

Guatemalan forced migrants massacred by police and organized crime in Mexico

<https://mailchi.mp/rightsaction/guatemalan-forced-migrants-massacred-by-police-and-organized-crime-in-mexico>

After being forced to flee destitution, and State violence and corruption in Guatemala, a country ruled by a military-backed, corrupt and repressive 'open-for-global-business' government, forced migrants are massacred trying to cross Mexico and enter the US.

Mexican Police Accused of Slaying Over a Dozen Guatemalan Migrants

Security forces in Mexico have a long history of corruption and collusion with criminal groups. The investigation of a massacre of 19 people last month has implicated local police officers.

By [Emily Green](#) & [David Mora](#), Vice World News, February 3, 2021

<https://www.vice.com/en/article/93wmyz/mexican-police-accused-of-slaying-over-a-dozen-guatemalan-migrants>



Ángela López, in Guatemala, holds a photo of her son, Marvin Tomás, a migrant killed in a massacre in northern Mexico on January 22.

@ Guillermo Alvarez, for Vice World News

MEXICO CITY — Twelve local police officers have been charged with homicide in the [brutal massacre](#) of at least a dozen Guatemalan migrants, whose bodies were found shot and incinerated last month in Mexico, just south of the U.S. border.

The alleged involvement of the local police is a macabre development, underscoring the degree of corruption within Mexican law enforcement. In addition to homicide, the officers were charged with abuse of authority and making false statements.

- See also: [19 Burned Bodies Found Near the US-Mexico Border May Include Teen Migrants](#), by David Mora & Emily Green, Jan.26, 2021

Tamaulipas state Attorney General Irving Barrios Mojica said the 12 officers are now in custody. Mounting evidence showed that that the crime scene had been tampered with — no bullet casings and ammunition were found — although the truck carrying the bodies had 113 bullet impacts, according to Barrios Mojica. While investigators initially suspected the victims had been shot elsewhere and then

driven to the location where they were found, he said it was more likely that the police picked up their shell casings to cover their tracks.

Barrios Mojica also cited discrepancies between the officers' statements and the first reports filed after arriving at the scene. He said further investigation is being conducted based on other evidence, including call records and video surveillance images.

The bodies were found in a burned-out pickup truck in Camargo, just south of the Rio Grande. A second vehicle found on the scene had been seized by federal migration officers only weeks before, during a raid in which 66 migrants were discovered. One of the most dangerous stretches of the border, Camargo has become the scene of bloody battles for control between the Gulf Cartel and the Cartel of the Northeast, an offshoot of the now defunct Zeta Cartel.

Barrios Mojica did not opine on what might have motivated the police to kill the migrants. But there is a long history of police, particularly local security forces, working for the cartels in Mexico. In 2010, 72 migrants trying to reach the U.S. were hauled from buses and slain. The Mexican attorney general's office later said [police helped "intercept" the murdered migrants](#), whose bodies were found in an empty warehouse in the rural municipality of San Fernando, also in the northern border state of Tamaulipas.

Although the arrest of the officers is a bombshell, it is far from clear that they will be convicted. Barrios Mojica has a history of bringing [blockbuster charges that haven't been sustained](#), sometimes on the basis of protected witnesses with inconsistent testimony. Most notoriously, he charged 30 local officials in Michoacán with connections to a local drug cartel, but charges were later dropped and they were released. A case Barrios Mojica brought against five people for the 2018 murder of news [columnist Carlos Domínguez](#) also fell apart.

Most of the victims of the massacre in January 22 were Guatemalan migrants in their late teens and early 20s who had hired a smuggler to bring them to the U.S. They started heading north on January 12, departing from Comitancillo, Tuilelen, and Sipacapa, small towns and villages just south of the border with Mexico. It's an indigenous area with high levels of poverty and malnutrition, and a long history of people migrating to the U.S.

Barrios Mojica said the bodies of Marvin Tomás, 22, and Elfego Miranda, 40, had been identified based on DNA samples from family members taken the week before in Guatemala City. Two other bodies, presumably the smugglers, were identified as well.

Interior Secretary Olga Sánchez Cordero has dismissed comparisons between the January 22 murders and the 2010 San Fernando massacre, one of the most notorious atrocities suffered by migrants in Mexico's modern history. But the cases bear many of the same hallmarks.

"These violations of the human rights of migrants are absolutely unacceptable," Sánchez Cordero said on Wednesday, and suggested that Mexican immigration officers may have also been involved in the massacre. "We have had problems with many of our immigration officials, and we have to acknowledge that in order to move forward."

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The US and Canadian governments, the World Bank and global businesses and investors (in the sectors of mining, dams, African palm, sugarcane, bananas, garment “sweatshop” factors, tourism, etc.) maintain enriching and empowering relations with anti-democratic, corrupt and repressive governments in Honduras and Guatemala [& El Salvador], contributing to and benefitting from exploitation and repression, environmental harms and human rights violations, corruption and impunity.

“Shithole countries: U.S., Canada & international community help produce forced migrancy from Honduras & Guatemala”

by Grahame Russell, October 2019, <https://mailchi.mp/rightsaction/shithole-countries>

Rights Action (U.S. & Canada)

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Act / Stir up the pot / Chip away

Keep sending copies of Rights Action information (and that of other solidarity groups/ NGOs) to family, friends, your networks, politicians and media, asking ‘*Why do our governments, companies and investment firms benefit from and turn a blind eye to poverty, repression and violence, environmental and health harms that caused the forced migrancy / refugee crisis in Guatemala and Honduras?*’

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- GHRC (Guatemalan Human Rights Commission): www.ghrc-usa.org
- Breaking the Silence: www.breakingthesilenceblog.com
- Alliance for Global Justice: www.afgj.org
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