

# *Mexican president blames U.S. for surging drug cartel violence*

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**Mexican security forces' demo at a military parade for the 214th anniversary of Independence Day at the Zocalo Square in Mexico City on September 16, 2024. (Photo by AFP)**

Mexico City, September 21 (RHC)-- Mexican President Andres Manuel Lopez Obrador says the U.S. is partly responsible for the increased Sinaloa cartel violence that has left tens of people dead in the past

week.

The “instability and clashes” in the past week that led to 53 deaths in Mexico’s northern state of Sinaloa is the result of a “totally illegal” operation conducted by US forces, Lopez Obrador said during his morning news briefing.

Some 51 others are missing since rival factions of the Sinaloa Cartel began clashing on September 9th, with gruesome violence showing no signs of abating.

The trigger for the conflict between the two most powerful factions of the Sinaloa Cartel, a drug gang, dates back to July, when top trafficker and leader of one of those groupings, Ismael "El Mayo" Zambada, was arrested in the United States.

Zambada alleges that a senior member of the Los Chapitos, another faction of the cartel, kidnapped him and then flew him to the United States against his will.

Since fighting broke out on Sept 9, shootouts have disrupted daily life in the capital, Culiacan, where schools have had to close on some days while restaurants and shops shuttered early.

Lopez Obrador said the United States bears some of the responsibility for the violence "for having carried out that operation" to arrest Zambada. He said the arrest "produced the confrontation that is taking place in Sinaloa."

U.S. ambassador to Mexico City Ken Salazar rejected his country was responsible for the cartel violence. "When it is said that the United States, we, are responsible for what is happening in Sinaloa, in other places, well, I do not agree with that," Salazar said from Ciudad Juarez, according to Mexican media reports.

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