

Colombian Army Officers Removed for Suspected Eavesdropping



Bogotá, February 5 (RHC) -- Four senior Colombian army officers were removed from duty Tuesday for an allegedly illegal interception in the government's delegation attending the peace talks with the Revolutionary Armed Forces of Colombia (FARC), local media reported.

Among the four officers were the chief of army intelligence and the director of national army's central technical intelligence, Colombian Minister of Defense Juan Carlos Pinzon was quoted by the local daily El Tiempo's website as saying.

The announcement came after Colombia's *Semana* magazine reported that the army had recruited young civilian hackers to intercept e-mails and instant messages of the government delegation.

Pinzon said that the army will not tolerate any illegal behavior of any kind involving privacy. Colombian Attorney General's Officer Eduardo Montealegre said it is being reviewed whether the intelligence work was diverted to activities prohibited by the constitution, such as interfering in fundamental right of privacy.

Colombian President Juan Manuel Santos Tuesday also ordered an investigation into the case and condemned any illegal use of intelligence. He also expressed concern that the ongoing peace talks in Havana with the FARC could be affected by the spying allegation.

FARC spokeswoman Victoria Sandino said in Havana the it would issue a statement on the matter on Wednesday.

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