

## Crime gang extortion closes bars in San Miguel de Allende

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### Five cantinas in the historic center preferred shutting down to complying with extortion demands



*Cantinas* in San Miguel de Allende, Guanajuato, are closing down because of extortion by crime gangs.

Bar owners who spoke to the newspaper *El Universal* on the condition of anonymity say that suitcases filled with marijuana and cocaine were left in their premises three weeks ago, accompanied by notes saying they had between 22 days and a month to sell the drugs.

The owners preferred to throw the drugs away and close their bars before the deadline. At least five located in the historic center of San Miguel have closed down because of the threats, leaving at least 80 people without jobs.

The owners also said they did not report the extortion to the authorities because of fear of retaliation similar to that which took place earlier this month in the nearby city of Celaya. On August 5, after Celaya business owners staged a demonstration to protest extortion, [businesses were attacked](#) and four people were killed.

Violence has been on the rise in San Miguel de Allende, a city that was chosen by *Travel & Leisure* magazine as the top travel destination in the western hemisphere in 2019.

The NGO Semáforo Delictivo registered 49 homicides in the municipality in the first six months of the year, compared to 15 in the same period last year. And according to federal statistics, high-impact crimes like residential burglary have gone up 36%.

According to the organization More Security in San Miguel de Allende, there have been 72 murders in the city this year, and the rise in crime is related to the federal government's crackdown on fuel theft in the state.

Source: [Infobae](#) (sp), [El Universal](#) (sp)