



PACIFIC COUNCIL ON  
INTERNATIONAL POLICY

**MEXICO INITIATIVE**

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# **THE U.S.- MEXICO DOUBLE FIX:**

# COMBATING THE FLOW OF GUNS TO TRANSNATIONAL ORGANIZED CRIME

## **SYNOPSIS**

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# INTRODUCTION

There is an urgent need for effective U.S.-Mexico collaboration to combat the diversion of U.S. guns to Mexican transnational criminal organizations (TCOs). The U.S.-Mexico security agreement – the Bicentennial Framework for Security, Public Health, and Safe Communities – has paved the way for increased bilateral cooperation on shared security challenges. This report emphasizes the importance of achieving the framework’s goals by significantly curbing U.S.-to-Mexico gun trafficking, and it offers practical recommendations to foster domestic whole-of-government approaches and robust bilateral alignment, enhance enforcement capabilities, address factors contributing to arms diversion, and encourage wider stakeholder participation. The research, conducted through stakeholder interviews and open-source data analysis, aims to improve U.S.-Mexico security cooperation and safeguard both nations’ well-being.

## WHY BILATERAL SECURITY COOPERATION MATTERS

The U.S. and Mexico are intricately linked and mutually dependent, necessitating collaboration to address shared challenges. The illicit movement of hundreds of thousands of U.S. guns into Mexico every year is a significant bilateral security threat, as it empowers TCOs engaged in criminal activities that majorly impact both countries:

**Drug Trafficking and Abuse:** Through the acquisition of U.S.-origin firearms, TCOs have been able to maintain control over lucrative drug smuggling routes into the U.S., fueling the deadliest drug crisis in the country’s history. In 2021, the number of Americans who lost their lives to drug overdoses hit an all-time high of more than 106,000 [1]. The synthetic opioid fentanyl accounted for much of this scourge. According to the U.S. Drug Enforcement Administration (DEA), the Sinaloa and Jalisco New Generation cartels are the primary traffickers of fentanyl into the U.S. [2].

1. National Institute on Drug Abuse, “[Drug Overdose Death Rates](#)” (9 February 2023).

2. U.S. Drug Enforcement Administration, “[2020 National Drug Threat Assessment](#)” (March 2021).

**Human Rights and Armed Violence:** In Mexico, U.S. guns have undermined legitimate government authority and facilitated human rights violations. Armed violence in Mexico has reached historic levels, with the number of reported murders skyrocketing 75 percent between 2015 and 2022, from about 18,000 to 31,000. Out of the nearly 237,000 murders reported over that 8-year period, nearly 70 percent — 162,000 — were committed with a firearm [3]. Mexico has recorded more than 100,000 forced disappearances [4], and it ranks as one of the most dangerous countries in the world for journalists [5]. Armed violence has also plagued U.S. cities as local crime groups team up with Mexican cartels for a share of the drug profits.

**Irregular Migration:** People have been uprooted from their homes across Mexico because of the violence engendered by the illicit flow of U.S. guns to Mexican cartels and rogue security forces. A total of 36,682 people in Mexico reported leaving their towns in 2021 because of suffering or witnessing acts of violence against themselves, relatives, or members of their community. That marks a nearly five-fold increase from 2020, when there were 7,486 cases of displacement [6]. According to U.S. Customs and Border Protection (CBP), migrant encounters at the Southwest Border surged 143 percent between fiscal years 2019 and 2022, from about 977,500 to a record of more than 2.37 million [7].

**Linked Economies:** The instability fueled by the trafficking of guns from the U.S. to Mexico poses a significant threat to both nations' economies, which are intricately linked. The two countries share a 2,000-mile border with 47 active ports of entry and approximately one million crossings each day [8]. In 2023, Mexico became the U.S.'s top trading partner [9]. An estimated 1.6 million Americans live in Mexico, and more Americans travel to Mexico than any other nationality, supporting a tourism industry that contributes significantly to Mexico's economy [10].

3. Calculations based on statistics from Mexico's Secretariado Ejecutivo del Sistema Nacional de Seguridad Pública (SESNSP).

4. UN News, "[Mexico: Given the more than 100,000 disappeared, the UN urges the government to combat impunity](#)" (17 May 2022).

5. Reporters Without Borders, "[2022 Round-up: Journalists detained, killed, held hostage and missing](#)" (accessed 15 June 2023), pg. 13.

6. Julian Resendiz, "[Number of Mexicans displaced by violence grows nearly five-fold in 2021](#)," Border Report (11 May 2022).

7. U.S. Customs and Border Protection, "[Southwest Land Border Encounters](#)" (17 May 2023).

8. U.S. Department of State, "[U.S. Relations with Mexico](#)" (16 September 2022).

9. David J. Lynch, "[U.S. companies are buying less from China as relations remain tense](#)," The Washington Post (6 August 2023). Also see Christopher Wilson, "[Growing Together: How Trade with Mexico Impacts Employment in the United States](#)," The Wilson Center (November 2016).

10. U.S. Department of State, "[U.S. Relations with Mexico](#)" (16 September 2022). Also see Carmen Colosi and Caroline Hammer, "[What the Matamoros Kidnapping Says About the State of Cartel Violence in Mexico](#)," Worldview (21 March 2023).

# FROM MÉRIDA TO THE BICENTENNIAL: A HISTORICAL PRIMER

The history of U.S.-Mexico security cooperation is complex, shaped by shared interests, geopolitical dynamics, and the rise of transnational organized crime. As the U.S. cracked down on Colombian cocaine traffickers in the 1980s and 1990s, Mexican criminal organizations progressively took over the U.S.-bound cocaine supply chains, leading Mexico to experience a surge in armed violence and threats to governance [11]. Mexican President Felipe Calderón launched the Mexican Drug War in 2006. However, believing his government needed help to quash Mexico's major drug trafficking organizations, Calderón asked U.S. President George W. Bush for assistance. Calderón's request led to the Mérida Initiative, a congressionally authorized package of U.S. anti-drug and rule-of-law assistance for Mexico and Central America [12].

While Mérida improved bilateral collaboration, both countries struggled to fulfill their commitments under the initiative. By the early 2020s, a series of political developments and law enforcement blunders had frayed bilateral relations, and stakeholders had begun acknowledging the urgent need for a reset. U.S. President Joe Biden's 2021 inauguration led to a reorientation of U.S. drug policy, putting it more in line with Mexican President Andrés Manuel López Obrador's social agenda [13]. Both sides began working on a bilateral strategy for confronting the interconnected problems of U.S.-to-Mexico gun trafficking, the illegal fentanyl trade, opioid abuse, illicit financing, and human trafficking and smuggling. The result was the Bicentennial Framework, announced after the U.S.-Mexico High-Level Security Dialogue in October 2021 [14]. The Bicentennial Framework marks a new era of cooperation, with a substantive focus on reducing U.S.-to-Mexico gun trafficking and other pressing security issues.

## REDUCING GUN TRAFFICKING: A MAJOR BICENTENNIAL FRAMEWORK PILLAR

The first year of the Bicentennial Framework saw the U.S. and Mexico undertake multiple initiatives to reduce the flow of guns to TCOs. Both countries agreed to work together to disrupt and apprehend arms traffickers within U.S. borders [15]. The Biden administration announced

11. United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime, "Transnational Organized Crime in Central America and the Caribbean" (December 2012), pg. 31. Also see Eric L. Olson, "The Evolving Merida Initiative and the Policy of Shared Responsibility in U.S.-Mexico Security Relations," The Wilson Center (February 2017), pg. 3.

12. Clare Ribando Seelke, "Mexico: Evolution of Mérida Initiative 2007-2021," Congressional Research Service (13 January 2021).

13. The White House, "Fact Sheet: U.S.-Mexico High-Level Security Dialogue" (8 October 2021). Also see Mary Beth Sheridan, "Facing stunning levels of deaths, U.S. and Mexico revamp strained security cooperation," The Washington Post (8 October 2021).

14. The White House, "Fact Sheet: U.S.-Mexico High-Level Security Dialogue" (8 October 2021).

15. Interviews with U.S. officials, May 2022, Washington, D.C.

the establishment of a gun trafficking strike force and increased prosecutorial resources to shut down certain trafficking nodes [16]. Biden also moved to curtail the proliferation of homemade, untraceable ghost guns, which have flowed in large numbers to Mexico [17]. In June 2022, Biden signed the Bipartisan Safer Communities Act (BSCA), which made gun trafficking and straw purchasing federal crimes [18]. The U.S. Department of Justice (DOJ) and the U.S. Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, Firearms and Explosives (ATF) deployed their new BSCA authorities to “target southbound firearms flows” and “increase firearms tracing” in collaboration with Mexican counterparts [19].

In March 2023, the U.S. and Mexico marked the opening of the second phase of the Bicentennial Framework. For the first time, “high caliber weapons and ammunition” were singled out under the bilateral counter-arms trafficking agenda [20]. Mexico established a Presidential Commission dedicated to combating the trafficking of drugs, arms, and ammunition. The DOJ announced its collaboration with a newly formed, vetted unit created by the Mexican Attorney General’s Office, focused on strategic anti-firearms trafficking enforcement.



*A cross reading “No Mas Muertes” (No More Deaths) marks an unknown grave site in Terrace Park Cemetery in Holtville, California. The cemetery holds the remains of hundreds of unidentified migrants who died while making the treacherous journey from Mexico. Photo by Tish Lampert.*

16. The White House, [“Remarks by President Biden at a Gun Violence Prevention Task Force Meeting”](#) (3 February 2022).

17. To deter criminals from using ghost guns, Biden announced that the U.S. Department of Justice would be ramping up the National Ghost Gun Enforcement Initiative (see The White House, [“Remarks by President Biden at a Gun Violence Prevention Task Force Meeting”](#) (3 February 2022)). The Biden administration also issued a new rule requiring companies that sell do-it-yourself gun kits to add serial numbers and conduct background checks on prospective buyers (see Abené Clayton, [“US implements new rule to close loophole on untraceable ‘ghost guns,’”](#) The Guardian (24 August 2022)). U.S. District Court Judge Reed O’Connor of the Northern District of Texas struck down that rule in June 2023 (see VanDerStok, et al. v. Garland, et al., Memorandum Opinion & Order on Parties’ Cross-Motions for Summary Judgment & Motions to Intervene, Dkt. 227, Case No. 4:22-cv-00691-O (N.D. Tex.)). It was not immediately clear whether the Biden administration planned on appealing this ruling.

18. See Congress.gov, [“S.2938 - Bipartisan Safer Communities Act”](#) (accessed 14 June 2023).

19. The White House, [“Joint Statement from Mexico and the United States on the Implementation of the U.S.-Mexico Bicentennial Framework for Security, Public Health, and Safe Communities”](#) (13 April 2023).

20. The White House, [“Joint Statement from Mexico and the United States on the Launch of Phase II of the Bicentennial Framework for Security”](#) (10 March 2023).

## CRITICAL GAPS

Throughout our discussions with stakeholders in the U.S. and Mexico, certain challenges to reducing the southbound flow of illicit U.S. arms repeatedly rose to the forefront:

**Tracing:** The U.S. and Mexico have been focused on expanding tracing cooperation to reduce illicit arms trafficking, using the ATF's National Tracing Center to track guns recovered from crime scenes [21]. While a significant number of crime guns in Mexico originate from the U.S., restrictions and limited information-sharing around tracing have hindered efforts to combat illicit gun flows. Further efforts are needed to increase the tracing of crime guns recovered in Mexico [22] and ensure that the ATF is actively sharing relevant trace data with its U.S. and Mexican law enforcement partners.

**Assault Weapons and .50-caliber Rifles:** Mexican law enforcement seizes a significant number of U.S.-origin .50-caliber firearms and assault weapons from crime scenes. These weapons enable drug cartels to overpower Mexico's security forces and expand their criminal activities [23]. The trafficking of these weapons remains a direct result of U.S. policy, particularly the expiration of the Federal Assault Weapons Ban in 2004. Despite efforts by some U.S. states to implement effective assault weapons bans, the lack of nationwide restrictions on assault weapons and .50-caliber rifles continues to contribute to the problem. The U.S. and Mexico must emphasize the public safety implications and advocate tighter restrictions on these weapons to prevent further devastation.

**Federal Firearms Licensees:** The Mexican government has raised concerns about licensed U.S. gun dealers contributing to U.S.-to-Mexico gun trafficking. As of fiscal year 2020, the U.S. had more than 56,000 federally licensed gun dealers [24]. That is more gun dealers than the U.S. had McDonald's, Starbucks, and Subway restaurant locations — combined [25]. The ATF is

21. The White House, "[Fact Sheet: U.S.-Mexico High-Level Security Dialogue](#)" (8 October 2021). Also see U.S. Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, Firearms and Explosives, "[Fact Sheet - National Tracing Center](#)" (April 2023).

22. The ATF has said that it emphasizes the importance of comprehensive tracing to all international law enforcement agencies. See U.S. Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, Firearms and Explosives, "[National Firearms Commerce and Trafficking Assessment \(NFCTA\): Crime Guns - Volume Two](#)" (11 January 2023), part IV, pg. 1.

23. U.S. Government Accountability Office, "[Firearms Trafficking: U.S. Efforts to Combat Firearms Trafficking to Mexico Have Improved, but Some Collaboration Challenges Remain](#)," GAO-16-223 (January 2016), pg. 10. Also see Kevin Sieff and Nick Miroff, "[The Sniper Rifles Flowing to Mexican Cartels Show a Decade of U.S. Failure](#)," The Washington Post (19 November 2020).

24. U.S. Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, Firearms and Explosives, "[Firearms Commerce in the United States: Annual Statistical Update 2021](#)," pg. 21.

25. The Pacific Council Magazine, "[U.S. Guns Trafficked to Mexico: Here's What's Happening](#)" (11 January 2023). Also see Brian Freskos, Daniel Nass, Alain Stephens, and Nick Penzenstadler, "[The ATF Catches Thousands of Lawbreaking Gun Dealers Every Year. It Shuts Down Very Few](#)," The Trace, USA Today (26 May 2021). For the number of restaurant locations in 2020, see Liam Gravat, "[Number of McDonald's locations in the United States, North America and world in 2022](#)," USA Today (30 July 2022); Astrid Eira, "[Number of Starbucks Worldwide 2022/2023: Facts, Statistics, and Trends](#)," FinancesOnline (18 July 2023); and Danny Klein, "[Inside the Plan to Build a Better Subway](#)," QSR (August 2021).

responsible for inspecting these dealers to ensure compliance with laws and regulations, but resource limitations and statutory requirements have hampered the agency's ability to conduct regular and thorough inspections [26]. Recent data suggests a slight increase in inspections, but the current rate is still exceedingly inadequate. Policymakers should increase funding for ATF inspections, reconsider laws that impede stronger enforcement, and prioritize inspections in border states to disrupt the supply chains feeding Mexico's underground firearms market. Civil society organizations should advocate these reforms and raise public awareness about the impact of irresponsible gun dealers on cross-border trafficking.

**Border Inspections:** The Bicentennial Framework emphasizes the need to strengthen oversight and coordination at land ports of entry and between ports of entry along the U.S.-Mexico border. To curb arms smuggling into Mexico, CBP needs to increase outbound inspections at the Southwest Border. While the number of seized outbound weapons more than doubled between fiscal years 2019 and 2022, CBP is still missing the majority of the guns being trafficked into Mexico each year [27]. Limited funding and stretched resources have impacted CBP's ability to conduct outbound inspections regularly, and there are legitimate concerns regarding outbound inspections disrupting legal border traffic. The U.S. and Mexico need to continue investing in technology and facility upgrades to help balance the time required for inspections against the economic benefits of facilitating the smooth flow of legitimate travel and trade [28].

**Metrics:** The U.S. and Mexico lack adequate performance measures to evaluate their efforts to reduce gun trafficking under the Bicentennial Framework. Without these measures, both countries cannot comprehensively track progress or gauge the effectiveness of their efforts. The absence of performance measures also hinders implementing agencies, lawmakers, civil society organizations, and other relevant parties from recommending reforms. While arms seizures have been proposed as one metric, subject-matter experts emphasize the need for a broader set of measures, including assessing efforts against cross-border arms trafficking networks at different levels and examining the distribution of illegal arms and apprehended actors. Collaborating with civil society organizations can help design relevant, timely, and implementable performance measures, linked to strategic objectives and planned actions, with baselines and targets for specific tasks within defined timeframes. Making these measures public would enhance transparency and encourage analysis and evaluation by third-party stakeholders, benefiting both countries moving forward.

26. See Brian Freskos, Daniel Nass, Alain Stephens, and Nick Penzenstadler, "[The ATF Catches Thousands of Lawbreaking Gun Dealers Every Year. It Shuts Down Very Few](#)," The Trace, USA Today (26 May 2021).

27. Calculation based on data from U.S. Customs and Border Protection, "[Weapons and Ammunition Seizures](#)" (accessed 9 May 2023).

28. See The Wilson Center, "[US-Mexico Security Cooperation: A Conversation with Assistant Secretary Todd Robinson](#)" (31 October 2022).

**Mapping:** The U.S. and Mexico have complex security apparatuses involving numerous agencies, but stakeholders often lack comprehensive knowledge of each other's agencies' areas of responsibility (AORs). This lack of clarity hinders effective bilateral cooperation on security matters, leading to confusion, miscommunication, and overlapping efforts. To enhance engagement and streamline collaboration, a detailed diagram outlining the AORs of the relevant government agencies in each country, highlighting areas of overlap and cooperation, would serve as a valuable reference tool. This visual representation would promote transparency, clarity, and alignment of efforts, ultimately strengthening the bilateral security partnership.

## PRIORITIZING MORE FORCEFUL COUNTER-ARMS TRAFFICKING TOOLS

The U.S. and Mexico should ensure combating international arms trafficking is a top national security priority. The following section contains additional strategies and tools that should be implemented in pursuit of this goal:

**Creating a Central Authority:** The Biden administration has pledged to combat gun trafficking through a whole-of-government approach. Effectively implementing this approach requires the U.S. to create a central authority at the National Security Council to ensure a strategic vision, shared intelligence, innovation, and systematic coordination across relevant U.S. agencies. A central authority will guarantee that arms trafficking to Mexico – and other global hotspots – is continuously managed as a national security priority.



IMAGE VIA AFP/GETTY IMAGES



**Follow-the-Guns Methodology:** The illegal use of guns by Mexican TCOs is part of a broader criminal scheme, and tracing recovered crime guns back through their supply chains can help law enforcement uncover routes, channels, markets, and methods used to illicitly transport firearms across the U.S.-Mexico border. While ATF traces provide some information, they lack crucial details about how crime guns move from retail purchasers to end users, and the lack of publicly available detailed trace data hinders researchers and experts from analyzing the problem. Implementing a follow-the-guns methodology can enhance intelligence gathering and detective work, enabling both countries to target and disrupt critical points of diversion in the arms supply chain.

**Addressing the Source:** The U.S. has launched a global initiative under the public health pillar of the Bicentennial Framework to target the synthetic drug chain, focusing on precursor chemical suppliers, which are primarily located in China and India. Mexico argues that the U.S. has been reluctant to take similar action in response to illicit arms flows, despite Mexico's efforts to address the issue in multilateral forums. Mexican officials claim that U.S. gun manufacturers and dealers are complicit in supplying illicit arms that harm Mexicans and citizens of other countries. Mexico has filed a lawsuit against U.S. gun manufacturers, and other affected countries have expressed support, highlighting the global implications of the problem. Stakeholders advocate for repealing the Protection of Lawful Commerce in Arms Act (PLCAA) to increase accountability in the gun industry.

**Subnational Participation:** The Bicentennial Framework's success relies on engaging subnational actors, particularly in Mexico, where organized crime has a strong presence at the state and municipal levels. State and local actors possess a deep understanding of the unique challenges and intricacies of their respective regions, allowing for tailored solutions that address specific concerns on the ground. Their knowledge of local dynamics can significantly enhance the effectiveness of enforcement efforts. Involving subnational stakeholders increases their support and commitment to federal programs impacting their regions. It also strengthens the overall U.S.-Mexico collaboration, resulting in a more comprehensive and cohesive anti-arms trafficking approach that transcends national borders and facilitates information-sharing and coordination at all levels.

**Export/Import Controls:** Notably absent from the Bicentennial Framework is the issue of legal U.S. gun exports to Mexico and the lack of measures to prevent these weapons from being diverted to Mexican criminal groups and rogue security forces. The Mexican government must do more to prevent guns imported by the Secretaría de la Defensa Nacional (Secretariat of National Defense, or SEDENA) from going to armed forces and police with histories of corruption or human rights abuses. Concerned stakeholders have called for enhancing end-user verification and monitoring controls to ensure transparency and accountability. Additionally, greater U.S. scrutiny is needed over foreign companies that export guns to Mexico through the U.S. to evade stricter controls in their home countries.

**Alignment with Central America:** The Bicentennial Framework focuses on U.S.-Mexico security concerns but excludes Central American countries, even though they face interconnected challenges in regards to TCOs and gun trafficking. It is vital to adopt a comprehensive approach covering the entire Central American region, with regional coordination mechanisms and joint law enforcement actions. Addressing arms trafficking to this region is in line with the Biden administration’s Strategy for Addressing the Root Causes of Migration in Central America.

**Human Rights Norms & Global Arms Instruments:** Mexico and international human rights advocates are urging the U.S. to address its deficient gun control policies, saying they contribute to mass harm and atrocities in Mexico. Mexico's lawsuits against U.S. gun sellers align with a global discourse on business and human rights, emphasizing the need for the gun industry to take responsibility for the human harm caused by its products. Firearms trafficked from the U.S. have also inflicted suffering in Canada and countries in the Southern Hemisphere and Caribbean. The leaders of these countries have pressed the U.S. to acknowledge and address this problem. While the Biden administration supports projects to combat illicit gun trafficking, it has not committed to crucial global arms instruments like the Arms Trade Treaty and the Firearms Protocol, despite the U.S. being the world's leading weapons exporter. Advocates argue that the U.S. has a special responsibility to prevent illegal guns from reaching the wrong hands in other countries, and the time is ripe for it to commit to these international agreements.



*A husband and wife embrace after Border Patrol guards open a gate along the U.S. southwest border so families torn apart by deportation can spend a few minutes together as part of the “Door of Hope” program in November 2017. Photo by Tish Lampert.*

**Case Studies:** Both U.S. and Mexican officials recognize the importance of a comprehensive understanding of arms trafficking and are open to case studies that can inform policy-making and foster cooperation. Governments, think tanks, experts should consider elevating existing or future studies on counter-arms trafficking challenges to the attention of both countries' officials to aid in developing effective solutions.

## RECOMMENDATIONS

### To the relevant U.S. authorities:

1. Establish a central authority at the National Security Council to guarantee that arms trafficking to Mexico — and other global hotspots — remains managed as a national security priority. A central authority can best ensure a strategic vision, shared intelligence, innovation, and systematic coordination across relevant U.S. agencies to enhance targeting and avoid duplication of efforts. This authority could also increase coordination with Mexico at the multilateral and regional level.
2. Expand intelligence collection and enforcement efforts to supplement border security, disrupt nodes of diversion, and dismantle firearms trafficking networks closer to the source of the problem. This requires strengthening interagency coordination related to intel and data collection and the subsequent analysis for effective targeting.
3. Increase investments in investigative and border control measures aimed at stopping U.S.-sourced firearms from illegally entering Mexico. Both the president and Congress need to ensure that Customs and Border Protection has sufficient resources for targeted outbound inspections.
4. Prioritize enforcement actions against the illicit trafficking of assault weapons, other high-powered firearms, and associated ammunition. Restricting or banning the trade of assault weapons on the private market is the best avenue for keeping them out of dangerous hands.
5. Repeal the Protection of Lawful Commerce in Arms Act so that gun industry practices, standards, due diligence, and safety measures are subject to civil liability.
6. Repeal the Tiahrt Amendment so that researchers and other experts can use trace data to analyze gun trafficking trends and patterns and inform public policy.
7. Provide more resources to the Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, Firearms and Explosives (ATF) and repeal restrictions on the agency's federal firearms licensee oversight authority so that the ATF can more effectively police FFLs and prevent their involvement in the trafficking of firearms to Mexico. The U.S. needs to make every effort to ensure that FFLs with a history of violating federal law and threatening public safety are not allowed to remain in business.
8. Increase training and support to Mexican law enforcement agencies with the goal of ensuring the comprehensive tracing of recovered crime guns and the effective use of trace data in anti-arms trafficking initiatives.

9. Enhance ongoing efforts to sanction arms traffickers connected to Mexican transnational criminal organizations as well as the seizure of related financial assets and criminal proceeds.
10. Increase resources and efforts to train and advise Mexican investigators, prosecutors, and judges in prosecuting arms trafficking cases.
11. In addition to conducting targeted law enforcement activities, prioritize preventative actions aimed at diminishing arms trafficking networks. Such strategies should be geared toward strengthening human rights, anti-corruption efforts, rule-of-law institutions, and transparency.
12. Commit as signatories to the Arms Trade Treaty and the Protocol against the Illicit Manufacturing of and Trafficking in Firearms, Their Parts and Components and Ammunition, supplementing the UN Convention Against Transnational Organized Crime.
13. Strengthen end-use monitoring in Mexico to mitigate the risk of arms diversion to transnational criminal organizations and rogue security forces.

**To the relevant Mexican authorities:**

14. Expand intelligence and enforcement efforts to supplement border security and address downstream nodes of distribution and end-use.
15. Increase resources for inspecting inbound vehicles and conducting investigative and other border control measures to counter illicit trafficking and smuggling networks. Due consideration should be given to border technology that best strengthens the shared responsibility and information-sharing approach codified in the Bicentennial Framework.
16. Ensure effective utilization of crime gun tracing, forensic evidence collection and intelligence gathering to best disrupt arms trafficking networks.
17. Build on past security and police reform initiatives to create more professional forces able to reduce corruption within the ranks, develop a vetted career path, and enhance capacity of core mandated functions to ensure more effective binational cooperation and information-sharing as well as joint enforcement operations and mirrored border patrols.
18. Continue to build on judicial reform and advance prosecutorial efforts to help disrupt and dismantle homegrown transnational criminal organizations, counter the arms networks that underpin their activities, and reduce opportunities for firearms diversion and corruption.

**To the Members of the High-Level Security Dialogue:**

19. Commit to the further development and transparent reporting of robust action plans and metrics.
20. Continue the binational agenda to expand tracing of both recovered crime guns and weapons seizures and undertake comparable analysis for effective targeting of arms trafficking networks inclusive of all nodes of the illicit arms supply chains.

21. Continue striving towards increasing the efficacy of targeted border inspections and interdictions while improving binational border crossing procedures for more efficient ports of entry for citizen movement and cross-border trade.

22. Ensure the effective inclusion of state- and local-level officials and law enforcement agencies.

**To non-state stakeholders:**

23. In accordance with relevant subject matter expertise, keep a spotlight on the Bicentennial Framework, including highlighting successes and recommending improvements to help ensure accountability for the commitments each government has made.

24. Provide technical advice where relevant.

25. Assist the U.S. and Mexico with developing relevant and effective metrics and performance measures.

26. Recommend and/or undertake case studies related to counter-arms trafficking issues, including evidence-based research, outcomes of fact-finding missions, reports on the efficacy of specific interventions, and other applicable policy frameworks and instruments.

27. Continue to publicize the stakes, issues, and impacts of cross-border arms trafficking and firearms diversion on the U.S. and Mexico.

28. Grow capacity to advance accountability and influence their governments on counter-arms trafficking and firearms diversion activities.

**To gun manufacturers, wholesalers, and dealers:**

29. Enact robust internal controls to prevent the diversion of their legal commerce to traffickers and the black market. Such controls should include enhanced risk assessments, know your customer practices, and other due diligence measures.

30. Establish enhanced mechanisms for reporting the suspicious activity of illicit dealers and sellers to U.S. authorities.

31. Desist from firearms marketing and sales practices that directly or indirectly target transnational criminal organizations and other criminal elements.

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