

Mexican National Guard fatally shoots migrant, wound others

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Migrants travel in Chiapas state, Mexico [File: Isabel Mateos/AP Photo]

Mexico City, November 2 (RHC)-- Officers from Mexico's National Guard fatally shot a migrant after opening fire at a pick-up truck attempting to avoid a checkpoint, authorities said.

The National Guard said the truck, which was carrying 13 migrants, did not respond to orders to stop for inspection near the southern town of Pijijiapan on Monday, and instead tried to ram a patrol car.

Officers opened fire, killing one migrant and wounding four others. Prosecutors in the southern state of Chiapas later said the dead man was a Cuban citizen, identified only as Cristobal N.

The National Guard said the officers fired on the vehicle because it “put at imminent risk their safety.” All of the migrants and the driver of the truck were detained. The wounded, who authorities said are all Cuban, were taken to a nearby hospital. State prosecutors said a rifle was found in the truck.

The incident occurred as a caravan of about 2,000 migrants travelled north from Tapachula. They departed on October 23, and hoped to reach the United States.

Irineo Mujica, one of the leaders of the caravan, told the AFP news agency the people in the truck had previously been travelling with the group, but decided to break off following rumours of raids by authorities.

Tens of thousands of U.S.-bound migrants, mostly Central Americans and Haitians, have arrived in Mexico in recent months fleeing poverty and violence. The country has expelled 54,000 foreigners so far in 2021, according to New York-based Human Rights Watch.

Deadly confrontations between law enforcement and migrants remain relatively rare in Mexico. In September, a National Guard officer was killed by suspected immigrant traffickers.

A dozen members of an elite police force in the northern border state of Tamaulipas are also currently on trial for allegedly killing at least 14 Guatemalan migrants and five other people, whose bullet-ridden and burned bodies were found near the US border in late January.

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