



Mexico's foreign minister says US citizens main source of fentanyl trafficking

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Mexico's foreign minister said Wednesday that American citizens are the main smugglers of fentanyl from Mexico into the US after Republican lawmakers pressured his country to step up efforts to curb fentanyl trafficking.

After a meeting with Mexican prosecutors on an influx of firearms into Mexico, Marcelo Ebrard said that most arrests of fentanyl traffickers occur at Mexican customs, with US citizens making up most of those apprehended.

"The largest number of people arrested with fentanyl are US citizens. They are not migrants and they are not Mexicans. This is what some senators and congressmen are saying," said Ebrard.

According to the US think tank the Cato Institute, in 2021, US citizens accounted for 86.3% of convicted fentanyl drug traffickers -- "ten times greater than convictions of illegal immigrants for the same offense."

The report also revealed that 90% of fentanyl seizures happen at legal crossing points, not irregular migration routes. Since US citizens are subjected to less scrutiny when crossing legally, they appear to make "the best smugglers."

However, fentanyl production and trafficking in Mexico remains a significant challenge in terms of Mexico's battle with drug cartels.

In the past week, the Mexican Secretariat of National Defense reported various raids in Mexico's northern region resulting in notable seizures of fentanyl, including the confiscation of more than 1.8 million fentanyl pills and 280 kilograms of fentanyl in Tijuana in northwestern Baja California state and a shipment of 354,000 fentanyl pills and 2.7 kilograms of pure fentanyl in Sinaloa.

US Secretary of State Antony Blinken has lauded the Mexican government's efforts to stop fentanyl from transiting Mexico, saying that Mexican authorities have seized "record quantities" of fentanyl.

According to the US Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), more than 150 people die every day in the US from overdoses related to synthetic opioids such as fentanyl.