

TODAY'S MEDIA TRENDS

GLOBOVISION

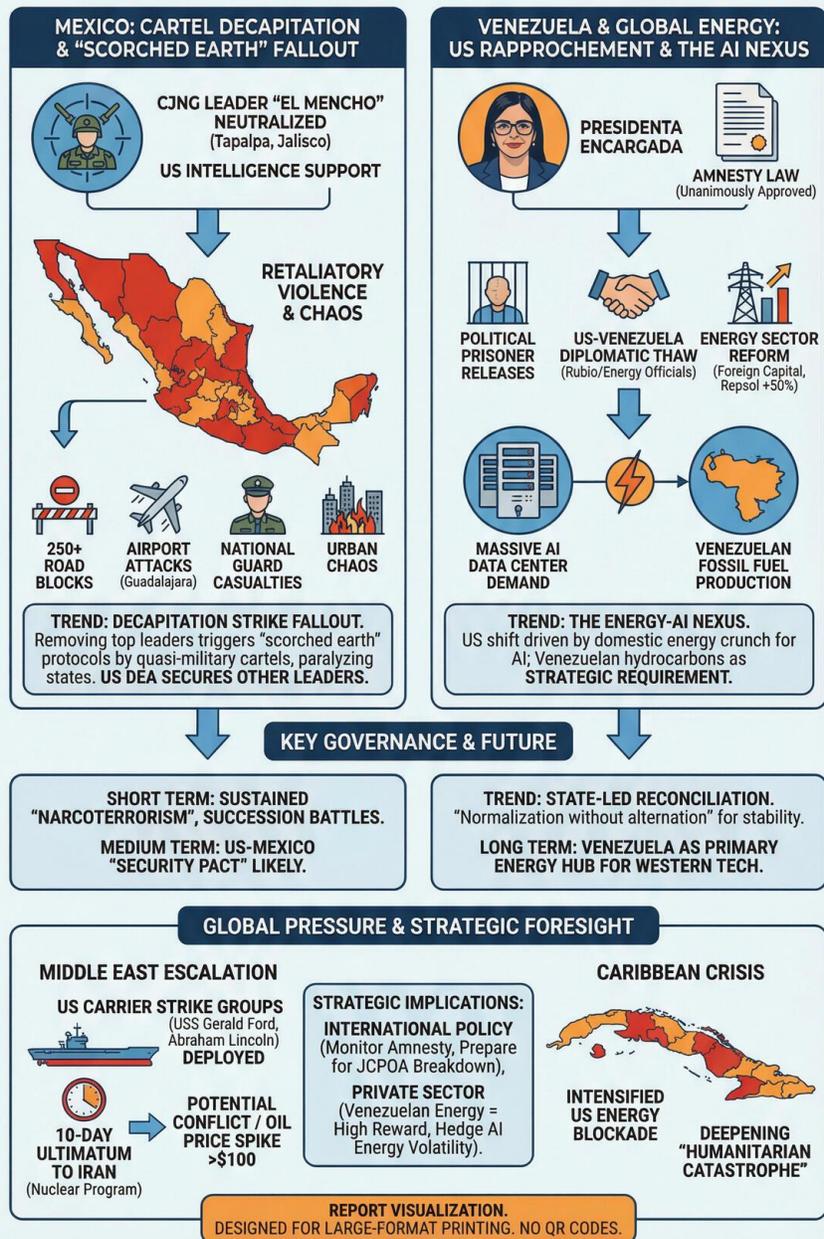
FEBRUARY 23, 2026

THE GDELT PROJECT

GLOBAL SECURITY & ENERGY MARKETS REACT TO "EL MENCHO" DEATH & US-VENEZUELA RAPPROCHEMENT

DAY-AT-A-GLANCE: FEB 23, 2026

Two primary axes dominate: Mexico's violent counter-narcotics fallout & US-Venezuela rapid stabilization, impacting global energy & AI.



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MARKETS REACT TO THE DEATH OF
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ACCELERATING US-VENEZUELA
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DAY-AT-A-GLANCE

The geopolitical landscape on February 23, 2026, is dominated by two primary axes: the violent aftermath of a high-stakes counter-narcotics operation in Mexico and the rapid stabilization of US-Venezuela relations. The death of Nemesio "El Mencho" Oseguera Cervantes, leader of the Jalisco New Generation Cartel (CJNG), in a joint intelligence operation has triggered a [massive wave of retaliatory violence](#) across 20 Mexican states, including hundreds of road blocks and urban chaos. While the Mexican government claims to have restored control over 90% of the affected areas, the regional security implications remain volatile as the US DEA secures high-ranking cartel figures in the operation's wake.

Simultaneously, Venezuela is undergoing a profound internal pivot. Following the "events of January 3rd"—implied to be a decisive US military or political intervention—the

"Presidenta Encargada" Delcy Rodríguez is overseeing a transition defined by a [unanimously approved Amnesty Law](#). This legislative maneuver is facilitating the release of political prisoners and seeking to normalize the domestic political environment to attract foreign investment. US Secretary of State Marco Rubio and energy officials are signaling a "tremendous progress" in the country, prioritizing [energy security and fossil fuel production](#) to meet the massive power demands of the global artificial intelligence boom.

Globally, the "Trump 2.0" administration is exerting maximum pressure on multiple fronts. In the Middle East, a [10-day ultimatum](#) to Iran regarding its nuclear program has led to the deployment of the USS Gerald Ford and USS Abraham Lincoln carrier strike groups to the region. Meanwhile, in the Caribbean, Cuba faces a deepening "humanitarian catastrophe" due to [intensified US energy blockades](#). These developments suggest a resurgent US hegemony utilizing "lawfare," decapitation strikes against non-state actors, and aggressive energy diplomacy to reshape the international order.

MAJOR DEVELOPMENTS

Decapitation of the Jalisco New Generation Cartel (CJNG)

- Mexican federal forces, supported by US intelligence, killed Nemesio "El Mencho" Oseguera Cervantes during an [operation in Tapalpa, Jalisco](#).
- The operation resulted in over 250 road blocks and [violent disturbances in 20 states](#), including attacks on Guadalajara's airport.

- At least [25 National Guard members](#) and several other security officials were killed during the retaliatory cartel offensive.
- The US DEA confirmed multiple cartel leaders are now [under US custody](#) following the strike.

US-Venezuela Diplomatic and Energy Rapprochement

- US Secretary of State Marco Rubio and Secretary of Energy Christopher Greens report ["enormous growth"](#) and normalized security conditions in Venezuela over the last six weeks.
- The Venezuelan National Assembly unanimously passed the [Ley de Amnistía](#) (Amnesty Law) to foster national reconciliation and end political "lawfare."
- Spanish multinational Repsol plans to [increase production by 50%](#) in Venezuela following US license flexibilization.
- The US is actively seeking to secure Venezuelan oil and gas to fuel [AI data centers](#) that require immense, constant energy loads.

Escalation in the Persian Gulf

- The US deployed the [USS Gerald Ford](#) to the coast of Israel, joining the USS Abraham Lincoln in a massive show of force against Iran.
- President Trump issued an ultimatum to Tehran, warning of [consequences within 10-15 days](#) if a nuclear agreement is not reached.
- Iran has dismissed threats of "limited strikes," stating any action will be met with [total military response](#).

Humanitarian and Energy Crisis in Cuba

- Cuban Foreign Minister Bruno Rodríguez denounced a US ["energy blockade"](#) designed to trigger a humanitarian collapse on the island.
- The Cuban government has [suspended university classes](#) and restricted public transport to conserve dwindling fuel supplies.
- US measures have intensified since the start of the year, with Washington [pressuring third countries](#) to withdraw support for the island.

Death of Salsa Icon Willy Colón

- Renowned musician and activist Willy Colón [passed away at age 75](#) on February 21, 2026, due to respiratory complications.
- His death has prompted [global tributes](#) from the Latin American community, recognizing his role in defining the "urban sound" of the diaspora.

KEY GOVERNANCE TOPICS

AI and Technology Policy

- UN Secretary-General António Guterres is advocating for a [scientific commission for AI control](#), modeled after the IPCC, to manage global governance of the technology.
- The US has expressed a ["total denial"](#) of UN-led governance over its sovereign AI developments.
- AI growth is now a [primary driver of energy policy](#), forcing shifts in how fossil fuel resources are allocated globally.

Energy Security and Infrastructure

- Colombia is seeking to [purchase Venezuelan gas](#) to avoid domestic shortages, despite delays in US-authorized transactions via Ecopetrol.
- The 224-kilometer [Antonio Ricaurte gas pipeline](#) is a priority for binational repair and reactivation.

Domestic Stability and "Lawfare"

- Venezuela's use of the [Amnesty Law](#) is viewed by analysts as a strategic "reset" to gain international legitimacy while de-escalating internal conflicts.
- A "Follow-up Commission" of [23 deputies](#) has been established to oversee the law's implementation and prevent "revanchism."

National Security and Global Risk

- The death of "El Mencho" serves as a benchmark for [intelligence-led decapitation strikes](#), though it has immediately compromised regional social order.
- The US "Trump Tariffs" have been [raised to 15%](#) globally following a Supreme Court ruling that limited the president's authority under previous statutes.

LEGISLATIVE ROUNDUP

Legislative activity in Venezuela is currently focused on consolidating the post-January 3rd political order. The primary thrust is the use of amnesty to clear the legal docket of political opponents, while simultaneously reforming the energy sector to facilitate immediate Western re-entry into the oil and gas markets. In the US, the legislative and judicial branch are in a tug-of-war over [executive tariff authority](#).

BILLS DISCUSSED/DEBATED:

- **Ley de Amnistía y Convivencia Democrática:** A comprehensive amnesty bill passed unanimously to [release political prisoners](#) and drop charges against those involved in protest-related crimes.
- **Reforma de la Ley de Hidrocarburos:** Amendments to the oil law to [open the sector to foreign capital](#) and reduce the state monopoly held by PDVSA.
- **Ley de Protección de los Derechos Socioeconómicos:** Proposed legislation to [reform the salary structure](#) and pension system amid the new economic bonanza.
- **Constituyente Laboral:** An executive-led process to [design public policies](#) that strengthen the labor model and worker benefits.

HEARINGS & PRESS EVENTS:

- **Gabinete de Seguridad Mexicano Press Briefing:** Details provided on the [military-intelligence operation](#) that neutralized the leader of the CJNG.
- **Conference on Disarmament (Geneva):** Cuba's denunciation of [US aggressive measures](#) and energy blockades.
- **Miraflores Presidential Meeting:** Delcy Rodríguez hosted [victims of political violence](#) to discuss reconciliation and the Amnesty Law.

DEEP DIVE: TRENDS AND THEMES

The Energy-AI Nexus

A critical emerging trend is the explicit linking of Latin American energy production to the survival of the global AI industry. For the first time, US diplomats are characterizing

[Venezuelan hydrocarbons](#) not just as a commodity, but as a strategic requirement for the "immense demand" of AI data centers. This suggests that the US shift toward Venezuela is driven by a domestic energy crunch in the US, making the "Trump-Rubio" rapprochement a pragmatic necessity rather than a purely ideological shift.

State-Led Reconciliation as a Stabilization Tool

Venezuela is attempting a "Mandela-style" transition, with even radical government supporters and [victims of opposition violence](#) meeting to discuss forgiveness. However, skeptics note that this "reconciliation" occurs while the government remains hegemonic, with the [National Assembly 90% aligned](#) with the executive. The theme is "normalization without alternation," where stability is achieved by incorporating opposition figures into a new, managed governance framework overseen by US interests.

Decapitation Strike Fallout

The death of El Mencho illustrates a "victory at a high cost" for Mexico. The [immediate outbreak of violence](#) shows that cartels have transitioned into quasi-military insurgencies capable of paralyzing 20 states simultaneously. This trend suggests that removing top-tier leaders no longer disables these organizations but instead triggers a "scorched earth" protocols that threaten the stability of the Mexican state itself.

STRATEGIC FORESIGHT

Short Term (1-4 Weeks):

In Mexico, a sustained period of "narcoterrorism" is expected as CJNG factions compete for succession and lash out at the

state. The [US embassy shelter-in-place](#) orders will likely persist. In the Persian Gulf, the 10-day ultimatum to Iran will reach its deadline, potentially leading to [surgical strikes](#) or a total naval blockade if Tehran does not capitulate. In Venezuela, the first major wave of [political prisoner releases](#) under the Amnesty Law will conclude.

Medium Term (1-6 Months):

The Venezuelan economy will see a "rebound effect" as Repsol, Chevron, and other majors [increase production](#), likely stabilizing the exchange rate. Legislative debates will shift toward [salary reforms](#) and "un-bonusing" pay to appease a restless labor force. In Mexico, the government will likely seek a "security pact" with the US to maintain more permanent military presences in high-conflict states like Jalisco.

Long Term (1-5 Years):

A structural realignment is possible where Venezuela becomes the **primary energy hub** for the Western Hemisphere's tech industry, potentially leading to [full diplomatic restoration](#) with Washington. Conversely, if Iran and the US enter a kinetic conflict, global oil prices will likely [exceed \\$100 per barrel](#) indefinitely, accelerating the transition to nuclear power and causing global economic contraction.

RECOMMENDATIONS & IMPLICATIONS

For International Policy:

- The international community should monitor the [Amnesty Law](#) implementation for signs of "selective justice" or the exclusion of high-profile detainees.

- Regional neighbors, such as [Costa Rica](#), must maintain migration alerts for cartel spillover as Mexican organized crime undergoes a violent restructuring.
- The UN must prepare for a total breakdown of the [JCPOA framework](#) as US carrier groups move into strike positions.

For Private Sector/Investors:

- Venezuelan energy assets represent a [high-reward opportunity](#) as US sanctions de-escalate, particularly in gas and heavy crude infrastructure.
- Supply chains through Mexico remain at [extreme risk](#) due to potential highway blockades and port disruptions by cartel remnants.
- Investors in AI and data centers should hedge against [energy volatility](#) by monitoring US-Venezuela diplomatic health, as this has become a critical supply-side dependency.

ABOUT THIS REPORT

Today's Media Trends is a public interest experiment in applying deep thematic trend analysis to television news coverage from around the world to explore how responsibly applied advanced AI can help journalists and scholars better understand the overarching trends, themes and patterns of our global world.

No data is used to train or tune any AI model.

Each morning, in collaboration with the Internet Archive's TV News Archive, we apply Google's Gemini 3 to deeply examine yesterday's coverage from each television news channel to tease out the overarching themes and trends of its news coverage into a richly annotated thematic analysis. Each high-level insight is connected back to the original broadcast, allowing journalists and scholars to understand the dominate themes and trends and instantly click out to the underlying sources for details.

By helping journalists and scholars see the broader trends and patterns of global news coverage, this analysis helps them identify relevant stories and coverage they might not otherwise have encountered and uncover connections, emphases and narrative shifts that enable more comprehensive reporting and deeper, evidence-based research.

This report is entirely machine generated using Gemini 3 and may include errors and omissions. Please verify all findings. No data is used to train or tune any AI model.

For questions or suggestions, please contact kalev.leetaru5@gmail.com. You can also learn more about the GDELT Project at <https://blog.gdeltproject.org/> and the Internet Archive's TV News Archive at <https://archive.org/details/tv>.