

Arizonans sheltering in place after cartel violence erupts in Mexican resort town

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By Casey Torres

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PUERTO VALLARTA, Mexico (AZFamily) — Cities across the Mexican state of Jalisco shut down Sunday after members of the Jalisco New Generation Cartel launched a wave of violence in retaliation for the killing of their leader, leaving American and Canadian tourists sheltering in place.

Videos sent to Arizona's Family by a Scottsdale man vacationing in Puerto Vallarta showed cars engulfed in flames in the middle of streets and plumes of smoke rising from burning buildings.

The violence erupted after Nemesio Ruben Oseguera Cervantes, known as "El Mencho," was killed by the Mexican Army in the state of Jalisco on Sunday.

Jorge Mendoza Yescas, the Consulate General of Mexico in Arizona, called the death a significant development in the fight against cartels.

"Mexico recognized that they acted with their own troops, their own elements, but they obtained, they were given with very important information, intelligence information, by U.S. authorities," Mendoza Yescas said. "So this is a fight and a problem that is being solved by both countries."

Mendoza Yescas also described Oseguera Cervantes as "the most violent criminal in recent history in Mexico, and I think in the rest of the world."

Howard Fleischmann, of Phoenix, was in Puerto Vallarta with his wife celebrating their birthdays in the city where they were married when the violence broke out.

"It's a special place for us. We love Puerto Vallarta. In 40 years we've never felt unsafe but it's not business as usual today. It's a whole lot different," Fleischmann said.

Fleischmann said he woke up to smoke Sunday morning. Businesses and schools across Jalisco shut down, and Mexican officials ordered Americans and Canadians vacationing in the state to shelter in place.

He said he was hunkering down in his condo and was uncertain whether he would be able to fly back to Phoenix on Tuesday as planned.

"If we see the cartel walking down the streets, then I'm going to get worried. Because we are defenseless, just totally defenseless," Fleischmann said.

Airlines canceled flights to and from parts of Mexico. Phoenix Sky Harbor Airport listed several canceled flights to Puerto Vallarta, Mazatlán, and Guadalajara, the state capital of Jalisco.

According to Mendoza Yescas, no civilians have been reported hurt or killed.

Arizona Attorney General Kris Mayes said what's going on in Puerto Vallarta shows how critical the fight against the Mexican drug cartels is, in a post on X.

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