

Colombia: A march is held to demand justice for the murder of Luis Rivera Mestra

Last Saturday, January 16, in the village of Las Guamas, rural area of the municipality of San Pelayo, department of Córdoba, a large march was held to demand justice for the death of the worker Luis Fernando Rivera Mestra at the hands of an army officer.

On Saturday afternoon, the residents of Las Guamas and neighboring towns mobilized to demand that the clearly identified soldier be arrested and held accountable for his crime. Shouting “Justice” and wearing white clothes, the participants of the activity expressed their pain and indignation.

“We demand justice, because it is unjustifiable that the person responsible is at large as if nothing had happened” was heard from a family member of Luis Fernando Rivera Mestra.

The background fact in the case

In the country of mass graves, false positives and massacres carried out by both regular military and police forces, not to mention the tragic historical examples at the hands of paramilitary groups, what Rivera Mestra’s murder continues to highlight is the degree of impunity enjoyed by members of the Colombian state security organs.

In October 2020, the Center for Research and Popular Education (CINEP) of Colombia published a report that shows how the police, paramilitaries and the army are the biggest violators of human rights in that country and how the absence of sanctions, in general, stimulates repressive behavior ranging from politically motivated responses to cases of daily

violence (II).

This is evident in the case in question not only because the military officer involved is free, but also because the army issued a brief statement in which it warns that "they are assisting in all the necessary actions that may be necessary and for this reason they made contact with the Police". Nothing more.

The important feedback from the guameros

On Saturday, among the many banners there was one that read "Luis Fernando, your people are with you", a clear allusion to the fact that his fellow citizens have great distrust in the possibility of a fair and transparent legal process that will lead to the perpetrator of the murder paying for it.

Therefore, they want to make their contribution and have begun a collective crusade with a show of force, whose projection, according to their own words, is to not give up the fight to set a very important precedent in the region because true justice is fundamentally a matter of popular protagonism.