

Mexican Judge Blocks Fast-Track Extradition of 'El Chapo' Guzman to the United States



Mexico City, January 13 (RHC) -- A Mexican judge has blocked the fast-track extradition proceedings of the Mexican drug kingpin Joaquin "El Chapo" Guzman to the United States, media outlets have reported.

The leader of the powerful drug organization Sinaloa Cartel "succeeded in getting a federal judge to suspend any attempts to immediately put Guzman at the disposal of the United States," local daily newspaper *El Excelsior* reported. The paper added that "the judge granted a provisional suspension against ... any attempt at extradition without fulfilling the formalities of the process as required by law."

According to observers, the move has forced Mexican authorities to abide by the legal timetables, which could take about one to five years to complete.

Jose Manuel Merino, international affairs official at the Attorney General's Office (PGR), told *El Excelsior*: "we are estimating on average, according to experience, around a year at the least."

The United States has filed two extradition requests with Mexico's Ministry of Foreign Affairs, though it is not clear yet where "El Chapo" Guzman will be finally tried.

The state of Texas has ensured the the Attorney General's Office that it will not apply the death penalty if Guzman is tried in Texas on charges of drug trafficking and other related crimes, another daily newspaper, El Universal, reported.

Mexico has no death penalty and needs to make that request in other states, Merino said.

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