

# *FARC Responds to Government Accusations over Oil Spill*

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Bogota, June 29 (teleSUR-RHC) The Revolutionary Armed Forces of Colombia (FARC) expressed on Saturday its regret over the result of an oil spill, after a bomb by the group hit a crude oil pipeline on June 22.

FARC Commander Carlos Lozada said in a statement that the spill in the town of Tumaco, southeast of Colombia, was an undesired consequence of the ongoing internal conflict between the FARC, government forces and private paramilitary armies. He also stressed the FARC does not rejoice in the consequences of war, unlike the national media and government.

"We are not proud of the result of our actions against the oil infrastructure, nor do we take pride in the deaths of enemy soldiers when they occur, unlike the joy, shamelessly shown by media and government spokespeople, each time they display our dead fighters as trophies of war," Lozada said in a statement published on the group's official website.

He further stressed that hostilities between the government and his group had to stop in order to move forward with the peace talks to end the conflict.

Colombian officials did not waste time in blaming the FARC for the incident and pointing fingers. The environment minister called it "the country's biggest environmental disaster in the past decade."

However, the group's commander could not help but to point to the government's systematic environmental abuses. "The intense use of agrochemicals and defoliants has brought serious damage, particularly in forest regions and areas where aerial spraying is carried out.

The creation of roads and major infrastructure projects without taking any measures, have also caused a terrible environmental impact. Only between 2000 and 2007, 336,000 hectares of forest were destroyed every year and specifically the Colombian Pacific lost 14,322 sq. kms of tropical forest," he said.

The June 22nd incident caused a spill of at least 400,000 gallons of crude oil into areas in the region. While Lozada maintained that his group had a hand in it, he stressed that the government was also implicit in causing of the crisis, as it refuses to halt aggression, even as the FARC and the government are in the midst of peace talks, ongoing for the past two-and-a-half years.

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