

Colombian Authorities Arrest Suspects in Bogota Bombings



Bogota, July 9 (teleSUR-RHC)-- At least 15 people suspected of participating in bombings that shook Bogota, leaving 10 people injured, were arrested by Colombian authorities on Wednesday. Authorities claimed the suspects were members of an underground cell of the National Liberation Army, known as ELN, Colombia's second largest guerrilla organization.

The police accused David Camilo Rodriguez Hernandez, alias El Profe, of being the chief of the cell. Among the arrested are a two employees of the municipal government of Bogota and several students. The charges they are facing include terrorism, rebellion, and harm to others.

However, human rights organizations have criticized the actions by authorities. The Peoples' Congress said that most of those arrested are "recognized student leaders, peasants, journalists, officials with the municipality and defenders of human rights."

According to the human rights group, 11 of those arrested are member of organizations affiliated with the People's Congress. In a statement posted online, the People's Congress said that the arrests were an attack on civil rights in Colombia and an attempt to silence legitimate dissent.

“The arrests are aimed at persecuting and criminalizing social protest and freedom of expression in Colombia, and hinder the defense of human rights and search for a stable and lasting peace,” read the statement.

Casting greater doubt on the government's claims, the ELN told W Radio that it was not familiar with any of the 15 suspects. Two of the 15 arrested were freed by a court late Wednesday after it determined that they were not connected to the alleged crimes of the others, only that they lived in the same residence as some of the other suspects.

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