

# *Colombian Army Kills 12 Rebel Fighters*

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Bogotá, May 13 (RHC) – Twelve rebels were killed last week in operations against the FARC and ELN guerrilla groups in several Colombian regions, army officials said on Monday.

Three FARC members died on the night of May 9th in a clash with the Colombian Army in Antioquia. The day before the firefight, the Colombian Air Force bombed a camp in Guaviare, killing four FARC members. Colombian Gen. Juan Pablo Amaya stated the attack was targeting a high-ranking FARC leader believed to be residing in the camp.

“The target was Carlos Antonio Lozada. We didn't get him on this occasion, but air, land and river efforts will continue,” Amaya told reporters.

In related statements, Defense Minister Juan Carlos Pinzon said the army also prevented a FARC attack in the country's southern Huila department, where rebels planned to detonate several explosives along local roads.

Meanwhile, peace negotiations between the rebel group and the Colombian government resumed in Havana on Monday, despite the clashes.

In a statements, the FARC voiced its optimism regarding the agreement reached on the issue of illegal drugs.

Rebel spokesman Jesús Santrich affirmed that both parties are hopeful and willing to reach an agreement.

However, Santrich called for the Colombian desire for peace not to be used as a way of manipulating voters in view of the upcoming elections on May 25th. The current round of talks should conclude on May 22nd, when the announcement of a concrete agreement on the topic of illegal drugs is expected.

Since November 2012, both peace delegations, led by former vice-president Humberto de la Calle and guerrilla commander Iván Márquez, have been looking for a political solution to the decades-old military conflict in Colombia.

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