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President-elect Enrique Peña Nieto faces the daunting challenge of halting Mexico's vicious and ongoing drug war. Experts agree that one of his priorities will be to strengthen political institutions.

Since outgoing President Felipe Calderon declared war on the drug cartels in the first week of his administration, back in December 2006, more than 60,000 people have been killed, and the sickening violence, which spans the length and breadth of the nation, shows no signs of slackening.

Peña Nieto who's employed a former Colombian general as a security advisor, says tackling rampant crime is his number one priority. He says that he's going to create a new police force made up of ex-servicemen. Another primary aim is to reduce the number of murders, kidnappings and cases of extortion, which have significantly increased and which are grievously affecting Mexicans. He's also pointedly and bluntly stated that the Institutional Revolutionary Party PRI, of which he's a prominent member, has never and never will forge any sort of pact with organized crime.

Experts on the drug cartels say that it's going to be a Herculean task to dislodge the deeply entrenched cartels, and Peña Nieto will need to develop a long-term strategy anchored by pillars of wisdom, backed up with steadfast resolve.

Professor Jorge Chabat, who's the Director of International Studies in the Center for Research, Technology and Economics in Mexico City, says there's no chance of removing the Country's Armed Forces from its current spearheading role, in directly confronting and combating the cartels, particularly the ultra-violent Zetas, who are rampaging nationwide. "The only option is to strengthen institutions, while reducing impunity, which means getting away with it. This is the gene permeating all of these crimes, and that will take many years. We will have to build better police forces and strengthen the judiciary," he told DW.