

# **‘We’re Going to Find You.’ Mexican Cartels Turn Social Media Into Tools for Extortion, Threats, and Violence**

**Why are people migrating? Why are people willing to leave their homes and move somewhere else?**

**By: Alfredo M [REDACTED] & Angel M [REDACTED]**

## *AUTHORS*



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Rebecca is an award-winning journalist with 15 years of experience reporting and editing for print, audio and digital media. I'm currently a staff writer for The Los Angeles Times' new equity initiative. Previously, she was a project editor at The Fresno Bee, spearheading the bilingual Central Valley News Collaborative.



**Omar Ornelas**

Omar Ornelas is a Mexican photojournalist based in Palm Springs, California. For the last 15 years, he has been reporting on and photographing farmworker labor, education, health and housing issues in the Coachella Valley, as well as border security and Mexican and Central American migratory flows at the U.S.-Mexico border, for The Desert Sun and the USA TODAY Network.

## **Why are people Migrating? Why are people willing to leave their homes?**

**One Day in March she got a called by her mother saying her brother got kidnapped by the cartel. Before that Mariana work at a clothing market but while she works there she would get threats from the cartel as well, and fled in 2015 to a Asylum. While she was there she got added my a guy with a horse avatar, and insisted for \$3,700 for her brother back. She ended up giving them the money but was too late for her brother, she never got answered after she sent the money and later her brother was found dead in a small town in Guerrero.**





# The story

Marian tells us how she received a message from an unknown user with a horse head on facebook, background context her brother had been missing for 2 days and she didn't lived in mexico at that time. This horse head user claimed to know where her brother was and they begin to threatened her by telling her they would kill her brother and send him home in cubes on a plastic bag if she didn't pay "They are going to let your brother go free but you have to pay," the extortionist said. "If not, they'll kill him." "i'm going to start collecting the money" she said. They demanded her an amount of 3,700 pesos which translates to \$161.64 US dollars. Mariana scared told her loved ones about this situation and together gathered as much money as she could for his resque. The reason why she had moved to the US in first place was because of all the violence and extortion she was receiving from having a store and was demanded to pay them \$75 weekly for he protection. When she missed a 3 or 4 payments one of the users mentioned her daughter and how she could be on risk on something happening to her. All this tension obligated her to migrate to the US and stayed in texas florida and Oregon with some relatives. Anxiously she informed her relatives from mexico and they searched for him hoping they would find him and everything wa just a scam. But it wasn't, Mariana deposit the money to the user and mas hopin for her brother release as soon as possible. 2 weeks after this people had informed her that police had come across a dead body in a well in Guerrero. The person's disembodied limbs, swollen and decomposing, were in black bags, Mariana said. Exactly how the horse head had explained. Sadly even after paying the Horse head the money they had demanded, her brother had been killed and the bodie police officers he found had Roberto's DNA.

## Mexico Travel Advisory

Almost all of the 13 states in Mexico that the U.S. State Department recommends Americans "reconsider" or "avoid" traveling to are plagued with violence between rival cartels. While cartels rarely target U.S. citizens, mistakes do happen, and they are more likely to occur in these states.



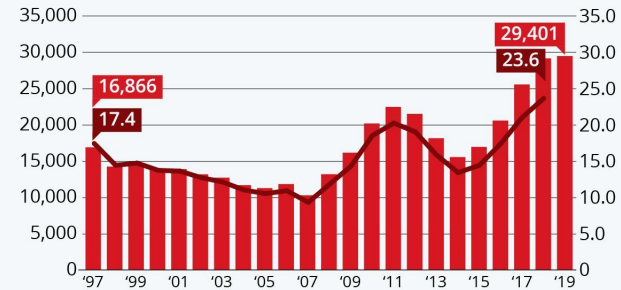
Source: U.S. Department of State

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## Number of Homicides in Mexico on the Rise

Number of homicide investigations in Mexico per year and rate per 100,000 inhabitants

■ Total homicide investigations ■ Homicide investigations rate



New methodology for rates implemented in 2015

Sources: National Public Security System of Mexico, University of San Diego



statista

# The issue

- The issue about this story is the violence that's been occurring on Mexico as well as other places around the world. Citizens get threatened and extorted by violent groups which in this case were the Cartels.
- Mariana in this case lived far away from her hometown where Roberto, her brother lived. Due to this reason she couldn't reassure if he was safe nor look for him. By getting the message from this user she got was terrified but couldn't do anything but hope he was safe and to gather up all the money.
- People get threatened every day and even tend to appear on lists which these violent groups make to let them know they are on the risk of being killed. Other people get extorted by making these citizens pay these violent groups to guarantee their safety if not they get threatened others get put on the list where if you appear in they'll come after you.
- For this reason people leave their hometown and seek Querencia in the US. Not all immigrants come to the US for fun they come with the hope of seeking a better future and better lifestyle for their children





## **Critical essential question**

- **Why did roberto get kidnapped and was it just to get money out of it or did he become an enemy to this violent group?**
- **How long did it took for Mariana to gather all the money up and why did they stil ended up killing Roberto after paying them?**
- **How was Mariana able to cover all the funeral expenses if she had given all the money for Robertos resque**
- **How did this event affect Marianas and her familys life after this situation and what have they done to avoid it in the future**



# QUERENCIA

## Quotes from the story that show how these immigrants seek for Querencia in the US

- People have fled their homes, and some have even left the country, after accounts associated with delinquent groups threatened them on social media. For some, the death threats and extortion attempts have continued even after they began the asylum process in the United States
- The number of Mexicans seeking asylum in the United States has increased by more than two-and-a-half times since 2014
- threats were often “the breaking point,” she said, that finally spurred them to flee and seek refuge in the United States.
- People have learned to take the lists seriously, said Romina, a former Chilapa resident who is now seeking asylum in the United States.