

FARC says plan is underway to exterminate former rebel fighters



Bogota, January 31 (RHC)-- Colombia's former rebel group, FARC -- now called the Common Revolutionary Alternative Force -- has denounced the execution of an extermination plan against former guerrilla fighters who are settled in the Ituango Municipality, in Antioquia.

The humanitarian situation is particularly serious in the Santa Lucia community where 12 citizens, who were in the process of returning to civilian life, have been killed so far. "The government cannot continue to hide this plan of extermination against peace. We are attending a friend's funeral every three days," a resident said and explained that the presence of the Army is notorious in the zone.

"Although there is a lot of Army and Police there, ex-combatants are killed. They have not been able to prevent this bloodshed," Omar Restrepo, FARC representative said.

Among the actions against the peace process would be an attack on Pastor Alape, who is the FARC delegate to the National Reincorporation Council (CNR).

Earlier this week, the possible attack was confirmed by President Ivan Duque's Stabilization and Consolidation Adviser, Emilio Archila, who indicated that the Police and the National Protection Unit (UNP) have already been alerted, as reported by the Anadolu Agency.

Antioquia's social organizations asked the Colombian government for immediate and efficient measures to protect their leaders and the lives of the 2016 Peace Agreement signatories. They also requested the international community, the Congress peace commission, and the mainstream media to pressure the Duque administration to implement efficient actions aimed at defending peace.

Amid the persistent violence in Colombia, former President Ernesto Samper (1994-1998) said that crimes against social leaders and former combatants directly affect the peace process. "The murder of former FARC guerrillas has a tendency that could even equal the genocide against the Patriotic Union perpetrated some years ago. Peace is killed every time a social leader or a former guerrilla fighter dies," Samper warned.

"Social leaders are being killed because they defend agreements related to land, illegal crops substitution, and human rights. Do you want to end this genocide? Respect the Peace agreements and reactivate negotiations with the National Liberation Army(ELN)," he added.

Carlos Ruiz Massieu, head of the UN Verification Mission in Colombia, stressed that security is one of the main challenges for the comprehensive implementation of the 2016 Peace Agreement.

However, he also referred to the need to find concrete solutions to problems such as the existence of illicit economic activities, the presence of armed groups, and the lack of economic opportunities for the population.

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