

Another Mexican mayoral candidate murdered ahead of general elections



Mexico City, June 22 (RHC)-- Omar Gomez Lucatero, an independent candidate who aspired to be the mayor of Aguililla in the state of Michoacan, was murdered next to the local cemetery, which is close to a military barracks. His death brings the number of politicians murdered to 120 since September 2017, since the official beginning of this latest electoral season, the most violent in the country's history.

The governor of Michoacan vowed to carry out detailed investigations to find the responsible people of Lucatero's murder. "I express my firm commitment to find the responsible people of the murder of Omar Gomez Lucatero, a mayoral candidate for the Aguililla municipality, in events that took place a few moments ago, and take them to justice."

According to local newspapers, Gomez was shot dead when leaving his home in Las Palomas community, located in a region called "Tierra Caliente." The region is located between the states of Mexico, Guerrero and Michoacan, and has a high presence of criminal organizations of different sorts, including the Jalisco Nueva Generacion and the Nueva Familia Michoacana cartels.

In a video uploaded to social media, the cousin of Gomez Lucatero says an armed group arrived to the candidate's house and forced everyone to leave before executing him. Trying to hold back his tears, his cousin blames the local candidate of the Revolutionary Institutional Party (PRI), Osvaldo Maldonado, for the murder.

Gomez was running as an independent candidate after he left the PRI. He became the mayor of Aguililla shortly after in 2014 when Jose Cruz Valencia was arrested and had to leave office.

His case is the latest in a string of attacks against local politicians running for office in the upcoming elections. Similar attacks recently claimed the lives of Alejandro Chavez Zavala who was running for mayor of Taretan, and Miguel Amezcua Manzo who aspired to be the town councilor of Santiago Tangamandapio both in Michoacan state.

Chavez and his wife, Mary Dimas, were shot by an unknown assailant driving a black Ford Lobo while leaving the city following a campaign event. Alejandro's brother, Julio Chavez Zavala, took his place in the presidential race.

According to consulting firm Etellekt, there's been 120 murders and 400 attacks against politicians since September 2017. Out of the murdered, 29 were pre-candidates and 16 candidates, and 80 of them belonged to opposition parties. The rest of them were mayors, former mayors, militants, social leaders, councilors and representatives. The same firm also recorded 351 murders against non-elected government officers.

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