

Shooting near U.S.-Mexico border leaves two migrants dead

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San Diego, September 30 (RHC)-- Two Mexican migrants have been shot to death on the Mexican side of the border with the United States, Mexico's National Migration Institute said. The incident occurred in the early hours of Friday morning. Another three people suffered gunshot wounds but were assisted by one of the institute's emergency rescue teams, along with nine others who were not injured.

Rescue services found the group of 14 Mexican nationals at dawn on Cuchuma Hill near Tecate, a city in the border state of Baja California. By the time rescuers climbed up to meet the group, two migrants were already dead.

Members of the Mexican immigrant welfare agency Grupo Beta help a person injured during an armed attack by unknown assailants early Friday, at the Cerro de Cuchuma, in Tecate, in Baja California state, Mexico. Wearing a baseball cap and a red shirt, one aid worker lifts a medical packet containing fluids, as other aid workers try to assist a person between two large boulders.

The harsh desert hill is considered a sacred site by at least one Mexican Indigenous group, but it is also used by human smugglers.

The cause of the shooting is not known, but border crossings in certain regions can involve agreements with local cartels for the right of passage. Migrants and asylum seekers are sometimes shot if their smuggler is working for a rival gang or if they haven't paid passage rights.

Migrants and asylum seekers are also often robbed by roving gangs of thieves and kidnappers in border areas.

In one notable case in 2021, Tamaulipas state police shot and killed 19 people on the border, including at least 14 Guatemalan migrants. A court recently convicted 11 officers of homicide.

In that case, officers had initially argued they were responding to shots fired and believed they were chasing Gulf cartel vehicles. But the state police burned the bodies in an attempt to cover up the crime.

The two dead in Tecate are the latest in a rapidly growing number of migrants and asylum seekers killed or injured on Mexico's northern and southern borders in a desperate bid to reach the United States.

In Chiapas, one of three southern Mexican states to border Guatemala, a truck flipped on the highway on Thursday, killing two Central American migrants and injuring another 27.

And on Friday, Mexico's Migration Institute said 52 migrants were travelling in an overcrowded dump truck when the driver lost control and overturned. The injured, including six children, were transported to hospital, where they were all granted legal cards of asylum, as victims of a crime on Mexican territory.

Just the day before the crash, two more Central American migrants died after trying to board a moving train in the state of Coahuila near the Texas border.

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