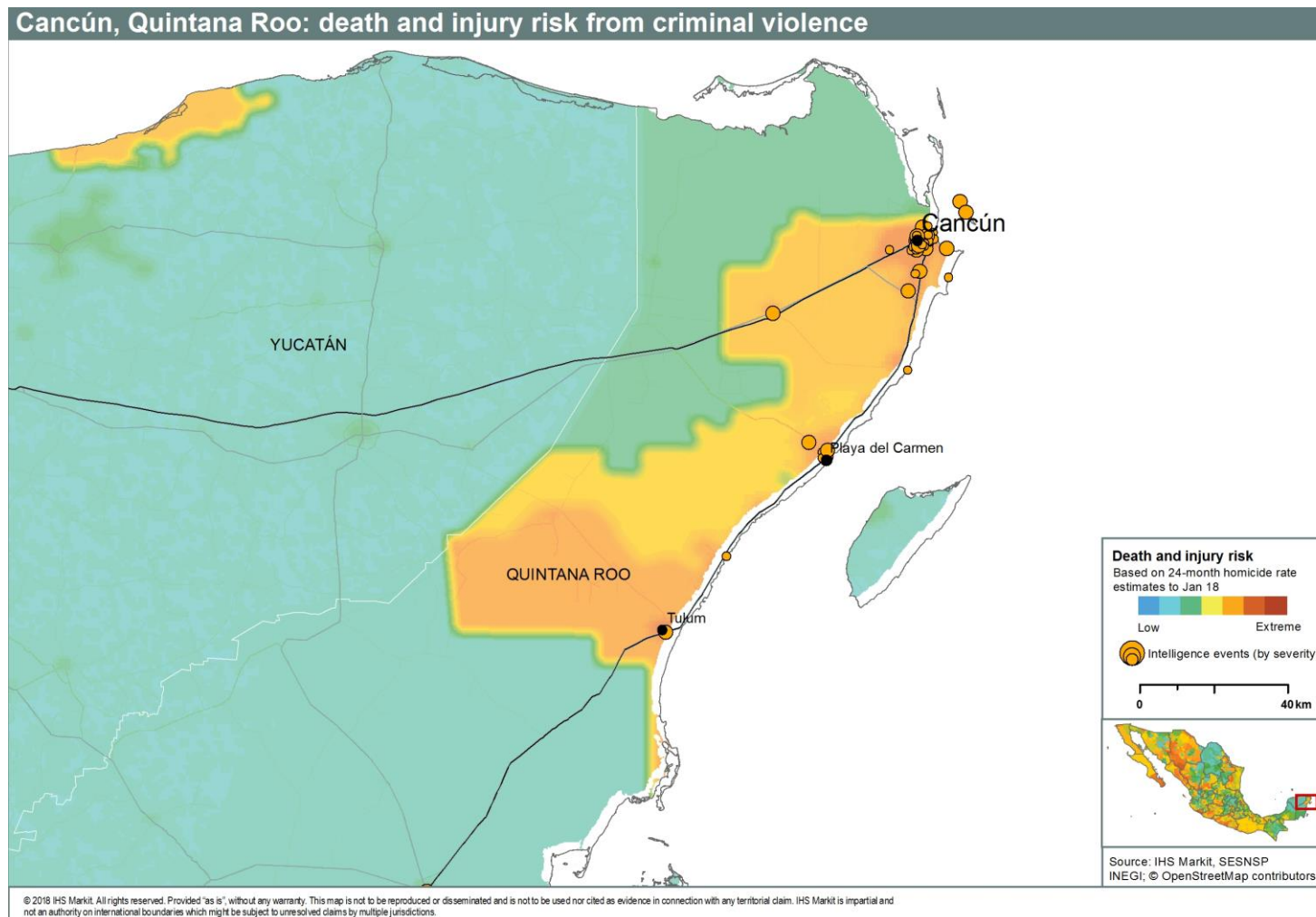
Security Assessment

Benito Juárez (the municipality in which Cancún is located), together with neighbouring Playa del Carmen, is a tourist hub in northern Quintana Roo, with a thriving hotel, restaurant, and bar service industry.

Crime risks have increased as a result of violent competition between local gangs connected to the Zetas, Los Combos, and the Gulf, Sinaloa, Doña Lety, and Cártel de Jalisco Nueva Generación. Organised crime groups have used the area to traffic and sell narcotics. Security is worsening as police report multiple homicides, including in tourist districts, although tourists are not targeted specifically. The presence of gunmen has led to more than 80 drug trafficking-related deaths to March 2019.

Theft risks targeting foreigners have been reported in the last 12 months, particularly on public buses around the tourist site of Playa del Carmen, while vehicle robberies have also increased 14% in the last year.

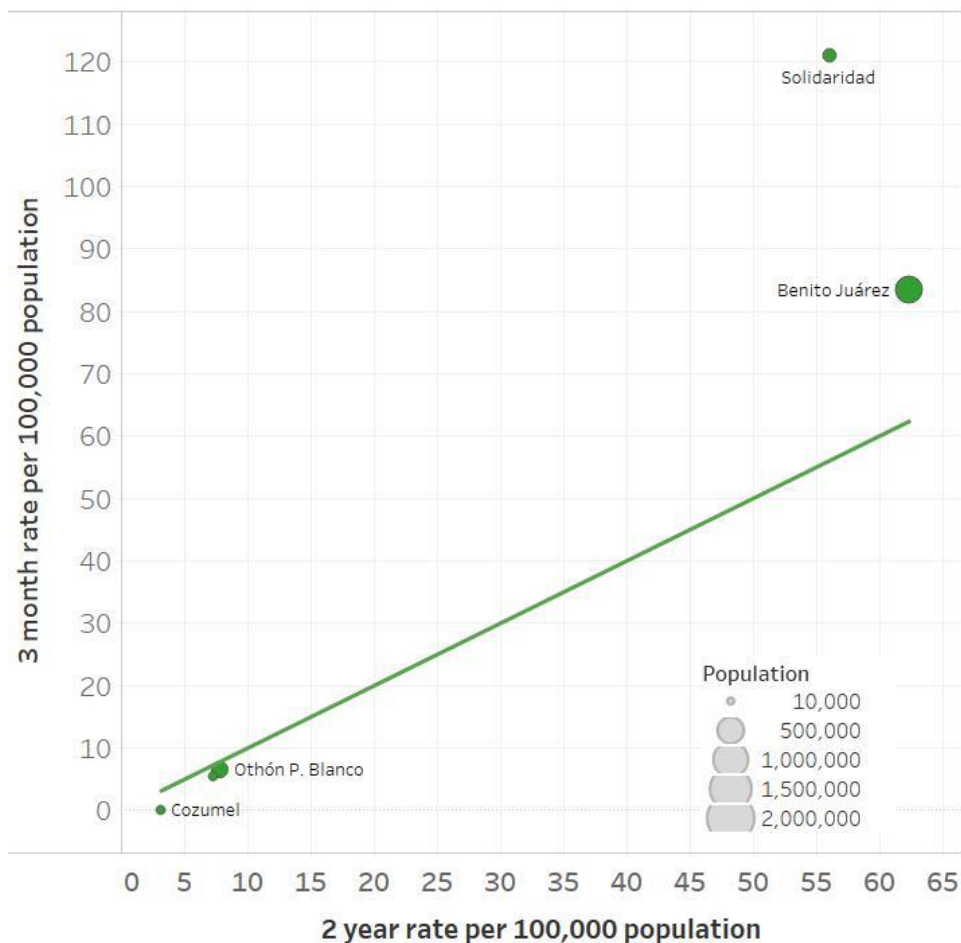
Organised crime groups are likely to continue with high-profile shooting incidents until cartel control of the tourist centre has been settled or if police deployments force criminals out of urban areas. Increased security has failed to address overall deterioration in hotspots with El Crucero, Plaza de Toros, and Villas Otoch posing high collateral death and injury risks.



For detailed analysis click on: [Drug cartels' dispute over control of trafficking, sales in Mexico's Cancún increases collateral injury, death risks](#) and [City Crime Report: Cancún](#).

Spotlight on Cancún, Quintana Roo

Homicide rate by municipality; 3 month vs 2 year baseline



Source: Mexican National Public Security System

State level homicide trend



Source: Mexican National Public Security System

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Areas to watch through June 2019

1

Guanajuato

- A narco-message allegedly from the Santa Rosa de Lima Cartel (SRLC) leader 'El Marro' hung on 31 January near the Salamanca refinery stated the cartel would start killing civilians in Guanajuato to force an end to anti-fuel-theft security operations. Locals set up roadblocks and burned tanker vehicles to limit army and federal police movements in February, indicating that the SRLC enjoys local support in fuel theft operations. In March, suspected members of the cartel killed 15 people in a bar in Salamanca, Guanajuato. SRLC control of the state is contested with the Jalisco New Generation Cartel (CJNG), driving an increase in criminal violence, particularly targeted assassinations of rivals.

2

Hidalgo

- The SRLC is expanding into Hidalgo state, challenging the CJNG for control of fuel trafficking in the state, particularly along its border with Queretaro, where illegal fuel tapping activities run through the state to Guanajuato. State officials have stated that fuel-theft groups are moving into Hidalgo and responsible for a recent spike in homicides and the death of an investigative police agent in Huichapan in January 2019. As a result, pipeline tapping is on the rise and it has the highest concentration of all states in Mexico, which is likely to spark violence with cartels as security forces attempt to shut down illicit hydrocarbon theft.

3

Veracruz

- Operations of the Gulf Cartel, Los Zetas, Vieja Escuela, and Cartel del Noreste are being challenged by the CJNG, which is continuing to expand its territory. New governor Cuitláhuac García Jiménez took office and promptly declared a humanitarian emergency, intent on locating disappeared and clandestine graves. By end-February 2019, Veracruz became one of the top states for narco-trafficking-related homicides, including the execution of a Grupo Sombra – Gulf Cartel leader in an inside job. Transport risks are expected to remain high, especially along the Puebla-Veracruz corridor.

4

Tabasco

- Fuel theft-related crimes are increasing in Puerto Dos Bocas, Villahermosa, and Cardenas including the regular appearance of narco-messages in January and February 2019. Messages have threatened the Attorney General's Office (PGR) since authorities have stepped up an anti-hydrocarbon theft strategy. In 2019, authorities have captured at least one million litres of stolen fuels despite the state not traditionally being a hotspot of cartel activities.

Crime risk enhancement for LATAM markets

Assess the effect of crime on operations in Latin America

Foresight Security Planning – NEW crime analysis

Headline Analysis –

- > El Salvador gangs likely hoping to negotiate with incoming president-elect's government, temporarily reducing death and injury risk
- > Growing crime presence along Guatemala-Mexico border increases death and injury, cargo transit security risks in 2019
- > Increased military presence in Bolivia's southwestern departments highlights operational capacity of criminal networks in border, mining areas
- > Brazilian justice minister's anti-crime package focuses on harsher punishment, but highly unlikely to tackle growing criminality
- > Infiltration of government agencies in Mexico's Morelos state indicates increasing property damage and death and injury risks
- > Transportation strikes over extortion increase supply-chain disruption risks along the San Pedro Sula-Puerto Cortes corridor
- > Increasing frequency of armed assaults on tourists raises risks for foreigners, despite Costa Rica's reduced homicide rate

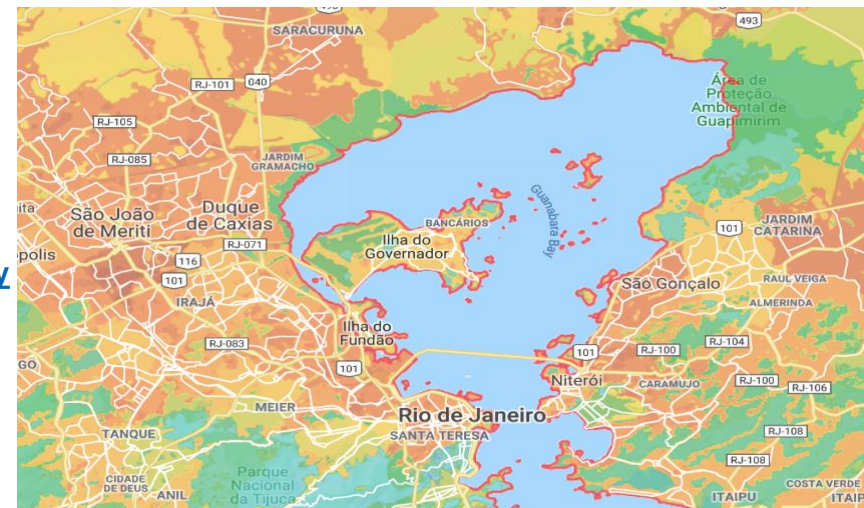
Intelligence Events – extra geotagged crime events – interrogate on CONNECT maps, filter by categories such as **criminal violence, extortion, theft, kidnap**.

City crime profiles and maps:

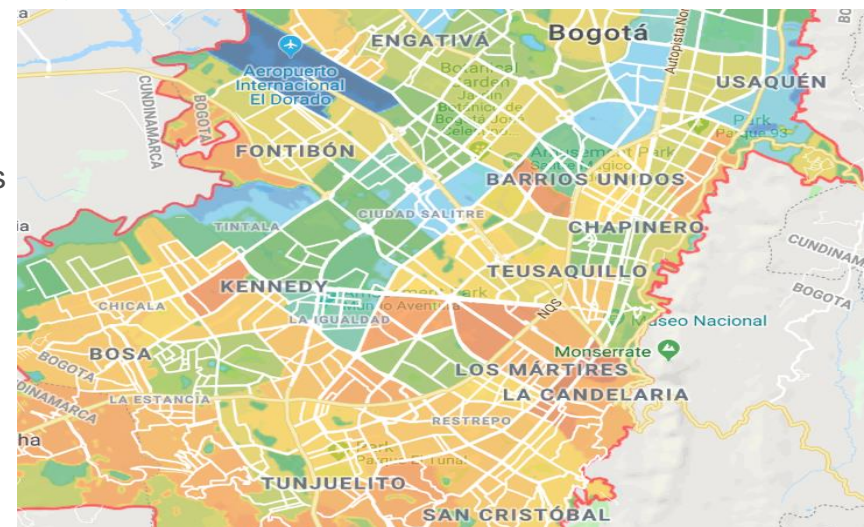
- **Map layers** – high resolution crime risk layers at neighbourhood level for the whole of Mexico, as well as Bogotá, Caracas, Mexico City, Rio de Janeiro and São Paulo.
- **City crime profiles** for Bogotá, Buenos Aires, Caracas, Cancun, Guadalajara, Guatemala City, Lima, Managua, Medellín, Mexico City, Monterrey, Rio de Janeiro, San Salvador, Santiago and São Paulo.

City level crime risk weblayers

Rio de Janeiro



Bogotá



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