



War and peace

# Colombia's security forces and prosecution requested disappearances: former warlord

by Adriaan Alsema | August 16, 2019



Colombia's paramilitaries cremated victims or threw them in the river at the request of the security forces and prosecution, a former paramilitary warlord said Thursday.

At a public event organized by newspaper *El Espectador*, Jose Ivan Laverde, a.k.a. "El Iguano," said he cremated some 560 bodies and threw 40 in the river after warnings from the Prosecutor General's Office that forensic investigators were on their way and "there would be a scandal."

Also the security forces urged Laverde's "Border Front," the AUC unit that was active in the Catatumbo region, to get rid of bodies.

*"Unfortunately things have to be said crudely: it was about numbers. It was to prevent the media from recording the number of homicides committed in the municipalities and to avoid problems for the security forces. In a city where 10, 15, 20, and even 40 people were executed in a single day, this brought problems to the commanders of the legal entities. It was the public force that told us: "Disappear them, don't leave me all those dead bodies" so that they wouldn't have it on their resume.*

Jose Ivan Laverde

According to Laverde, his men cremated some 560 people and threw another 40 in the Catatumbo river in order to keep homicide rates low or to prevent forensic investigators discovering mass graves.

*"We would retain people, execute them and bury them in mass graves. At one point, members of the Prosecutor General's Office told us that a commission was coming to unearth them and that it would cause a scandal, so we took the decision to incinerate them in brick ovens that were already there.*

Jose Ivan Laverde

Laverde stressed the necessity to hear other paramilitary commanders who have not been allowed to testify and that multiple former commanders have been assassinated to prevent them from revealing who financed them.

The former AUC chief said he had already told prosecutors about the people who financed his paramilitary group and benefited financially from the paramilitaries, but that they were never prosecuted.

*"Once we entered the department, many people got involved and supported us. Yes, many people benefited. When the AUC gained territory, others followed, buying land or doing business. They benefited from the pain and blood of the people who have suffered. From the beginning, with our own names and the lists in our hands, we told who financed the AUC and how. Cattle ranchers, rice farmers, miners, traders. We have given this information.*

Jose Ivan Laverde

On the list Laverde handed to the prosecution are state-run oil company **Ecopetrol** and Gaseosas la Frontera, one of the companies of Carlos Arila Lulle, the owner of radio and television network RCN.

### Laverde's list of sponsors

- Termotasajen
- Cootranscúcuta
- Tejar de Pescadero
- Norgas
- Gaseosas la Frontera (Postobon)
- Estacion de Servicio San Rafael
- Arroquera Gálvez
- Carbones la Miria
- Ferreteria
- El Palustre
- Inducarga
- Caño-Limón oil collection center (**Ecopetrol**)

Source: Razon Publica

Colombia's prosecution said in May that it had compiled a database of more than 2,300 alleged sponsors of the AUC, mainly businessmen and individuals linked to "different economic activities, particularly from the cattle, agriculture and hydrocarbon sectors."

**Colombia to seek charges against 2300 civilians and 3300 state officials over ties to paramilitary death squads**

in 2015, Former Vice-Prosecutor General Jorge Perdomo said more than 12,000 civilians were suspected of having sponsored the AUC.

Laverde urged the prosecutor general's office to make the surrendered lists of alleged sponsors public.

**BECOME A PATRON** Colombia Reports relies on your financial support. Please become our patron and support independent reporting from Colombia.

- AUC
- CATATUMBO
- PARA-ECONOMICS
- PARAPOLITICS
- WAR CRIMES

### Trending

**Nephew of Colombia's army chief implicated in kidnapping by his anti-kidnapping unit: report**

**'I am the president of Colombia': Uribe**

**Colombia's former president admits having flown on Jeffrey Epstein's 'Lolita Jet'**

### Weekly interviews and news updates

**Colombia calling**  
Latest tracks

**Colombia Calling**  
with RICHARD MCCOLE

147 TRACKS

- Colombia Calling - 286: Science Journalis... ▶ 32
- Colombia calling - 285: Brewing craft be... ▶ 261

[Cookie policy](#)

### Related articles

**The Gaviria family: prolific land thieves now after Colombia's 2nd largest economy**

**232 assassinations later, Duque convenes commission to cut ties between politics, business and paramilitaries**

**The Gaviria family: prolific land thieves now after Colombia's 2nd largest economy**

**232 assassinations later, Duque convenes commission to cut ties between politics, business and paramilitaries**

**The notoriously criminal in-laws of one of Colombia's most famous journalists**