

Mexico to Spend \$3.4 Billion in Troubled Michoacan State



Mexico City, February 5 (RHC) -- Mexican President Enrique Peña Nieto has pledged to spend about \$3.4 billion in social and infrastructure programs in the troubled Mexican state of Michoacan, where vigilantes have battled a drug cartel.

The funding, which Peña Nieto announced on Tuesday in Morelia, the state capital, will be dedicated to recover security, establish conditions of social order and spur economic development.

Peña Nieto was forced to deploy thousands of troops and federal police to an agricultural region known as Tierra Caliente, or Hot Land, in Michoacan to restore security after civilians began to form "self-defense" militias last year to oust the Knights Templar drug cartel.

Local residents formed the vigilante groups, arguing that local police were unable to stop the cartel's murders, kidnappings and extortion rackets.

The turmoil in violence-plagued state has become the biggest security challenge of President Peña Nieto's administration.

The Mexican president has pledged to get rid of gang violence that has claimed about 80,000 lives in Mexico since 2007.

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