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Vigilantes in mexico

Image caption A vigilante guards the bridge during the blockade Tensions between rival vigilante groups in Michoacan have soared, with at least 11 people killed in clashes between rival vigilante groups in the western Mexican state of Michoacan. The two groups clashed in the town of La Ruana. Vigilante groups were set up almost two years ago by locals who said security forces had not done enough to protect them from drug cartels. Earlier this year, the government tried to take control of vigilantes by incorporating them into a rural police station and registering their weapons. Michoacan Security Commissioner Alfredo Castillo said the clashes sparked a historic rivalry between their leaders. During Tuesday's two-hour shooting, five members of the Hipolito Mora-led group and six followers of his rival Luis Antonio Torres were killed. Image caption Hipolito Mora, founder of one of the self-defense groups for Michoacan Mr Mora's son Manuel, was among those shot, officials said. Self-defense groups were set up in February 2013 to fight a drug cartel calling itself templar knights. Earlier this year, many cities in the western state were taken over and the Knights Templars were ousted, extorting money from local businessmen and farmers. But soon tensions emerged between the various groups that accused each other of infiltrating the same drug band they had set up to fight. There have also been disputes since groups seized ranches and land formerly held by Templar knights. In March, Mr Mora was arrested on suspicion of killing two vigilantes from two other groups. He was released two months later after prosecutors determined there was no evidence to tie him to the crime. On Tuesday night, the government said it had sent federal police officers to La Ruana to have vigilantes under control. The shooting comes as tens of thousands of Mexicans take part in protests and demand the government do more to address relations between drug cartels and local law enforcement agencies. The high level of collusion between the two was brought to the attention of the 43 students believed to have been killed by a drug gang in the neighboring state of Guerrero. The 43 went missing in the town of Iguala after being handed over to city police members by local drug gangs. Members of the gang say they were killed and their bodies burned, but so far only the remains of one of the 43 students have been identified. MEXICO CITY (AP) - Vigilante attacks and mob justice appeared to be on the rise in Mexico this week as violence mounted, more than two dozen bodies appeared along the way, and the government ruled out any new crackdown on criminal gangs. Prosecutors in the northern state of Sinaloa said Thursday five young men have been killed in recent days and all five cases of toy cars are carefully placed atop the corpses. The men were apparently car thieves, and the toys all indicated the cause of their killing and served as a warning to other thieves. The latest such murder took place on Wednesday. Prosecutors said the victim was identified as the same man seen on security camera footage earlier that day for stealing a pickup gun from a woman in front of her home in the state capital, Culiacan. That same day, a total of seven suspected kidnapers were killed by city dwellers in the largest mass lynching in recent memory in the central state of Puebla. Some were beaten, some hung. According to the National Human Rights Commission, 43 people have been killed in lynchings and 173 injured so far this year. This has already reached a record year in the mafia's judiciary in 2018. Those who take justice into their own hands are committing barbaric acts, not justice, the committee said. Vigilantes say they need to act because the authorities will not crack down on criminal gangs that have become more brazen and have begun to return to the horrific mass executions that marked Mexico's 2006-2012 drug war. On Thursday, the notoriously violent Jalisco cartel killed 19 people whose bodies - in some cases dismembered - were left hanging from an overpass and scattered along a highway in the western state of Michoacan. Another four dismembered bodies were found in plastic garbage bags on the same day on a highway in the Gulf state of Veracruz, and a few hours later five more bodies were found in other parts of the state packed in garbage bags. It was the Michoacan that Mexico's last major anti-gang offensive was launched in 2006; and it was Michoacan, where the country's largest vigilante movement was launched in 2013. At the time, farmers and ranchers were armed to oust the Caballeros Templarios drug cartel from the state with the help of the army and federal police. Some elements of these government forces have now been merged into the National Guard, a force reluctant to confront residents and criminals under President Andrés Manuel López Obrador, partly because López Obrador discourages the use of force. In July, villagers defending Puebla fuel thief pushed armed National Guard forces aside and set fire to two of their patrol vehicles. In May, an armed gang in Michoacan kidnapped five soldiers to demand an army unit recover illegal weapons from soldiers seized by the gang. López Obrador later personally congratulated the unit on avoiding violence. Hipólito Mora, one of the founders of the 2013 Michoacan vigilante movement, said such tactics were unlikely to work against violent, heavily armed cartels. Authorities need to give the armed forces more leeway, not restrict them, not allow organized crime gangs to throw stones at them and burn their vehicles, Mora said. Now he's back at his lime plantations, but he still has the weapons he used in the vigilante movement. They (the cartels) will grow if they are not stopped and the armed forces do not defend themselves, Mora said. Said. We can do whatever we want. But López Obrador said Friday that he will not be implicated in the kind of military offensive launched by then-President Felipe Calderon against the cartels in 2006 when he sent troops to Michoacan. Over the next few years, there were over 100,000 murders. We will not fall into the trap of sending a message to the war as before, said López Obrador. This has led us to a situation of crime and violence. Instead, the president vowed to pursue programs to provide young people with jobs, training and education programs so they could not be included in drug cartels. We will continue to address the root causes of the violence, he said. Peace and tranquility are truth products, and it takes time, but this is the best strategy. López Obrador said he was aware of the historical parallels. It was right there, in Michoacan, where they declared war on the drug trade and kicked a hornet's nest, causing a lot of suffering and damage to the Mexican people. Mexico is still struggling with the protracted tragedy of the latest drug war: the search for more than 40,000 missing people they will never see again. Relatives and activists themselves searched the search and dug secret gravesites used by drug and kidnapping gangs. On Thursday, activists announced the closure of the largest, longest such excavation to date, excavating a total of 156 graves in three years that included at least 298 bodies and thousands of bone fragments. The relatives expressed certainty that there were no bodies left in the vast burial ground known as the Colinas de Santa Fe in Veracruz. AYAHUALTEMPA, Mexico-13, Luis Gustavo Morales barely knows how to do basic math, but he already knows how to handle a shotgun nearly as high as he does. This indigenous village in the rugged mountains of southern Mexico enlists some of its own children to help fight criminal gangs, especially the ruthless cartel that has waged bloody turf war. Some 31 children aged 6-15 are training vigilance, although only five are currently handling real weapons. The move shows less of a force for communities than a cry for help. For years, this community of 800 people and 15 other nearby villages have been at the mercy of local cartels. In response, the cities raised their own vigilante police with about 200 armed men who mete out justice, according to local tradition. They have their own local legal codes approved by the Aboriginal Assembly and even operate in prisons. These forces, known as policía comunitaria, or communal police, have become common practice in some parts of rural Mexico, where official police forces are ineffective. The decision, starting arming some children came after the creepy creepy On January 17, 10 musicians who belonged to one of the communities, a crime locals believe came at the hands of a local drug cartel called Los Ardillos. One of the victims was 15 years old. They kill children. We have to arm the kids, said Isabel Márquez, a 25-year-old mother of two. Bernardino Sánchez, founder of local vigilante forces, said the children were asked in part to raise public awareness of the violence and inertia of their communities. He said many kids still go to school and are training three nights a week. Still, the pictures of armed children shocked Mexicans. For many, it's a new gruesome episode of Mexico's decades-long war with drug cartels, which has left about 200,000 dead and 60,000 missing. There is also new evidence that in some parts of Mexico, due to the lack of rule of law and a functioning state that can effectively control the area, it represents a high level of social collapse in parts of Mexico. The reality is that Mexico is rapidly evolving to a failed state, said Alejandro Schulmann, the director of political risk consulting firm Empira. He estimates that a third of the country is outlaw land. President Andrés Manuel López Obrador suggested at the end of January that these vigilantes could in fact be a criminal group recruiting assassins among young people. According to the country's human rights commission, vigilantes violate international law because children cannot be forced to participate in armed conflicts. State Government Héctor Astudillo has publicly committed to increasing public safety in the area while asking vigilantes to disarm children. State police did not return calls for comment. Vigilantes say they have no choice. The most important thing for us is survival, even if it means breaking the law, said Mr. Sánchez, founder of the vigilante group. If the government were to provide security, there would be no need to take up arms. The murder rate in Guerrero State, home to Ayahuatltempa and tourist refuge in Acapulco, has been more than 40 per 100,000 residents, nearly 10 times that in the U.S., for a decade. Located in the mountains of southwestern Mexico, the indigenous village of Ayahuatltempa is home to about 800 people. Show CaptionThe indigenous village of Ayahuatltempa in the mountains of southwestern Mexico is home to about 800 people. This mountainous region in southwestern Mexico has been outlawed for centuries. Bandits hid here during the colonial period to avoid the Spanish army. The insurgents from here conspired against the crown in the fight for Mexican independence. In the 1970s, Marxist guerrilla leaders made the Guerrero Mountains their headquarters. Authorities estimate that about 18 drug cartels are fighting across the state and about 25 vigilante groups, most of them set up to protect local communities criminals. Los Ardillos is now the region's main cartel. He broke out of the Beltrán Leyva cartel after Mexican special forces. After Arturo Beltrán Leyva, in 2009. It controls a lot of opium poppy fields and traffic in heroin along a corridor that passes through 16 indigenous communities, residents said. In recent years, Los Ardillos has decimated its main rival, Los Rojos, in a bloody war that left hundreds of people dead and missing. Melecio Bolaños, a husky local vigilante, said Los Ardillos wants to take control of communities to sell drugs and blackmail local businesses. He said the cartel had killed 26 residents in the past year, including several vigilantes. We refuse to obey. That's why they're attacking us, said Mr. Bolaños. Ayahuatltempa is in a cavity among the mountains, the peaks of which are wrapped in clouds. Security checkpoints made of sandbags and stones confront visitors at the entrances to the state road. Most of the inhabitants are peasants who grow corn, pumpkins and beans. The luckiest have pigs and goats. Luis Morales, the village's head of community vigilantes, gave real weapons to his two sons, 15-year-old Gerardo and Luis Gustavo. Gerardo wanted to be a doctor, but the only high school in a nearby town controlled by Los Ardillos. Luis Gustavo is glad he dropped out of school. It was boring, he said with a chuckle. One night, they gathered on the basketball court with another dozen kids to train. They lined up obediently, showed their weapons, some of them in jail, and began marching through the village, followed by a group of barking stray dogs. They practiced four jobs on the field. The kids seemed to be enjoying the training. Then those with toy guns rolled on the ground and pretended to shoot. The Morales brothers played with their rotating tops. But even the youngest were aware of what they were up to and who the enemy was. Los Ardillos, said Marvin Martínez, 10, without hesitation. We're at war with them. Write to Juan Montes juan.montes@wsj.com Copyright ©2020 Dow Jones & Company, Inc. All rights reserved. 87990cb8e856818d5eddac44c7b1cdeb8 87990cb8e856818d5eddac44c7b1cdeb8

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