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## **Mexico Fifth Poorest Nation In Latin America**

*by Steven Ranieri*

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According to a recent study by the UN Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean (ECLAC), 40 million Mexicans lack sufficient resources to meet basic needs, compared to 26.3 million ten years ago. The study, which focuses on poverty in Latin America during the past decade, indicates that Mexico now ranks as the fifth most impoverished nation in Latin America, after Guatemala, Peru, Brazil and Colombia. Statistics published by the National Nutrition Institute for Indigenous Communities show that efforts to combat poverty, such as the prominent National Solidarity Program (PRONASOL), are not keeping pace with the rate of impoverishment. According to the Institute, in some indigenous communities, 90% of children suffer from malnutrition. An average 100 of every 1,000 infants die before their first birthday. The International Labor Organization (ILO) cited the Mixteco area of Oaxaca state as the poorest region in Latin America. The region's 20,000 sq.km. are inhabited by 600,000 poverty-stricken people in 155 municipalities and 800 towns and villages. Only three out of 10 members of the Mixteco Indian tribe of Oaxaca remain in their places of origin, according to the ILO study. Extreme deforestation, erosion, and lack of organization in indigenous communities were listed as chief causes of emigration. (Sources: The Mexico City News, 10/29/90; El Financiero, 11/05/90)

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