



## Emblematic Cases

The methodological strategy employed by the Historical Memory Group to analyze and illustrate the processes and dynamics of conflict in Colombian territory, is the reconstruction of emblematic cases.

Emblematic cases that are identified by MH, condense multiple processes, modes and regional expressions of conflict and victimization that help define and make public the authorships, responsibilities, and the social and political impacts of contemporary violence. Some of them are:

### El Salado

The massacre of El Salado is one of the most atrocious of contemporary conflict in Colombia. It was perpetrated between the 16<sup>th</sup> and 21<sup>st</sup> of February 2000 by 450 paramilitaries who, assisted by helicopters, gave death to 60 people in an utter defenseless state. This event is part of the bloodiest escalation of massive violence events in Colombia between 1999 and 2001. During this period, in the Montes de Maria region, where El Salado is located, violence was materialized in 42 massacres that left 354 fatal victims behind. The report *The Massacre of El Salado: That wasn't our war (La Masacre de El Salado: Esa guerra no era nuestra)*, released on the Memory Week 2009 event (Semana por la Memoria 2009), attests the ill-fated consequences of stigmatizing civilian population that is trapped between two armed agents fighting for territorial control.

Available at <http://www.memoriahistorica-cnrr.org.co/s-informes/informe-7/>

### Trujillo

The municipality of Trujillo, on the Valle del Cauca Department, has been a setting of multiple and continuous violence. The period between 1988 and 1994, registered 342 victims of homicide, torture and forced disappearance, according to family members and humanitarian organizations. All sort of actors converged to embody a spectacle of



horror that is still stirring the conscience of its inhabitants amidst the most aberrant impunity. The first report of Historical Memory, *Trujillo: An ongoing tragedy (Trujillo: Una tragedia que no cesa)*, was presented on September 2008 in the framework of Memory Week.

Available at <http://www.memoriahistorica-cnrr.org.co/s-informes/informe-8/>

### **La Rochela**

The 18<sup>th</sup> of January 1989, near the township of La Rochela, municipality of Simacota, Department of Santander, a paramilitary group perpetrated a massacre in which 12 out of 15 judicial officers that investigated crimes in the region were killed. The crime was the outcome of an alliance between paramilitary groups, drug traffickers and members of the army, framed in a milieu of violence against judiciary officers. Around the time events took place, numerous attacks against justice administration employees happened in Colombia. Between 1979 and 1991 an annual average of 25 judges and lawyers were murdered or suffered some sort of murder attempt. The massacre of La Rochela, as an emblematic case, illustrates the multiple forms of victimization of judicial workers in Colombia.

Available on 2010.

### **Bojayá**

In the middle of an armed confrontation between FARC and Self-Defense Groups, the 2<sup>nd</sup> of May 2002 in the municipality of Bojayá, Department of Chocó, various gas pipes were launched, one of them landing inside the local church. The explosion resulted in the death of 80 Afro-Colombians, among them 48 minors. This massacre caused the displacement of 5.771 people to the capital city of Chocó, Quibdó. This cruel violent event was evidence of: the violation of the most basic principles of International Humanitarian Rights Law by armed groups; the failure of the Colombian state to safeguard the community's integrity; and the disrespect for



civilian population -used as human shield first, later pressured to shelter armed actors in their place of refuge, and finally massacred with the launch of the explosive artifact-.

Available on 2010.

### **Segovia**

The night of November 11, 1988, a paramilitary commando called Death to Revolutionaries of the Northeast (Muerte a Revolucionarios del Nordeste – MRN for its name in Spanish) made an incursion into the urban area of the municipality of Segovia, Department of Antioquia. List in hand, firing arm rifles and grenades to nearby inhabitants, the commando made its way into two town streets, home to militants and politicians of the Union Patriótica (Patriotic Union Party) who were assassinated. The massacre left 43 dead and 54 people injured. These events acquire relevance beyond the massacre's magnitude, yet the largest in the eighties decade, for the extermination methods of the Union Patriótica members it exemplifies.