

Prison violence kills 20

## Gangs battle at Cereso prison in Juárez, Mexico

By Daniel Borunda / El Paso Times

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Relatives of prison inmates wept Wednesday as they waited for news outside the Cereso state prison in Juárez during a riot.

### More on the violence in Juárez

A gang attack left 20 inmates dead and more than 30 others injured on Wednesday in one of the bloodiest riots in the turbulent history of prisons in Juárez.

The riot was the most violent outbreak at the 4-year-old Chihuahua state Cereso prison, which was believed to be more secure than the riot-plagued municipal Cereso prison.

It is not known whether any Americans were involved.

Chihuahua state public safety officials said an investigation was under way to determine how members of one prison gang managed to launch the major attack on rivals housed in a maximum-security section.

"It was an attack presumably by the Aztecas gang on rival gangs," said Marco Antonio Moreno, a spokesman for the Chihuahua public safety department.



Around 6 a.m., prisoners were leaving a conjugal visitation area of the prison when an Azteca gang member forced a guard to open the cells of fellow gang members, officials said.

Initial reports were that prisoners used firearms, but Moreno said it was believed that the inmates were armed with makeshift knives, known as a shanks.

The freed Aztecas -- about 150 according to an Associated Press report, though state officials

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would not confirm that number -- then forced their way to an area where members of the rival Mexicles and Artistas Asesinos (Artist Assassins) gangs were located.

Prisoners were stabbed with shanks, sliced with broken glass and



Police prepared Wednesday to enter the Cereso state prison in Juárez during a riot. A fight between gangs after a conjugal visit at the prison left 20 prisoners dead and seven others injured, police said. (Photos by Miguel Tovar / Associated Press)

beaten with variety of blunt objects. Mattresses and blankets were set on fire, and windows were broken as attackers entered the maximum-security area, officials said.

No guards were killed, and order was restored about three hours later by about 200 anti-riot police and dozens of Mexican army soldiers.

A list of the dead provided by prison officials showed that seven of the slain had no known gang affiliations, five were Artistas Asesinos, three were Mexicles, two were Norteños, one was a Sureño, one belonged to another gang, and one inmate had not been identified. No known

Aztecas were among the dead.

The Aztecas and Mexicles have been fighting for years to control drug trafficking inside prison, fueling riots and assaults that have



A police officer arrives to a state prison during a riot in Ciudad Juarez, Mexico, Wednesday, March 4, 2009. A fight between gangs after a conjugal visit at a state prison in the Mexican border city of Ciudad Juarez has left at least 20 prisoners dead and seven others injured, police said. (AP Photo/Miguel Tovar)

left more than 20 inmates dead at the Juárez municipal Cereso since 2006.

Aztecas are associated to the El Paso-based Barrio Azteca prison gang targeted in a U.S. anti-

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racketeering case last year.

As a precaution, soldiers were sent to guard the outside of the Juárez municipal prison.

The municipal prison is scheduled to be taken over by the military in coming days as part of the deployment of more than 5,200 soldiers and 800 federal police sent to quell violence, which has left nearly 2,000 people slain in the Juárez area since January 2008 due in part to a drug cartel war.

Street violence in the city apparently has slowed since Mexican troop reinforcements arrived last weekend, but slayings continue.

State police said an unidentified woman in her late teens was shot to death Tuesday night in colonia Melchor Ocampo -- one of two homicides that day.

And Wednesday afternoon, the decomposing decapitated head of a man was found in a vacant lot next to the Club de Leones (Lion's Club) school.

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#### **Inmates killed**

Name and gang affiliation, if any, of inmates killed Wednesday in the Chihuahua state Cereso prison in Juárez.

Abelardo Torres Lares, Mexicles.

José Angel Cisneros Macias, Mexicles.

Gildardo Omar Zubia Guilar, Mexicles.  
Edgar Adrian Monrreal Aguilera, Norteño.  
Jorge Aguilera Luna, Norteño.  
Jorge Ernesto Aguilar Chavira, Artistas Asesinos.

Juan Daniel Rodríguez Rodríguez, Artistas Asesinos.  
Salvador Regalado Corral, Artistas Asesinos.  
Samuel Lopez Lopez, Artistas Asesinos.  
Andres Fernando Delgado Moreno, Artistas Asesinos.  
José Manuel Saenz Díaz, Guerrero de Chuy El Diablo.  
Carlos Muñoz Cardiel, Sureño.  
No known gang affiliation  
Arturo Ivan Alvarez Bejar.  
Fernando Martin Martinez Gordillo.  
Manuel Antonio Martinez Gordillo.  
Israel Gonzalez Hernandez.  
Jairo Castillo Piña.  
Manuel Valentin Ramos Chacón.  
Martin Martinez Zamora.  
One unidentified inmate.  
Source: Chihuahua department of public safety.

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