

Organization attributes Sheet: Sinaloa Organization aka Sinaloa Federation

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A. When the organization was formed + brief history
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• When Felix Gallardo (AKA: “El Padrino” or the Godfather) in the late 1980s divided trafficking routes among the members of his organization, Joaquin Guzman Loera (AKA: “El Chapo”) and Ismael Zambada Garcia (AKA: “El Mayo”) were assigned the Pacific routes, with Sinaloa State being the main operations center.¹• “Chapo” Guzman has been the most notorious leader of the organization and his ambition to control other trafficking routes in Mexico has led to confrontations with most other major drug trafficking organizations in the country.• Joaquin Guzman was arrested in 1993 but escaped from prison in 2001 and has subsequently been included on the Forbes list of the wealthiest men in the world.²• Currently the Sinaloa Organization is considered one of the strongest drug trafficking organizations in Mexico because of its political connections at all levels of the government, its continuous efforts to expand, and its linkages to criminal organizations in other countries.
B. Types of illegal activities engaged in,
a. In general
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Drug trafficking
b. <i>Specific detail: types of illicit trafficking activities engaged in</i>
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Cocaine smuggling from Colombia and Peru, through Central America and Mexico into the United States and Europe.• Marijuana smuggling from Mexico into the United States.• Methamphetamine production (using pseudoephedrine from India and China) and smuggling into United States.• Heroin production in Mexico and smuggling into United States.• Retail illegal drug selling in Mexico.
C. Scope and Size
a. Estimated size of network and membership
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• No good estimates of membership, although it is believed to be in the thousands
b. Countries / regions group is known to have operated in. (i.e. the group’s operating area)
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• North Pacific Mexico (Sinaloa, Sonora, Chihuahua and Durango), Central (Guatemala, Costa Rica, Honduras) and South America, (Colombia and Peru), United States and Europe.• Guzman Loera has established Turkish and Indian contacts to purchase pseudoephedrine and through the Turkish contacts, his organization is reportedly buying Afghan heroin to sell in US, Canadian and European markets.³
D. Leader Characteristics
a. Who is/are the leader(s)
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Joaquin Guzman Loera (AKA: “El Chapo”)• Ismael Zambada Garcia (AKA: “El Mayo”)• Juan Jose Esparragoza (AKA: “El Azul”)• Ignacio Coronel Villareal (AKA: “Nacho Coronel”) (deceased August 1st, 2010).⁴
b. Leadership timeline

Information derived from several sources and searchable databases.

All research conducted according to the project manual.

- From the beginning “Chapo” and “El Mayo” have been the leaders of this organization. During the time Guzman Loera was in prison Zambada continued running the organization. Once Guzman escaped, they continued to direct the organization jointly.

c. Leadership style (autocratic, diffuse, etc.)

- Diffuse and shared among the three, each with specific roles.
 - Guzman Loera’s ambition has opened new markets and zones of influence mostly through violent means.
 - Zambada’s approach is more *classic* since he relies on violence only when absolutely necessary. His approach has restrained Guzman Loera’s style of doing business. Zambada is reputed to be the businessman behind the organization because he seems to have a good understanding of the forces that drive the illegal drug market.
 - Esparragoza’s role is as a *consigliere* and mediator with other organizations.
 - Coronel Villarreal’s function was also as a mediator with other organizations and as a counter balance to Guzman Loera’s violent approach to business.

E. Organizational Structure

a. Topology (cellular, hierarchical, etc.)

- Cellular. There is evidence that most cells rarely have direct contact with the leaders and receive orders from lieutenants. This has made Sinaloa a harder and more elusive target for the Mexican authorities.⁵

b. 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?

- Informal. Based on ad hoc alliances and contracts.⁶

c. Command and Control (decentralized or centralized)

- Decentralized but with direction coming from the leaders.

F. Resources

a. Financial

- According to Forbes, Guzman Loera’s personal wealth exceeds one billion dollars and he apparently prefers to keep most of it in cash, as revealed by the \$26.2 million seizure made by the Mexican military in 2008 in a house in Sinaloa.⁷
- Zambada Garcia is more inclined to launder his financial resources through front companies based in Sinaloa, Sonora and Nayarit.⁸

b. Human

- The Organization has relied for enforcement on other groups such as Los Pelones, Los Artistas Asesinos, Mexicles, and at some point, the Beltran Leyva brothers and their organization.⁹

c. Logistical

i. Forgery, safe-houses, etc.

- Guzman Loera has expanded operations throughout Mexico, using safe houses around the country.

ii. Key routes

- From Peru and Colombia, to Central America (Guatemala and Honduras) and from there to the ports of Lazaro Cardenas (Michoacan), Manzanillo (Colima) and Mazatlan (Sinaloa).¹⁰

Information derived from several sources and searchable databases.

All research conducted according to the project manual.

d.	Transportation
i.	Land
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Rail cars • Oil tankers • Tunnels (Sonora and Arizona Border)
ii.	Sea
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Speed boats • Fishing vessels • Semisubmersibles
iii.	Air
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Small aircrafts (Cessnas)
iv.	Intermodal container
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Some
G. Trafficking Methods and Modalities	
a.	Corruption
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • This organization has relied heavily on corrupting high level official in state and federal agencies to facilitate its activities and even act against other organizations. As an example, when working for Sinaloa, the Beltran Leyva brothers managed to compromise high-ranking officers from the Office of the General Attorney and the Federal Police.¹¹
b.	Concealment
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Significant amount of illegal drugs have been found hidden in special compartments of trailer trucks, cars and rail cars.
c.	Deception
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Loads of illegal drugs have been found mixed in with other products such as vegetables, canned food, cooking oil, etc.
d.	Circumvention (avoiding border entry points)
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • In the early 1990s the first tunnel going under the Sonora – Arizona border was built by this organization to smuggle drugs. Since then several other have been discovered by United States authorities in the area.¹² • More recently the organization began dispersing the means of transportation using cargo aircrafts, semisubmersible vessels, container ships, speed boats, buses, rail cars, tractor trailers and automobiles.¹³
H. Prior / Existing Relationships	
a.	Other criminal organizations (cooperative and conflictual)
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Beltran Leyva Brothers used to be part of this organization, but after Alfredo Beltran Leyva was arrested in 2008 (allegedly because Guzman Loera facilitated the arrest of one of his brothers) this organization separated from Sinaloa and began operating against it.
b.	Corrupt politicians, law enforcement , political parties and other state entities, etc.
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Corruption has been an asset for this group. When Guzman Loera was in prison he acquired all sorts of benefits by corrupting official with money sent by Zambada (and eventually this helped him escape). Once out, although law enforcement agencies have been close to re-arresting him, he has always managed to escape.
c.	<i>Specific detail: Any alliances / past dealings with terrorist groups.</i>

Information derived from several sources and searchable databases.

All research conducted according to the project manual.

- The Sinaloa Organization along with the Juarez Organization, and the Beltran Leyva Brothers created an alliance called *La Federacion* (the Federation) to take over the Gulf and the Arellano Felix routes. This agreement broke down in 2008 when Guzman Loera gave away to the Federal Police the position of Alfredo Beltran Leyva and started to move on to the Juarez cartel trafficking zones.¹⁴
- Currently the Sinaloa organization has formed an ad hoc alliance with La Familia and the Gulf Organization to fight the Zetas and to use some of their smuggling routes. This new alliance has been called "The New Federation."¹⁵
- So far there is been no indication of dealings with terrorist groups.

I. Ideological / Ethnic / Familial Orientation (if any)

- Information not found.

J. Technical Sophistication

- Relies primarily on Humint from a sympathetic population.

K. Penchant for Innovation

- The tunnels are the main example of innovation.

L. Activities in United States

a. Includes both criminal and non-criminal activities

- Drug trafficking

b. *Specific detail: trafficking activities ; logistical activities*

- Cocaine, Marijuana, Heroin, Methamphetamine

c. Linkages with US groups

i. Market/transaction links

- 18th Street
- Black Guerrilla Family
- Bloods
- Florencia 13
- Gangsters Disciples
- Hells Angels
- Latin Kings
- Mara Salvatrucha
- Mexican Mafia
- Nortenos
- Surenos¹⁶

ii. Stable supplier

- Cocaine: Colombian and Peruvian Organizations including Sendero in the VRAE
- Marijuana: Mexican producers
- Methamphetamine: produced with Indian and Asian pseudoephedrine
- Heroin: Mexican producers and is said to have Turkish connection to get Afghan product.

iii. Franchise arrangement

- Information not found.

iv. HQ and Branch office

- California (Oakland, San Francisco, Los Angeles, Riverside, Calexico, San Diego, Otay Mesa and San Ysidro), Oregon (Portland, Eugene, Klamath Falls), Arizona (Yuma, Phoenix, Glendale, Peoria, Tucson, Sasabe, Sierra, Nogales, Naco and Douglas),

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New Mexico (Deming, Columbus and Las Cruces), Texas (El Paso, Ft. Hancock, Fabens, Laerdo, Roma, Rio Grande City, Brownsville, San Antonio, Houston Beaumont, Midway, Tyler, Ft. Worth and Dallas), Oklahoma (Oklahoma City and Tulsa), Colorado (Denver and Colorado Springs), Louisiana (New Orleans and Shreveport), Mississippi (Jackson and Hattiesburg), Georgia (Atlanta), Florida (Tampa, Orlando and Miami), Arkansas (Little Rock, Missouri (St. Louis), Iowa (Des Moines), Illinois (Chicago and Joilet), Tennessee (Nashville and Memphis), Indiana (Ft. Wayne and Indianapolis), Michigan (Detroit), Kentucky (Lexinton), North Carolina (Raleigh and Charlotte), Virginia (Galax and Arlington), Ohio (Toledo, Columbus, Cleveland, Cincinnati, Akron and Dayton), Maryland (Baltimore), Washington D.C, Pennsylvania (Pittsburgh and Philadelphia), New Jersey (Newark and Atlantic City), Rhode Island (Providence) and Massachusetts (Boston).¹⁷

M. Evaluations

a. Strengths

- The organization's balanced leadership arrangement has been beneficial to its expansion because Guzman Loera's ambition to obtain control of other routes and plazas has been contained by Zambada's and Esparragoza's more entrepreneurial approach to the business.
- El Chapo has a legendary status in Sinaloa and Durango, where he and his organization are deeply embedded in the society and the economy.

b. Weaknesses and vulnerabilities

- Guzman's ambition to expand the organization's power and control over more territories could prove counterproductive, although it might also lead him to engage in more risky behavior or to explore other smuggling activities.

c. Additional insights

- The Sinaloa organization's traditional business view of the illegal drug trade (use of violence only when necessary and low key operations to avoid attracting attention of law enforcement) might restrain it from engaging in other type of smuggling activities or cooperating with organizations whose interests differ from drug trafficking.

Other Notes

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¹ Beith, Malcom, *The Last Narco: inside the hunt for el Chapo, the world's most wanted drug lord*, (New York: Gove Press, 2010) 105

² Worlds' Billionaires, Forbes, March 2011, <http://www.forbes.com/profile/joaquin-guzman-loera>

³ Gomora, Doris, "Expert Asserts Mexican Cartels Import Drugs From Afghanistan", El Universal, (Internet Version- WWW in Spanish), January 4 2011, OSC: <V-LAP20110106443002001.docx>

⁴ Beith, *op cit*, p. 57 and "Operation in Which 'Nacho' Coronel Died, Recounted", *Milenio*, (Internet Version- WWW in Spanish), August 3, 2010, OSC: <V-LAP20110106443002001.docx>

⁵ Borderland Beat Reporter, "El Tomate reveals Sinaloa Cartel's Method of Operation", Borderland Beat, January 12th, 2011, <http://www.borderlandbeat.com/2011/01/el-tomate-reveals-sinaloa-cartels.html>

⁶ Beith, *op cit*. p. 15

⁷ *Ibid*, 6th image.

⁸ Press Release, "Treasury Identifies Financial Network of Ismael Zambada Garcia" Drug Enforcement Administration, May 17, 2007, <http://www.justice.gov/dea/pubs/pressrel/pr051707.html>

⁹ Beith, *op cit*, p. 112.

Information derived from several sources and searchable databases.

All research conducted according to the project manual.

¹⁰“Mexico's Sinaloa Cartel Reportedly Exporting Cocaine Through Port of Paita”, (Internet Version- WWW in Spanish), Jan 16, 2011, OSC: [V-LAP20110118053001001.rtf](#) and “Honduras: Local Drug Gangs Help Authorities Track Sinaloa Cartel”, (Internet Version- WWW in Spanish), April 10, 2010, OSC: [V-LAP20080411026003001.doc](#)

¹¹ Beith, *op cit*, p.109

¹² *Ibid*, p. 70

¹³ *Ibid*, p. 146

¹⁴ *Ibid*, p 140

¹⁵ Stewart, Scot, “Meinaloxico: The Struggle for Balance”., Stratfor, April 8, 2010, http://www.stratfor.com/weekly/20100407_mexico_struggle_balance

¹⁶ “National Drug Threat Assessment”, *National Drug Intelligence Center*, February 2010, pp. 64-65, <http://www.justice.gov/ndic/pubs38/38661/index.htm>

¹⁷ National Drug Intelligence Center, Situation Report: Cities in which Mexican DTOs operate within the United States, Department of Justice, April 11th, 2008