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Teen Shot Herself With Submachine Gun Allegedly Trying to Record TikTok

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Earlier this year, a young girl died in the Mexican state of Sinaloa after finding a nine-millimeter Uzi submachine gun in her grandmother's closet and accidentally firing it.

[Vice News](#) reported that 15-year-old Yazmín Esmeralda was visiting her grandmother with her mother and younger brother last month in a small town near the state's west coast.

According to an interview her family gave to local news outlets, as well as the state prosecutor's office, the young girl allegedly found the weapon and then asked her brother to film a video of her holding the gun to upload to TikTok, Vice reported.

The gun accidentally went off and killed the teenager instantly.

According to [data](#) from Everytown for Gun Safety, 5.4 million children in the US live in households with at least one unlocked and loaded firearm.

[According to](#) the organization's [#NotAnAccident Index](#), there were at least 2,070 unintentional shootings by children under 18 years old between January 1, 2015, and December 31, 2020, resulting in 765 deaths and 1,366 injuries

Seven in 10 of these unintentional child shootings occurred in homes, the organization reported, whether in the home of the shooter, the victim, a relative's house, or another home.

Sara Bruna Quiñonez Estrada, Sinaloa's state prosecutor, told VICE World News that it is not clear how the Uzi ended up in the home. She told the outlet that Mexico's army stopped using this type of weapon after it was found that the safety lock was difficult to use and that the gun had the tendency to go off accidentally.

Beyond that, Vice reports, it's "extremely hard" for civilians to own weapons legally in the country. Despite the nation's strict gun regulations, the [LA Times](#) reported in 2019 that millions of weapons were in "private hands" — some of which previously belonged to military or police and sold into the "underworld" though the majority were smuggled from the U.S.

"The fact that there were weapons in the house, that weren't controlled, is the responsibility of the adults who knew there were children in the house," Quiñonez Estrada told Vice.

Sinaloa is home to the notorious cartel of the same name once run by Joaquín "El Chapo" Guzmán. Quiñonez Estrada told Vice that she believes the manner in which Esmeralda died shows that the "youth is immersed in that culture."

"It's what they hear about at all hours," she continued.

María Teresa Guerra Ochoa, head of the state's women's ministry, told Vice that drug traffickers are sometimes admired as they can be seen as symbols of success as many of them "come from poverty."

In January 2021, the [Courier-Journal](#) in Louisville reported that

Mexican drug cartels had started using TikTok as a means to promote the lifestyle of organized crime.

David Saucedo, a Mexico City-based security analyst, told the outlet that images of parties, military-grade weapons, an abundance of cash and exotic pets are used to attract young men who might be interested in joining a cartel.

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