

Mexico president-elect says will look at legalizing some drugs

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MEXICO CITY (Reuters) - Mexico's President-elect Andres Manuel Lopez Obrador said on Sunday that he would consider legalizing certain drugs as part of a broader strategy to fight poverty and crime.

Mexico's President-elect Andres Manuel Lopez Obrador delivers speech in a rally as part of a tour to thank supporters for his victory in the July 1 election, in Morelia, Mexico, October 6, 2018. REUTERS/Alan Ortega

Speaking in the state of Zacatecas, Lopez Obrador said that a recent proposal from the country's defense minister, who backed legalization of opium for medicinal use, was important and that he would not rule out anything.

"It's important what he proposed," Lopez Obrador said. "There should be a comprehensive approach to the terrible problem of insecurity and violence."

Lopez Obrador, who takes office on Dec. 1, said on Sunday that he would also look at paying farmers more for their corn as a way to dissuade them from planting poppy seeds.

Since 2006, Mexico has been mired in a military-led battle against drug gangs, which have now splintered into smaller groups that fight for trafficking routes and territory to sell drugs. Homicides hit a record in 2017, data from statistics body INEGI shows.

The president-elect has held town-hall reviews on violence and discuss potential "amnesty" for non-violent drug traffickers and farmers. Members of his team have previously said Mexico would evaluate creating legal markets for marijuana as well as opium.

Reporting by Mexico City Newsroom; Editing by Marguerita Choy