



A COUNTRY WITHOUT LEADERS IS NOT A COUNTRY



**2020 ANNUAL REPORT ON VIOLENCE AGAINST POLITICAL, SOCIAL AND COMMUNAL LEADERS.
A YEAR OF CHALLENGES, THREATS AND EVIDENCE OF OUR LEADERS' VULNERABILITY.**

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PRESENTATION

2020

was a year defined by constant and permanent grief. We suffered through a pandemic that was beyond the authorities' control, and which has yet to end. Thousands of Colombians have died because of it, others have survived but are left with persistent health after-effects, and the economic consequences of the policies needed to deal with the health crisis, have all had a considerable effect on the lives, projects and dreams of many more.

But these aren't just personal stories. As a society, our spaces for democratic encounter have also suffered the effects of the health crisis. The Communal Action Board elections were postponed, and dialogue and proximity were substituted by virtual interactions. Street protests, like the ones that characterized the end of 2019 and the beginning of 2020, were cancelled to avoid crowds that would increase contagions.

And the narrative is no different when it comes to the lives and integrity of those who exercise leaderships in Colombia. 2020 has been the most violent year since 2016 for political, social and communal leaders in the country. Leading initiatives that seek to transform the country's reality has become an increasingly dangerous activity.

Different leaders suffer different kinds of violence. The situation isn't the same for female leaders (especially social ones), as for those who are indigenous or afro, or those who belong to the LGBTI community. And the lethality of the violence against these groups is increasing.

That being said, and even in the context of a pandemic, we still see leaders, who in spite of the danger have continued their work to transform the reality in which they live. They haven't ceased to defend their land, their communities, the environment and the rights of various groups.

In 2020, Colombia lost many leaders. Some due to violence, others to Covid-19, and others to different causes. But each of these lives lost deserves a tribute to its work, every dream that was cut short deserves to be remembered, and every one of these faces needs to be part of our history.

While we were still in the midst of the grief that 2020 left us with, the first days of 2021 brought us some very painful news: the death of Laura We-

2020 HAS BEEN THE MOST VIOLENT YEAR SINCE 2016 FOR POLITICAL, SOCIAL, AND COMMUNAL LEADERS IN THE COUNTRY.

Photo: <https://www.elcolombiano.com/>

instead, after several days of being hospitalized with respiratory difficulties. Laura was one of the leaders, who in spite of the context, continued to fight for equality, against discrimination, and in defense of the rights and lives of Trans people in Colombia.

With her as Executive Director of the GAAT Foundation, and with Caribe Afirmativo, we presented a proposal to the National Electoral Council (CNE)¹, to guarantee a right which seems obvious, but because of discrimination, was only a dream: Trans people's right to vote in our country. The CNE, showing a strong commitment with equality and inclusion, passed it in the same terms as it was requested by its beneficiaries.

This was one of Laura's last legacies, and MOE will supervise its implementation to honor the life, struggle and work of our friend and ally.

For her tireless work in the defense of life, after a year of so much loss, so much violence and so much pain, we dedicate this report to Laura, and to all those leaders that we lost last year. Let it serve to honor and remember them, as we raise our voice and continue to say that a Country Without Leaders is Not a Country.



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¹ Acronyms in the document refer to the initials in Spanish.

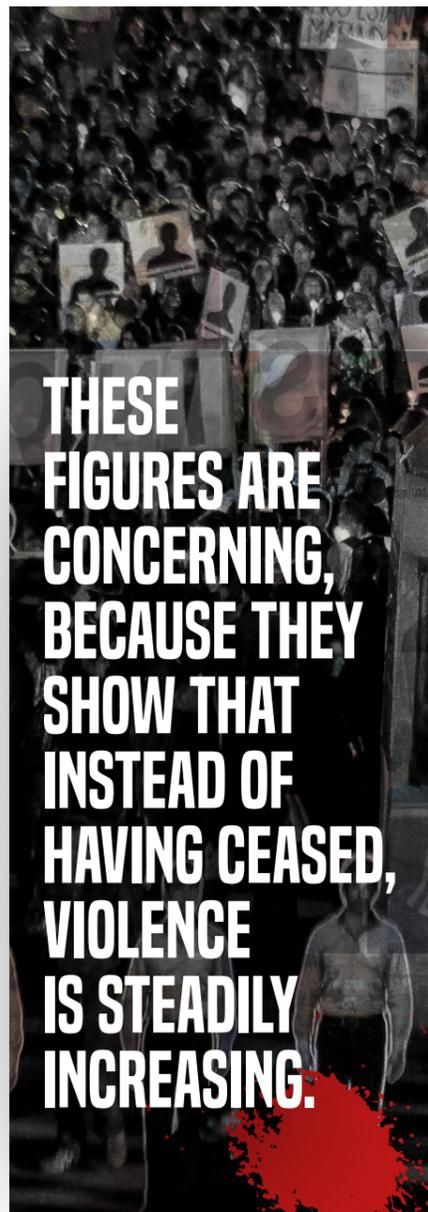


EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

During 2020 (January, 1st through December, 31st), the Electoral Observation Mission (MOE) registered 563 acts of violence against political, social and communal leaders. This represents a 69.6% increase from 2018, when there were 332 reported violations, and a 2% increase from 2019, which had 551. These figures are concerning, because they show that instead of having ceased, violence is steadily increasing. Worse still, during the first semester of 2020, when there were periods of strict confinement, there was a 50% decrease of aggressions against leaders, which was still not enough to offset the violence registered over the whole year.



Photo: Maurilio León / EL TIEMPO



THESE FIGURES ARE CONCERNING, BECAUSE THEY SHOW THAT INSTEAD OF HAVING CEASED, VIOLENCE IS STEADILY INCREASING.

This accelerated increase shows that patterns of violence are moving away from electoral dynamics. There are attacks and violations being perpetrated against different types of leaders that can't be solely explained by any one contextual element, but which continue to intensify over time.

Threats were the most common form of aggression during 2020, with 326 cases. This stems mainly from 24 collective threats that affected 196 leaders (which represents 60.1% of all threatened leaders). Compared to 2019, when there were 21 registered events that affected 150 leaders, we see a 30.7% increase in the number of leaders who were victims of these threats.

Additionally, 2020 had a 32.5% increase in murders over 2019 (from 126 to 167). However, this increase affected different types of leadership in different ways. While homicides against political leaders fell by 53.8%, for social and communal leaders those numbers grew by 80% and 50%, respectively.

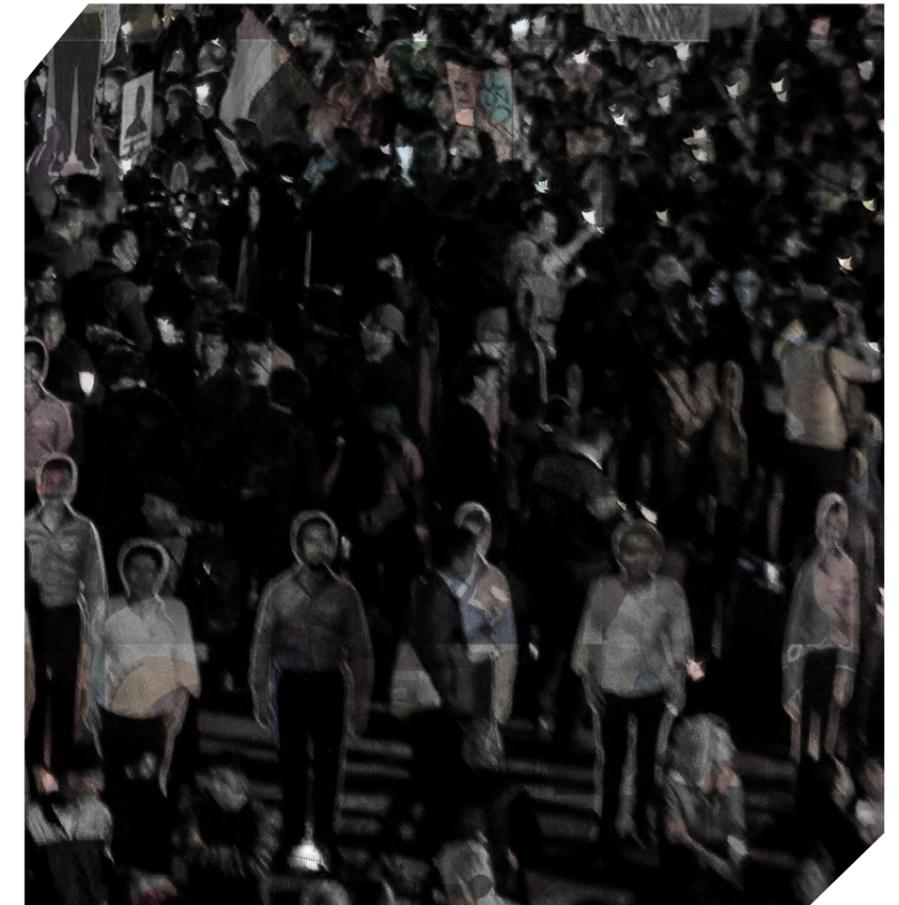
A search for a possible correlation between the increase of assassinations of different types of leaders and the homicide rates in different municipalities², showed an extremely weak link between the two. Therefore, the elevated number of leaders killed cannot be explained by the general violence that exists in the territories, which suggests that there are other causes behind it.

During 2020, there were violent actions registered against political, social and communal

leaders in 90.6% of the country's departments (29 out of 32). The departments of Cauca, Norte de Santander and Antioquia concentrated the largest number of violations and lethal acts of violence. Additionally, aggressions escalated significantly during the year's second semester in the departments of La Guajira, Chocó and Nariño.

The four departments with the highest number of leaders killed (Cauca, Antioquia, Nariño and Norte de Santander) are also the territories with the most massacres and massacre victims registered during 2020. Upon crossing these variables we found a significant correlation, which shows that municipalities that registered the occurrence of massacres tend to have cases of murdered leaders. Likewise, those with the most reported massacres also have the largest amounts of leaders killed. Two of the 11 massacres that were perpetrated in the department of Cauca were also the scenes of the murder of an indigenous social leader (Santander de Quilichao), and a communal leader (Mercaderes), who was killed along with his wife, his son and his granddaughter.

In 2020 there were 268 registered acts of violence against leaders across the 16 PDET regions (those in which the Development Plans with a Territorial Focus are applied), an 18.6% increase from the 226 instances reported in 2019. Of the 167 killings that took place in 2020, 102 (61% of them) happened in these territories.



2. Calculated according to the total reported killings by the National Police in 2020.

This represents a 37.8% increase from 2019, when there were 74 reported murders. Additionally, 76.5% of the acts of aggression, and 95% of the homicides in these regions were perpetrated against social and communal leaders.

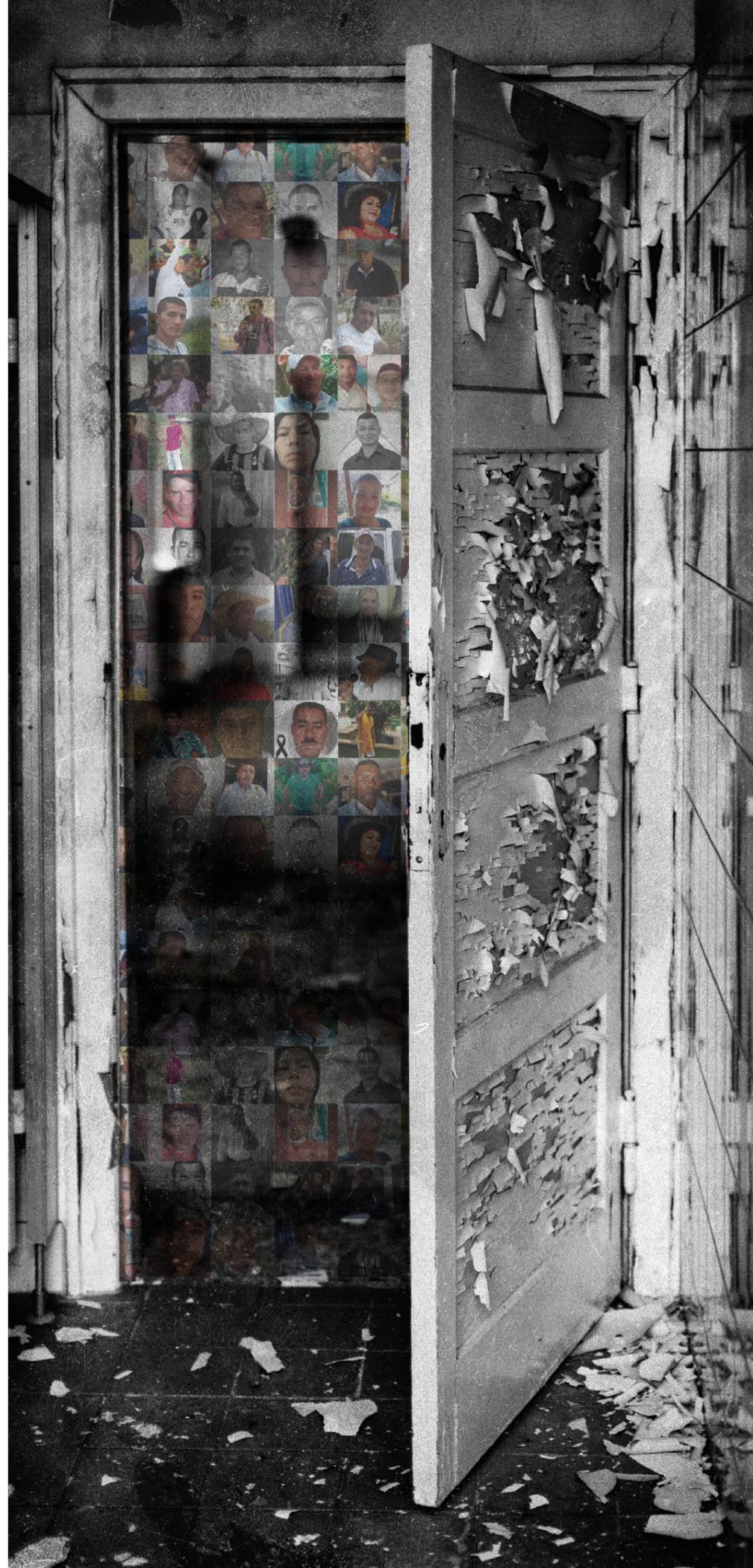
When it comes to each type of leadership in particular, social leaders suffered the most violations, with 324 (58%). This means that out of 10 leaders who suffered acts of aggression during 2020 in Colombia, nearly six of them were social leaders. While it's true that acts of violence against social leaders have been increasing since 2017, in 2020 the lethality of the attacks stands out, even during the period of strict confinement, with an 80% increase in murders (from 61 in 2019 to 110 in 2020), and 70% in attempted assassinations. This context shows that the patterns of violence, beyond just trying to dissuade the actions of social leaders through coercion, seek to silence their voices.

Regarding the geographical location of lethal violence against social leaders, the situation in the states of Cauca, where homicide numbers grew by 123.5% (17 in 2019 versus 38 in 2020); Córdoba, which had a 300% increase (two in 2019 versus eight in 2020); Chocó, where there was a 400% surge (two murders in 2019 versus 10 in 2020); and Putumayo, which had a variation of 400% (one murder in 2019 versus five in 2020); is particularly alarming. The situation in the department of Nariño also stands out. Before June there had been no reports of violence, but during the second semester there were 11 registered killings and two assassination attempts, which represents a 62.5% increase in lethal violence over 2019, in only six months.

Of the 324 acts of violence against social leaders, 162 (50%) happened in 15 of the 16 PDET territories; and 42% of the aggressions (68) were murders, which amounts to a 74% increase over 2019, when there were 39. The cases that stand out most are those of the Nariño-Cauca-Valle region, with a 62.5% surge (16 killings in 2019 versus 26 in 2020), Southern Córdoba, where numbers grew by 300% (two homicides in 2019 versus eight in 2020), Southern Meta-Guaviare, which registered four murders in the year's second semester, after not having registered a single one in 2019, and finally the pacific region of Nariño, which had 10 registered acts of violence against social leaders in the last six months of 2020, all of them lethal (eight murders and two attempted assassinations).

A review of the ethnic component of the aggressions against this type of leader shows that the departments of Cauca, Chocó and La Guajira concentrated 67% of the total acts of violence against afro and indigenous leaders.

Indigenous leaders suffered 27.7% of the violent acts perpetrated against social leaders registered during 2020 (90). Of these, 43.3% were lethal (29 murders and 10 assassination attempts). It's important to underscore that there was an increase of lethality



in the year's second semester, with a 78.6% surge over only six months. The departments of Cauca, Nariño, La Guajira and Chocó concentrated 79% of the acts of aggression (71), and 74% of the lethal violence (22 murders and seven attempted assassinations) against this type of leader.

Aggressions against afro-descendent leaders amount to 7.1% of all victimized leaders (23 events). 56.5% of those violent acts were lethal (10 homicides and 3 assassination attempts). The departments of Cauca and Chocó stand out, as they concentrated 52% of the registered aggressions (12 attacks) and 77% of the acts of lethal violence (with totals of eight murders and two attempts).

Political leaders are the second most affected type of leadership in 2020, with 170 violent acts (30.2% of the year's total events). This is a 43% decrease compared to 2019, but a 50.4% increase compared to 2018, which like 2019 was also an electoral year. This shows that elections are no longer the only reason to attack people who seek protagonism on the electoral stage, or those who hold public office through popular election.

In 2020, acts of violence against elected officials (on the national and local levels) stand out, as they concentrate 70.6% of the aggressions against political leaders (120 events). Especially of note, are the attacks directed specifically against local elected officials, which rose by 138% compared to 2019 (from 42 to 100 victims).

As for lethal attacks, while there was a notable decrease compared to 2019, 50% of the killings against this type of leader were concentrated in the departments of Antioquia (three), Valle de Cauca (three) and Cauca (three). Additionally, there was a territorial expansion of the phenomenon, with the first registered murder in four years in the department of Vichada. The victim was Olga Lucía Hernández, a former Liberal Party candidate for the Cumaribo Municipal Council.

Regarding communal leaders, in 2020 they suffered a total of 69 acts of violence, which amounts to a 38% increase over the 50 registered events in 2019. It's worth noting that 68% of those aggressions were lethal (39 murders and eight attempted killings), which represents a 27% increase over 2019.

On that subject, Presidents of Communal Action Boards (JAC) concentrate 62% of the violent acts against communal leaders. Compared to 2019, numbers are up by 22.9% (from 35 to 43). It's worth noting that 65% of the violence against them was lethal. Compared to 2019, murders are up by 35.3% (from 17 to 23).

Regarding the geographical location of the events, the departments of Antioquia, Norte de Santander and Putumayo con-

concentrate 38% of the aggressions (26 events), and 40% of the lethal acts of violence (16 homicides and 3 attempted killings) against this type of leader.

Of the 69 violations against communal leaders, 43 of them (62%) were perpetrated in 12 of the 16 PDET territories. 72% of the violent acts (31) were lethal (29 killings and two assassination attempts). The murders were concentrated in the regions of Bajo Cauca (seven), Nariño-Cauca-Valle (five) and Putumayo (four).

In the cases of both communal and social leaders, nearly half of the acts of violence occurred in the municipalities' rural sectors (46.4% and 51% of the aggressions against each of these types of leader, respectively), where they're more exposed to different risks, the presence of armed groups and illegal economies.

Regarding acts of violence against women who are political, social and communal leaders, there has been a consistent rise between 2017 and 2020 in cases of violence against women who occupy leadership roles. They went from 47 in 2017, to 62 in 2018, to 106 in 2019 and 120 in 2020. Furthermore, the equally consistent increase in the number of lethal acts of violence against women leaders is alarming (21 in 2017, 29 in 2018, 34 in 2019 and 35 in 2020). These numbers show that in only three years, events of lethal violence against women leaders have increased by 66.7%.

The most common form of violence against women exercising leadership roles is the threat (84 cases). However, this type of aggression has a specific characteristic in the case of women leaders, because by exerting this pressure mechanism, the perpetrators also resort to stereotypes and symbolisms which extend the impact to their families and close ones, thus affecting

the psychological integrity of the people around them. It's worth highlighting that threats against women leaders transcend them, because by directing the attack against their gender condition, the threats become a way to dissuade other women from participating in those same spaces.

While 29.2% of the aggressions against women leaders were lethal (16 attempted killings and 19 murders), these events had different effects on different types of leadership. For women who

are political leaders these represented 11.8% of the aggressions they suffered. But the proportion is much higher for women who are social and communal leaders, for whom lethal acts of violence were 35% and 44.4%, respectively, of the attacks perpetrated against them.

Regarding the geographical location of these violent acts against women leaders, 59.2% were concentrated in Bogotá (21 events), and in the departments of Cauca (15), La Guajira (11), Magdalena (nine) and Bolívar (eight). Cauca stands out because it's the department with the largest number of lethal aggressions against women leaders, with four murders and two attempted assassinations. Additionally, 40% of the lethal attacks against women leaders (11 killings and three attempts) occurred in seven of the 16 PDET territories.

Regarding the different types of leadership, women who are social leaders were the most affected, with 64% of the total events in 2020. They're the only type of leader whose cases have gone up consistently since 2017 (from 19 in 2017, to 25 in 2018, to 49 in 2019, to 77 in 2020). Additionally, 77.1% of the lethal acts of violence (27) against women who exercise some type of leadership were perpetrated specifically against women who are social leaders. Those numbers show a 35% increase from 2019, when 58.8% of the lethal aggressions were directed towards that same group.

Upon a review of the ethnic component of the violations against women who are social leaders, the fact that 39% of the 23 acts of violence against women who are indigenous leaders were lethal (five murders and four attempts) stands out. In the case of afro-descendent women leaders, they were affected by two acts of violence (one attempted assassination and one threat).

Finally, in order to verify whether violence against women leaders coincides with the territorial dynamics of gender-based violence, we carried out an analysis of the correlation between said variables. From that exercise, we learned that the municipalities with higher numbers of gen-

THE MOST COMMON FORM OF VIOLENCE AGAINST WOMEN EXERCISING LEADERSHIP ROLES IS THE THREAT.

3. Based on data from the Integrated Gender Violences Information System.

der violence events, specifically those defined in Law 1257 (femicides, harassments and discrimination, human trafficking, intra-family violence and sexual violence), tend to have higher numbers of violations against women leaders. This, in turn, evidences that being women has an important impact on the fact that these leaders suffer violence.

However, the violence that women who exercise leadership roles face is a broader and more complex phenomenon, which isn't limited to the threats, kidnappings, disappearances, assassination attempts and killings that they have been victims of. It also requires the incorporation of different physical, psychological, sexual, symbolic and economic effects that constitute what has been called "violence against women in politics".

Among the practices and aggressions that affect, inhibit or hinder the effective participation of women in politics (in different leadership roles), the following have been identified: a) gender stereotypes in politics that are used to intimidate and discourage their participation; b) the lack of support by social and political organizations, as well as other leaders in their communities and their own family members; c) the double standard with which they're treated, compared to men; d) the economic violence they are the object of; e) the aggressions and sexual harassment of which they are victims; f) different practices that seek to displace them from leadership roles, so that men are the ones who are prominent and can aspire to popular election; g) a larger exposure to attacks, because of their feminist identity, and carrying a gender and women's rights agenda; h) a differential effect, in the context of political polarization, stigmatization and political violence the country is currently experiencing.



Having said that, in 2020 there were 724 registered actions by Illegal Armed Groups (GAIs), of which 68.2% (494) were belligerent actions and the remaining 31.8% (230) were intimidations. This represents an 8.4% increase from the 668 actions registered in 2019.

Specifically, belligerent actions were up by a mere 2.3% over 2019, going from 483 to 494. Of these, 176 (35.6%) are attributable to the FARC dissidences; 158 (32%) to the ELN; 148 (30%) to Organized Armed Groups (GAOs); and 12 (2.4%) to "Los Pelusos". It's worth noting that ELN and EPL actions decreased considerably in the last six months of the year (by 43.6% and 91%, respectively), while violent actions by the FARC dissidences and GAOs notably escalated during the same period (by 41% and 46.7%, respectively).

In the case of LGBTI leaders, it's worth noting their double risk condition, because of the activities they carry out and causes they represent, as well as the structural discrimination they suffer because of their sexual orientation and/or gender identity.

In 2020, there were seven attacks perpetrated against LGBTI leaders, which represents an increase and escalation of the acts of violence against leaders from this social sector. Year to year, attacks against LGBTI leaders have steadily risen (from one aggression in 2018, to three in 2019, to seven in 2020). From these numbers we see that the events registered in 2020 amount to a growth of 133% compared to 2019 and 600% over 2018. Because of this, for MOE it's essential to bring attention to this situation and be alert about the urgent need to adopt differential measures, in order to guarantee the optimal conditions for these leaderships to develop.

Regarding the nature of the events, the fact that 85.7% of the aggressions perpetrated against LGBTI leaders were lethal (three murders and three attempts) stands out, given that this is the first time in three years that there were three registered killings of this type of leader. In territorial terms, the case of the department of Antioquia is remarkable, being the only one to have more than one case.

Intimidations also increased in 2020, though at a higher rate (24.3%), going from 185 events in 2019 to 230. GAOs led that list, with a total of 102 cases (44.3% of the total). They were followed by the FARC dissidences with 74 (32.2%), then the ELN with 44 (19.1%), and finally, "Los Pelusos", with 10 (4.3%). Equally notable is the ELN's behavior, having reduced its actions by 24% in the year's second semester.

It's worth highlighting that during the periods of lockdown caused by the pandemic, different groups (like the ELN, FARC dissidences, and different GAOs) took to imposing orders, such as curfews, in order to force the confinement of



Photo: <https://caracol.com.co> - Colprensa

the population and prevent the spread of Covid-19.

As for to the territorial aspect of the GAI's actions, throughout the year there was a change in the way they acted compared to 2019. This is because, although their presence has been practically constant in terms of the number of affected municipalities (202 in 2019 and 201 in 2020), they have disappeared from some territories, and mo-

MOE HAS INSISTED THAT AT THE LOCAL LEVEL THERE ARE VARIOUS INTERESTES WHICH ENABLE VIOLENCE AGAINST POLITICAL, SOCIAL AND COMMUNAL LEADERS, WHICH DON'T ALWAYS INCLUDE THE ACTIONS OF ARMED GROUPS.

ved into to others. And there was a registered escalation of the violence executed by GAIs in Antioquia, Caquetá and Meta, where GAI actions went up by 13.7%, 225% and 750%, respectively.

Nevertheless, the departments that registered the most GAI actions were Antioquia, with 141 registered events (46 intimidations and 95 belligerent actions); Cauca, with 103 (26 intimidations and 77 belligerent actions); Chocó, with 95 (31 intimidations and 64 belligerent actions); and Norte de Santander, with 87 (12 intimidations and 75 belligerent actions).

Upon contrasting the territories where aggressions against political, social and communal leaders converge with the presence of GAIs, we found that, while armed conflict in those regions is an important cause of the violence against leaders, it isn't its only determining factor.

Thus, while out of the 184 municipalities where there were violent actions against leaders in 2020, there is at least one GAI present in 53% of them (98 municipalities), that doesn't mean that all cases that occur in those territories can be attributed to them. To that point, 35% of the acts of violence against leaders occurred in the 47% of remaining municipalities, where there is no registered presence of any GAI.

Now, looking at it from the angle of the lethality of the violence, while it's true that 71.7% of the events of lethal of violence against leaders were perpetrated in municipalities where there is registered GAI presence, it cannot be inferred that they are all attributable to these groups. Additionally, 28.3% of the lethal acts of violence occurred in territories with no registered GAI presence.



Photo: <https://www.infobae.com>- Carlos Ortega/Archivo

Lastly, we looked for a possible correlation between the actions/territorial presence of GAIs by municipality and violence against leaders. Upon crossing these variables, we see that in municipalities with more GAI presence, there tends to be a higher number of violations against leaders. This doesn't imply that these groups perpetrate those actions, nor is their convergence the only variable at play, for there are more factors to consider when it comes to explaining the phenomenon of violence against leaders.

For example, in those territories where GAIs have more presence, there is usually also a smaller State presence, among many other variables to be taken into account. Furthermore, upon analyzing the correlation of the variables "hectares of coca plantations" and "violent acts against leaders", while there is a positive relation, the correlation is very low and scarcely significant. There are even departments like La Guajira and Cundinamarca, which register a high number of instances of violence against leaders, but don't have any hectares of coca plantations, illegal mining, and in the case of the latter, no GAI presence either.

In this sense, MOE has insisted that at the local level there are various interests which enable violence against political, social and communal leaders, which don't always include the actions of armed groups. Thus, it is necessary to identify and attack both the legal and illegal actors behind the planning and execution of these violent acts. For MOE the existence of a sufficiently robust investigative and judicial mechanism is essential, in order for there to be judicial truth in the cases of violence against leaders. Because if the true culprits of these crimes can't be found it won't be possible to truly attack the problem.



Photo: <https://www.cinep.org.co/Home2/component/k2/395-lideres-sociales-matandolos-en-paz.html>

In light of the political violence and the analysis of GAI activity, MOE has identified some departments that merit a detailed analysis, in order to understand the specificities of the phenomenon of violence. In the case of the departments of Córdoba, Cesar and La Guajira it's because they concentrate 50.4% of the cases in the Caribbean region. Likewise, MOE has highlighted the departments of Antioquia, Cauca and Nariño, because they're the most affected territories, in terms of lethal violence against leaders and GAI presence.

In Córdoba, in 2020 there were 24 registered acts of violence against leaders, which amounts to an increase of 26.3% over 2019. Out of these, the homicide numbers stand out, having gone up significantly (by 120%), from five in 2019 to 11 in 2020. Violence against social leaders merits special attention, having risen by 375% over 2019 (from four to 19 cases), and by 217% compared to 2018 (when there were six reported violations). The southern region of Córdoba stands out (Tierralta, Puerto Libertador, Montelíbano and San José de Uré), given that it concentrated 91.7% of violent events and every killing perpetrated in the department. Likewise, these municipalities have the department's highest concentration of illegal plantations, and San José de Uré was the scene of three massacres during the analyzed year.

Regarding GAI actions, there were 26 of them in Córdoba in 2020, 18 were belligerent and eight were intimidations. It's worth highlighting the esca-

tion of the conflict in this territory, given that 15 of the 18 belligerent actions took place in the year's second semester, with San José de Uré and Puerto Libertador being the most affected municipalities, because of GAO presence (Specifically the AGC and the Caparrapos, which dispute control over the territory).

In Cesar, while it's true that compared to 2019 aggressions are down by 8.33% (from 12 in 2019 to 11 in 2020), this isn't the case with lethal violence, which rose by 66.7%, from two murders and one attempt in 2019 to two killings and three attempted assassinations in 2020. Contrary to the national tendency, political leaders were affected the most, concentrating 63.6% of all registered aggressions. The violent events were concentrated in the north of the department, where there's ELN and EPL presence, given that it's a strategic corridor in the drug trafficking route to Venezuela. At a municipal level, Aguachica and El Copey concentrated 63.6% of the department's total aggressions. Furthermore, in September, the former was the scene of a massacre which left three people dead.

In 2020 there were six violent actions by the ELN in six of the department's municipalities (all within the year's first semester), and one action by the EPL in Chimichagua in August. Therefore, those municipalities, despite not registering any violent actions against leaders, were the stage of violence derived from the armed conflict.

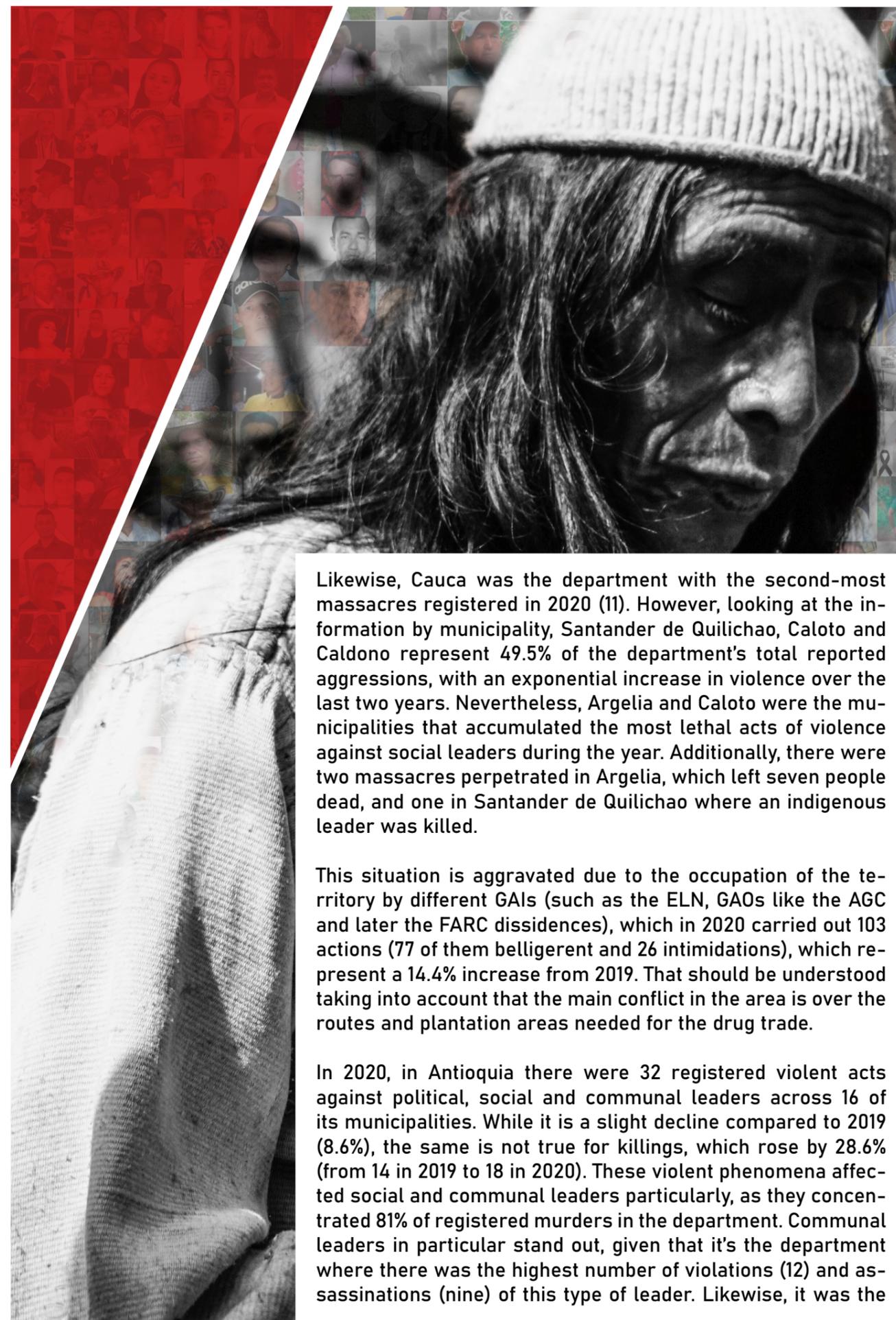
Regarding the department of La Guajira, while it's true that compared to 2019 aggressions are down by 36.6% (from 41 events that year to 26 in 2020), it's of note that in 2020, 92% of violent acts, including all those that were lethal (seven attempted assassinations) took place in the year's second semester, reaching the same number of lethal cases as the previous year. Social leaders concentrated 58% (15) of 2020's total cases. What stands out is the ethnic and gender component of the perpetrated aggressions, given that women indigenous leaders were the victims of four out of the six attempted killings of social leaders, and six of the eight threats that were reported (the remaining two were against two afro-descendent leaders). The municipalities of Rihacha and Maicao amassed 81% of the total reported events in the department in 2020. Additionally, the latter was the stage of a massacre last December, in which four people were killed.

In 2020, there was a drop in municipalities with GAI presence, from seven in 2019 to five. GAOs have the biggest influence, acting in three municipalities, followed by the FARC dissidences and ELN, who have a presence in one municipality each. Likewise, armed actions are down 50% from last year, from four in 2019 to two in 2020. Nevertheless, an analysis of the political context is particularly important in this department. The political instability it's been immersed in for the past two constitutional periods, its condition as a border territory with Venezuela and the con-

vergence of armed groups and drug trafficking structures seeking to exploit the department's coastal area are all variables that have led to an atmosphere of institutional distrust by the guajiro population, and that compel us to keep a close eye on the situation experienced there, as well as the conditions in which innumerable leaders carry out their activities.

Cauca is the department with the highest number of aggressions against leaders (109 violations), and acts of lethal violence (46 homicides and eight attempted assassinations) in the country. This situation has been escalating steadily since 2017, and in only three years aggressions have increased by 252%, while events of lethal violence have gone up by 108%. 83% of the killings perpetrated in this department (38) were against social leaders. On that subject, it's worth noting the ethnic and gender components of the aggressions because these territories concentrate most of the country's attacks against indigenous and afro-descendent leaders, as well as the highest number of lethal acts of violence against women leaders.

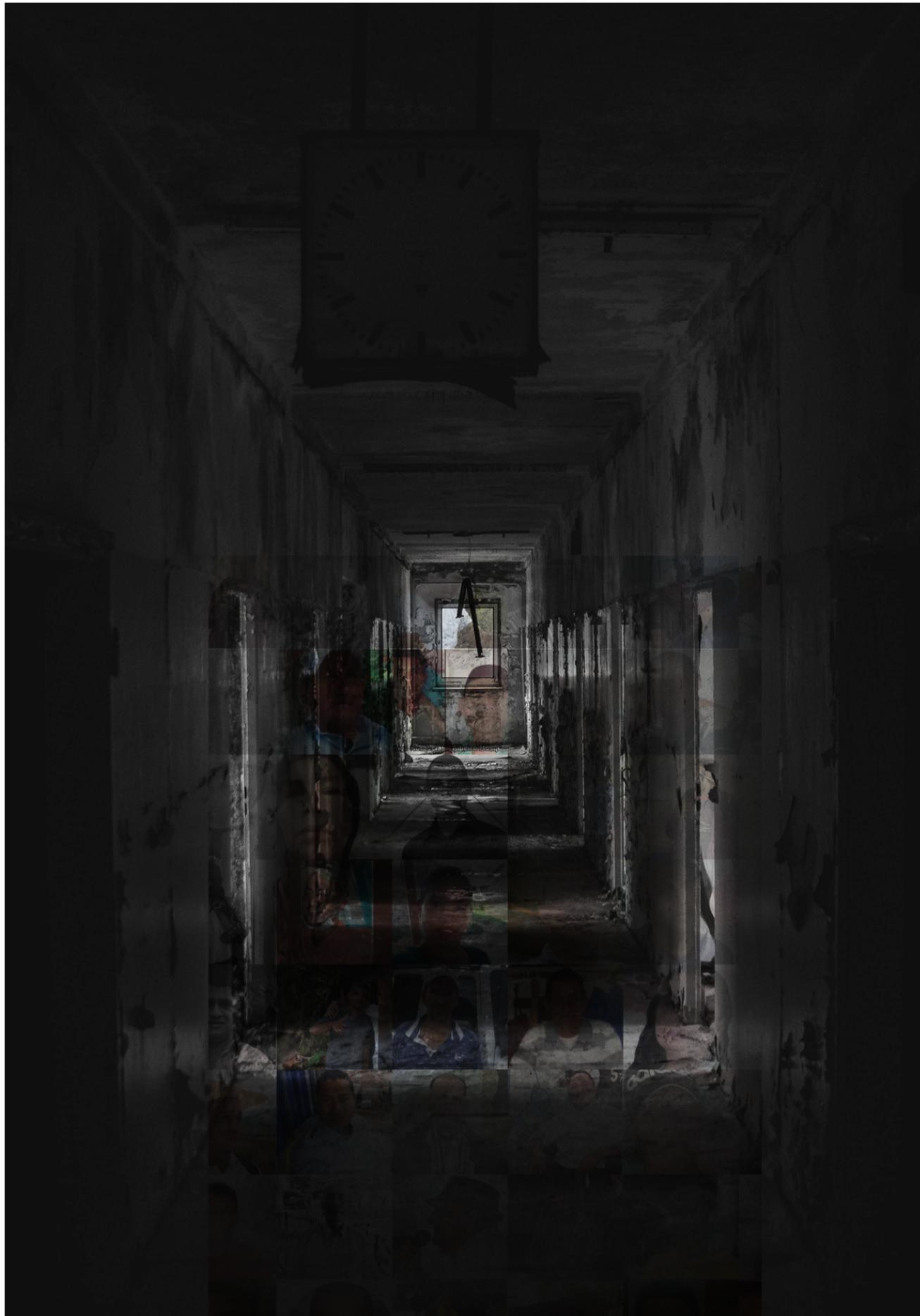
CAUCA IS THE DEPARTMENT WITH THE HIGHEST NUMBER OF AGGRESIONS AGAINST LEADERS.



Likewise, Cauca was the department with the second-most massacres registered in 2020 (11). However, looking at the information by municipality, Santander de Quilichao, Caloto and Caldono represent 49.5% of the department's total reported aggressions, with an exponential increase in violence over the last two years. Nevertheless, Argelia and Caloto were the municipalities that accumulated the most lethal acts of violence against social leaders during the year. Additionally, there were two massacres perpetrated in Argelia, which left seven people dead, and one in Santander de Quilichao where an indigenous leader was killed.

This situation is aggravated due to the occupation of the territory by different GAIs (such as the ELN, GAOs like the AGC and later the FARC dissidences), which in 2020 carried out 103 actions (77 of them belligerent and 26 intimidations), which represent a 14.4% increase from 2019. That should be understood taking into account that the main conflict in the area is over the routes and plantation areas needed for the drug trade.

In 2020, in Antioquia there were 32 registered violent acts against political, social and communal leaders across 16 of its municipalities. While it is a slight decline compared to 2019 (8.6%), the same is not true for killings, which rose by 28.6% (from 14 in 2019 to 18 in 2020). These violent phenomena affected social and communal leaders particularly, as they concentrated 81% of registered murders in the department. Communal leaders in particular stand out, given that it's the department where there was the highest number of violations (12) and assassinations (nine) of this type of leader. Likewise, it was the



scene of three of the lethal aggressions perpetrated against LGBTI leaders (one murder and two attempted killings). Additionally, it's the territory that had the highest amount of massacres in the country (19),

The acts of violence occurred mainly in the sub-regions of Urabá and the Bajo Cauca Antioqueño, where there are GAOs present, as well as ELN and FARC dissidences, which coexist with legal and illegal economies that fight over control of the territory, the population and its resources. Also, Antioquia was the most affected department by GAI activity, with 141 actions (95 belligerent and 46 intimidations), which represents a 13.7% increase over 2019.

Lastly, in the department of Nariño, while it's true that during the first six months of 2020 the decline in violence relative to 2019 was abrupt, there was a rapid escalation as of July, with 11 of the year's 13 murders and both of its attempted assassinations, all against social leaders. Because of this, in contrast with 2019 the lethality of aggressions against that group grew by 62.5% (from eight murders and no attempted killings to 11 murders and two attempts), which highlights the case of indigenous leaders, who were victims of 8 violent events, all of them lethal (six murders and two attempts). Likewise, during the second semester of 2020, there were seven massacres perpetrated against the department's young population.

In terms of GAI activity, Nariño

registered a total of 44 actions (34 belligerent and 10 intimidations), mainly because of actions by the FARC dissidences. On that subject, the municipality of Tumaco presented the most worrying context, by amassing the highest amount of violent acts against leaders (with 11 murders and two attempted killings) in the department, as well as all of its violations against indigenous leaders and

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38.6% of GAI actions. Additionally, there was a massacre in August, 2020 which left six people dead. This is why it's necessary to call attention to this situation, because it's a region where dynamics related to the drug trafficking productive chain converge with the struggle for control by GAOs and the FARC dissidences, which has left the indigenous, afro and peasant populations which inhabit the department, in the midst of the confrontation.

In light of the current expansion of violence in the country, and taking into consideration the economic context derived from the sanitary emergency, it's essential for the different instances in charge of the protection and prevention of violence against leaders and human rights defenders, and the different sectors benefiting from state actions to be articulated, in order to achieve preventive attention measures (and not just reactive ones), that build off of the contexts, dynamics, conflicts, and demographic, cultural, gender, ethnic, political, socioeconomic and environmental characteristics of the communities and affected leaderships.

In this context, it's necessary to rethink the protection mechanisms being enacted, in order to identify feasible alternatives that can generate a bigger impact when implemented. It would be positive to move towards a concept of collective protection, in addition to the individual kind, in order to achieve a more efficient use of resources and actions, to encompass and address the phenomenon of violence against leaderships, which currently troubles our country, in the best way possible.

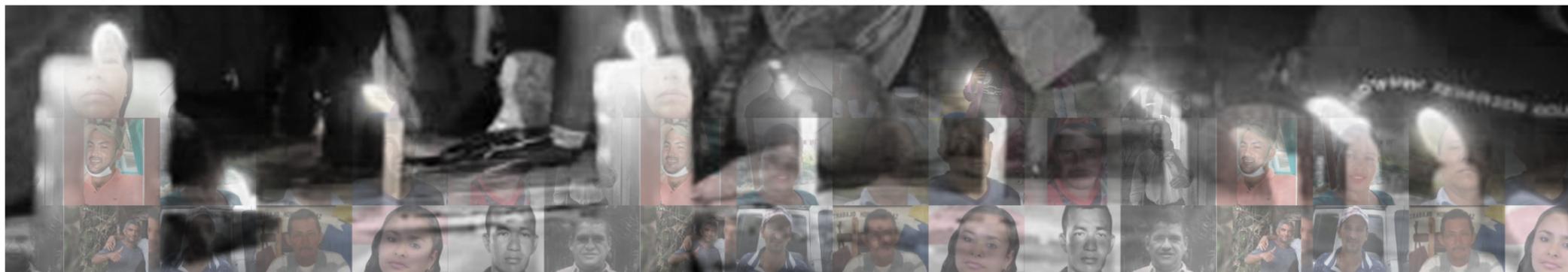
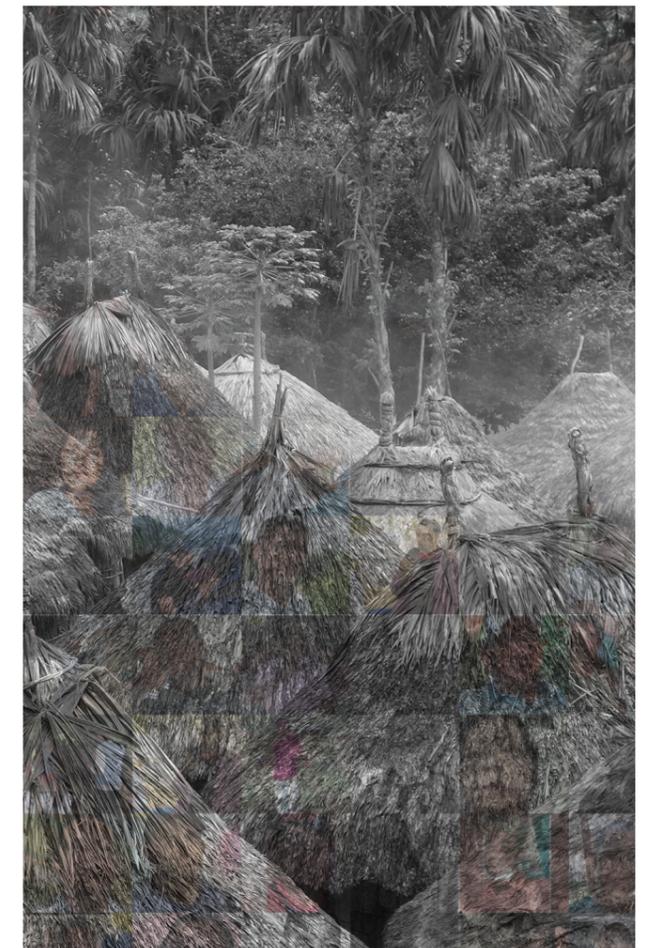
RECOMMENDATIONS: THE DECALOGUE

1. MOE recommends that the National Government guarantee the operation of a mechanism or space for inter-institutional analysis, prior to CIPRAT sessions, that can identify alerts which require urgent attention by institutions, so that threats detected by the Early Alerts System (SAT) can be efficiently addressed. Furthermore, the gathered information should be contrasted with the communities from the affected zones, in order to formulate responses that are in line with the communities' needs and their relationship with the territory.

2. State presence is a key element in the effective prevention of violence against leaders. MOE sees as necessary that municipal and departmental administrations build investment plans so that in the medium and long term the necessary infrastructure can be built to take public goods and services to remote rural areas. In the short term, territorial entities can cover their territories' needs with human rights missions, as well as health and justice service brigades, which provide service coverage and accompaniment to the citizens of rural populations.

3. With the support of the Ombudsman's Office, the municipal attorney (Personero), and territorial organizations, MOE recommends the establishment of humanitarian aid locations for primary attention, and the activation of protection routes in order to address attacks or threats to leaders from rural populations, without having to go to the municipal capital. These locations should prioritize proximity to afro-descendent or indigenous collective property territories, in order to provide differential treatment to those populations. .

4. It's essential that the Office of the High Commissioner for Peace (OACP), supervise the Territorial Peace and Reconciliation Councils' effective operation and composition, so that these instances articulate actors with knowledge of the territories' risk factors with those who generate State responses and operative actors who operate prevention and protection mechanisms. The presence of ethnic community actors, diverse gender identities and sexual orientations, and women, amongst other populations that need a differential approach, must be guaranteed in the composition of the councils, which must guarantee which must also be overseen by the OACP.



5. MOE considers it important that the OACP design technical assistance programs for the Territorial Peace Councils that request them, with the aim of fortifying the capacities of their members, in order to increase the council's impact in the formulation of requests to authorities, the drafting of recommendations to guarantee peace, and also reference and identify risks and conflicts in the territories.

6. It's necessary that the training programs that have been started by the National Government be replicated by the territorial entities, with the objective of increasing and completing the covered issues, in order to generate outreach from the different levels of government towards the affected citizens. It must be a priority for the territorial entities to generate these spaces, taking into account the diversity which exists in their territories.

9. It's essential for the National Government to adopt the necessary administrative measures to guarantee the inclusion of protection measures and schemes that fit within the logic of collective protection. This would allow operators to seek innovative procedures for the Colombian system, instead of a sole option based on traditional individual protection systems, which can often be ineffective in the specific conditions of rural territories or ethnic populations.

10. MOE recommends that the National Government review its decision which places the consolidation of homicide numbers for social and communal leaders, as well as human rights defenders, under the responsibility of the Attorney General. For it's essential that any analysis be built on the base of an integral appraisal of the facts, not just based off reports, but also the realities of the different communities and territories, taking into consideration such relevant inputs as the early alerts elaborated by the Ombudsman's Office.

7. The training programs that were already created by the Ministry of the Interior, as well as those that may arise from the territorial entities, are fundamental in the exercise of fortifying collectives' capacities. That's why it's essential that the training process work as a space for participative and action-based research that contributes to the diagnostic of the problem being elaborated by the entities, thus obtaining significant improvements in the dialogue with the communities, as well as the degree of confidence and emission of results.

8. For MOE it's important to underscore the need to include leaders and beneficiaries of the protection program in the intermediate risk evaluation systems, particularly the Technical Information Collection and Analysis Group, (CTRAI) and the Preliminary Evaluation Group (GVP). This would allow for the recognition of the effective protection needs generated by different contexts and realities, thus laying the groundwork for the inclusion of truly differential measures.

