

# *New massacre in Colombia leaves three dead and one wounded*

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Bogota, May 15 (RHC)-- At least three young people were killed over the weekend in the municipality of Buga, Valle del Cauca, Colombia, and a 16 year-old minor was wounded. Local police sources confirmed a new episode of armed violence in the South American country.

According to local media, the police version reports that the victims were hanging out in the park of one of the city's neighborhoods when armed men attacked them at night. The dead were 18, 19 and 25 years of age.

Also, a 16 year-old minor was wounded in the shooting, who underwent surgery and is in a reserved prognosis.

Although the authorities are investigating whether the multiple homicide was the result of retaliation, the Institute for Development and Peace (Indepaz) recalls that there was already an Early Warning (EW) for the area.

In particular, Indepaz refers that the Ombudsman's Office had issued a TA, number 19/2021, which included the municipalities of El Cerrito, Buga and Palmira and pointed out the deficiencies of the state response in terms of security, especially in comprehensive prevention actions.

The previous March, another massacre took place in a rural area of the same municipality. In this event, three people were killed in a house in the Chambimbal district. A year earlier, in January 2021, the massacre of five young people in a farm caused commotion in Buga and the rest of Valle.

The main hypotheses so far are, the settling of scores and disputes over territorial control due to drug trafficking. However, Indepaz points out that the economy of municipalities like Buga, in which both legal and illegal actors take part, helps to understand, in part, how the armed conflict and criminality have fed the functioning of this economy.

In view of what would be the 39th massacre so far this year, Indepaz recalls that the so-called Autodefensas Gaitanistas de Colombia (AGC), local drug trafficking structures and the Third Division of the Colombian Army, among other armed groups, are active in the area.

The climate of violence, with massacres and selective assassinations of former combatants and peace signatories has not stopped in Colombia, two weeks before the first round of the presidential elections.

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