

Crossfire in Colombia

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By Roberto Morejón

Shortly after a dramatic call by Venezuelan authorities for an intervention of the competent agencies to stop violence in Colombia, the murder of a teenager dedicated to environmental protection was reported in Colombia.

Venezuelan Foreign Minister Félix Plasencia accused Colombian President Iván Duque of doing nothing to reverse the humanitarian crisis in Colombia.

The most recent events confirm the concern of the Venezuelan Minister, as the murder of Breiner David Cucuñame, 14 years old, the first environmentalist to be killed in 2022, was reported in Colombia.

Breiner was walking with his father through a region in the department of Cauca when they were intercepted and killed by unidentified individuals.

INDEPAZ, Instituto de Estudios para el Desarrollo y la Paz (Institute for Development and Peace Studies), also denounced the assassination of two social leaders in the Colombian departments of Antioquia and Chocó.

These are not isolated events, as the Regional Indigenous Council of Cauca puts the number of members of native communities killed in the last three years at 300.

In Colombia, it is dangerous to be an activist defending human rights or the environment, to question the impositions of the State or to advocate respect for native peoples.

According to the Ombudsman's Office, 145 activists in favor of citizens' prerogatives were exterminated in Colombia last year.

Worse still, violence reaches foreigners, since according to the non-governmental organization Consultoría para los Derechos Humanos y el desplazamiento, almost 2,000 Venezuelans who emigrated to Colombia lost their lives.

By the way, President Nicolás Maduro informed in October 2021 about Caracas' intention to sue Iván Duque before the International Criminal Court for the extermination and persecution of Venezuelan migrants in Colombia.

The concern of the Venezuelan authorities is added to that expressed by sectors of the population in Colombia, because the heavy burdens of the armed conflict are added to the legacy of drug trafficking and the actions of paramilitaries and dissidents of armed groups.

But the Duque government, backed by the ultra-conservative Democratic Center of Álvaro Uribe, looks the other way, obsessed as it is with dealing a setback to the Bolivarian Revolution, while Colombia is bleeding to death.

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