
Colombian Army Helicopter Lands in Minefield, 4 Dead

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According to reports from the soldiers on board the transport helicopter, six of whom were wounded, the explosives at the landing site were placed and detonated by guerrillas with the Revolutionary Armed Forces of Colombia, or FARC, the Defense Ministry said in a communique, revising initial information that the chopper had been shot down by the rebels.

The troops wounded in the explosion were evacuated and are receiving treatment at medical centers.

Army commander Gen. Jaime Lasprilla, traveled to the zone to direct operations there in the wake of the incident.

“The information we have is that the incident occurred on the Santa Lucia trail near the small town of El Aserrio in the Catatumbo region,” Teorama prosecutor Ever Pallares told EFE.

The helicopter, belonging to the army’s 33rd Mobile Brigade, was carrying 15 soldiers, local media reported.

Several photographs published by several media outlets show that the aircraft was completely destroyed.

The helicopter was apparently headed for the Filo Guamo area, where technicians of state oil company Ecopetrol are working to repair a stretch of the Caño Limon-Coveñas pipeline, damaged the week before in a guerrilla attack.

Operating in that area bordering on Venezuela are guerrillas of the FARC, the National Liberation Army (ELN), and the Popular Liberation Army (EPL), which authorities say is chiefly engaged in drug trafficking.
