

# *Mexican Military Investigated for Forced Disappearance of Youth*

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Mexico City, July 21 (teleSUR-RHC)-- Mexican authorities are investigating the military's suspected involvement in serious human rights abuses related to the forced disappearance and possible murder of seven young farmers in the northern state of Zacatecas, Mexican media reported on Monday.

The Mexican Secretary of Defense said in a statement that evidence pointed to the “probable” involvement of the Mexican military in the disappearances.

Four of the seven victims, three men and one woman, were identified by family members after being found dead with bullet wounds in their necks in a house under construction in the Zacatecas municipality of Jerez. Three more bodies were found separately in another Jerez community, but family members were not allowed to see the bodies and have requested DNA samples to prove their identities.

Unlike the other four, which were identified by tattoos or specific clothing items, the three bodies do not fit the descriptions of the missing young people and may not be any of the seven disappeared.

Family members insist genetic testing is necessary given the serious doubts about the identities of the bodies.

The seven young individuals were disappeared two weeks ago on July 7. Family members held soldiers of the 97th Battalion responsible, saying military personnel had stormed and raided a house where the

youth were spending the night. Among those disappeared were five men and two women – four of them minors under 18 years of age –, and one former soldier of the accused 97th Battalion, who renounced the military last year, according to Mexican newspaper *El Proceso*.

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