

## Weapons Held By Civilians In Colombia Threaten Women's Lives, Says NGO

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[RCN Radio](#)

Three years ago, Colombia signed a treaty before the United Nations that has not been complied. The international agreement **seeks to control the arms trade**. The increase in the number of homicides especially of women with firearms in the country, shows the need to fulfill that commitment.

Of the 560,000 legal firearms in Colombia, **260,000 are registered in the name of surveillance companies** and about **150,000 are in the hands of civilians**, according to the Ministry of Defense. What is worrisome is that, according to Katherine Ronderos, Director of the Women's International League for Peace and Freedom, **there are other weapons that are not in the records and are easily obtained in the illegal market**.

"In several cities of this country, you can rent a gun for a day. For people living in those territories is probably every day, but for many, not like that you can rent a gun for a day, your crime and you return it," he says.

The concern is greater because the figures of Legal Medicine indicate that in a significant percentage of the femicides committed in Colombia during the last year, a firearm was used. This is what **Camila Rodríguez, from LIMPAL Colombia, reveals**.

"Regarding the numbers of femicides with firearms, we are talking about 2016 to 2017 of 3077 who died in a violent manner, of which 577 were for firearms and 7 for explosive devices," says Rodríguez.

The World Arms Trade Treaty **entered into force on 24 December 2014**, after being announced at the United Nations Assembly. Colombia signed it, but **three years later it has not implemented it** and the illegal arms of civilians abound in the country.

"Colombia signed it, that was three years ago that signed this treaty before the United Nations, but we have not ratified it in Colombia and I believe that this must be a commitment of the State and the government to say we bet on peace but also of this we need to strengthen the legislation that we have in front of the trade ", adds Ronderos.

Associated with the cases of Femicidio in Colombia **is a high percentage of previous reports on intrafamily violence** and threats with a weapon. In the big cities, the greatest number of murders occurred.

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"Although there are departments where no femicides were registered, it does not mean that they did not happen, however within the most numerous registers are the city of Bogota and the department of Antioquia where they have been increasing since 2015 to date "Says Camila Rodríguez.

"Women for disarmament, more life and less weapons," is the name of a campaign that will begin in Colombia seeking to lower rates of gender violence and the use of firearms in the country. What is expected is that in a scenario with a reduced armed conflict, also the number of cases of murders of women will decrease.

**"We are concerned that guns are used for violence against women** and what we are looking for is for women to live in a society free from violence and for **guns to pose no threat to us in our own homes,"** says Katherine Ronderos.

Through decree 2280 of late 2016, the Ministry of Defense extended the suspension of permits for the carrying of weapons throughout the country. Despite the measure the crimes committed in Colombia with a firearm are still a reality.