MIRANDA INTELLIGENCE

Foreign Press Chatter

May 15, 2026

The Wall Street Journal published a lengthy report this week on the ongoing intra-cartel war in Sinaloa, retracing the conflict from El Chapo's capture and conviction through the internecine betrayals that have "unfolded like a Shakespearean drama" — leaving over 3,000 dead and 3,600 disappeared since September 2024. The authors quote experts and government sources who say the Mayitos faction is emerging stronger against Los Chapitos, an assessment echoed by both Ioan Grillo in his latest substack CrashOut report and organized crime reporter Keegan Hamilton.

As Sheinbaum continues to resist pressure to hand over Rocha Moya, the news cycle keeps busy. A briefly viral CNN report alleging that the CIA was behind a car bomb that killed a suspected Sinaloa Cartel member and his driver in Mexico City in March (followed up by The New York Times which reported sources as saying the CIA was ‘’not present on the site of the attack and were not advising the Mexicans in person when the operation was carried out’’ but ‘’provided intelligence and planning support’’) drew emphatic rejections from both the Mexican government and the intelligence agency; Sheinbaum described the report as "a fiction the size of the universe." In other crime coverage, Reuters covered the Mother's Day protest in Mexico City led by relatives of the disappeared, and the NYT profiled Cecilia Flores, the country's highest-profile searching mother, following the recent identification of the remains of one of her two missing sons.

Reuters reported on Wednesday that Víctor Rodríguez Padilla's days as Pemex CEO were numbered, with the executive increasingly "sidelined" by the president — and on Thursday the rumors were confirmed: Sheinbaum announced he would be replaced by the company's CFO, Juan Carlos Carpio. An energy consultant quoted in Bloomberg noted that the move does not signal "meaningful changes" at the company, which remains saddled with $79 billion in debt and declining production. Pemex was also a contributing factor in S&P's downgrade of Mexico's credit outlook from stable to negative this week.

In cultural news, AP reported on ulama, the ancient Mesoamerican ballgame that "survived only in the remote pockets of northwestern Mexico before its late 20th-century rebirth." Singer-songwriter Julieta Venegas (born in California, raised in Tijuana) and her new album *Norteña* were profiled by both the NYT and the LA Times. AP also covered 40-year-old goalkeeper Guillermo Ochoa as he prepares for what could be his sixth World Cup, pending the final roster announcement.

This week also proved a useful reminder to treat alarmist X accounts and Substacks on US/Mexico news with suitable skepticism. A post from previously obscure *León Barrena Rodríguez & Partners LLP* (‘’Where legal precision becomes market advantage’’, 14k followers on X) claiming that the U.S. was allegedly investigating a major Mexican financial institution with ‘’sanctions expected’’ briefly

went viral (1.1mn views on X), amplified by broad circulation in business-minded WhatsApp groups, and even caused nervousness in Mexico's financial markets.

Notable blogs in English on Mexico

Ioan Grillo examined in CrashOut how the Mayos have benefited at the expense of the Chapitos following the indictment and ouster of Rocha as Governor of Sinaloa. Earlier he looked at the explosive CIA assassination story, concluding that while it's certainly possible, considering the Trump administration's escalation of the drug war, the story still has a lot of holes. He also raised the possibility that this kind of tactic (whether the allegation is true or not) is a deliberate form of "psychological warfare" against cartel operatives. In Mexico Decoded, Viri Ríos returned to the topic of crime reduction in Mexico, with a focus on the extraordinary 41% decline in homicides over the past 18 months, according to official statistics — she acknowledges the skepticism over government data, but in her analysis finds that even if there were some statistical fudging, it wouldn't negate the broad downward trend in violent crime across most of Mexico's states. The Mexico Political Economist reported on the petrochemical sector and the "lethal embrace" of Pemex, which has not only hollowed out its own petrochemical division over decades, but also failed to supply the raw materials private companies need to operate. And Miranda Intelligence's daily Substack covered key developments in energy, fintech, public affairs and politics in Mexico.

Top stories on Mexico

The Reign of "El Chapo" Is Over but the Bodies Keep Piling Up

13/05/26, WSJ, José de Córdoba and Santiago Pérez

Cartel wars, El Chapo's sons, a mysterious kidnapping and an extraordinary U.S. indictment
10/05/26, LA Times, Keegan Hamilton

U.S. and Mexican Officials Deny C.I.A. Had Lethal Role in Mexico Operation
12/05/26, NYT, Julian E. Barnes and Maria Abi-Habib

Exclusive: CIA escalates secret war on cartels with deadly operations inside Mexico
12/05/26, CNN, Natasha Bertrand, Zachary Cohen, Evan Perez and Mauricio Torres

Cartel corruption claims push US-Mexico relations to breaking point
13/05/26, The Guardian, Oscar Lopez

Her Two Sons Disappeared. Her Search Made Her the Voice of Mexican Mothers.
14/05/26, NYT, James Wagner

MIRANDA INTELLIGENCE

Relatives of Mexico's disappeared hold Mother's Day protest ahead of World Cup
10/05/26, Reuters, Alicia Fernandez and Leila Miller

Sheinbaum Taps Pemex CFO to Run Oil Giant as Debt Woes Persist
14/05/26, Bloomberg, Scott Squires, Kelsey Butler and Maya Averbuch

Mexico Rating Outlook Revised to Negative at S&P as Debts Mount
12/05/26, Bloomberg, Maria Elena Vizcaino and Kelsey Butler

Mexico's Uber Crackdown at Airports to Complicate Plans for World Cup Visitors
15/05/26, Bloomberg, Gonazlo Soto

Mexican Companies Sell $6.1 Billion in Debt Amid EM Bond Boom
12/05/26, Bloomberg, Maria Elena Vizcaino and Kelsey Butler

Mexican parents criticise ending school year a month early for World Cup
09/05/26, BBC, Aleks Phillips

Ulama, a 3,400-year-old ballgame that survived in Mexico
09/05/26, AP, María Verza

A Monument to Chocolate Is Wrapped in Layers of Mexican History
10/05/26, NYT, Lauren Gallow

Julieta Venegas, a Mexican Pop Hitmaker, Is Looking Homeward

14/05/26, NYT, Jon Pareles

Julieta Venegas: La Leyenda de Tijuana
11/05/26, LA Times, Andrew Casillas

Diego Calva on his first Cannes, 'The Night Manager' Season 2 and more
12/05/26, LA Times, Carlos Aguilar

BTS brings K-pop frenzy to Mexico
09/05/26, LA Times, Kate Linthicum

Ochoa's energy is rubbing off on Mexico teammates as goalkeeper eyes a sixth World Cup at 40
13/05/26, AP, Carlos Rodríguez

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Notable blogs in English on Mexico

- Mexico Decoded – Mexico's Decline in Homicides Deserves the World's Attention
- Crashout - With Rocha out, The Mayos Advance and Did CIA Organize A Car Bomb Hit On A Narco?
- The Mexico Political Economist – Mexico's oil obsession is killing its petrochemical sector
- Miranda Intelligence on Substack

Photo of the Week



Collectives and families of the disappeared march on Mother's day asking for support in their fight against impunity in Mexico ahead of the 2026 FIFA World Cup, in Mexico City, Mexico May 10, 2026. REUTERS/Raquel Cunha