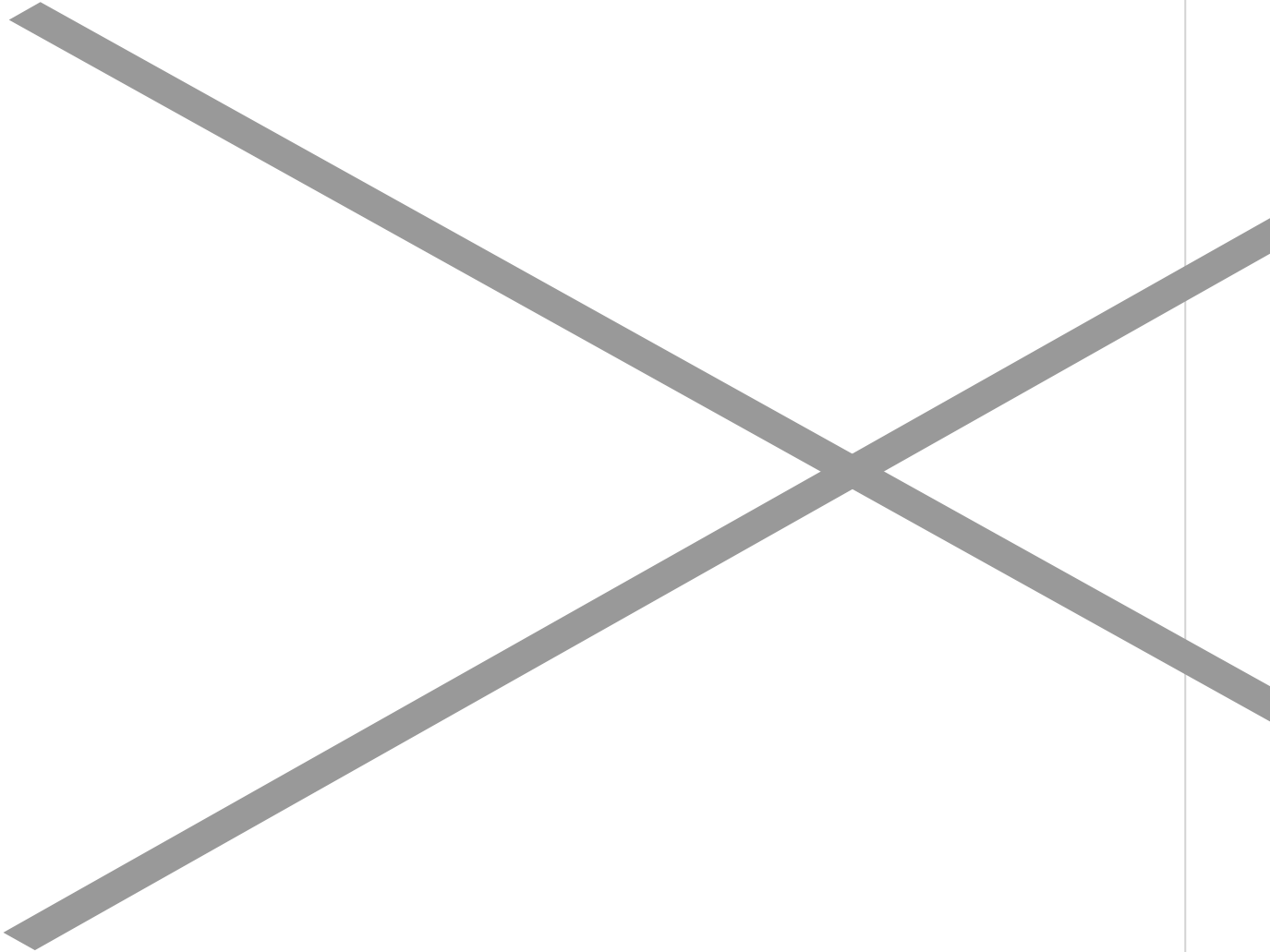


Colombian vice president says security foiled assassination attempt

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"They will not silence us! Our struggle is and always has been against all types of violence that seek to sow fear," said Marquez.

Bogota, January 11 (RHC)-- Colombian Vice President Francia Marquez, who was elected on a history-making ticket in August, has said her security detail has foiled an assassination attempt close to her home.

On Twitter on Tuesday, Marquez, the country's first Afro-Colombian vice president, said her security had carried out "the deactivation and destruction of a high-capacity explosive device" in the road leading to her family home in the village of Yolombo in Colombia's southwest.

Francia Marquez said the device contained more than seven kilogrammes (15.4 lbs) of explosive devices and involved "a plastic bag containing a high-powered explosive substance made of ammonium nitrate, powdered aluminium and ... nails." She added her security agents discovered the explosive after reports of suspicious behaviour by "outside elements" in the area.

Marquez, a vaunted environmental activist, became part of Colombia's first-ever left-wing government following her victory with President Gustavo Petro, a former mayor of Bogota and one-time rebel with the now-defunct M-19 movement. The election underlined a drastic change in presidential politics in Colombia, a country that has long approached leftist candidates warily for their perceived association with decades of armed conflict.

Petro has attempted to end the continuing violence in the country by negotiating with left-wing rebels and armed groups such as drug traffickers, drawing criticism from right-wing factions.

In her tweet on Tuesday, Marquez noted the incident represented "another attempt on my life." In 2019, following a series of death threats, Marquez was attacked in her conflict-racked home region of Cauca by men wielding guns and grenades during a meeting with community leaders. She was not harmed.

Activists are often targeted in Colombia, where armed groups and criminal gangs remain active despite a 2016 peace deal between the government and the FARC rebel group. At least 138 human rights defenders were killed in 2021, accounting for more than a third of the global total.

Shortly after the swearing-in in August, a vehicle in Petro's presidential motorcade also came under gunfire in the northeast of the country. The government said no one was hurt in the attack, which occurred at an illegal checkpoint.

<https://www.radiohc.cu/index.php/en/noticias/internacionales/310194-colombian-vice-president-says-security-foiled-assassination-attempt>



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