





Deadly force and denial: the military's legacy in Mexico's 'war on drugs'

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ABSTRACT

This article explores the military's use of deadly force in contemporary Mexico. Annually, roughly 50,000 soldiers patrol the streets in the context of the 'war on drugs', which began in 2006 and continues to this day. How many people have the military killed, detained, or injured during 'police operations'? The information about what the military do has been concealed for years. Recently, after years of secrecy, the military made these facts public. We analysed this information from two angles. First, we assessed how trustworthy the facts are. Second, we used four indicators to investigate the data. The figures the military provide in any document rarely match those provided in another. This means two things: essential information about the military's performance is missing or being manipulated; and thus the military are not really being held accountable for their deeds in the 'war on drugs'. We also found the following: for each year, the military kill many more alleged aggressors than they injure; in most years, the military kill more or about the same number of people as they detain; the military often abuse when they use deadly force. Our findings give some hints about the possible commission of extrajudicial executions.

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