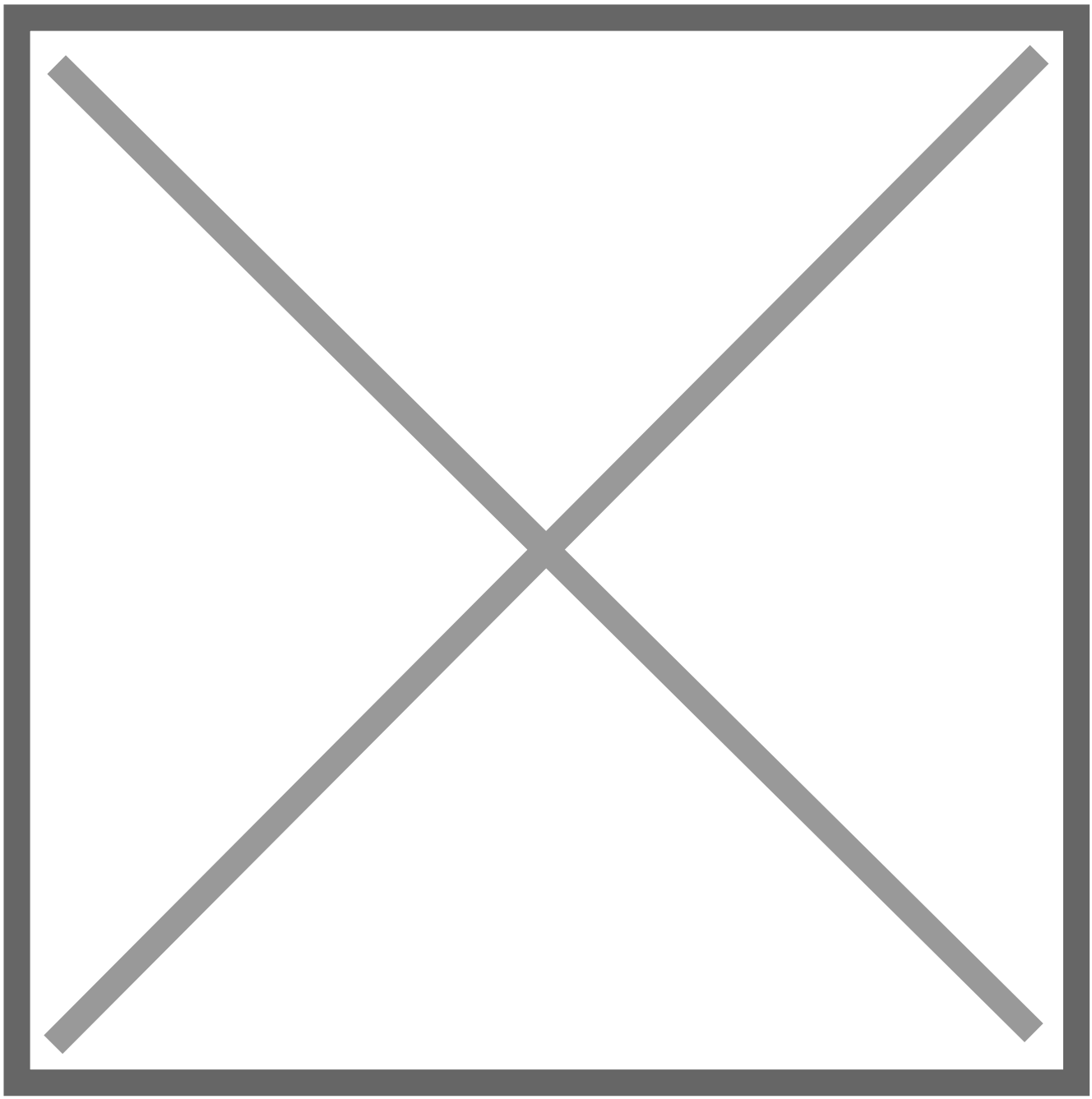
News



Members of the National Guard walk past people while on patrol in Acapulco, Mexico, Feb. 22, 2026, after authorities reinforced security following roadblocks and arson attacks carried out by organized crime in several states in the aftermath of a military operation in which a Mexican drug lord Nemesio Oseguera, known as "El Mencho," was killed in Tapalpa in Mexico's Jalisco state. (OSV News/Reuters/Henry Romeroin)

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Mexico City — February 23, 2026
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Mexican bishops called on the faithful to follow safety protocols as violence broke out in several states following the military's killing of a powerful cartel boss.

In a message published by the Mexican bishops' conference Feb. 22, the bishops expressed their closeness with Catholics, "sharing your concern and inviting you to prudence and prayer."

"We exhort you, with a pastoral and fraternal spirit, to strengthen personal and community security measures, take shelter in your homes when necessary, and avoid unnecessary travel, always following the instructions of the civil authorities," the statement read.

The message, which was addressed to "The Pilgrim People of God in Mexico," was signed by Bishop Ramón Castro Castro of Cuernavaca and Auxiliary Bishop Héctor Pérez Villareal of Mexico City, the president and secretary general of the bishops' conference, respectively.

Mexican military officers conducted an operation in the town of Tapalpa, located in the central western state of Jalisco Feb. 22, in an attempt to capture Nemesio Rubén Oseguera Cervantes, who was known by his nickname, "El Mencho."

Osegura was the head of the notorious Jalisco New Generation Cartel, known by the Spanish acronym CJNG, Mexico's most powerful drug cartel known for trafficking fentanyl, methamphetamine and cocaine into the United States.

According to The Associated Press, a shootout occurred, resulting in the deaths of four people; three more, including Osegura, were wounded and later died.

Hours after his death, violence broke out in half a dozen states across the country, with gunmen blocking highways and setting cars and businesses on fire. Residents and tourists were forced to shelter in place in the resort town of Puerto Vallarta, after several major airlines canceled flights due to the increasing violence.

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The Reuters news agency also reported that gunmen attacked a National Guard military police base in Jalisco.

Speaking on the condition of anonymity, a cartel member confirmed that the attacks were done out of revenge for Osegura's killing and warned that more attacks would be coming as rival gangs attempt to take control of CJNG.

White House press secretary Karoline Leavitt confirmed via X that the United States "provided intelligence support to the Mexican government in order to assist" with the operation.

In their message, the bishops called on the faithful to "intensify their prayer for the peace that our nation so greatly needs" and prayed that through Jesus, Catholics renew their commitment "to be sowers of reconciliation and fraternity."

Invoking the intercession of Our Lady of Guadalupe, the bishops prayed that Mary would "cover us with her mantle, protect our families, and help us build paths of justice, peace, and hope."

"May the Lord strengthen us and grant us to live through these moments united, with prudence, solidarity, and faith," the bishops wrote.