

Sixth Indigenous leader killed in Colombia in one week



Bogota, November 3 (RHC)-- The Regional Indigenous Council of Cauca (CRIC) has condemned the murder of another member of the community in the municipality of Toribío -- the sixth murder that occurred in a week in the department of southwest Colombia which has been plagued with violence.

"Indigenous authorities confirm a new murder in the village of Loma Linda, municipality of Toribío. The victim was identified as 18-year-old Alexander Vitonas Casamachin," the CRIC said in its Twitter account.

The human rights coordinator of the Association of Indigenous Cabildos of North Cauca (ACIN), Edwin Mauricio Capaza, condemned the murder of the young man and explained that although he "did not play a leadership role, his death is part of the regional tragedy."

Cauca is plunged into a spiral of violence due to the presence of armed groups such as the National Liberation Army (ELN) guerrillas and paramilitaries and drug gangs who are engaged in a power struggle over the control of that region. It is one of Colombia's biggest drug-producing regions.

Last Tuesday, armed groups murdered Neehwe'sx leader Cristina Bautista and village guards Asdrual Cayapu, Eliodoro Inscué, José Gerardo Soto and James Wilfredo Soto at the Tacueyó farmhouse in Toribío.

In addition, the NGO Somos Defensores Program detailed Saturday in its "Semiannual Report January-June 2019" that in that period 59 Indigenous people have been killed in Colombia, 10 of them in Cauca.

In response to such a surge in violence, Colombian President Iván Duque called on Colombians to unite with the objective of confronting drug trafficking and recalled that he sent 2,500 soldiers to that department to counter the crisis.

"That is the fuel of violence. Drug trafficking has always been an enemy of institutionality, prosperity, coexistence and Colombians can not have bends because to face drug trafficking we must all go together as a society," he said.

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