

# *Protests against violence in Buenaventura, Colombia*

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**More than 20 homicides have been registered so far this year in the main port on the Colombian Pacific coast. | Photo: WRadio**

Bogota, February 6 (RHC)-- In Colombia, residents of Buenaventura raised their voices in rejection of the increase of violence in the district, hours after armed clashes between local gangs in the Juan XXIII neighborhood.

Protesters blocked the El Piñal bridge, preventing vehicles from entering the main port on Colombia's Pacific coast. Inhabitants of Buenaventura launched an SOS in search of help against the violence that

they denounce has intensified due to armed groups fighting for the control of some areas.

Bonaverenses are asking the government to take action to stop the wave of crimes, threats, extortion and forced displacement of families. Some inhabitants say that this situation of displacement has been generated by the confrontations between the gangs 'Los Shotas' and 'Los Espartanos,' in sectors such as the Juan XXIII neighborhood, which is one of the most affected.

The mayor of Buenaventura, Víctor Hugo Vidal, affirms that he is not unaware of the situation of anxiety, violence and terror that the port city is experiencing, but he highlighted the results that the authorities have had in the last few weeks.

The Secretary of Security of Buenaventura, Ulpiano Riascos, confirmed that clashes between illegal armed groups were registered in the Juan XXIII neighborhood, which caused several inhabitants to leave their homes and seek refuge. The official pointed out that the recent violent events in the District were probably motivated by the control of territories.

So far this year there have been more than 20 cases of homicides in the main port on the Colombian Pacific coast. At the end of the mobilization, the organizers called for new marches on Sunday and Monday.

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