Mapping Criminal Organizations in Guanajuato
Criminal Organization Histories

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Description

This document includes information for all criminal organizations (COs) present in Guanajuato from January 2000 to December 2021. For each CO, background information is provided about their (i) leaders in Guanajuato, (ii) emergence in Guanajuato, (iii) exit from Guanajuato, (iv) primary illicit activities in Guanajuato, and (v) relations with other COs in Guanajuato. This information is aimed at describing the history of each CO *in Guanajuato*. In other words, the information is largely restricted to the CO's history within the state of Guanajuato, though some other details are provided when appropriate.

Cartel de Sinaloa/Cartel del Pacifico (CDS)

Leaders

According to some accounts, Juan Jose Esparragoza Moreno "El Azul" oversaw operations in Guanajuato, primarily Leon, for CDS before 2007 (neither Mayo nor Chapo had any presence in the state), and the Beltran Leyva brothers, still under CDS, operated in San Miguel de Allende.

Another version that does not necessarily contradict the first is that Ignacio Coronel Villarreal "Nacho" was the CDS leader that had operations in Leon on behalf of CDS and the Beltran Leyva brothers, still under CDS, operated in San Miguel de Allende.

Emergence

CDS had presence and operations in the state of Guanajuato for decades until 2007. In Leon, various leaders and their families lived in the city since the 1980s. In San Miguel de Allende CDS would launder money and leaders would take luxurious vacations.

The versions claiming that Nacho was in charge of operations in Leon place the Mata Zetas, a military unit created in 2007 that answered to Nacho in Leon during this time. There is evidence that the Mata Zetas were in Leon in 2009 and 2010.

From 2010 to August 2020, CDS did not have presence in the state of Guanajuato outside of supplying certain local delinquency groups with drugs. However, almost immediately after the arrest of El Marro, leader of CSRL, in August 2020, CDS sent members of their armed forces to various municipalities in the state to fight CJNG.

Exit

The accounts that claim that El Azul was in charge of CDS operations in the state allege that in 2006 La Familia Michoacana met and negotiated with El Azul and agreed to exchange Guanajuato for territories in other states.

Reports seem to agree that when the Beltran Leyva brothers broke with the CDS in January 2008, CDS lost its operations in San Miguel de Allende.

The versions that report on Nacho Coronel claim that following the death of Nacho in July 2010, the cell of the Mata Zetas that operated in Leon decided not to join CJNG and instead became independent, though closely allied with CDS. These accounts note that this cell of Mata Zetas was killed off in 2011 - 2012 when CJNG entered Leon.

Primary Activities

According to various accounts, the operational "presence" of CDS in Guanajuato was only to sell drugs in Leon, Irapuato, Celaya, and Salamanca. However, CDS did not sell directly to local consumers or operate in the state, their presence was limited to distributing wholesale drugs to local criminal groups who then acted as local dealers. This is why CDS never had local bosses (jefes de plaza) or tried to infiltrate local police or politics in Guanajuato.

Relations

It is reported that CDS have always had close relations with Los Pelones, a local group operating in Irapuato and Salamanca, and provide them with drugs.

While CSRL sought an alliance with CDS over the years to fight CJNG in Guanajuato, various reports claim that Mayo, one of the leaders of CDS, did not agree to this alliance. Following the arrest of El Marro, leader of CSRL, in August 2020, CDS sent soldiers to Guanajuato to fight CJNG. Some reports claim that they are fighting CJNG in the state without alliances with other groups fighting CJNG in the state, though on two separate occasions (one in late 2020 and one in early 2021), CSRL leaders have claimed to be in alliance with CDS in the state. It is unclear which version is accurate.

Beltran Leyva Organization/Cartel del Pacifico Sur (BLO)

Leaders

BLO was run by the Beltran Leyva brothers. Around 2010, the last remaining brother, Hector Beltran Leyva, took control and renamed the organization "Cartel del Pacifico Sur" (CPS).

Emergence

BLO was a network of traffickers led by the Beltran Leyva brothers that worked under the Sinaloa Cartel until 2008 when they broke with the Sinaloa Cartel and became independent.

Reports place BLO in the municipality of San Miguel de Allende before 2000, when they were still part of the Sinaloa Cartel. They started operating in San Miguel de Allende independently starting in 2008 when they separated from the Sinaloa Cartel.

Exit

Hector Beltran Leyva was arrested in October 2014 in San Miguel, and the BLO-CPS organization ceased to exist. Remnants of the BLO-CPS did not operate in Guanajuato.

Primary Activities

Their operations in San Miguel were limited to money laundering and investment in the tourism sector.

Relations

Unknown.

Mata Zetas/Los Antrax (MZ)

Leaders

Unknown.

Emergence

Versions reporting that Nacho Coronel had operations in Leon under CDS claim that following the death of Nacho in July 2010, the cell of the Mata Zetas that operated in Leon decided not to join CJNG and instead became independent, though closely allied with CDS. There is no information about the name they took following their independence in 2010.

Exit

Accounts note that this cell of Mata Zetas was killed off following CJNG entrance into Leon.

However, various more recent reports on the composition of Union de Leon note that a group called "Los Antrax", who are a local drug dealing cell, are remnants of an enforcement group that operated for Nacho and now members of CUL. They also report that Los Antrax are closely allied with CDS and get their drug shipments from CDS. The overlap in background information between the Mata Zeta cell and Los Antrax, both remnants of an enforcement group that worked for Nacho, both dedicated to drug dealing, both closely allied with CDS, and both buying their drug shipments from CDS, hint that this may be the same CO.

This group should not be mistaken for a CDS enforcement group called Los Antrax.

In this specific case, I therefore consider this CO as independent from July 2010 to 2013 and starting in 2014 I consider it as a member of CUL.

Primary Activities

Drug dealing.

Relations

This cell remained allied with CDS once it became independent.

Los Pelones (Pelones)

Leaders

Los Pelones are allegedly headed by Javier Ramirez Morales "El Pelon".

Emergence

Los Pelones are a local delinquency group that operates in the municipalities of Salamanca and Irapuato. This group should not be confused with other criminal organizations with the same name, for example, a group called Los Pelones that operated in Guerrero and another that operates in Quintana Roo.

It is unclear when it was formed but reports from 2019 claim that it has operated in Guanajuato for at least ten years.

Some reports refer to Los Pelones as a cell of the Sinaloa Cartel, while others claim it is a local group that works closely with the Sinaloa Cartel. Some reports allege that the core members of Los Pelones are originally from Sinaloa, and all reports agree that the Sinaloa Cartel supplies them with drugs that they then sell locally. The close collaboration with the Sinaloa Cartel and its main members being from Sinaloa seem to be the reason why they often get referred to as part of the Sinaloa Cartel. However, most local reports point to them being an independent local group that simply has close business ties with the Sinaloa Cartel. Considering the reports about the Sinaloa Cartel in Guanajuato, this seems to be the most plausible version.

Exit

N.A.

Primary Activities

Los Pelones are headed by Javier Ramirez Morales "El Pelon" and specialize in drug dealing and oil theft.

Relations

There are no reports about Los Pelones being at war or in alliance with other groups in Guanajuato. However, given their close ties with the Sinaloa Cartel, it is likely that they are antagonistic toward CJNG and neutral with CSRL.

Cartel La Union de Leon, La Union Leon, Gente de Leon (CUL)

Leaders

CUL was allegedly founded by Agustin Alvarez "El Guty", leader of the delinquency group called "Los Alvarez". El Guty was killed in 2016. Union de Leon is now allegedly headed by Juan Gonzalo Serrano Paredes aka "Gonzalo", "Mario", or "Rata" and Fernando Galvan Ramirez aka "Fernando" "Tio Fernando" or "Cuca".

Emergence

CUL is a confederation or union of local delinquency groups that all operated in the city of Leon. Union de Leon was reportedly formed in 2014 as a response to CJNG incursion into the city of Leon, which started in 2011, though a few reports claim that Union de Leon was created as early as 2011.

CJNG allegedly offered local criminal groups in Leon an acquisition when it entered the municipality, but when many refused, CJNG began killing them. In response, various of these local groups, each who operate in different parts and neighborhoods of Leon and who partake in different illicit activities, came together and formed Union de Leon. Union de Leon is not one hierarchical group, but rather a confederation of separate groups working together to fight CJNG. Each group operates independently but band together when necessary.

Union de Leon is composed of at least ten different groups, including remnant cells of La Familia Michoacana/Caballeros Templarios and Zetas. Groups identified include:

1. **Los Alvarez**, from Michoacan, in Leon for almost a decade, was led by Agustin Alvarez "El Guty", assassinated in May 2016 at Olive Garden in Plaza Mayor

2. **Los Antrax**, not related to CDS' Los Antrax, it's local drug dealing group (some reports allege that this was a group of Nacho Coronel that distributed drugs in Leon, after death of Nacho became independent, though still gets its drugs from CDS)
3. **Los Cabras**, Zetas remnant cell
4. **Los Colombianos**, a group of Colombian nationals that specialize in theft and extortion
5. **Los Vieja Guardia** (AIM), old school group dedicated to theft, assaults, and drug dealing
6. **Los Marros**, dedicated to oil theft
7. **Los Leches**, a group of younger individuals dedicated to selling drugs at bars and clubs
8. **El Bufalo**, specialize in stealing from cargo trucks and selling products to local vendors
9. **El Zamarripa**, specialize in credit card theft, cloning cards at ATMs

Exit

N.A.

Primary Activities

Various, see list above.

Relations

Since its inception, Union de Leon has been in conflict with CJNG over control of the municipality of Leon. Due to the deep social ties of the various groups in their communities, local knowledge, and their alleged strong connections with local police forces, Union de Leon has been able to successfully fight CJNG despite having fewer resources. Through public messages, Union de Leon has made it clear that they are not rivals with CSRL or CNP. Some experts have reported that Union de Leon and other groups that are fighting CJNG in the state (CSRL, CNP, and Los Durango) have met and have either agreed to be neutral or even negotiated alliances, though these reports note that these are loose alliances where each group operates separately and fights CJNG independently while not attacking each other.

Cartel Los Durango, Los Durango (CLD)

Leaders

According to various reports, Ines "N" founded the group around 2006 and was killed in 2018. Jose Angel "El Durango" was also a leader, though arrested in late 2018. Some report that the parents of Ines were from Durango, hence the name of the group. The group is allegedly headed by Antonio Javier Perez Garcia and brothers Erick, Raul and Noe Ayon Aviles (Noe was captured in January 2018).

Emergence

CLD are a local delinquency group that operates in the city of Leon. According to various reports, Ines "N" founded the group around 2006.

Exit

The group was believed to be disbanded following series of arrests in late 2018, though arrests, seizures and videos in 2020 made it clear that they were operating in Leon and continued to do so throughout 2021. It is unclear whether they were dismantled and did not exist as a coherent group in 2019 or

whether they were not dismantled and continued operating under the radar of law enforcement until 2020.

Primary Activities

CLD specialize in local drug dealing, armed robbery, and vehicle theft.

Relations

Los Durango are always reported to have close links with the Sinaloa Cartel, as well as with Cartel Union de Leon. It is unclear whether Los Durangos are part of the Union de Leon, allies, or neutral, though it is clear that they are not rivals. It is also not clear whether Los Durango have negotiated an alliance with CSRL or are neutral, but they are clearly not rivals. Los Durango are enemies of CJNG.

Cartel Jalisco Nueva Generacion (CJNG)

Leaders

CJNG is led by Nemesio Oseguera Cervantes “El Mencho”.

Emergence

When Mencho still worked for CDS/Milenio under Nacho Coronel for a cell known as “Mata-Zetas”, this cell had intermittent presence in some Guanajuato municipalities bordering Jalisco in 2009 and 2010. This presence, as far as I can tell, was not permanent and was only transient to commit attacks, dump bodies. I suspect this is why some reports place Cartel del Milenio in Guanajuato during some years, even after 2010 when this groups dissolved. In July 2010, Nacho Coronel was killed and Mencho formed CJNG. Some reports characterize CJNG independent since this time, while others characterize CJNG as having operated semi-independently under CDS until 2012 when CDS tried to kill Mencho and CJNG became fully independent.

CJNG announced its presence in Leon in February 2011, and the Attorney General of Guanajuato immediately confirmed their presence in Leon. During 2011-2015 CJNG began making intrusions into Leon, Penjamo, Purisima del Rincon, and San Francisco del Rincon. These efforts began to grow in intensity starting in 2013-2014, but CJNG found it difficult to penetrate Guanajuato given Zeta and CT efforts to repel them. Also, around 2014 local delinquency groups in Leon banded together as Cartel Union de Leon specifically to fight growing presence of CJNG in Leon.

In the first three months of 2015, both the Zetas and the CT cartels fragmented and were severely weakened, with many CT cells in Guanajuato retreating back to Michoacan. This gave CJNG the opportunity to expand beyond Leon, Penjamo and los pueblos del Rincon. Between 2015-2017 CJNG began expanding to Romita, Silao, Irapuato, Manuel Doblado, Abasolo, Guanajuato, and even Salamanca.

Exit

N.A.

Primary Activities

Oil theft and drug dealing, especially methamphetamine.

Relations

From its entrance into Leon in 2011, CJNG has been at war with local groups in Leon. In 2014 these groups banded together to form Cartel Union de Leon (CUL). CJNG has been at war in Leon against CUL since 2014 and against CLD since it entered Leon.

From 2014 to early 2017, CJNG and CSRL had been neutral, with occasional clashes, but nothing major. However, in early 2017 El Marro, leader of CSRL, allegedly killed the nephew of El Mencho when Mencho tried to negotiate with Marro—Mencho wanted to absorb CSRL into his ranks. Then in October 2017, Marro publicly declared war against CJNG, who was making headway into CSRL territories. Since 2017 an all-out war over the "triangulo de huachicol" (name for the municipalities with oil pipelines in Central Guanajuato) has taken place, with various municipalities being contested, including Silao, Irapuato, Salamanca, Celaya, los Apaseos, Moroleon, Uriangato, Salvatierra, Coroneo, Jerecuaro, Yuriria, etc. CJNG found it tough to make headway but was gaining strength.

In 2019 federal and state government began Operacion Golpe de Timon against CSRL, and in August 2020 arrested El Marro, leader of CSRL. This severely weakened CSRL, and about a third of the organization defected to CJNG. From then to the end of 2021, CJNG has made further inroads into Guanajuato, taking control of municipalities like Salamanca, Irapuato, Valle de Santiago, and Silao.

However, soon after the arrest of El Marro, CDS, which had been hesitant to support Marro, began sending cells to Guanajuato to stop CJNG from taking over the state.

At the same time, in 2019 Carteles Unidos in Michoacan began financing CSRL fight against Mencho and FEGS also began helping CSRL. CU and FEGS entered Guanajuato with CSRL help in 2019 to fight CJNG, though by the end of 2020 both had been eliminated from the state by CJNG. This has made it difficult for CJNG to take over rest of Guanajuato, though through 2021 it gained strength even in previous CSRL strongholds like Celaya and los Apaseos.

In 2020 CNP, a rival of CJNG, entered the state of Guanajuato and began operating in Leon. CNP allied itself with CUL to fight CJNG in Leon. In 2020 it also began fighting Cartel del 00 in Leon, which is a group formed by CJNG defectors. Both CNP and Cartel del 00 seem to have left Leon and the state by late 2021.

Cartel Nueva Plaza, La Nueva Plaza (CNP)

Leaders

Enrique Sanchez Martinez "El Cholo" (killed March 2021) and Erick Valencia Salazar "El 85".

Emergence

CNP was founded by Carlos Enrique Sanchez Martinez "El Cholo" who was a high-ranking member of CJNG. The split began in March 2017 and by August 2017 they were clearly enemies. CNP operates out of Guadalajara and the Sinaloa Cartel seems to be supporting them against CJNG. The other leader of CNP is and Erick Valencia Salazar "El 85" who was also a former high-ranking member of CJNG and its alleged co-founder (along with El Mencho). El 85 was arrested in 2012, presumably betrayed by El Mencho, and was released from prison in December 2017, when he joined El Cholo and CNP.

By mid-2020 the presence of CNP in Leon was confirmed.

Exit

In March 2021 El Cholo was captured and killed by CJNG. After the death of El Cholo there are practically no mentions of CNP in Leon or Guanajuato.

Primary Activities

Unknown.

Relations

CNP allied itself with CUL in Leon to fight CJNG.

Cartel del 00 (C00)

Leaders

Cartel del 00 is led by Manuel Reyna Hernandez “El 00” or “La Loca”.

Emergence

“El 00” was the local boss (jefe de plaza) for CJNG in the municipality of Leon. In mid-2000 he defected along with his structure and network and joined CNP. In a public message signed by El 00, he admits fighting with El Cholo against CJNG.

According to reports, following the death of El Cholo, leader of CNP, in March 2021, El 00 declared his group independent and allied himself with Cartel Union de Leon.

Exit

Following a bloody war with CJNG, in October 2021 El 00 left public messages declaring that he had left Leon and the state of Guanajuato and conceded the territory to CJNG.

Primary Activities

Unknown.

Relations

In mid-2000 he defected from CJNG along with his structure and network and joined CNP. In March 2021, El 00 declared his group independent and allied himself with Cartel Union de Leon.

Since its inception it was in direct conflict with CJNG.

Cartel Santa Rosa de Lima, Cartel de Guanajuato, Cartel del Marro (CSRL)

Leaders

CSRL was allegedly founded by David Rogel Figueroa “El Güero” in 2014. It is unclear when Jose Antonio Yepez Ortiz “El Marro”, right hand man to El Güero, became leader of CSRL, but by 2017 El Marro was the leader. In August 2020, El Marro was apprehended by government authorities.

Following the arrest of El Marro, authorities reported that Adan Ochoa “El Azul” or “El Pez Gordo” became the leader of CSRL. However, some reports claim that CSRL broke into two factions, that of El

Azul and the other of someone called “M1”, as both wanted control of CSRL. El Azul was arrested just two months after El Marro on October 14, 2020. Following the arrest of El Azul, reports claim “M1” became leader.

Another version is that CSRL leaders met and agreed not to have a single leader, and state authorities claimed that “M1” was not one person, but a pseudonym used by various CSRL leaders.

In October 2021, individuals identified as Carlos “M1” and Fernando Emmanuel “El Panther” were both arrested and state authorities claimed that both had been leaders of CSRL following the arrest of El Marro. It is unclear whether they were both leaders, whether they shared leadership, or whether they were leaders of different CSRL factions. It is unclear who became leader after the arrest of El Panther and M1, though the governor of Guanajuato stated in November 2021 that CSRL was nearly disarticulated.

Emergence

CSRL was founded in 2014 by Zeta members in Guanajuato who declared themselves independent as the larger Zetas organization was in decline. It was allegedly founded by David Rogel Figueroa “El Güero” who was identified as a Zeta member from the state of Chiapas. Its center of operation centered in the Laja-Bajio region (Villagran, Cortazar, Juventino Rosas, Celaya, Comonfort, Apaseo el Grande, Apaseo el Alto, Salvatierra) and in Salamanca. From 2014-2017 the group operated more low-key, grew in capacity, and expanded territories of operation to municipalities like Irapuato and Silao, and southern municipalities close to Michoacan, as well as some municipalities in the northeast of the state.

In 2019 state and federal government began Operacion Golpe de Timon, an operation specifically targeting CSRL, which weakened the organization and culminated in arrest of El Marro. In August 2020, El Marro was apprehended, and reportedly about a third of CSRL members defected to CJNG, significantly weakening CSRL. The defections plus CJNG efforts meant CSRL lost control of important municipalities like Salamanca, Valle de Santiago, and some municipalities in the north and south of the state.

As of December 2021, CSRL is very weakened, but remains strong in Laja-Bajio region, though CJNG seems to now be contesting previously uncontested municipalities like Celaya, Cortazar and Juventino Rosas, and intensifying attacks in other critical municipalities to CSRL like los Apaseos.

Exit

N.A.

Primary Activities

CSRL was formed by a group of Zetas specializing in oil theft (huachicol), but also partook in extortion and theft, including cargo truck theft, freight train theft, vehicle theft, among others. At some point CSRL began heavy drug dealing activities in its territories, especially that of methamphetamine. In 2019 when the Mexican government closed oil pipelines for some time, CSRL reportedly turned to extortion more heavily. Today, CSRL’s main activities are oil theft, though not to the same extent as before 2019, extortion, and drug dealing.

Relations

From 2014 to early 2017, CJNG and CSRL had been neutral, with occasional clashes, but nothing major. However, in early 2017 Marro allegedly killed the nephew of El Mencho when Mencho tried to negotiate with Marro—Mencho wanted to absorb CSRL into his ranks.

In October 2017 Marro publicly declared war against CJNG and El Mencho, who was making inroads into CSRL territories in central Guanajuato, though the conflict seemed to have begun in January 2017. From 2017 to August 2020 there was intense conflict, with CJNG making headway and CSRL losing power in important municipalities like Leon, Silao, and Irapuato, and other CSRL strongholds being strongly contested by CJNG, such as Celaya, Salamanca, los Apaseos, Salvatierra, Valle de Santiago, Moroleon, Uriangato, and other southern municipalities.

The arrest of El Marro severely weakened CSRL, and CJNG began making major inroads into CSRL territories, even some of their strongholds like Celaya and Los Apaseos.

In 2019, CSRL established alliances with Carteles Unidos and FEGS to fight against CJNG. With the help of CSRL, both CU and FEGS entered Guanajuato in 2019, but were expelled by CJNG by the end of 2020. CU kept supporting CSRL with equipment and soldiers after they were expelled from the state.

In their fight against CJNG, CSRL also negotiated with Union de Leon, CNP, and Los Durango. It is unclear whether the negotiations led to an alliance, but it was at least an agreement of neutrality, where they would not fight each other and would all fight CJNG.

Days after arrest of El Marro in August 2020, CDS, which had been hesitant to support Marro, began sending soldiers to some municipalities in Guanajuato to fight CJNG. Some reports claim that CDS is fighting CJNG without an alliance with CSRL, though on two separate instances (one in late 2020 and one in early 2021), CSRL leaders have claimed that they are in alliance with CDS in Guanajuato. It is unclear which version is accurate.

La Familia Michoacana, La Familia (LFM)

Leaders

LFM leaders operated from Michoacan and only operated in Guanajuato through mid-level members.

Emergence

LFM started making intermittent operations into the southern municipalities of Guanajuato in early 2008 through small cells, and actually started establishing operations in the state around mid to late 2008. In 2009 they started expanding through the south and central parts of Guanajuato, which they mostly held through 2010 and early 2011.

LFM allegedly first wanted to control Guanajuato to have it as a buffer to prevent Zetas from reaching the state of Michoacan, LFM stronghold, but once they were in the state they began drug dealing, extorting, and kidnapping.

In 2009, a group called “La Familia Guanajuatense” (LFG) appeared in Guanajuato. Between October 2009 and February 2010 LFG left various narcomessages in Guanajuato. There was initial uncertainty about whether this was a new criminal organization or a rebranding of a LFM cell in Guanajuato.

Following some arrests, it was clarified that LFG were LFM members working for La Tuta (a main LFM leader) that were using the name LFG, perhaps as a way to establish a brand specific to Guanajuato. After February 2010 mentions of LFG basically disappeared. No mentions of the group past 2011. We consider it part of LFM, not an independent group.

Exit

In January 2011, most LFM leaders renamed themselves CT and broke with Jose de Jesus Mendez Vargas "El Chango", who continued to use the name of LFM. El Chango was then arrested in June 2011. This greatly weakened LFM and its cells in Guanajuato, which started retreating back to Michoacan. CT cells quickly took over most LFM operations in Guanajuato. It appears that LFM maintained some weak presence in the south of Guanajuato during 2012 and 2013. By 2015 there is basically no evidence that they were in the state anymore.

Primary Activities

Drug dealing, extortion, and kidnapping.

Relations

LFM were at war with Zetas before either entered Guanajuato, and this war extended to Guanajuato when both groups expanded to this state. With Zetas also expanding to Guanajuato, the cells of both groups were fighting in various municipalities of the state.

When CT broke with LFM, LFM cells began fighting CT in the state as well.

Los Caballeros Templarios, Los Templarios (CT, LCT)

Leaders

CT leaders operated from Michoacan and only operated in Guanajuato through mid-level members.

Emergence

CT emerged from La Familia Michoacana (LFM) in January 2011 when most LFM leaders and members defected and renamed themselves CT. CT quickly overtook LFM and its operations, including in Guanajuato. Most LFM cells in Guanajuato became CT.

CT seems to quickly become most powerful group in Guanajuato and is one of the reasons CJNG had trouble cementing itself in Leon when they entered in 2011 and why CJNG found it hard to extend beyond municipalities bordering Jalisco before 2015.

Starting around 2019 to December 2021, remnants of CT, along with other groups from Michoacan, have been attempting to re-establish their presence in municipalities on the border with Michoacan like Penjamo in partnership with CSRL. Particularly, to fight CJNG.

Exit

In mid to late 2013, the self-defense (autodefensas) movement began in the CT's home state of Michoacan to combat CT. In 2014, the autodefensa movement grew exponentially in Michoacan and CT were weakened considerably. This also weakened their cells and operations in Guanajuato. In addition,

in March 2014 Nazario Moreno Gonzalez “El Chayo” and Enrique Plancarte “Kike”, two of the main CT leaders, were killed and the federal government began targeting Servando Gomez Martinez “La Tuta”, the last remaining CT leader. In February 2015, La Tuta was arrested and CT fragmented.

It appears that CT cells in Guanajuato mostly retreated back to Michoacan at this time. Evidence suggests that some CT cells remained in Guanajuato through 2016, apparently surviving from oil theft, but they seem to be all but dissolved by 2017, with some small remnant maybe still in Apaseo el Alto.

Primary Activities

Very soon after CT emerged, oil theft by CT in Guanajuato begins to be mentioned. CT was also involved in extortion and drug dealing.

Relations

CT and LFM cells in Guanajuato fought from 2011 until LFM cells ceased operating in the state. CT cells in Guanajuato fought Zetas cells in Guanajuato starting in 2011 until both no longer operated in the state. A notable exception is in Leon, where CT cells and Zetas cells joined CUL in 2014. CT also fought CSRL from its emergence in 2011.

In November 2020 a CSRL leader stated that they had negotiated an alliance with CT where CT stayed in Michoacan and prevented CJNG from entering Guanajuato from Michoacan and CSRL prevented CJNG from entering Michoacan from Guanajuato.

Carteles Unidos (CU)

Leaders

CU leaders operate from Michoacan.

Emergence

CU is the name of a confederation of criminal organizations from the state of Michoacan that was created in Michoacan to fight against CJNG, which is on a mission to take over that state. Member groups allegedly include, but are not limited to, Los Viagras, CT remnants, LFM, and Cartel de Tepalcatepec. Reports point to CU forming an alliance with CSRL in Guanajuato starting in 2019, as they both had a common enemy. With the help of CSRL, CU entered Guanajuato in 2019 to fight CJNG in Silao.

Starting in 2020, CU began trying to make incursions into southern Guanajuato through some of the small and rural municipalities that border Michoacan, but CJNG has, for the most part, been able to repel these efforts.

Exit

By the end of 2019 CU had been expelled by CJNG.

Primary Activities

Unknown.

Relations

Reports point to CU forming an alliance with CSRL in Guanajuato starting in 2019, as they both had a common enemy. Since 2019, CU has been reportedly supplying equipment, soldiers and money to CSRL.

Los Zetas (Zetas)

Leaders

Zetas leaders operated from northeastern Mexico and only operated in Guanajuato through mid and low-level members.

Emergence

The Zetas started expanding to Guanajuato in mid to late 2008 through small cells and quickly took over local drug dealing and extortion in various municipalities, especially those on the border with San Luis Potosi.

In late 2009, Zetas separate from CDG and became an independent criminal organization.

Exit

By 2012, Zetas presence in Guanajuato seems to greatly diminish, weaken, and become more localized as CT gains power. In their strongholds in the northeaster parts of Mexico, the Zetas were increasingly losing power as the government pursued them during the early 2010s. The two main leaders of the Zetas were killed/arrested in 2012 and 2013. Heriberto Lazcano Lazcano “El Lazca” or “El Verdugo” or “El Z-3”, leader of the Zetas, was killed in October 2012; Miguel Treviño Morales “Z-40”, leader of the Zetas, was arrested in July 2013. These arrests in their strongholds weakened Zeta cells in Guanajuato.

Omar Treviño Morales “Z-42”, the last leader of the Zetas, was arrested March 4, 2015, resulting in the fragmentation of the group. That is, the Zetas as some sort of coherent group broke up and remnant cells of Zetas (still called themselves Zetas despite the group not existing anymore) continued operating in Guanajuato in some municipalities like Irapuato, Salamanca, Leon, Celaya and some of the municipalities on the border with San Luis Potosi. In 2020 it is very clear that no Zetas remained in Guanajuato besides a cell that is part of Cartel Union de Leon.

Primary Activities

The Zetas were the first to exploit oil theft in Guanajuato. In 2011 oil theft in Guanajuato begins to increase dramatically and was primarily driven by Zetas. After the fragmentation of the Zetas in 2015, it seems as though some Zeta cells were able to remain in operation due to the oil theft market. The Zetas also partook in extortion and drug dealing.

Relations

The war that LFM and Zetas waged against each other in other states extended to Guanajuato with the incursion of both groups into the state in 2008. In March 2011, CT appears and also fights against Zetas and LFM cells in Guanajuato. CJNG entered Guanajuato in 2011 and started fighting everyone.

In 2014, one of the Zeta cells in Guanajuato decides to become independent, a group later known as CSRL. CSRL began to fight other Zetas in the state upon its formation.

Cartel del Golfo (CDG)

Leaders

N.A.

Emergence

The Zetas, still part of the Gulf Cartel (CDG), started expanding to Guanajuato in mid to late 2008 and quickly took over local drug dealing and extortion in various municipalities, especially those on the border with San Luis Potosi. There is no evidence that CDG ever had any direct presence in Guanajuato other than through the Zetas in 2008 and 2009 while they were still part of CDG. However, by 2008 various sources point to the Zetas as acting semi-autonomously or as even partners with CDG leaders.

Exit

In December 2009, Zetas broke with CDG and became independent. This means that CDG, who only had presence in Guanajuato through the Zetas, ceased having presence in the state.

Primary Activities

Extortion and drug dealing.

Relations

At war with LFM.

El Grupo Sombra, Fuerzas Especiales de Grupo Sombra (FEGS)

Leaders

Antonio Cervantes Hernandez "El Tony" was a presumed leader of FEGS and operated in Guanajuato in 2019 until his death in August of that year. It is unclear who took charge of FEGS operations in Guanajuato following the death of El Tony.

Emergence

FEGS is a remnant criminal group stemming from the Gulf Cartel. Reportedly, it was created in early 2017 in the state of Veracruz by deserters of the Gulf Cartel. It appears that CJNG fighting CSRL and FEGS in Guanajuato and Veracruz, respectively, led CSRL and FEGS to negotiate an alliance. It is clear that by May 2019 FEGS had moved into various municipalities in Guanajuato with the help of CSRL to fight together against CJNG.

Exit

In August of 2019, Antonio Cervantes Hernandez "El Tony", presumed leader of FEGS, was captured by CJNG. In a video made public by his kidnappers, El Tony confessed to working with CSRL. El Tony's body was then hanged in public in the municipality of Villagran, CSRL's stronghold. This, in addition to other CJNG efforts, severely weakened FEGS in the state of Guanajuato, and FEGS was effectively expelled from the state by CJNG by late 2020.

Primary Activities

Oil theft and extortion.

Relations

At some point in 2018 or early 2019, CSRL and FEGS met and negotiated an alliance. It is clear that by May 2019 FEGS had moved into various municipalities in Guanajuato with the help of CSRL to fight together against CJNG in Guanajuato.