

Violence Strikes Again in Michoacan, Mexico -- 7 Dead, 5 Wounded



Mexico City, June 17 (teleSUR-RHC)-- The embattled central Mexican state of Michoacan has once again been the setting of a violent shootout, which left seven people dead on Tuesday including two police, with five officers injured and one missing, according to local authorities.

According to the Michoacan Attorney General's office, a police convoy was ambushed by armed men they say were members of the Knights Templars drug cartel. No arrests have yet been made. The Attorney General has also stated the two police and two civilians died of gunshot wounds, while three other civilians were burnt to death inside the vehicles that were torched by the armed assailants. Authorities said they are trying to identify the incinerated bodies.

The five injured police were rushed to the hospital, but there are no details regarding their condition. The incident occurred on the highway between Apatzingan and *El Alcalde* in the municipality of Apatzingan, an area that is believed to continue under the Knights Templars' control.

The authorities said the unidentified armed men later returned to the scene of the shootout and torched police vehicles and other automobiles and trucks, inside of which the three burnt bodies were found.

Army personnel, federal, state and municipal police have been deployed to the area of the incident to investigate the events and search for the assailants responsible for the alleged ambush. They are also looking for the disappeared police officer, officials told local media.

The area where the shootout took place is said to be one of the last bastions of the Knight Templars, where the former leader of the drug gang, Nazario Moreno, also known as “El Más Loco” or “The Craziest One”, had a spectacular recreational center that included a casino, rodeo and arena. Moreno was killed in a shootout with federal police in March 2014.

Michoacan is a violent state known for its massive marijuana and poppy plantations, as well as for the production of opium and heroin.

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