

15-year-old is assassinated while being treated in hospital in Mexico as homicides reach record levels

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On Sunday, a 15-year-old youth was shot and wounded and later assassinated while being treated for his wounds at the General Hospital of Tecate in the Mexican state of Baja California. Tecate sits on the US border and is home of the internationally known Tecate beer.

This shocking incident has unfolded amid record levels of both coronavirus cases and homicides across the country, which are placing intolerable burdens on the already underfunded health care system. The response by local authorities and the federal government of President Andrés Manuel López Obrador (known as AMLO), which inflexibly prioritize capitalist profits over the lives of workers and youth, has only exacerbated the twin crises.

While minimizing the danger of COVID-19 and seeking to normalize mass deaths, the AMLO administration refuses to carry out any policies to counter the widespread conditions of poverty and social inequality that lie at the root of the homicide levels and the uncontrolled spread of COVID-19.

The government has projected that Mexico will reach 40,000 homicides by the end of the year, breaking 2019's record of 36,476 killings. The bulk of the homicides are tied to organized crime and operations conducted by the Mexican police and military, ostensibly to combat the drug-trafficking cartels.

At the same time, Mexico has reported more than 1,250,000 coronavirus cases and 114,000 confirmed COVID-19 deaths, as hospitals in Mexico City, Ciudad Juárez and other cities begin to fill up. Hospital occupancy in Baja California has increased from 33 percent to 72 percent since early November.

At around 2 in the afternoon on Sunday, 15-year-old

Martin W. was shot in the back. A local Facebook news service, *CNR TECATE*, reported the incident and showed the body of the young man being treated for a gunshot wound by the paramedics.

There was reportedly still hope that the youth would recover. After he was transported to the hospital and was being treated for his wounds, a gunman walked into the hospital with the sole mission of finishing him off. The gunman found the youth in the emergency wing of the hospital, where he delivered the coup de grâce as horrified medical staff looked on.

This sort of barbarism and unabashed act of criminality was once a rarity in the small city of 73,000 people. Nowadays, stories of execution-style murders are becoming ever more common. Organized crime is increasingly taking control of the city, even to the extent that cartel thugs can kill a young man in his hospital bed in plain view of the public.

These acts are already routine in large cities like Tijuana, which is located south of the border of San Diego, California, and 30 miles west of Tecate.

AMLO campaigned on the promise to solve the issue of violence, partly by removing the military from the streets, but homicides have kept increasing during the first two years of his tenure. While proclaiming a policy of "Hugs not Bullets," he secured approval for a new National Guard, composed of military and former federal police, with total disregard for their long record of crimes, human rights abuses and involvement with the drug cartels themselves.

AMLO proved his salt by coming to the aid of General Salvador Cienfuegos, also known as the "Godfather," by securing his return from the United States, where he was imprisoned and facing trial, and

setting him free without charges. Cienfuegos was indicted by the US government on charges of providing the H-2 cartel with protection, taking bribes, and deploying the military against its rivals during his tenure as defense minister.

Mexican youth like Martin W. make up the vast majority of victims of organized crime and government operations in what constitutes a war against Mexican working class youth. Most homicide victims are young men under the age of 30 from the poorest layers of the population.

Recently, there have been protests by pseudo-left, anarchist and feminist organizations that have demanded that the authorities end the “femicides” in Mexico. In the capital of Mexico City, they occupied a Human Rights Commission building, chanting “Stop killing us.” AMLO criticized the protests as the wrong way to enact change. Last month, local police under AMLO’s Morena party in Cancún used gunfire to disperse a similar feminist protest as National Guard troops stood watch.

Pseudo-left organizations have focused their activism on the increased killings of women under the artificial label of “femicides” coined by the identity politics milieu. While there has been a horrifying increase in the killings of women, they form a small fraction of the overall homicides. Out of the 40,000 projected homicides, just over 3,000 of the victims will be women.

The bourgeois media and pseudo-left activists blame the homicides on a culture of violence in Mexico rooted in *Machismo*. Thus, they frame the problem as one of culture and identity. The enemy is not fundamentally the complicit government or organized criminal organizations with ties to the business elites and the state, but a long-ingrained hatred of women that supposedly lies deep within Mexican culture. This is patently false and hides the true causes of the homicide epidemic in Mexico, which are tied to Mexican capitalism under the auspices of U.S. imperialism.

The pseudo-left’s focus on “femicides” obscures the fact that the overwhelming majority of homicide victims, men and women alike, are drawn from the working class and the most impoverished layers of society. The immense inequality between the rich and poor in Mexico and oppressive poverty afflicting Mexican youth are creating conditions where organized

crime thrives. It is a question of class and global capitalism.

This devastated environment creates the conditions in which both the cartels and state forces are able to recruit youth and send them to war against each other. The cartels have no respect for age or sex. They possess government-sanctioned impunity to dispose of Mexican working-class youth. Local, state, and federal authorities demonstrate complete indifference to the terrible conditions and suffering of the working class, which have now been vastly exacerbated by the COVID-19 pandemic.

Mexican youth and workers need to join their international brothers and sisters to form their own independent political movement to get rid of the parasitic cartels and capitalists that are plundering their livelihoods and destroying their lives. Only an international socialist revolution can achieve this aim.



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