

Armed Teen Girl Detained in Mexico after Shootout with Army



Mexico City, July 22 (teleSUR-RHC)-- A 14 year-old armed girl was detained on Tuesday in a Mexican border with the U.S. along with four heavily armed men who said they worked for the Juarez cartel, according to local media.

The group, which also includes a 17-year old male, had allegedly engaged in a shootout with Mexican soldiers a few days before their arrest, *El Fronterizo* newspaper said. They managed to escape, thus prompting federal authorities to deploy forces to search for them.

The girl, identified only as Rosalinda, is said to be a 'hitgirl' for the Juarez cartel and in charge of safeguarding shipments of drugs while they are packaged and sent across the border into the United States.

The armed group was detained in a small community called *La Caseta*, which they claimed to control. The town has a population of about 1,200 people and it is located across the border from the Texas towns of Fabens and Tornillo. Rosalinda had a .22 pistol in her possession, while the 17-year-old boy had an assault rifle as did the other three older males. They also had over 400 cartridges of different calibers.

In 2013, BBC published a story saying there were over 75,000 children working for drug cartels either voluntarily or by force. The British news outlet added over 25,000 were working for the Sinaloa cartel of

Joaquin “El Chapo” Guzman, the most wanted drug lord, who recently escaped from a Mexican maximum security jail.

Activist for Cauce Ciudadano in Mexico, Carlos Cruz, told BBC that the cartels exploit children by using them for kidnapping, drug packaging and safeguarding, and as “*halcones*” or lookouts.

In 2006, close to 2,000 minors were killed in shootouts or other gang-related activities. In June 2014, the federal statistics office of the government reported 45,000 minors were missing, and according to activists and child protection agencies in Mexico, many are abducted for their organs or to be prostituted, but many more are coerced into working for drug cartels.

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