

Report Confirms Colombian Generals Involved in False Positives



Bogota, June 26 (teleSUR-RHC)-- Top generals in the Colombian army, which local Senator Ivan Cepeda had long ago denounced, have been implicated in a long-running “false positives” military scandal, according to a new report.

Two active top generals, Jaime Lasprilla and Juan Pablo Rodriguez, who had been condemned last year by Cepeda after he refused to vote for their promotion, have been listed in the new Human Rights Watch (HRW) report. The report also includes dozens of other high-ranking active commanders.

President Juan Manuel Santos, however, rejected the accusations and claimed that the report was baseless. “(The Armed Forces) showed me answers they got from the Prosecutor's Office and the Attorney General's office (...) there's not one investigation against these high-ranking officials,” said Santos during a military promotion ceremony.

The HRW report coincides with Cepeda's own investigation. In November 2014, the opposition senator accused at least five commanders, who were later promoted to generals, of being a part of brigades involved in false positives. "Don't you come and tarnish this institution," Santos said during his speech, referring to the report.

However, in a stark contrast with his speech, the president later met with HRW representatives late Wednesday and said he was committed to investigate anyone involved in the false positives scandal. Cepeda said he had evidence to back his claims, and HRW report says it has several pieces of evidence obtained during the course of their investigation.

"False positives" were extrajudicial killings carried by the Colombian army, in which unarmed civilians assassinated by soldiers were presented as downed guerrilla fighters, in an attempt to portray the war against the FARC rebel group as successful, and over 3,000 people were killed this way from 2002 to 2008.

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