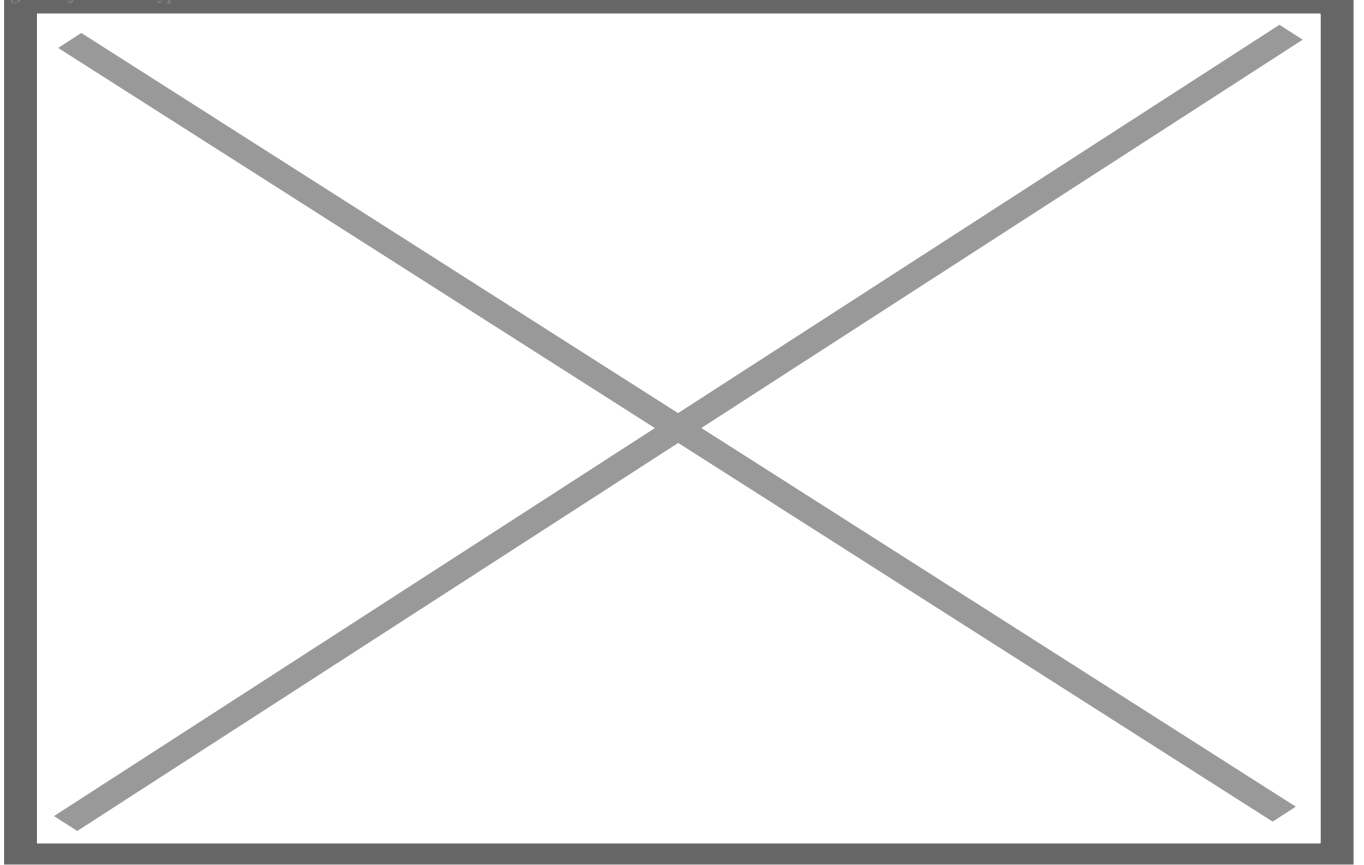


Investigation into armed attack on displaced people in Chiapas, Mexico

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Nearly 1,000 people were forcibly displaced in southern Mexico due to violence generated by criminal groups returned to their homes. | Photo: Sinaloa Hoy

Mexico City, June 5 (RHC)-- An armed attack perpetrated has been carried out against victims of forced displacement in the community of Santa Martha, municipality of Chenalhó, Mexican state of Chiapas (south), left at least seven dead and three wounded.

The State Attorney General's Office, through the Office of Indigenous Justice, reported over the weekend that it opened an investigation for the crimes of homicide and injuries against those responsible for the incident.

Armed men showed up at a building in the Zapatista community of Polhó, where some 150 Tsotsil indigenous people from the Santa Martha sector were taking refuge, and fired at the displaced people.

According to media reports, the injured were taken to different hospitals in the city of San Cristóbal de las Casas.

Human rights defender Reynaldo Pérez said the attack was directly against Indigenous people, mostly women, children and the elderly. Witnesses told local media that from the refuge they responded with firearms to the aggressors, among whom there were two wounded.

The displaced were dispossessed of their lands and communal rights last September and had to flee Santa Martha after an armed confrontation that lasted seven days and caused many of their homes to be burned to the ground.

This is reportedly an agrarian conflict involving the communities of Chenalhó and Aldama, in which around 22.5 hectares of land are disputed. According to authorities, criminal groups allegedly linked to the Jalisco Cartel - New Generation and the Sinaloa Cartel also operate in the region.

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