

Two pastors killed, one kidnapped in Colombia

By Kenneth D. MacHarg

Miami, FL—Two Pentecostal pastors were killed and a Nazarene pastor kidnapped during a weekend that also saw a national protest against the continuing violence in Colombia.

RCN Radio reported that two pastors of the Pentecostal Church in Colombia were killed January 23 by presumed guerrillas for their alleged assistance to the army.

Observers of the deteriorating situation in Colombia report that many of the over 50 pastors killed in the past year were targeted because of their perceived cooperation with government or military authorities.

In addition, a pastor of the Nazarene Church in Bogotá was reported kidnapped the same day. Radio reports say that his captors are asking one million dollars for his release.

Dr. Jack Stone, General Secretary of the Nazarene Church told Compass Direct that he had heard about the kidnapping, but can neither confirm nor deny it. He said that there are reports that the pastor, who was not identified, had been kidnapped one other time.

No groups have claimed responsibility for either actions.

The murders and kidnapping occurred during a weekend when a reported 18 million Colombians turned off their lights in a demonstration of their frustration at the continuing violence.

Electricity demand during the two-minute protest dropped by 15 percent, as an estimated 3.9 million households flicked off their lights, the national electric company reported.

It was the first major action by a budding peace movement since last October, when street protests turned out five million marchers in the country of 40 million people. Evangelical Churches played a leading role in those calls for peace.

Peace activists are demanding that civilians be spared from the rigors of the South American country's nearly 36-year conflict.

The unusual protest followed rebel bombings of 22 electricity pylons that caused massive school closings and forced severe power rationing for hundreds of thousands of Colombians.

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