News



Security authorities work at a crime scene where police staff investigator Halexy Guadalupe was gunned down by unknown assailants, in Culiacan, Mexico, Dec. 18, 2024. Mexico's bishops in a May 20, 2025, statement urged the populace not to "remain indifferent to the spiral of violence" the nation is facing. The statement followed the May 19 slaying of seven young people at a parish festival. (OSV News/Jose Betanzos, Reuters)



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Mexico City — May 22, 2025

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The Mexican bishops' conference has condemned a massacre of seven young people — including minors — at a parish festival, while urging action on the part of authorities amid rising violence and warning the population to avoid indifference in the face of recurring atrocities.

The conference also expressed outrage at the assassination of two senior officials in the Mexico City government, who were gunned down in a vehicle after they stopped outside a metro station on a busy thoroughfare in the national capital May 20.

The attack on the seven youths occurred around 2:40 a.m. on May 19 in the town square of San Bartolo de Berrios in western Guanajuato state, where gunmen "from a cartel" arrived in trucks and "brazenly opened fire on the people they found there," according to a statement from the Archdiocese of León, signed by Archbishop Jaime Calderón Calderón.

The Guanajuato state prosecutor's office confirmed the number of deaths but offered no additional details, The Associated Press reported.

"We are outraged, shocked and we condemn this act," Calderón continued.

"I urge our authorities to find those responsible and seek justice so these incidents never happen again in our society. Uncovering the truth and applying justice is a duty to bring comfort to the families of the victims."

The Mexican bishops' conference said in a May 20 statement, "As pastors of the People of God, we cannot remain indifferent to the spiral of violence that is

devastating so many communities in our country. … We cannot get used to living with violent death, nor allow impunity to become the norm."

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The massacre was the second such attack on young people in Guanajuato in barely two months. Eight young people were gunned down in March outside a parish after a celebration of Mass in Salamanca, a municipality in the neighboring Diocese of Irapuato.

Guanajuato — long considered one of Mexico's most Catholic states and visited by Pope Benedict XVI in 2012 — has become one of Mexico's industrial heartlands as automakers opened factories over the past three decades. But violence has plagued the state over the past decade as drug cartels dispute a lucrative and illicit trade in fencing gasoline siphoned from pipelines operated by Pemex, the state-run oil company.

Mexico City has been considered a bastion of relative calm amid violence in other parts of Mexico. But two functionaries were murdered May 20: Ximena Guzmán, personal secretary to mayor Clara Brugada, and José Muñoz, a government adviser.

No motive has been given for the murders and the suspects remain at large. Brugada said earlier in May that homicides had fallen 49% since 2019 in Mexico City.

The National Dialogue for Peace — an initiative of the Mexican bishops' conference, the Jesuits' Mexico province and the Conference of Major Superiors of Religious of Mexico — expressed outrage over the murders. The national dialogue remembered Guzmán as a "generous person," who served as a liaison with Brugada in its peacebuilding efforts.

The bishops' conference said in a May 20 statement that the crime in Mexico City "adds to a painful chain of violent events," which after the massacre in Guanajuato "is an alarming sign of the weakening of the social fabric, impunity, and the absence of peace in vast regions of our nation."