

Mexican army kills Jalisco New Generation Cartel leader in operation

BY FABIOLA SÁNCHEZ
ASSOCIATED PRESS

MEXICO CITY — The Mexican army killed the leader of the Jalisco New Generation Cartel, Nemesio Rubén Oseguera Cervantes, "El Mencho," on Sunday, decapitating what had become Mexico's most powerful drug cartel and thrusting swaths of the nation into chaos.

The drug lord was the Mexican government's biggest prize yet to show the Trump administration in its efforts to crack down on the cartels, and his death was met with a forceful reaction from the cartel, known by its Spanish initials CJNG.

Cars burned out by cartel members blocked roads in nearly a dozen Mexican states and left smoke billowing into the air. Jalisco's capital, Guadalajara, was turned into a ghost town Sunday night as civilians hunkered down. School was canceled Monday in several states.

Oseguera Cervantes was wounded in an operation to capture him Sunday in Tapalpa, Jalisco about a two-hour drive southwest of Guadalajara and he died while being flown to Mexico City, the Defense Department said in a statement. The state is the base of the cartel known for trafficking huge quantities of fentanyl and other drugs to the United States.

CARTEL A MAJOR FENTANYL TRAFFICKER

During the operation, troops came under fire and killed four people at the location. Three more people, including Oseguera Cervantes, were wounded and later died, the statement said. Two others were arrested and armored vehicles, rocket launchers and other arms were seized. Three members of the armed forces were wounded and receiving medical treatment.

A Jalisco state official who requested anonymity because they were not authorized to speak publicly said that a member of the National Guard died in Tapalpa during the operation, six other National Guard



Armando Solis/AP Photo

A soldier stands guard by a charred vehicle after it was set on fire, in Cointzio, Michoacán state, Mexico, on Sunday, following the death of the leader of the Jalisco New Generation Cartel, Nemesio Oseguera, known as "El Mencho."

members died in Zapopan beside Guadalajara, a jail guard was killed at a lockup in Puerto Vallarta when prisoners rioted, and an agent from the Jalisco state prosecutor's office was killed in Guadalajara. Details were not immediately available.

The U.S. Embassy in Mexico said on X that the operation against Oseguera Cervantes was carried out by Mexican special forces "within the framework of bilateral cooperation, with U.S. authorities providing complementary intelligence."

"Ever since President (Claudia) Sheinbaum has been in power, the army has been way more confrontational, combative against criminal groups in Mexico," said David Mora, analyst for International Crisis Group in Mexico. "This is signaling to the U.S. that if we keep cooperating, sharing intelligence, Mexico can do it, we don't need U.S. troops on Mexican soil."

ROADBLOCKS AND BURNING VEHICLES

The killing of the drug lord set off several hours of roadblocks with burning vehicles, tactics commonly used by the cartels to block military

operations. Videos circulating on social media showed smoke billowing over the tourist city of Puerto Vallarta in Jalisco, and people sprinting through the airport of the state's capital in panic.

Air Canada announced it was suspending flights to Puerto Vallarta "due to an ongoing security situation" and advised customers not to go to their airport. A number of Mexican and international airlines also canceled flights.

In Guadalajara, the state capital, burning vehicles blocked roads and businesses shuttered just months before Mexico's second-largest city is scheduled to host matches during this summer's soccer World Cup.

The U.S. State Department warned U.S. citizens in Jalisco, Tamaulipas, Michoacán, Guerrero and Nuevo Leon states to remain in safe places due to the ongoing security operations. Canada's embassy in Mexico warned its citizens in Puerto Vallarta to shelter in place and generally to keep a low profile in Jalisco.

Jalisco Gov. Pablo Lemus told residents to stay at home, suspended public transportation and said that the state was "living through critical

hours."

US HAD OFFERED UP TO \$15M FOR HIS CAPTURE

The U.S. State Department had offered a reward of up to \$15 million for information leading to the arrest of El Mencho. The Jalisco New Generation Cartel, known as CJNG, is one of the most powerful and fastest growing criminal organizations in Mexico and was born in 2009.

In February, the Trump administration designated the cartel as a foreign terrorist organization.

Sheinbaum, like her predecessor, has criticized the "kingpin" strategy of previous administrations that took out cartel leaders only to trigger explosions of violence as cartels fractured. While she has remained popular in Mexico, security is a persistent concern and since U.S. President Donald Trump took office a year ago, she has been under tremendous pressure to show results against drug trafficking.

On Sunday, Sheinbaum applauded Mexican security forces and called for calm in a post on X.

KNOWN AS AN AGGRESSIVE CARTEL

The Jalisco cartel has been one of the most aggressive cartels in its attacks on the military — including on helicopters — and is a pioneer in launching explosives from drones and installing mines. In 2020, it carried out a spectacular assassination attempt with grenades and high-powered rifles in the heart of Mexico City against the then head of the capital's police force and now federal security secretary.

The DEA considers the cartel to be as powerful as the Sinaloa cartel, one of Mexico's most infamous criminal groups, with a presence in all 50 U.S. states. It is one of the main suppliers of cocaine to the U.S. market and, like the Sinaloa cartel, earns billions from the production of fentanyl and methamphetamines. Sinaloa, however, has been weakened by

infighting after the loss of its leaders Ismael "El Mayo" Zambada and Joaquín "El Chapo" Guzmán, both in U.S. custody.

Oseguera Cervantes, 59, was originally from Aguililla in the neighboring state of Michoacán. He had been significantly involved in drug trafficking activities since the 1990s. When he was younger, he migrated to the U.S. where he was convicted of conspiracy to distribute heroin in the U.S. District Court for the Northern District of California in 1994 and served nearly three years in prison.

Following his release from custody, Oseguera Cervantes returned to Mexico and reengaged in drug trafficking activity with drug lord Ignacio Coronel Villarreal, alias "Nacho Coronel." After Villarreal's death, Oseguera Cervantes and Erik Valencia Salazar, alias "El 85," created the Jalisco New Generation Cartel around 2007.

Initially, they worked for the Sinaloa Cartel, but eventually split and for years the two cartels have battled for territory across Mexico.

INDICTED SEVERAL TIMES IN THE UNITED STATES

Since 2017, Oseguera Cervantes has been indicted several times in the United States District Court for the District of Columbia.

The most recent superseding indictment, filed on April 5, 2022, charges Oseguera Cervantes with conspiracy and distribution of controlled substances (methamphetamine, cocaine, and fentanyl) for the purpose of illegal importation into the United States and use of firearms during and in connection with drug trafficking offenses. Oseguera Cervantes is also charged under the Drug Kingpin Enforcement Act for directing a continuing criminal enterprise.

Last year, people searching for missing relatives found piles of shoes and other clothing, as well as bone fragments at what authorities later said was a Jalisco cartel recruitment and training site.

Trump's Hospital Ship Plan Sparks Greenland health care defense

BY JAMEY KEATEN AND KONSTANTIN TOROPIN
ASSOCIATED PRESS

U.S. President Donald Trump said he would deploy a hospital ship to Greenland, alleging that many people there are sick and not receiving care, even though both of the U.S. Navy's hospital ships are currently docked at a shipyard in Alabama.

Trump's announcement prompted a defense on Sunday of Denmark and Greenland's health care system from their leaders, and it was the latest point of friction with the American leader who has frequently talked about seizing the massive Arctic territory.

"It's a no thank you from here," said Greenlandic Prime Minister Jens-Frederik Nielsen.

Trump's social media post about a hospital ship came after Denmark's military said its arctic command forces on Saturday evacuated a crew



Evgeniy Maloletka/AP Photo

Houses are seen near the coast of a sea inlet of Nuuk, Greenland, on Sunday.

member of a U.S. submarine off the coast of Greenland for urgent medical treatment.

The Danish Joint Arctic Command, on its Facebook page, said the crew member was evacuated some 7 nautical miles (8 miles; 13 kilometers) off Nuuk — the capital of the vast, ice-covered territory — and transferred to a hospital

in the city. The crew member was retrieved by a Danish Seahawk helicopter that had been deployed on an inspection ship.

Trump, in a post on his Truth Social platform on Saturday night, referred to his special envoy for Greenland and said, "Working with the fantastic Governor of Louisiana, Jeff

Landry, we are going to send a great hospital boat to Greenland to take care of the many people who are sick, and not being taken care of there. It's on the way!!!"

Nielsen said it wasn't necessary.

"We have a public health care system where treatment is free for citizens. That is a deliberate choice — and a fundamental part of our society," Nielsen said. "That is not how it works in the USA, where it costs money to see a doctor."

He added, in a note of exasperation, that Greenland is always open to dialogue and cooperation. "But please talk to us instead of just making more or less random statements on social media," he said.

Danish Defense Minister Troels Lund Poulsen, speaking to public broadcaster DR, said Danish authorities had not been informed that the U.S. ship was on its way.

The Pentagon referred

questions about the status of the U.S. Navy's two hospital ships, the USNS Mercy and USNS Comfort, to the White House. The White House did not immediately respond to repeated requests for more information.

Both ships are currently at a shipyard in Mobile, Ala., according to social media posts from the shipyard, which also posted photos of them next to each other.

When asked about the status of the ships and the president's post, the Navy referred questions to the White House.

The historically strong bilateral ties after World War II between NATO allies Denmark and the United States have come under severe strain in recent months as Trump ratcheted up talk of a possible U.S. takeover of the mineral-rich and strategically located Arctic island.

Danish Prime Minister Mette Frederiksen defended

Denmark's health care system on Sunday, writing on Facebook that she was "happy to live in a country where there is free and equal access to health for all. Where it's not insurances and wealth that determine whether you get proper treatment."

"You have the same approach in Greenland," she said, before adding: "Happy Sunday to you all!" in front of a blushing, smiling emoji.

Aaja Chemnitz, one of the two Greenlandic politicians in the Danish parliament, wrote on Facebook that "Donald Trump wants to send a poorly maintained hospital ship to Greenland. It seems rather desperate and does not contribute to the permanent and sustainable strengthening of the health care system that we need."

"Another day. Another crazy news story," she wrote in front of a smiley face emoji.

US-Iran nuclear talks set for Geneva as Washington awaits Tehran proposal

BY JON GAMBRELL
ASSOCIATED PRESS

DUBAI, United Arab Emirates — The United States and Iran will hold their next round of nuclear talks Thursday in Geneva, a facilitator said Sunday, as the Islamic Republic faces both the threat of a U.S. military strike and new protests at home.

Oman's foreign minister, Badr al-Busaidi, confirmed the talks. Oman previously hosted the indirect talks on the Islamic Republic's nuclear program and facilitated the latest round in Geneva last week.

There was no immediate comment from the Trump administration, which has built up the largest U.S. military presence in the Middle East in decades as it pushes its longtime adversary for concessions on its nuclear program and more.

Shortly before Oman's announcement, Iran's top diplomat, Abbas Araghchi, told CBS in an interview that he expected to meet U.S. envoy Steve Witkoff in Geneva on Thursday, and said a "good chance" remained for a diplomatic solution on the

nuclear issue.

Washington awaits a proposed deal that Araghchi has said would be ready to share within days, and the foreign minister told CBS that Iran was still working on the draft proposal.

The nuclear issue, he added, is the only matter being discussed — even though both the United States and Israel also want to address Iran's missile program and its support for armed proxies in the Middle East.

President Donald Trump warned on Friday that limited strikes against Iran are possible, and both Iran and the U.S. have signaled they are prepared for war if the talks on Tehran's nuclear program fail.

Minutes after Oman's confirmation of the talks, Iranian President Masoud Pezeshkian said on social media that negotiations had involved "the exchange of practical proposals and yielded encouraging signals," but added that Tehran has "made all necessary preparations for any potential scenario."

The U.S. has said Iran cannot have nuclear weapons or the capacity to build them and that

it cannot enrich uranium. Araghchi, however, told CBS that Iran has the right to enrich uranium.

On Friday, he said his U.S. counterparts had not asked for zero enrichment as part of the latest round of talks, which is not what U.S. officials have said publicly. He also said talks focused on how to ensure that Iran's nuclear program, including enrichment, "will remain peaceful forever." He said that in return, Iran will implement confidence-building measures in exchange for relief on economic sanctions.

Tehran has long insisted that any negotiations should only focus on its nuclear program, and has refused to discuss wider U.S. and Israeli demands

that it scale back its missile program and sever ties to armed groups.

Although Iran insists its nuclear program is peaceful, the U.S. and others suspect it is aimed at eventually developing weapons. Iran says it hasn't been enriching uranium since U.S. and Israeli strikes on Iranian nuclear sites in June.

At that time, Trump said the strikes had "obliterated" Iran's nuclear sites, but the exact damage is unknown because Tehran has barred international inspectors.

Meanwhile, Araghchi asserted to CBS that "we have a very good capability of missiles, and now we are even in a better situation" than before

the strikes in June.

Nuclear talks had been deadlocked for years after Trump's decision in 2018 to unilaterally withdraw the U.S. from Iran's 2015 nuclear deal with world powers.

NEW PROTESTS IN IRAN

Confirmation of new

talks came as new anti-government protests began in Iran, according to witnesses, as university students in Tehran and another city demonstrated around memorials for thousands of people killed in a crackdown on previous nationwide demonstrations about six weeks ago.

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