

Zapatistas Back Indigenous Woman to Run for Mexico's Presidency



Mexico City, May 29 (RHC-teleSUR) -- Hundreds of Indigenous representatives at the National Indigenous Congress from across Mexico elected a prominent Indigenous leader Sunday as their independent candidate for the upcoming presidential elections in Mexico due in 2018.

Maria de Jesus Patricio "Marichui" Martinez will be backed by the Zapatista Army of National Liberation in a break from more than two decades of the rebel group's rejecting the Mexican state and its electoral politics. Among the EZLN delegates present were Subcommandantes Mosies and Galeano — formerly known as Marcos — and Comandante Tacho.

From the Nahuatl community of Tuxpan, in the state of Jalisco, Patricio Martinez is a traditional doctor in her community, founder of the health center Calli Tecolhuacateca Tochan in 1992 and a long-time leader in the Indigenous movement.

The convention and consultations, which began Friday and concluded Sunday, also included delegates from 32 states, for a total of 848 delegates from 58 Mexican Indigenous communities and was held in San Cristobal de las Casas in the southeastern state of Chiapas.

The Zapatistas came onto the international scene after attacking several military installations in Mexico on Jan. 1, 1994, launching an Indigenous struggle against NAFTA and conditions in Mexico. The movement has seen victories, but also considerable challenges, including intense repression and criminalization of the struggle at the hands of the Mexican state, private landowners, and paramilitary forces.

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