One in 10 Mexican Police Officers Unfit for Duty

Mexico City, October 28 (RHC)-- More than 28,000 police officers in Mexico -- almost one out of ten police officers in the country -- have failed workplace screening tests yet remain on active duty, according to a new study by Mexican non-governmental watchdog group Causa en Comun, or Common Cause.

The study said that of 303,492 Mexican federal, state and municipal police officers across the country, 28,000 failed to pass polygraph tests, drug screening, and aptitude tests. Common Cause said that it concerned that many officers were not reevaluated in a timely fashion, as the law requires a review every three years.

Moreover, according to the 2009 National Public Security Law, all sworn personnel working in a preventative or investigative capacity must be dismissed from the force if they fail the workplace screening tests.

In the state of Sinaloa -- one of Mexico's most troubled regions -- 654 officers, representing nearly 55 percent of federal judicial personnel in the state, failed the tests. For Sinaloa state police, 592 officers representing approximately 37 percent of all provincial officers failed their evaluations.

The state of Guerrero, where 43 college students from Ayotzinapa Rural Teachers' College disappeared while traveling to Mexico City two years ago, has significant numbers of unfit officers, as do the states of

Michoacan, Veracruz and Baja California.

Mexican police, along with unpopular President Peña Nieto's administration, have been hit by many scandals lately. In August, Mexican police faced accusations of having carried out and covered up 22 extrajudicial executions on a ranch in Tanhuato in the western state of Michoacan in May 2015.

The government and police have also been plagued by accusations from Mexican opposition forces and popular movements of having covered up ten deaths at the hand of police in Oaxaca from June. Officials have maintained that they remain unclear as to who opened fire on a group of protesting education workers who took to the streets in opposition to neoliberal education reforms.

Nieto's government is widely unpopular, with a plummeting approval rating, rampant violence, corruption and crime – all of which he vowed to clean up after he was elected president in 2012. His administration has also faced heavy criticism for failing to investigate the tens of thousands of people who have gone missing in Mexico over the past decade.

The Organization of American States warned in 2015 that the cost of corruption in Mexico is five times greater than elsewhere, on average. Mexican police killed 17 people for every cop who perished in gun battles during 2014, a study by Mexico's National Autonomous University found.

Despite initiatives to purge the state of inadequate police, the numbers of poorly trained officers appears to have remained static, according to statistics from the National Public Security System Secretariat.

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