

Two social leaders murdered in Cauca region, Colombia



Indepaz reported that 141 human rights leaders and defenders have been killed this year, bringing the total to 1,256 since the signing of the Peace Accord. | Photo: RT

Bogotá, October 19 (RHC)-- The Institute for Development and Peace Studies (Indepaz) and Colombian media report Tuesday the murder of two social leaders and other acts of violence occurred in the departments of Valle del Cauca and Cauca (west, on the Pacific coast).

In messages disseminated through social networks, Indepaz reported the murder of indigenous leader Luis Alfonso Narváez by armed men who entered his home, in the village of El Guayabo, indigenous

village of Santa Bárbara, municipality of La Vega, Cauca.

Members of the community immediately took him to the local hospital, where he arrived without vital signs due to the seriousness of his injuries.

Narváez had served on three occasions as governor of the resguardo and opposed mining and energy projects. It appears that his assailants took advantage of the fact that his assigned escort was not with him. Several illegal armed groups operate in the area, the paramilitary Autodefensas Gaitanistas de Colombia (AGC) and other irregular armed groups.

Indepaz states that with Luis Alfonso Narváez, 141 leaders and human rights defenders have been murdered this year and 1,256 since the signing of the Peace Accord.

The non-governmental organization also reports this Tuesday the crime of social leader Efrén España, attacked this Monday in front of his house by armed individuals, at 8:40 p.m. local time. Efrén was one of the founders of the Peasant Workers Association of Argelia (Ascamta) and led actions in the Nueva Colombia neighborhood of Sinaí, Valle del Cauca.

Meanwhile, a leader of the Association of Indigenous Councils of Northern Cauca (Acín), Edwin Mauricio Capaz, demanded this Monday that the Colombian State and the international community address the acts of violence in the territories of the native peoples.

Hours before, the death of two indigenous people from the northern municipality of Caldon, Cauca, identified as Marco Aurelio Casso (48 years old, resident of Pioyá) and Modesto Yonda Peña (22, Plan de Zúñiga), was reported.

According to the authorities, armed subjects arrived at the public establishment where they were, took them away from there and shot them with their hands tied in a secluded place known as El Naranjal, in the Plan de Zúñiga village.

Violence also reached northern Cauca. In the Río Palo neighborhood, municipality of Puerto Tejada, hired killers on motorcycles shot a member of a local criminal group and killed his three-year-old daughter.

According to the departmental police commander, Colonel Gustavo Adolfo Martínez, the incident was the result of retaliation between gangs and one of the perpetrators was identified.

The Governor's Office of Cauca and the Mayor's Office of Puerto Tejada offered a reward of up to 15 million Colombian pesos (about US\$4,000) to anyone who provides information leading to the capture of the attacker.

In another incident presumably linked to hired killings, armed men entered a discotheque in Palmira, in the south of Valle del Cauca, and shot indiscriminately at those present. Andrés Mauricio Martínez (23 years old) and Jean Carlos Arboleda (26) were killed, while two young men and a 57 year old woman were wounded.



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