

Julio César Chávez Jr. Faces Trial in Mexico

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Former world champion boxer Julio César Chávez Jr. is facing legal battles in both the United States and Mexico after being arrested in Los Angeles this summer by U.S. federal agents, a case that highlights Washington's use of immigration enforcement as a tool against broader criminal concerns.

Chávez, 39, had been living in the U.S. for several years when authorities detained him in early July near his Los Angeles residence. Officials said he had overstayed his visa and provided false information on a green card application, violations that made him subject to

removal. His celebrity status as the son of Mexican boxing legend Julio César Chávez did not shield him from enforcement.

After several weeks in U.S. custody, Chávez was deported on August 19 and handed over to Mexican federal authorities in Sonora. There, he faces trial on allegations of organized crime and arms trafficking. His lawyer, Rubén Fernando Benítez Alvarez, has dismissed the charges as speculative, but the U.S. arrest and deportation placed him squarely within a binational legal effort targeting cartel-linked figures.

The arrest came shortly after Chávez fought American boxer Jake Paul in Los Angeles, a high-profile event that placed him back in the U.S. spotlight. Days later, federal agents moved in, underscoring how immigration enforcement can apply even to internationally recognized athletes.

Chávez's name emerged from a U.S.-filed complaint in 2019 against the Sinaloa Cartel, which accused cartel members of trafficking drugs, weapons, and people. Mexican prosecutors opened their own case based on that complaint, investigating 13 individuals, including Chávez and Ovidio Guzmán López, son of Joaquín "El Chapo" Guzmán. Guzmán López was later extradited to the U.S. in 2023.

Analysts say Chávez's deportation reflects a broader U.S. trend of using immigration law as part of national security strategy. Visa cancellations, expedited removals, and closer monitoring of foreign nationals have become standard tools for dealing with individuals suspected of cartel ties. "Immigration enforcement is increasingly doubling as crime prevention," one legal expert noted.

Chávez has a record of legal issues in the United States. In 2012, he served 13 days in a Los Angeles jail for driving under the influence. In 2024, he was arrested for firearms possession after rifles were found in his California home; he was released on \$50,000 bail and ordered into addiction treatment.

Now, he is detained in Hermosillo, Mexico, awaiting a trial that could bring a prison sentence of up to eight years if convicted. Mexican President Claudia Sheinbaum confirmed that he had been wanted since 2023 but was only apprehended after his U.S. deportation.

For Washington, the case is a reminder that immigration enforcement is central to its cross-border crime strategy. Chávez's deportation showed that even high-profile figures are

subject to removal when immigration violations overlap with broader criminal suspicions. His trial in Mexico will continue, but U.S. officials view his arrest and deportation as part of a larger effort to curb cartel influence and reinforce border security.