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## ***Colombia: Anatomy of armed strike***

And then? What happened to the public force so effective in dissolving student and teacher marches and so submissive to the attacks and other nonsense of the Gaitanista Self-Defense Groups?



The curious reader will ask who I mean when I say that people wondered where the generals and the soldiers and the police were when the so-called Gaitanista Self-Defense Forces of Colombia or Clan del Golfo got bogged down by the extradition of their former leader alias "Otoniel" and declared an armed strike. And where were Duque and his Mindefensa, who seemed to crouch in the palace before the barrages of the paramilitaries in various parts of Colombia?



Several situations caused strangeness. How is it that the so-called (or self-described) "good people", the same one that shot against the indigenous minga in the national strike, against students and workers who opposed Duque's tax reform, did not do so against the "paracos" golfers, who set fire to vehicles and threatened the inhabitants of various regions. What would be the thing. Where was hidden that subject who in Cali shot the demonstrators, over the shoulder of policemen, who seemed to make him "curtain" (as in football), during the civil protests against the government.



While those of the Gulf, with intimidating messages, terrifying warnings and predatory acts, stood on the streets of villages, roads, sidewalks, bridges, streets and other spaces, neither those of the Esmad, nor soldiers nor policemen appeared for these "payments". It would seem that those of the anti-riot squad are not trained to face paramilitaries, only peasants, students, workers and, sometimes, members of football "barras bravas".

The terrorist armed strike of the paramilitaries, of the same ones who recently murdered seven soldiers in Frontino, paralyzed villages and sowed fear in more than ten

departments. In Montería, for example, panic spread among its inhabitants. The paramilitaries urged them not to leave their homes. However, in a gesture very similar to that of presidential ineptitude, the Dimayor turned a deaf ear to the requests of Deportivo Independiente Medellín not to play, in the Jaraguay stadium, in the capital of Cordoba, a match against Jaguares.

Neither was it postponed, nor was it accepted to play in another less random place. Those of Medellín argued that, above a football match, there was the life, the integrity of the players. And, in addition, they issued a statement of solidarity with the Monterian people, besieged by the bandit paramilitary organization. The Dimayor and the eleventh Monterian ignored the "armed strike" and, belittling any likelihood of attacks against spectators, journalists, cameramen and footballers, insisted that they had to play.



Anyway. People kept wondering why against the demonstrations of the national strikes last year and further back there was repression and, on the other hand, there was no official reaction against the excesses of the hordes of the Gulf Clan. When the armed strike had been going on for more than 48 hours, the Mindefensa went out to offer rewards for some leaders of the Gaitanista Self-Defense Groups, and that was it. Meanwhile, on social networks, in community stations, in classrooms and in other scenarios, people continued with their questions, in the midst of an atmosphere of tension that vacated warehouses, shopping centers, schools, adulterated the celebration of Mother's Day and clarified points about what kind of government the Colombian is.



People said, for example, that the forces of the state are very severe with teachers, students, workers, social leaders and other exponents of civil resistance against official outrages, and very accommodating with terrorists, such as those of the Gulf Clan. Where are General Zapateiro and his troops to impose order and control of more than ten departments that paramilitarism paralyzed as it wanted?, was another of the questions that flew from word of mouth.

During the armed strike (at the time of writing, Saturday night, it was still going on), the paramilitaries murdered fourteen people, locked up thousands more, paralyzed transport, depleted the community, prevented the mobilization of travelers to the towns that were going to celebrate the mother's party and sowed terror for a good part of the country. And then? What happened to the public force so effective in dissolving student and teacher marches and so submissive to the attacks and other nonsense of the Gaitanista Self-Defense Groups?

There was no shortage of those who, in the midst of general stupor and official inefficiency, recalled the "false positives", the recent deaths of Putumayo, the children bombed, and kept wondering: where were they, those with bayonets and helmets, those with rifles and helicopter gunships when the paramilitaries took key points of eleven departments to their cover? "It's very easy to be brave from the Nariño Palace," Frontino Mayor Jorge Elejalde told Duque.



There has been a sense of citizen bewilderment and a sea of doubts. On the other hand, the state and government ineptitude to face a challenge such as the one launched by paramilitarism in the face of the extradition of alias "Otoniel" has been clear, which, as has also been said, took the truth to the American dungeons.

Reinaldo Spitaletta for La Pluma, May 10, 2022

Edited by [María Piedad Ossaba](#)

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