

At Least 8 Wounded, Serious Material Damage in Two Bogota Bomb Blasts

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The first blast occurred in an office located in the Colombian capital's financial section, on 72nd Street, and this was where the seven people were injured and the office largely destroyed, Bogota Health Secretary Mauricio Bustamante said.

EFE was able to learn that a suspicious package was found by members of the building's security team after an anonymous telephone tip and they immediately began evacuating the public from the area, but seven people were still injured when the bomb went off.

Four ambulances and three firetrucks were dispatched to the blast site and hundreds of people gathered in the vicinity.

Witnesses told EFE that the explosion made the windows in nearby buildings rattle.

The Bogota Fire Department reported, meanwhile, a second explosion at another Porvenir office in the Puente Aranda industrial zone, and one person sustained a head injury and had to be taken to the hospital in that blast.

In the second incident, the attackers left a suitcase containing explosives at the site and later telephoned to announce the planting of the bomb, a tip that enabled the office to be evacuated before it went off.

Bogota police commander Gen. Humberto Guatibonza said that "it's clear" that these were attacks targeting Porvenir, and authorities moved to evacuate the other offices of the organization in the Colombian capital.

Security forces also set up a joint command center in the Chapinero neighborhood and capital authorities called an extraordinary security meeting.

Guatibonza said that evidence is being collected to determine who was responsible for the attacks.

The Liberal Party candidate for Bogota mayor, Rafael Pardo, one of the first to arrive at the financial district blast site, told reporters that "one cannot discount a threat by the FARC at this time" and he asked for authorities and the public to take every precaution.

"If it walks like a duck and quacks like a duck ..." said Pardo, noting that the Revolutionary Armed Forces of Colombia, or FARC, guerrillas recently had announced that some of their fighters were in Bogota allegedly to carry out terrorist attacks.