

Meet 'El Mencho' the top drug kingpin after fall of 'El Chapo'

Julian Gill, Houston Chronicle
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Photo: U.S. Department Of State

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PHOTOS: Most wanted Latin American drug lords

Nemesio Ruben Oseguera-Cervantes, aka "El Mencho," has surpassed El Chapo as the most wanted drug kingpin among Mexican and U.S. authorities.

Birth place: Mexico

Drug affiliation: Leader of the Jalisco New Generation Cartel



>>> *Police are offering multi-million rewards for the arrest of these Latin American drug lords*

The 2016 arrest of El Chapo, one of the world's most notorious drug kingpins, left the door open for a new power struggle among Mexican drug cartels.

Since then, the Jalisco New Generation Cartel has emerged as one of the fiercest groups cutting into El Chapo's drug-market share, according to the [Associated Press](#).

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The Drug Enforcement Administration said in a [2017 drug threat assessment](#) that the Jalisco cartel splintered from El Chapo's Sinaloa cartel around 2010. Now, U.S. and Mexican authorities are targeting the group's leader and founder Nemesio Ruben Oseguera-Cervantes, aka "El Mencho," who has reportedly grown his cartel from a regional drug-trafficking threat to an international crime power.

U.S. Drug Enforcement Administration officials unveiled some additional strategies in combating Mexican drug cartels Wednesday in Chicago alongside members of the Mexican government, military and federal police, who said one priority was to capture t

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"Through extreme violence, corruption, and extortion, [Jalisco New Generation Cartel] has increased its presence in Mexico, engaging in turf battles throughout the country and steadily expanding their territory and control," according to a press release from the U.S. Department of State.

The State Department is offering a reward of up to \$5 million for information that leads to the arrest of Oseguera-Cervantes, on top of a \$1.6 million reward from Mexican authorities.

According to [an extensive article in Rolling Stone](#), Oseguera-Cervantes, 52, was born into a family of poor avocado farmers in Mexico and eventually dropped out of school in the fifth grade. He moved to California in the 80s and began smuggling drugs into the U.S. under several aliases.

In the mid-90s, an investigation involving a wiretap revealed his role in a heroin deal that landed Oseguera-Cervantes a five-year prison sentence in West Texas. He was released on parole after three years, and the U.S. Marshals deported him back to Mexico when he was 30 years old.

His rise to power started after other powerful cartel leaders were arrested or killed. The gap in leadership left him fighting off competition for control of the Jalisco, Nayarit, and Colima drug distribution networks, the state department's press release said.

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The Jalisco cartel's drug operation is centered around methamphetamine, but it also deals wholesale amounts of marijuana, cocaine and heroin. They bring drugs into the United States through various drug trafficking corridors along the southwest border, including the cities of Tijuana, Juarez and Nuevo Laredo, according to the DEA.

The cartel's swift rise has also been stained by bloody battles with Mexican authorities.

In one of the Jalisco cartel's [most notable attacks](#) in 2015, six soldiers were killed after the cartel downed a Mexican military helicopter with the a rocket-propelled grenade. It was the first time a Mexican military aircraft was destroyed by police, the Rolling Stone article said.

That same year, the cartel killed at least 15 police officers while pinning them down with machine gun fire and grenade launchers.

Oseguera-Cervantes has been charged in a federal indictment in the District of Columbia with drug trafficking, corruption and murder. His wife, Rosalinda Gonzalez

Valencia, was arrested earlier this year in Mexico on charges of organized crime and money laundering after she was accused of managing the cartel's finances.

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