

Homicides in Mexico hit record numbers so far this year



Mexico City, July 25 (RHC)-- The number of killings continues to rise in Mexico with more than 17,000 homicides registered over the first six months of the year, reaching an all-time high in spite of the efforts made by the government of Andres Manuel Lopez Obrador to combat violence in the country.

The problem of violence and insecurity is one, if not the main challenge facing the administration of left-wing president AMLO, who took office last year in December. The head of state admitted on various occasions this month the difficulties faced by his government to solve the decade-long problem.

"Violence is a pending issue as we have not been able to reduce the number of crimes. Cartel and gang violence continue to proliferate across Mexico," he said during a press conference on July 2.

3,001 murders were recorded in June, which represents 232 more homicides than what was reported last year at the same period, according to data provided on July 21 by the Mexican Secretariat of Public Security.

Last month's numbers mark the second-highest figures since statistics began to be compiled in 1997, July 2018, when 3,158 murders were reported is the record number. The data also show that the first half of the year saw 17,138 killings, almost 100 homicides each day, 7.2 percent higher than the statistics for the first half of 2018 when 15,973 murders were reported.

As a response to the problem, the government assured it will address the roots of violence by increasing financial aid to families and creating campaigns to prevent drug use, however, its key measure was to launch last month the militarized National Guard.

The body was widely criticized by civil organizations and analysts since it demonstrates ineffectiveness as well as a lack of coordination with the police, according to them.

"I doubt that the National Guard will have any kind of effect because they [the government] just changed the [existing] security model in a superficial way but essentially, it remains the same. I would surprise me a lot if it could improve things for the better," security analyst Alejandro Hope told EFE news agency.

The expert regrets the lack of knowledge about the complexity of violence. "The problem is we don't fully understand the origins of violence. The factors are structural, social, related to illicit markets, and so on," the expert added.

Drug regulation is the only way to drastically reduce the number of murders said Wednesday the director of the NGO Semaforo Delictivo, Santiago Roel, in an interview with EFE. In addition, he urged that attention be focused on how some states such as Baja California Sur, Tamaulipas or Guerrero have recently managed to reduce crime rates.

"I wouldn't say that Mexico would be a peaceful country if drugs were to be regulated, but It would get the conditions to be so. More time could be devoted to working on other issues," Roel added.

The country has been struggling with violence for years and the successive governments have tried to battle drug cartels taking out the leaders, which was no a way to address the issue from the grassroots, resulting in the fragmentation of gangs and in the increase of violence rates.

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