

Armed robbers in Mexico steal \$2.5 million in gold coins

By Reuters, August 6, 2019

MEXICO CITY – Armed robbers broke into a Mexican government coin manufacturer on Tuesday and filled a backpack with more than \$2 million worth of gold coins from a vault that had been left open, security officials said.

The daylight robbery was the latest high-profile crime to hit Mexico City, where crime has increased during record lawlessness plaguing the country.

Two people, one wielding a firearm, broke into a “Casa de Moneda” branch in the morning after throwing a security guard to the ground and taking his gun, Mexico City police said.

One of the robbers then went to the vault, which was open, and filled a backpack with 1,567 gold coins, police said.

The coins, known as “centenarios,” have a face value of 50 pesos, but trade for 31,500 pesos (\$1,610) apiece, according to Mexican bank Banorte. That makes the total value of the haul at least \$2.5 million.

The coin was first minted in 1921 to commemorate the 100th anniversary of Mexico’s independence from Spain, according to the central bank. Production was suspended in 1931, but the coin was re-minted beginning in 1943 due to demand for gold coins.

One side bears Mexico’s coat of arms, with an eagle perched atop a cactus, and the other features the capital’s iconic Angel of Independence monument backed by the majestic Iztaccihuatl and Popocatepetl volcanoes. The coins, 37 mm (1.46 inches) in diameter, have a gold fineness of 0.900, or 90% purity.

The same Casa de Moneda branch was also broken into last year while the building was being renovated, according to Mexican media.

Mexico is suffering from record murder levels that have made the capital, long regarded as a relatively safe haven, increasingly prone to violent crime.

Last month two Israeli men were gunned down inside a high-end Mexico City shopping mall, and in a separate incident, Mexican boxing legend Julio Cesar Chavez said he was mugged at gunpoint.