

# *Colombia: No Bombing of Illegal Groups When Minors Are Present*

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**The Minister of Defense of Colombia, Iván Velásquez, offers a press conference to announce that the bombings against illegal groups are suspended | Photo: EFE/Mauricio Dueñas Castañeda**

Bogota, August 26 (RHC)--The Colombian Minister of Defense, Iván Velásquez, announced Thursday the suspension of bombings by the Armed Forces against illegal groups that put the lives of the civilian population at risk or in which there is knowledge of the presence of minors.

"Minors recruited by illegal organizations are victims. Therefore, any military action cannot endanger the victims; life must be prioritized over death; operations cannot be developed that endanger the lives of the civilian population and these forcibly recruited minors. These actions in this direction must end, and the bombings must be suspended", said Velásquez to local media.

The minister added that, before a military operation, the uniformed forces must consider how viable the intervention is through the Armed Forces intelligence service.

During the government of Iván Duque, the attacks generated some casualties against illegal groups. Still, they were criticized because several involved civilians or children recruited by these structures.

The most recent example was in September 2021, when government forces bombed a camp of the National Liberation Army (ELN), an operation in which four minors were killed.

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