

Forty new COVID-19 cases in Colombian prison



Bogota, April 23 (RHC)-- In Colombia, Meta Department Governor Juan Zuluaga confirmed 40 new COVID-19 cases in the Villavicencio prison, a public facility where 70 infected people have been registered so far.

The situation in the rest of the Colombian prisons is still uncertain, although various social organizations have asked the conservative President Ivan Duque to take effective measures to prevent a greater number of infections in closed and crowded buildings.

"There are over 120,000 people -- including mothers, fathers, grandparents, children and siblings -- who are serving sentences or waiting for their legal proceedings to end," stated Alberto Brunori, the representative of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR) in Colombia.

During an audience at the Senate's Peace Commission, this international official also showed that this Andean country has 132 jails with a capacity to accommodate 80,928 people, according to data available at the National Penitentiary and Prison Institute.

"The situation is even more serious when it is considered that 6,822 people are overcrowded in inhumane conditions in 239 transitory detention centers located inside police stations. On March 26, the Constitutional Court ordered precautionary measures," Brunori explained and added that the

overcrowding rate at these transitory sites is 132 percent.

Prisoners are in an extremely risky condition because the Duque administration has not guaranteed basic rights related to access to drinking water, health, and food.

Brunori also requested prison authorities to apply basic human rights standards for persons under their jurisdiction and the UN minimum protocols to treat prisoners.

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