

Poll: Mexico feels less secure amid drug crackdown

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More than 40 percent of Mexicans say they feel less secure since the start of a government crackdown on the drug trade, according to a poll published Friday.

Only 25 percent of Mexicans polled say they feel safer since President Felipe Calderon sent more than 20,000 troops to battle drug cartels nationwide, the newspaper El Universal reported. Another 27 percent say they feel the same level of security.

Still, half of all respondents say they believe the country will be safer in the next three years if the government continues the battle.

Violence has soared since the army and federal police stepped up attacks on the drug trade nearly two years ago.

Eight dead bodies were found Friday in the border city of Tijuana, across from San Diego, according to an official at the Baja California state prosecutor's office who was not authorized to be quoted by name. Five were dumped in an empty lot, one was discovered in the trunk of a car and two others were found decapitated two blocks from the local office of Calderon's ruling National Action Party.

Some 40 people have been killed in drug-related violence in the past week in Tijuana, bringing the total so far this year to more than 400.

State prosecutor Rommel Moreno has blamed the violence on warring leaders within the city's Arellano Felix drug gang.

Asked what they believed was driving the violence, 40 percent of poll respondents said it was a sign that organized crime has overpowered the government, 35 percent said it was a reaction to the crackdown and 21 percent believed it was drug cartels fighting for territory.

The poll by Buendia & Laredo had a margin of error of 3.5 percentage points and surveyed 999 adults Sept. 26-29.