

Beat: Miscellaneous

Founding leader of Zetas drug cartel killed in gunfight with Mexican Marines

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USPA News - The suspected founder and leader of the violent `Los Zetas` drug cartel is believed to have been killed during a confrontation with security forces in northern Mexico, military officials said on Tuesday. His body was later stolen by gunmen from a funeral home.

The confrontation occurred on Sunday afternoon at around 1:30 p.m. local time in the municipality of Progreso, located in the northern state of Coahuila, and reportedly resulted in the death of Heriberto Lazcano, who is also known as `el Lazca` and was the founding leader of the Los Zetas drug cartel. According to Mexico`s Navy, local residents reported that a group of gunmen, suspected to be linked to organized crime, were in the area of Progreso. Authorities deployed security forces to verify the reports, but Naval vehicles patrolling the area were quickly attacked with grenades. Navy forces responded to the attack, triggering a violent confrontation which resulted in the deaths of two suspected criminals. In addition, two assault rifles, a grenade launcher, a dozen grenades, as well as a rocket launcher and two rockets were confiscated from the two suspects. After a preliminary investigation by the local forensic office, one of the two bodies was identified as Lazcano through both fingerprints and photos. Further medical exams were planned to verify the preliminary information, but gunmen were later able to steal Lazcano`s corpse in a stolen hearse. According to partial figures released in January, at least 12,903 people were killed in Mexico in violence blamed on organized crime from January to September 2011. Figures for the entire year are not yet available but they will likely bring the total figure for 2011 to more than 17,000, the highest annual number yet.

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