

# Mexican, Colombian drug traffickers said to seek refuge in Argentina

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## ABSTRACT (ABSTRACT)

Like them, "I estimate there are about fifty or sixty relatives of drug traffickers who came to study in Buenos Aires," believes one man that has written dozens of reports for Interpol on drug trafficking. "When I say I mean the Onassis-type drug traffickers, their fortune exceeds five billion dollars," insists the source. "The rest-he points out - are dealers "thugs," jumpers," who are now flooding Argentina."

The summary of situation is done by someone who knows the DEA inside out, adding that "the policy of the Calderon Government, which has left a trail of dead of close to sixty thousand people, because of drug trafficking, forced to Argentina a stampede of "entrepreneurs" fleeing violence and assembling here their drug "micro-enterprises," he says.

Mariano Borinsky, chief of the Tax Crimes Investigation Unit confirmed to the Colombian magazine "Semana" that "Argentina is being transformed into a clear strategic point for drug trafficking." Spain is not immune to the problem, said an intelligence agent who prefers anonymity. "Between 2003 and 2004, the "Pepes" Gallegos sent his lieutenants to Argentina and they made the connection into Europe." The Colombian drug trafficker, according to the chief of police narcotics from Colombia, Luis Alberto Perez Albaran, "feels safe in Argentina because it is a neutral place, a refuge."

## FULL TEXT

Text of report by Spanish newspaper ABC website, on 17 July

[["Drug Traffickers in Mexico and Colombia Seeking Refuge in Argentina."](#)]

Drug Traffickers in Mexico and Colombia Seeking Refuge in Argentina

To Mary Veronica Colombo, the message came clear, "shut your mouth or you are going to end up like Leo." They had put a gun to her head. She and her daughter heard the threat inside a van. The four men who retained them referred to Leopoldo Vina, one of three shot dead after torture, in what was dubbed the triple murder of ephedrine. The case, only four years ago, opened a narcotics trafficking network where Mexican drug traffickers converged, names like Rodrigo Iturbe Pozas.

The news of violent deaths and settling of accounts which have Colombians and Mexicans involved surged in recent years in Argentina. There is fear that this country becomes a paradise for the extension of the cartels. At the same time, soldiers from the FARC and paramilitary troops from the United Forces manage to process their status as political refugees.

It is the field of drugs that raises the most concern. On the one hand, micro trafficking multiplies and secondly, the great lords of the Cali, Sinaloa, Tijuana and Juarez cartels, sent their children, nephews and friends to study at prestigious universities for a few years.

The son of Pablo Escobar, Juan Pablo, bounced from Germany, took refuge with his wife and his children in Argentina's capital. Up until a couple of years ago he would walk by the pretty Buenos Aires neighbourhood of Recoleta, equivalent to Salamanca in Madrid, like any other resident of the city. He had no bodyguards.

Juan Jose Esparragoza, nicknamed "El Azul", sent his daughter to study a career at one of the most prestigious private schools. She has not yet finished. She continues his studies without anyone, police or mafia, disturbing her.

Like them, "I estimate there are about fifty or sixty relatives of drug traffickers who came to study in Buenos Aires," believes one man that has written dozens of reports for Interpol on drug trafficking. "When I say I mean the Onassis-type drug traffickers, their fortune exceeds five billion dollars," insists the source. "The rest-he points out - are dealers "thugs," jumpers," who are now flooding Argentina."

Last year in the Alto Palermo, one of the most central shopping centres of Buenos Aires, police arrested a tourist who was shopping. The subject turned out to be Luis Agustin Caice Velandia, better known as "Don Lucho", a Colombian drug dealer that moved freely with a Guatemalan passport.

In mid 2010, Angie Sanclemente Valencia, was immortalized in the press as the "narco-model." The former beauty queen of the Colombian National Coffee pageant was arrested at a hotel in Buenos Aires after being a fugitive for months, accused of being part of an organization that transported cocaine. The head of the organization was her lover, Carlos Ademar Cabanas, a Mexican known as the "Monster".

The list of cases is overwhelming. Several different explanations serve to understand why Argentina is now the territory marked for drug crime. "In 2005, the activity of the DEA (Drug Enforcement Administration), left Peru, Bolivia and Colombia devoid of the precursor chemicals needed to produce cocaine. Drug traffickers sought and found in Argentina the perfect place to resume their activities. The country is a producer of petrochemicals, the controls are low and the land radar installation minimal.

The Pampas are filled with clandestine airstrips and kitchens (clandestine laboratories). Production began and continues because, in addition, the penalties are very low if people get caught. If no criminal record exists, the sentences rarely reach three years.

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