

Colombian FARC Rebels Warn 'New Genocide' Targets Colombia's Social Movements



Bogota, November 22 (RHC)-- Leaders of Colombia's largest rebel army, the FARC, penned an open letter to President Juan Manuel Santos Monday urging him to publicly acknowledge the crisis of fatal violence targeting rural and social leaders in the country that they dubbed a "new genocide."

"The situation is very dramatic and worrying," wrote the FARC. "More than 200 deaths so far this year with a total blanket of impunity. A new genocide is in motion against social and campesino leaders."

The open letter comes after yet another campesino leader, Erley Monroy Fierro, was gunned down Friday, and just one day before Santos and FARC leader Rodrigo Londoño, also known as Timoleon Jimenez or Timochenko, are expected to sign the updated peace deal.

In the letter, the FARC detailed a slew of attacks in the past week threatening the safety of labor and campesino leaders with systematic violence, including three murders and two assassination attempts in the span of just 48 hours.

The wave of attacks against rural leaders, trade unionists and peace activists chillingly recalls the history of the violent extermination of the left-wing political party Patriotic Union beginning in the 1980s.

Now, the Marcha Patriótica, a political movement uniting some 2,000 social organizations, reports that more than 120 of its activists have been killed since it was founded four years ago.

Social movements and left-wing political leaders have raised alarm in recent days that a new political genocide is already emerging.

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