
UN Expresses Concern about Assassinations of Leaders in Colombia

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Guillermo Fernandez, joint representative of the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights, warned that the number of assassinations of social leaders in Colombia is high and continues to increase.

When presenting a report on the situation of social leaders in the country, Fernandez said that 115 human rights activists were assassinated in 2018 and so far this year, 76 reports have made and 26 assassinations have been confirmed.

The document, which was presented in La Guajira, in northeastern Colombia, pointed out that 24 departments are affected by political violence, and the highest incidence is reported in Antioquia, Cauca and Norte de Santander.

According to the report, local media also reported an increase in threats and attacks on journalists in 2018.

'Until November 2, 2018, three homicides, 200 threats and 477 aggressions against the media had been reported, seriously affecting the exercise of the freedom of speech,' the document added.

In that regard, Fernandez called on the Colombian Government to strengthen the guarantees for human rights advocates and social leaders.

Regarding the presence of the State in the territories, the UN office said that 'it has been noted that on occasions, the States is only present through the Army, so it has to carry out tasks that are not appropriate of its institutional responsibility'.

The main reasons why Colombian leaders are assassinated, according to the study, are supporting the Peace Agreement, denouncing criminal actions or favoring the replacement of illegal crops.