

# *Indigenous peoples in Colombia denounce threats from armed groups in Cauca*

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**The associations of indigenous peoples claim that in the face of the hostile situation they have begun to exercise their constitutional right to protect their territory. | Photo: Colprensa**

Bogota, August 15 (RHC)-- Six Ancestral Authorities and the Association of Ukawe Councils of Colombia denounce threats against members of indigenous communities by irregular armed groups in the municipality of Caldono, located in the department of Cauca.

According to the joint statement, members of the dissidents of the FARC and the National Liberation Army (ELN) have threatened several indigenous leaders and human rights defenders since last August 10 in Caldono, so they urge national authorities to provide security guarantees in the area.

"The new conflict scenario is part of a long chain of threats and systematic, generalized and extended acts, aimed at deploying scenarios of war and death for the dispute over territorial control," warn the indigenous communities.

At the same time, the indigenous peoples' associations state that in the face of the hostile situation they have begun to exercise their constitutional right to protect their territory, "we will continue to defend our role as agents of peace and caretakers of life", they point out.

Likewise, the communiqué points out that through aggressive and foul language, paramilitary groups constantly threaten leaders and the Indigenous Guard with assassination, "such accusations are nothing more than a belligerent strategy to destabilize our political organizational dynamics and our own government", they state.

According to the Instituto de Desarrollo para el Estudio y la Paz (Indepaz), 115 social leaders and 32 ex-combatants have been murdered so far this year, a legacy left by the government of former President Iván Duque.

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