

UN denounces murder of 86 human rights defenders in Colombia

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United Nations, December 12 (RHC)-- At least 86 human rights defenders have been murdered so far this year in Colombia, according to a report released this week by Alberto Brunori, the country's representative of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights.

Brunori stressed that the defense of human rights in Colombia is "a high-risk activity. "I have to say with sadness and indignation that at least 86 human rights defenders have been murdered in Colombia so far in 2019. We knew many of them, we knew of their courageous work," he said.

According to the UN delegate, these figures reveal "the lack of integral presence of the Colombian state.

"The strengthening of democracies of equality and dignity is failing because the right to life and human rights are not being protected," he said.

According to Brunori, the crimes against defenders occurred in a context of "stigmatization of their work and their claims," and in remote places where "the exercise of the right to justice and to economic, social and cultural rights is precarious.

Likewise, the diplomat, who participated in a forum held on the occasion of International Human Rights Day, pointed out that 22 of the 86 leaders murdered were members of Community Action Boards (JAC), grassroots organizations that promote community processes mainly in neighborhoods and rural areas.

According to the Institute of Studies for Development and Peace, since the signing of the agreement between the government of Juan Manuel Santos and the Revolutionary Armed Forces of Colombia (FARC) and May of this year, 837 social leaders and human rights

defenders and ex-combatants have been assassinated throughout the country.

Edited by Ed Newman