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UN Stresses Concern over Assassinations of Social Leaders in Colombia

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The representative of the UN High Commissioner for Human Rights in Colombia, Alberto Brunori, has urged the Government of Ivan Duque to urgently take measures to halt the increasing number of assassinations of social leaders.

Brunori expressed concern over the rise of crimes against human rights defenders and land claimers in regions of Cauca department, southwestern Colombia.

In the first few days of 2019 there are many dead, most in Cauca, stressed the UN representative alluding to the killing of seven social leaders in the first week of the year.

The Italian political scientist hailed the Government's meeting last Friday in which the Plan of Timely Action was discussed. It envisions a strategy to counter social violence in Colombia. However, he stressed that urgent measures should be taken quickly to put up a system aimed at guaranteeing protection for social leaders.

According to the nation's Ombudsman Office, since the signing of the Peace Agreements two years ago, some 358 Colombian have been murdered for their political beliefs or for being linked to social demands.

Human rights organizations believe the figure is higher, tagging it at over 400, including nearly 100 former fighters of the former guerrilla Colombian Revolutionary Armed Forces- People's Army.

On Saturday, Colombia's Attorney General, Nestor Martinez, admitted for the first time there is a pattern of systematic killings of social leaders.

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