

28 Dead, 365 Injured in Venezuelan Unrest



Geneva, March 14 (RHC) -- The death toll from violent unrest in Venezuela has reached 28, with 365 others injured, according to a top government official.

Venezuela's Attorney General Luisa Ortega Diaz, who is attending a meeting of the United Nations Human Rights Council in Geneva, Switzerland, said in statements to reporters that among the dead were three National Guard members, adding that of the injured, 109 were police or military personnel.

"That proves the 'protests' have not been peaceful, but violent," Ortega said, refuting media reports that demonstrators were mostly students and youth angered by economic hardships.

She said officials in the capital have seized 25 firearms, more than 200 explosive devices, "including Molotov cocktails and C-4 explosives." Ortega said she told the UN Council that the Venezuelan government planned to punish those responsible for the violence, as part of efforts to regain peace and establish order.

Those detained during the unrest, which has been mainly concentrated in 18 cities, have been "processed within 48 hours of being apprehended" as required by law, Ortega added. She also said 1,293 detainees had been released and 104 remained in custody, accused of serious crimes during the demonstrations.

“We need to ensure there is no impunity and it must be fully investigated to determine whether those people held in jail are responsible of those deaths,” she said.

Venezuela has been the scene of violent unrest since February 12th. The government says the violence is part of a scheme by the U.S.-backed opposition to destabilize institutional order and topple the administration of President Nicolás Maduro.

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