

## **Mexico wants to sue U.S. gun makers**

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CBS News has learned that the Mexican Government has retained an American law firm to explore filing civil charges against U.S. gun manufacturers and distributors over the flood of guns crossing the border into Mexico.

Sources say Mexico's frustration with U.S. efforts to stop the flow of weapons has pushed them into this novel approach. The law firm is looking at charges that may include civil RICO. The contract was signed on November 2, 2010 by a representative of Mexico's Attorney General, at their Washington embassy.

On November 5, 2010 President Felipe Calderon expressed his frustration to CBS News correspondent Peter Greenberg: "We seized more than 90,000 weapons...I am talking like 50,000 assault weapons, AR-15 machine guns, more than 8,000 grenades and almost 10 million bullets. Amazing figures and according to all those cases, the ones we are able to track, most of these are American weapons."

According to sources, investigators will obtain makes and serial numbers of guns seized by Mexican authorities and trace them to their U.S. distributors and manufacturers.

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Christopher Renzulli of New York, who has represented U.S. gun makers for fifteen years, says he believes this would be a difficult case for the Mexican government to win. "The Protection of Lawful Commerce in Arms Act would bar that kind of lawsuit from the start. The law, passed in 2005 has resulted in several lawsuits against gun makers being dismissed.

But sources familiar with the case say the law firm retained by Mexico - New York based Reid Collins & Tsai - believes the federal law won't stand in the way of their case.

According to the Mexican government database, there were 15,273 drug-related killings in 2010. Overall, a total of 34,612 people have died in drug-related killings in the four years since Mexican President Felipe Calderon declared a stepped-up offensive against drug cartels. Richard Feldman, President of the Independent Firearms Association and former gun industry association executive said: "Maybe we should be suing the Mexican government for their failure to prevent drugs from coming into our country."