

Organization Attributes Sheet: Former Kaibiles

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A. When the organization was formed + brief history

- Kaibiles, Guatemala's special trained forces. Defectors working with Los Zetas (Origin: Kaibil Balam was a "Mam indigenous leader who evaded capture by the Spanish conquistadores under Pedro de Alvarado.")¹
- In December 1974, the Commando School (Escuela de Comandos) was created by Guatemala's military government.² Several months later the school was renamed to the Kaibil Center for Training and Special Operations Centro de Adiestramiento y Operaciones Especiales Kaibil). The Kaibiles are Guatemala's specially trained military branch to fight guerilla's and follow a specific creed, "If I go forward, follow me. If I stop, urge me on. If I turn back, kill me."³ According to the Commission for Historical Clarification (CEH), Kaibiles training includes "killing animals and then eating them raw and drinking their blood in order to demonstrate courage."⁴
- Headquarters is located in the Military Zone 23, in Poptún, Petén. The para military group is known for jungle and counter insurgency tactics. Los Zetas used to provide security for the Gulf DTO; now former Kaibiles help to provide security for Los Zetas. Zetas recruit Kaibiles through radio ads in Petén offering "employment guarding vehicles 'transporting merchandise to Mexico.'"⁵ La Gente Nueva is another name for the Kaibiles by Los Zetas.⁶
- Technically, the name of the official military organization has been changed as a result of the reconciliation after the civil war, and the Kaibiles are now referred to as Special Forces Brigade. In 2005, the Brigade participated in UN peacekeeping operations in the Democratic Republic of Congo.⁷ Defecting Kaibiles or Special Forces have become mercenaries in Iraq.⁸

B. Types of illegal activities engaged in,

a. *General and specific detail: types of illicit trafficking and activities engaged in*

- Enforcers for hire for organized crime groups, drug trafficking rings, and human trafficking networks.⁹
- Activities are: drug trafficking,¹⁰ assassins for hire,¹¹ and smuggling guns.¹²

b. *Specific detail: types of illicit trafficking activities engaged in*

- Information not found.

C. Scope and Size

a. Estimated size of network and membership

- Estimates of 40 Kaibiles working for the Zetas in 2006.¹³ It is difficult to establish the number of Kaibiles or Special Forces Brigade who will defect to join the Zetas or other DTOs. In general, Kaibiles defect in small numbers.¹⁴

b. Countries / regions group is known to have operated in. (i.e. the group's operating area)

- Poptún, Petén Guatemala and Mexico
- The latter cartel is considered the main criminal group in Guatemala. Its forces include former Kaibil (elite) Guatemalan troops, who have managed to establish criminal contact points in Quintana Roo and Campeche

D. Leader Characteristics

a. Who is/are the leader(s)

Information derived from several sources and searchable databases.

All research conducted according to the project manual.

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> There have been different military leaders for the trained forces but that does not extend to those working for the Zetas or DTOs. The DTO leaders or sub-leaders will command the Kaibiles.
b.	Leadership timeline <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Unknown
c.	Leadership style (autocratic, diffuse, etc.) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> It is a military trained group. Defected Kaibiles working together are autocratic and centralized.¹⁵
E. Organizational Structure	
a.	Topology (cellular, hierarchical, etc.) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> See above Leadership Characteristics.
b.	Membership – is there formal or informal membership in the organization or network?
c.	What role do informal or nonmembers play in trafficking and other criminal activities? <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Formal membership is through the Guatemalan military where men are selected for training. Former Kaibiles train Mexicans, Guatemalans and Israelis. Those who attend the training camps learn sophisticated tactical methods and refine skills to kill. According to STRATFOR, “the cartel enforcers are transforming ordinary street thugs into highly-trained cartel tactical teams.”¹⁶
d.	Command and Control (decentralized or centralized) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> See above Leadership Characteristics.
F. Resources	
a.	Financial <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Paid by DTOs and Los Zetas Mexican assassins are believed to be more expensive than former Kaibiles.¹⁷ Kaibiles become mercenaries and work for security companies in Iraq. Kaibiles train Mexicans for highly tactical combat in Los Zetas camps in Northern Mexico. Reportedly, Israeli mercenaries have also visited these camps to provide tactical training.¹⁸
b.	Human <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Information not found.
c.	Logistical <ol style="list-style-type: none"> Forgery, safe-houses, etc. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> There are Zetas training camps in Guatemala and Mexico in which former Kaibiles are participants. Mercenary training is in Honduras.¹⁹ Key routes <ul style="list-style-type: none"> There are at least 43 unmarked routes in Petén.²⁰ According to <i>Mexico City Excelsior</i>, the Kaibiles have been able to “establish criminal contact points in Quintana Roo and Campeche.”²¹
d.	Transportation <ol style="list-style-type: none"> Land <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Information not found. Sea

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<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Information not found.
iii. Air
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Information not found.
iv. Intermodal container
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Information not found.
G. Trafficking Methods and Modalities
a. Corruption
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Information not found.
b. Concealment
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Information not found.
c. Deception
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Information not found.
d. Circumvention (avoiding border entry points)
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Information not found.
H. Prior / Existing Relationships
a. Other criminal organizations (cooperative and conflictual)
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Zetas,²² Gulf DTO, Mexican drug lord Otto Herrera.²³
b. Corrupt politicians, law enforcement, political parties and other state entities, etc.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Information not found.
c. <i>Specific detail: Any alliances / past dealings with terrorist groups.</i>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • None known
I. Ideological / Ethnic / Familial Orientation (if any)
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Military bonding
J. Technical Sophistication
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • High in relation to weapons
K. Penchant for Innovation
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Brazen violence, beheadings, highly sophisticated combat training and counterinsurgency
L. Activities in United States
a. Includes both criminal and non-criminal activities
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Information not found.
b. <i>Specific detail: trafficking activities ; logistical activities</i>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Information not found.
c. Linkages with US groups
i. Market/transaction links
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Information not found.
ii. Stable supplier
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Information not found.
iii. Franchise arrangement
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Information not found.
iv. HQ and Branch office
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Information not found.
M. Evaluations
a. Strengths

Information derived from several sources and searchable databases.
All research conducted according to the project manual.

- Counterinsurgency, jungle warfare, violent tactics, knowledge of Guatemala’s terrain especially in Petén.
- Kaibiles have to serve for two years after which they are free to join security companies or work for illicit networks.²⁴

b. Weaknesses and vulnerabilities

- It is impossible to say whether former Kaibiles operate together as a large unit or separately under regional DTO leaders.

c. Additional insights

- Kaibiles are trained to kill. They make better wages working for DTOs and anyone who will hire them for illegal activities. Former Kaibiles are mercenaries that have worked in Iraq and in peacekeeping missions for the UN in DRC.
- Since former Kaibiles are for hire they might be willing to collaborate with terrorists depending on compensation and the job.
- The Zetas’ major strength was violence which was used to take over trafficking activities in several areas of Mexico. Former Kaibiles are highly trained in violence and with more defectors coupled with the shift in Guatemalan drug trafficking, Kaibiles could follow the same path as the Zetas.

Other Notes

- The combination of brazen violence, working for Los Zetas, interactions with Israelis as well as working in Iraq and Africa has the potential to encourage former Kaibiles to seek, or be recruited for, more sophisticated and lucrative assignments.

¹ Department of Homeland Security, “Guatemala,” *U.S. Citizens Immigration Services*, 2000.

<http://www.uscis.gov/portal/site/uscis/menuitem.5af9bb95919f35e66f614176543f6d1a/?vgnnextoid=6cd5361cfb98d010VgnVCM10000048f3d6a1RCRD&vgnnextchannel=d2d1e89390b5d010VgnVCM10000048f3d6a1RCRD>

² Ibid.

³ Ibid.

⁴ Commission for Historical Clarification, "Conclusions," *Guatemala: Memory of Silence* Guatemala: CEH, February 1999. <http://hrdata.aas.org/ceh/report/english/conc1.html>

⁵ “Highlights: Northern Central America Press,” 23 April 2008, OSC: LAP20080423026003.

⁶ Burton, Fred and Stewart, Scott, “Mexican Cartels and the Fallout From Phoenix,” *STRATFOR*, July 2, 2008.

⁷ “Guatemala: Ex-Counterinsurgency 'Kaibiles' Become 'Mercenaries,' Drug Runners,” *Prensa Libre*, October 21, 2007, OSC: LAP20071023026002.

⁸ Ibid.

⁹ Ibid.

¹⁰ Ibid.

¹¹ United States v. Jorge Sosa, Indictment. ED-CR10-00049, (C.D. Cal. 2009).

http://www.pe.com/multimedia/pdf/2011/20110124_warcrimes_sosa.pdf

¹² “Kaibiles: The New Lethal Force in the Mexican Drug Wars,” *STRATFOR*, May 25, 2006.

[http://www.stratfor.com/memberships/46355/kaibiles_new_lethal_force_mexican_drug_wars?ip_auth_redirect=](http://www.stratfor.com/memberships/46355/kaibiles_new_lethal_force_mexican_drug_wars?ip_auth_redirect=1)

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¹³ Ibid.

¹⁴ Ibid.

¹⁵ Burton, Fred and Stewart, Scott, “Mexican Cartels and the Fallout From Phoenix,” *STRATFOR*, July 2, 2008.

¹⁶ Ibid.

Information derived from several sources and searchable databases.

All research conducted according to the project manual.

¹⁷ “Guatemalan Ex-Military Working for Mexican Drug Cartels,” *Prensa Libre (Internet Version-WWW)*, December 04, 2007, FEA20071206442149.

¹⁸ Ibid.

¹⁹ “Guatemala: Ex-Counterinsurgency 'Kaibiles' Become 'Mercenaries,' Drug Runners,” *Prensa Libre*, October 21, 2007, OSC: LAP20071023026002.

²⁰ Concogua, Benildo and Cereser, Leonardo, “Guatemala: Police Identify Routes Used by Drug Cartels,” *Prensa Libre* 02 May 2008.

²¹ “Operations of 'Gulf/Zetas' Cartel,” *Mexico City Excelsior*, September 09, 2008, OSC: LAP20080909016002.

²² “Guatemala: Ex-Counterinsurgency 'Kaibiles' Become 'Mercenaries,' Drug Runners,” *Prensa Libre*, October 21, 2007, OSC: LAP20071023026002.

²³ “Highlights: Northern Central America Press,” *Prensa Libre*, August 28, 2006, OSC: LAP20060828026001.

²⁴ “Guatemala: Ex-Counterinsurgency 'Kaibiles' Become 'Mercenaries,' Drug Runners,” *Prensa Libre*, October 21, 2007, OSC: LAP20071023026002.