

PRESS RELEASE

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More violence marks beginning of 2019 in Colombia

A series of disturbingly violent attacks across Colombia marks the first four weeks of the new year. On average, every three days, a social leader has been killed and 1,300 forced to flee their homes.

Several reported victims of the conflict as well as the car bomb attack in the capital Bogota which killed 22 people and injured 68 others, has led to an increased sense of uncertainty among the Colombian population. The end of the peace talks with the National Liberation Army is worrisome.

“Colombians who see social leaders and civilians killed every other day are losing their faith in any prospect of peace. Families are struggling to carve out a normal existence for themselves and everyday people are forced to flee their homes to escape the extreme violence in their communities,” said the Norwegian Refugee Council’s (NRC) country director in Colombia, Christian Visnes.

More than 1,300 people have been forcibly displaced in the first 25 days of January. According to OCHA, [more than 145,000](#) people were displaced from their homes in 2018.

“Hundreds of thousands of victims still depend on humanitarian support. Violence and conflict continue depriving vulnerable communities from accessing most basic services, like clean water, food and education” said Visnes.

The crisis in neighbouring Venezuela could lead to an increase in the influx of Venezuelans and put more pressure on the already overwhelmed government in Colombia.

“The hope for achieving lasting peace should not be abandoned by the public nor should these reckless acts of violence be allowed to destabilise the progress made so far. The Colombian government must put in place immediate measures and make sure that people who are affected are protected and assisted according to need,” Visnes concluded.

Note to editors

- NRC has spokespersons available for interview in Colombia.
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