

Overview

People who commit crimes in the United States sometimes flee to Mexico to avoid punishment.

Extradition often isn't possible, so U.S. authorities regularly ask Mexico to arrest and prosecute those who have fled. That is permitted under a Mexican law known as Article 4.

Although they are glad to have the Article 4 option, U.S. prosecutors say justice can be uneven because the legal systems in the two countries are so different.

Use of Article 4

Some cases in which prosecutors have used Article 4:

Two ex-employees of a Gilroy restaurateur were suspected of robbing and killing him in 1996. One man was arrested in Arizona, but the other, Jorge R. Guerrero, fled to Mexico. In November 2000, Guerrero was sentenced to 20 years in a Mexican prison.

Bernardo C. Chacon fled to Mexico from the city of East Palo Alto after assaulting two people in 1998, one of whom died. The case was filed in Mexico in 2002, and a year later, Chacon was sentenced to 26 years and eight months for murder and two years and eight months for attempted murder.

A father who raped his 14-year-old daughter in Spring Valley fled to Tijuana after the incident was reported in 1990. He was arrested and convicted in 2002 and sentenced to 10 years in prison. The father, who said he was too ill for prison, was allowed to serve his sentence under house arrest. He died a year later. Authorities declined to release the man's name, fearing that would further victimize the man's daughter.