

Mexico Disarms Community Police, Claims Evidence of Organized Crime Links



Mexico City, May 19 (RHC)-- Mexican federal and state authorities have detained 60 people after disarming the local community police in Zihuatanejo for infiltration by organized crime.

Guerrero state security spokesman Roberto Alvarez said 42 of them were not accredited police officers, even though they were uniformed and carrying weapons. Three actual police officers were arrested on suspicion of links to organized crime and an additional 15 officers were detained for being armed without passing confidence tests.

The army and state police will take over public safety duties in the city until the entire police force can be investigated, Alvarez said. The arrest occurred after state agents detained a civilian for usurpation of duties last week. The man was on an official Zihuatanejo police patrol when questioned by state police for speeding. Even though he wore a uniform, he said he was not a municipal police.

This case forced the intervention of the federal government because it was an organized crime issue and detected infiltration and usurpation in the police. The official statement indicates that the army decided to disarm the entire group and it was during the staff review that they identified the 60 men with problems.

They were transferred to Mexico City, where they were placed at the disposal of the federal Public Ministry waiting for trial.

Zihuatanejo has been hit hard in the past year by the violence that has engulfed much of the state. Through the first quarter of 2017, murders in the city were doubled during the same period last year.

Last month, a group of gangsters dressed in police uniforms killed three police officers in Zihuatanejo. Since then, the unlawful operation of organized crime within the municipal police has been evident.

"I believe there is a big weakness with municipal police and I believe mayors have to take more responsibility for their police," Guerrero state Governor Hector Astudillo said in an interview with Milenio television according to the Associated Press.

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