

Colombian rebel leader calls on government to fully implement peace agreement



Bogota, November 27 (RHC)-- The leader of the Alternative Revolutionary Forces of the Common (FARC), Rodrigo Londoño, or Timochenko, has denounced the government for its failure to protect former rebels -- 84 of whom have been killed by paramilitaries since he signed the Final Peace Accord with former president Juan Manuel Santos two years ago.

Timochenko, who signed the peace agreement on November 26, 2016, with then-president Santos in Bogota says that "progress has been very limited" regarding the implementation of the agreement. He argues that the accords have hardly been implemented, especially in terms of "access to land." And he is asking the head of the United Nations Mission in Colombia, Jean Arnault, to "ensure compliance with the agreement."

Specifically, Timochenko asks Arnault to provide "access to land for former guerrillas following the procedures already identified in the National Reintegration Council." The agreement outlines that the 7,000 guerrillas who laid down their arms will be provided with access to land and land titles. Colombia's 50-year internal conflict resulted in at least 6.6 million hectares being illegally expropriated.

The Special Jurisdiction for Peace (JEP) or the Truth Commission component of the peace accords has also been limited in its scope and powers by President Ivan Duque.

Since Timochenko signed the accord, 84 former rebels have been killed, mainly by the growing number of paramilitary groups in rural areas working on behalf of extraction enterprises and narcotraffickers.

The two most recent murders occurred in the departments of Meta and Nariño. Former FARC Sebastian Coy Rincon went missing November 15 and his body was recently found in the rural municipality of Uribe, while Angel Aleyser Melendez was discovered dead in the village of El Tablon in Nariño.

Timochenko and other FARC party members have been requesting a meeting with Duque since November 6, "in order to put real and concrete actions on the table" to stop the murders of former rebels and social activists.

Colombian rights group Research Institute for Development and Peace (Indepaz) reports that between November 2016 and May 2018, 385 rural activists and land rights leaders have been murdered, 11 of them at the hands of state security forces sent to these areas to protect the activists.

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