

Colombia Bus Fire Kills 31 Children and One Adult



Bogotá, May 19 (RHC) — At least 31 children and one adult have been killed in an incident during which a bus with dozens of passengers caught fire in a city in northern Colombia.

Regional security authorities say that another 18 people were wounded in the fire, which took place in the city of Fundacion, located some 750 kilometers north of the capital, Bogotá.

The charred bodies of victims are being identified using dental records in Barranquilla, the nearest city to Fundacion town where the accident occurred, said Major Eduardo Velez, coordinator of Magdalena province's emergency response corps.

He said the fire started after the driver attempted to start the faulty bus by pouring fuel into the engine which he accessed through the floor of the cabin. The driver reportedly escaped unharmed and was being questioned by police.

According to local officials, the bus was authorized to carry only 38 passengers; however, at the time of the accident, it was carrying around 50, most of them under the age of 14. The officials added that the bus was returning from an event at an evangelical Christian church in Fundacion.

Local reports say that President Juan Manuel Santos is traveling to Fundacion to console families of the victims.

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