

# *Zapatistas Criticize Mainstream Media for Botched Massacre Coverage*

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Mexico City, August 2 (RHC)-- The Zapatistas have strongly criticized mainstream media over its coverage of the recent massacre in the Chiapas community of San Juan Chamula, accusing the “paid press” of focusing on the death of the town’s “corrupt” mayor while ignoring up to dozens of other victims of the bloody tragedy.

Clashes erupted in San Juan Chamula late last month. Initial media coverage reported that Mayor Domingo Lopez Gonzalez, trade union leader Narciso Hernandez, and three others were murdered. But a report in the Mexican daily newspaper La Jornada, later indicated that at least 20 people were fatally shot or hacked to death by machete in the violent outbreak.

The Zapatista Army of National Liberation, or EZLN, said in a statement by Subcomandante Moises on Friday that media narrowly focused on “weeping and mourning” Lopez Gonzalez’ murder because he is a member of the Chiapas Governor Manuel Velasco’s Ecological Green Party and that Velasco tried to downplay the incident as a “small problem.”

The statement claimed that residents of San Juan Chamula and the surrounding communities in the Los Altos region of Chiapas “know that it was the guard of the corrupt Green (Party) mayor who started the gunfire and killed and injured many of those who were in the square.”

The EZLN deferred to the victims and the families of those killed in the attack to share the precise details of what happened in the July 23 attack, but described an “immense pain” over the events. The movement accused the media of failing to go to the source to report the fact, saying “paid media prefer to interview ‘experts’ instead of investigating what really happened.”

Moises also stressed that the Zapatistas regard see tragedies such as the massacre as the result of meddling by political parties, drug gangs, and the Catholic church.

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