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## Gunmen in Mexico Kill 13 at Party

By ELISABETH MALKIN  
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MEXICO CITY — More than a dozen gunmen sealed off a street in the violent border city of Ciudad Juárez and opened fire on a house where high school students were having a party, killing 13 people, officials said Sunday.

Chihuahua State authorities gave no motive for the mass killing, but it bore all the signs of the drug violence that has consumed the city over the past three years. Juárez has become ground zero in the [government's war against drug traffickers](#), as rival cartels use their enormous firepower to fight over drug distribution and routes across the border to Texas.

Although the government argues that the overwhelming majority of murders stem from turf battles among traffickers, there was no immediate evidence to suggest that the slain students were involved with gangs.

Neighbors told El Diario de Juárez, a newspaper, that the students had gathered to celebrate a birthday when just before midnight on Saturday, seven S.U.V.'s drove up and masked gunmen stormed the party.

As they cowered in their houses, neighbors dialed emergency services, but soldiers and police officers did not arrive until after the shooting had stopped. Among the dead was a man who lived next door, who had opened an informal stand to sell soft drinks and candy to the partygoers.

Families drove the injured to hospitals themselves rather than wait for ambulances.

A neighbor who gave his name only as Hector was quoted by The Associated Press as having said the students must have been attacked by mistake.

It was the worst mass attack in Juárez since gunmen killed 18 young people at a [drug rehabilitation center](#) in September. More than 2,000 people were killed in the city last year, giving it one of the highest murder rates in the world.

Last month, the federal police said that 2,000 additional officers would be sent to the city to add to the soldiers and state police officers patrolling Ciudad Juárez.

Five more people were killed in the Pacific Coast state of Sinaloa early Sunday when gunmen fired repeatedly on their car. Among the dead were a state police officer and a 16-year-old girl, state officials said.

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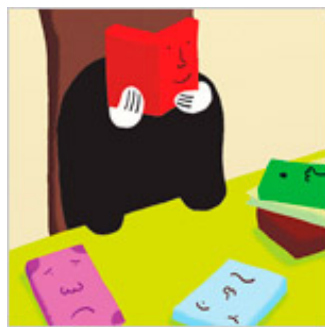
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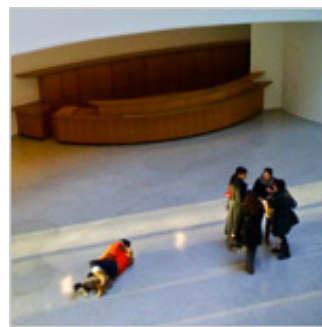
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