

Girl killed by land mine inside house (Colombia)

A 13-year-old girl was killed and her 12-year-old brother seriously wounded when a land mine apparently left by a rebel group inside a house in northeastern Colombia exploded, officials said.

(05.12.2005)

The explosion occurred in the village of La Aguada, in Antioquia province, some 560 kilometers (about 348 miles) from Bogotá.

The children, who had been walking on a path, entered an abandoned house to get a drink of water.

The girl stepped on the land mine and was killed by the blast, which wounded her brother, police spokeswoman Silvia Hernández Giraldo told Caracol Radio.

The girl's brother is being treated in a hospital in Rionegro, Hernández Giraldo said.

Most of the dwellings in La Aguada were abandoned by residents fleeing the fighting in the area, according to the police spokeswoman.

Last Friday, army and security services experts deactivated 92 land mines, 34 of which had been planted around a rural school in Samana, in west-central Colombia.

The mines were apparently planted by the Revolutionary Armed Forces of Colombia (FARC) guerrillas, officials said.

An estimated 70,000 to 100,000 land mines have been planted in Colombia, the only country in Latin America where these weapons are still in use.

Only Cambodia, Afghanistan and Angola have more land mines in their territories.

In the past 13 years, nearly 2,500 people have been the victims of land mines in Colombia, with about one-quarter of them being killed by these weapons.

Last year, according to official figures, more than 600 incidents involving land mines were registered in the Andean nation, with 170 resulting in deaths.

Colombia approved the Ottawa Convention to ban land mines in 2000.

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