

FARC Confirms Capture of Colombian General



Havana, November 18 (RHC) -- After two days of speculation, the Revolutionary Armed Forces of Colombia (FARC) has confirmed Tuesday that it is in possession of an army general and two other military personnel captured in western Colombia.

According to the statement, General Ruben Dario Alzate and two other army personnel were wearing civilian clothing, and were detained by the FARC's Ivan Rios Bloc only after being identified.

"The three were taken because they are enemy military personnel, carrying out their duties in a war zone," the communique says.

This marks the highest-ranking capture that the FARC have managed in 50 years of armed conflict, and a significant embarrassment for the military.

The announcement by the FARC's western Ivan Rios bloc came one hour after FARC representatives in Cuba said they had no direct link to the FARC operating in that area, and could not confirm the capture.

FARC negotiator Pastor Alape expressed surprise at President Juan Manuel Santos' decision to suspend the peace talks, reminding the government of its agreement not to let events in the country affect the negotiating table.

“What happens in Colombia should be resolved in Colombia,” said Alape, arguing that the government had decided to enter into negotiations in the middle of an armed conflict.

Alape also stated that the FARC negotiating team has no direct connection to the FARC fronts operating in western Colombia, where the capture took place.

President Santos made the decision to ground flights of negotiators to Havana on Sunday after news of the general’s capture broke, effectively suspending the peace talks until “events of the general's capture were clarified.”

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