

## Organization Attributes Sheet: Barrio Azteca (The Aztecs gang)

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<b>A. When the organization was formed + brief history</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• This organization began as a prison gang of Mexican and Mexican-American males in the late 1980s. Since then it has expanded to become a violent transnational criminal organization.<sup>1</sup></li><li>• It is based in west Texas (El Paso mainly) and New Mexico, but also operates heavily across the Rio Grande in Ciudad Juarez in the state of Chihuahua. It has an important presence in the Texan prison system, but also operates outside it.</li><li>• The gang has formed a strategic alliance with the Juarez Organization in which it carries out enforcement activities for Juarez in exchange for discounted drugs that are smuggled into the United States and sold to retail dealers in El Paso, Texas, who are also charged a “sales tax” by the gang.</li><li>• Recently, this alliance has been particularly useful since the Aztecs and La Linea have been leading the defense against Sinaloa’s attempts to obtain control of Juarez territories.<sup>2</sup></li><li>• This gang became prominent in 2010 because it was involved in the murder of a U.S Consulate member, Lesley Ann Enriquez, and her family in Ciudad Juarez. This led to a third superseding indictment by the Justice Department charging thirty five members of the gang with counts of murder, racketeering, and money laundering to.<sup>3</sup></li></ul>
<b>B. Types of illegal activities engaged in,</b>
a. In general
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Drug trafficking, extortion, contract killings, alien smuggling, kidnapping, and other offenses like, arson, assault auto theft, burglary, intimidation, kidnapping, robbery, and weapons violations.</li></ul>
b. <i>Specific detail: types of illicit trafficking activities engaged in</i>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Cocaine, Marijuana, Heroin and Methamphetamines sold by the Juarez Organization.</li></ul>
<b>C. Scope and Size</b>
a. Estimated size of network and membership
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• The gang is highly structured and has an estimated membership of 2,000 men.<sup>4</sup></li></ul>
b. Countries / regions group is known to have operated in. (i.e. the group’s operating area)
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Southwest United States (Texas, New Mexico) and Ciudad Juarez in the State of Chihuahua, Mexico.</li></ul>
<b>D. Leader Characteristics</b>
a. Who is/are the leader(s)
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Eduardo Ravelo (AKA: “Tablas”) is on the FBI most wanted list.<sup>5</sup></li><li>• Luis Mendez (AKA: “Alex”)</li></ul>
b. Leadership timeline
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Although reports identify Ravelo and Mendez as the remaining leaders of the gang who are still free, since this gang’s origins are within the prison system, it is very unlikely that members who have been prosecuted will stop working for the gang.<sup>6</sup></li><li>• Ravelo is said to be running the larger part of the gang from Ciudad Juarez and is in charge of making arrangements with the Juarez Organization.<sup>7</sup></li></ul>
c. Leadership style (autocratic, diffuse, etc.)
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Autocratic.</li></ul>
<b>E. Organizational Structure</b>
a. Topology (cellular, hierarchical, etc.)

Information derived from several sources and searchable databases.

All research conducted according to the project manual.

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Hierarchical organization with President, Vice-President, Captain, Lieutenant, Sergeant and Warrior.<sup>8</sup></li> </ul>
b.	<p>Membership – is there formal or informal membership in the organization or network? What role do informal or nonmembers play in trafficking and other criminal activities?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Barrio Azteca members are known for their propensity for violence and membership is for life. Serious association with members of other prison gangs such as the Mexicles, Artistic Assassins, Texas Syndicate, La Raza Unida, Aryan Brotherhood of Texas and the Mexican Mafia is not tolerated.</li> <li>• Members are known to use tattoos with Aztec or indigenous symbols which could not only be an indication of membership, but also of the rank inside the organization.<sup>9</sup></li> </ul>
c.	<p>Command and Control (decentralized or centralized)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Centralized.</li> </ul>
<b>F. Resources</b>	
a.	<p>Financial</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• This organization obtains its profits by smuggling drugs into El Paso, Texas that are obtained at a discount from the Juarez Organization.</li> <li>• Drugs are sold wholesale to dealers in El Paso who are also taxed for selling drugs in the gang's territories.</li> <li>• The gang also receives discounts for hiding Juarez Operatives in El Paso.<sup>10</sup></li> </ul>
b.	<p>Human</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Their numbers and the diverse activities speak of a sophisticated organization that exploits the different capabilities of their members.</li> </ul>
c.	<p>Logistical</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Forgery, safe-houses, etc. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The organization is known to operate in safe houses in both El Paso and Ciudad Juarez.</li> </ul> </li> <li>Key routes <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Information not found.</li> </ul> </li> </ol>
d.	<p>Transportation</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Land <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Information not found.</li> </ul> </li> <li>Sea <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Information not found.</li> </ul> </li> <li>Air <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Information not found.</li> </ul> </li> <li>Intermodal container <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Information not found.</li> </ul> </li> </ol>
<b>G. Trafficking Methods and Modalities</b>	
a.	<p>Corruption</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Information not found.</li> </ul>
b.	<p>Concealment</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Information not found.</li> </ul>
c.	<p>Deception</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Information not found.</li> </ul>
d.	<p>Circumvention (avoiding border entry points)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Information not found.</li> </ul>

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<b>H. Prior / Existing Relationships</b>	
a.	Other criminal organizations (cooperative and conflictual) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The gang has forged a close alliance with the Juarez Organization and has open conflicts with Artistic Assassins and Mexicles gangs that work for the Sinaloa organization in its efforts to acquire control of Ciudad Juarez smuggling routes.</li> </ul>
b.	Corrupt politicians, law enforcement , political parties and other state entities, etc. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Information not found.</li> </ul>
c.	<i>Specific detail: Any alliances / past dealings with terrorist groups.</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><b>So far there is no indication of the gang dealing with terrorist groups.</b></li> </ul>
<b>I. Ideological / Ethnic / Familial Orientation (if any)</b>	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Gang members are Mexican and Mexican-American Males who use Aztec or indigenous tattoos as identity symbols.<sup>11</sup></li> </ul>
<b>J. Technical Sophistication</b>	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Information not found.</li> </ul>
<b>K. Penchant for Innovation</b>	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Information not found.</li> </ul>
<b>L. Activities in United States</b>	
a.	Includes both criminal and non-criminal activities <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Transport illicit drugs across the U.S.–Mexico border for Juarez Organization. Barrio Azteca members also are involved in alien smuggling, arson, assault, auto theft, burglary, extortion, intimidation, kidnapping, robbery, and weapons violations<sup>12</sup></li> </ul>
b.	<i>Specific detail: trafficking activities ; logistical activities</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Information not found.</li> </ul>
c.	Linkages with US groups <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Market/transaction links <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>This organization operates throughout south west United States, in and outside the prison system.</li> </ul> </li> <li>Stable supplier <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Juarez Organization</li> </ul> </li> <li>Franchise arrangement <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Information not found.</li> </ul> </li> <li>HQ and Branch office <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Information not found.</li> </ul> </li> </ol>
<b>M. Evaluations</b>	
a.	Strengths <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The trans-border ability to operate for the Juarez Organization as enforcers, as well as to smuggle illegal drugs and goods is one of the gang’s major strengths.</li> <li>The flexibility that being a prison gang provides to continue operations even when members are incarcerated.</li> </ul>
b.	Weaknesses and vulnerabilities <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The violent behavior of the organization has attracted attention from law enforcement agencies on both sides of the border, and this is slowing down the gang’s operations.</li> </ul>
c.	Additional insights <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The alliance with the Juarez organization has proven to be strong although signs of the weakening of the Juarez organization have emerged. Despite this, if the supply of illegal drugs contracts decline this gang might be inclined to engage in riskier activities</li> </ul>

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to increase profits. The gang has already displayed a capacity for recklessness by murdering a United States Consulate official.

#### Other Notes

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<sup>1</sup> Office of Public Affairs, “35 Members and Associates of Barrio Azteca Gang Charged with Racketeering and Other Offenses, Including 10 Charged in U.S. Consulate Murders in Juarez, Mexico”, Department of Justice, March 9<sup>th</sup>, 2011, <http://www.justice.gov/opa/pr/2011/March/11-ag-299.html>

<sup>2</sup> EFE, “Mexican Police Arrest Suspected Leader of Los Aztecas Gang in Ciudad Juarez”, (Internet Version-WWW in Spanish), November 29<sup>th</sup>, 2010, OSC: FEA20101130011977

<sup>3</sup> Office of Public Affairs, “35 Members and Associates of Barrio Azteca Gang Charged with Racketeering and Other Offenses, Including 10 Charged in U.S. Consulate Murders in Juarez, Mexico”, Op Cit.

<sup>4</sup> National Drug Intelligence Center, “National Gang Threat Assessment 2009”, <http://www.justice.gov/criminal/gangunit/gangs/2009threatassess.pdf>

<sup>5</sup> FBI Ten Most Wanted Fugitives “Eduardo Ravelo”, <http://www.fbi.gov/wanted/topten/eduardo-ravelo>

<sup>6</sup> “35 Members and Associates of Barrio Azteca Gang Charged with Racketeering and Other Offenses, Including 10 Charged in U.S. Consulate Murders in Juarez, Mexico”, Op. Cit.

<sup>7</sup> “U.S. Agents Round Up Texas Gang Members, March 18, 2010, <http://www.cbsnews.com/stories/2010/03/18/national/main6311485.shtml>

<sup>8</sup> Barrio Azteca Prison Gang, [http://www.gangsor.us.com/barrio\\_azteca\\_prison\\_gang.htm](http://www.gangsor.us.com/barrio_azteca_prison_gang.htm)

<sup>9</sup> Ibid.

<sup>10</sup> Logan, Samuel, Street Gangs for Hire January 14, 2010, <http://www.thecrimereport.org/archive/street-gangs-for-hire/>

<sup>11</sup> Barrio Azteca Prison Gang, Op. Cit.

<sup>12</sup> “National Gang Threat assessment 2009”, Op. Cit.