
At Least 16 Killed, 5 Wounded in Mexican Prison Riot

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At least 16 inmates in a central Mexico prison were killed and five more were wounded in a riot that closed out a violent 2019 for the country, authorities said.

Zacatecas state security secretary Ismael Camberos Hernandez told local press that authorities had confiscated four guns believed to have been brought into the Cieneguillas state prison during visits Tuesday. He said the prison had been searched for weapons on Saturday and Sunday and that no guns had been found.

The melee broke out around 2:30 p.m. Tuesday and the prison was brought under control by 5 p.m., according to a statement from the state security agency. Fifteen of the victims died at the prison and one died later at a hospital.

One prisoner was detained with a gun still in his possession and the other three guns were found inside the prison, the statement said.

Camberos said not all the victims died from gunshot wounds. Some were stabbed and others beaten with objects. No guards or police were wounded, he said.

Camberos did not offer a possible motive for the attacks, but such killings frequently involve score settling between rival cartel members or a battle for control of the prison's illicit business.

Mexico has a long history of deadly prison clashes. In October, six inmates were killed in a prison in Morelos state.

In September, Nuevo Leon state closed the infamous Topo Chico prison, the site of many killings over the years. In February 2016, 49 prisoners died there during rioting when two factions of the Zetas cartel clashed.
