

Mexican Crime Boss Linked to Missing Students Kills Himself



Mexico City, October 15 (RHC-EFE) -- A reputed leader of a criminal organization suspected in the abduction of 43 students took his own life to avoid capture, a source with Mexico's Federal Police told EFE news agency on Tuesday.

Benjamin Mondragon, thought to be the regional boss for the Guerreros Unidos gang in the central state of Morelos, shot himself following an armed clash with officers, the source said. The confrontation took place at Mondragon's home in Jiutepec, Morelos.

Guerreros Unidos is based in the southern state of Guerrero, where authorities say the gang was involved last month in a night of violence that left six people, including three students from a teacher training college in the rural town of Ayotzinapa, dead; 25 others injured; and 43 trainee teachers missing.

Several people arrested in connection with the events of September 26th told investigators that the police chief in Iguala, Guerrero, Salgado Valladares, had his men intercept the students on the night in

question, while a Guerreros Unidos capo identified only as "Chucky" ordered the young people seized and killed.

Guerrero state Attorney General Iñaky Blanco said last week that the Iguala police department had been infiltrated by Guerreros Unidos, an offshoot of the Beltran Leyva drug cartel.

Federal prosecutors took charge of the high-profile case based on the suspicions of organized-crime involvement.

On Monday, a group of teachers, classmates and relatives of the 43 missing students seized the Government Palace and state legislature in Guerrero's capital, Chilpancingo, to protest the slow pace of the investigation and demand the young people's safe return.

Some 600 students from the Ayotzinapa Normal School, accompanied by relatives, occupied and later sacked the Government Palace.

The Ayotzinapa Normal School, whose students are known for their political activism, includes among its alumni Lucio Cabañas Barrientos and Genaro Vazquez Rojas, who led leftist guerrilla groups in the 1960s and 1970s.

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