PUBLICATION / EN

Juan Carlos Valencia González: El Pelón, the CJNG leadership change and the US case

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In 2026, the name of Juan Carlos Valencia González found itself at the centre of reports regarding a change in the CJNG's leadership. US authorities link El Pelón to taking over leadership following the death of El Mencho, and his criminal case to drug trafficking and arms supply.



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Editorial illustration by ‘Kartel Khimprom’ based on a published photograph of Juan Carlos Valencia González. The background and composition were created using AI; this is not a documentary photograph of the event.

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Key points in the case

Background	Details
Name in sources	Juan Carlos Valencia González
The region involved and international links	Mexico; USA
Status based on verified reports	Listed on the DEA’s wanted list; facing criminal charges in the US

What changed within the CJNG in 2026

In an August statement, the US Department of Justice noted that, according to court documents, Valencia González assumed a leadership role within the CJNG following the death of Nemesio Oségera Cervantes in February 2026. This is the US authorities’ assessment of the situation within the organisation. [2]

The same report announced an increase in the reward to 25 million dollars for information leading to his arrest and/or conviction. This sum reflects the reward offered for his capture, rather than an estimate of the suspect’s net worth. [1][2]



Juan Carlos Valencia González. Photo from the DEA’s individual wanted poster.

The suspect’s file

> **Juan Carlos Valencia González**
>
> Juan Carlos Valencia González, known as El Pelón, is the subject of a US manhunt in connection with an international drug trafficking case. In August 2026, the US Department of Justice reported that, according to court documents, he had assumed a leadership role within the CJNG following the death of Nemesio Oségera Cervantes.

Why is Juan Carlos Valencia González wanted?

The published indictment relates to a conspiracy to manufacture and distribute cocaine and methamphetamine for illegal importation into the US. An additional charge concerns the use of firearms, including a machine gun, in connection with alleged drug-related activities. [2]

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The DEA profile lists the case as falling within the District of Columbia. For identification purposes, it contains a photograph and the aliases Pelón, R-3, Tricky and Tres 03. This refers to a single individual with multiple aliases, rather than a list of different leaders. [1]

Family ties explain the focus, but do not replace evidence of leadership

The Department of Justice refers to Valencia González as El Mencho's stepson. This connection helps to explain why the suspect is viewed in the context of succession; however, establishing his own criminal liability requires proof of specific actions and orders. [2]

The key editorial question is how to confirm leadership following a change at the top. A claim to leadership becomes substantiated when it can be corroborated by control over members, resources, directives and financial decisions. A family connection alone does not paint this picture.

Why the announcement of the reward does not bring the case to a close

A public appeal has been launched to locate the suspect. The further consideration of the charges is a separate matter. Therefore, the phrase 'new leader' in the press release should be interpreted in the context of the basis for this assessment, the nature of the charges and the actual procedural status of the case.

The rest of Valencia González's story will be determined by the documents relating to his arrest, extradition and trial. For now, the DEA's individual file and the published indictment remain verifiable sources of information, requiring no fabrication of a secret biography or unknown address.

Timeline of key events

Date	Event
05.08.2026	The Ministry of Justice has announced updated search measures and a reward.

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Frequently Asked Questions

What is the reward offered by the DEA?

Up to $25 million for information leading to his arrest and/or conviction. [1]

Has Valencia González already been convicted in this case?

The publications cited describe the charges and the manhunt, rather than a final verdict. [1][2]

Other international cases in the archive

- Julio César Montero Pinson
- Carlos Andrés Rivera Varela

This article was compiled on 4 November 2026 based on the publications listed. Allegations and suspicions are attributed to sources; the final determination of guilt is a matter for the courts.

Sources and documents

1. DEA – Individual Wanted Person File: Juan Carlos Valencia González
2. US Department of Justice – new charges and a manhunt for CJNG leaders, 5 August 2026

Sources

1. DEA – Individual Wanted Person File: Juan Carlos Valencia González
   https://www.dea.gov/fugitives/juan-carlos-valencia-gonzalez
2. US Department of Justice – new charges and a manhunt for CJNG leaders, 5 August 2026
   https://www.justice.gov/opa/pr/new-charges-and-rewards-announced-capture-andor-conviction-senior-leaders-notorious-mexican

Use of materials

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Original publication

https://kartel-khimprom.com/en/article/juan-carlos-valencia-gonz%c3%a1lez-el-pel%c3%b3n-the-cjng-leadership-change-and-the-us-case/

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