95 Pounds of Sinaloa Cartel Meth Seized at Tijuana Airport

Robert Arce Breitbart, 14 Jan 2019

Mexican Federal Police assigned to drug interdiction at Tijuana's Abelardo L. Rodríguez International Airport seized nearly 95 pounds of methamphetamine in the baggage claim area Sunday.

Mexican Federal Police, along with elements of the army, contacted an unidentified male passenger arriving on a commercial flight from Culiacán, Sinaloa, according to local <u>reporting</u>. The passenger drew the attention of authorities after his purported three checked bags displayed irregularities in an x-ray machine. A secondary inspection was then ordered. Federal authorities discovered 42 kilos, 800 grams (94.35 pounds) of methamphetamine concealed within nine packages made to appear as if they contained large blocks of Mexican-style cheese.

The suspect, whose name has yet to be released, was handed over to the custody of investigators for the federal prosecutor's office for formal charging.

According to Breitbart law enforcement sources, the methamphetamine is believed to belong to the Sinaloa Cartel. The use of a parcel service or airline passengers traveling on commercial flights is a popular method for cartels when transporting illicit drugs to the Tijuana International Airport. Bribing inspectors is common for getting product past drug interdiction personnel.

The border cities of Tijuana and Ciudad Juarez are currently engulfed in bloody turf wars fueled by the street-level sales of high-grade yet affordable methamphetamine produced in Mexico. Some of the methamphetamine is sold by gangs loosely affiliated with the major drug cartels. Larger loads are smuggled across the U.S. border for distribution and consumption. Heroin is moved the same way.

Tijuana <u>registered</u> homicides in 2,508 in 2018 while Ciudad <u>Juarez</u> notched 1,247. Authorities in both cities acknowledge that turf wars are primarily to blame for the alarming rates of killings.

Robert Arce is a retired Phoenix Police detective with extensive experience working Mexican organized crime and street gangs. Arce has worked in the Balkans, Iraq, Haiti, and recently completed a three-year assignment in Monterrey, Mexico, working out of the Consulate for the United States Department of State, International Narcotics and Law Enforcement Program, where he was the Regional Program Manager for Northeast Mexico (Coahuila, Tamaulipas, Nuevo Leon, Durango, San Luis Potosi, Zacatecas.) You can follow him on Twitter. He can be reached at robertrarce@gmail.com