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Prosecutor: No Evidence that UNAM Student had Links to Colombia's FARC

by LADB Staff
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The Procuraduria General de la Republica (PGR) has no plans to file charges against Mexican citizen Lucia Morett, who had been under investigation for links to the Colombian rebel group Fuerzas Armadas Revolucionarias de Colombia (FARC).

Attorney General Eduardo Medina Mora said the government has found no evidence that Morett had any ties to the FARC, although he indicated that his office has not closed the investigation. Morett was visiting a FARC camp inside Ecuador during a Colombian military raid on the enclave. She survived the attack, but four other students from the Universidad Nacional Autonoma de Mexico (UNAM) were killed (see SourceMex, 2008-04-02).

The Colombian military raid into Ecuador in March of this year killed several FARC leaders as well as the Mexican students and severely strained relations between Colombia and Ecuador (see NotiSur, 2008-03-07). Morett, who is also being investigated by the Colombian and Ecuadoran governments, has been in Nicaragua for the past several months (see SourceMex, 2008-06-18).

Colombian authorities had raised the possibility that Morett and other Mexican and Chilean university students were in the FARC camp to learn guerrilla tactics from the rebel group. Morett adamantly denied this charge, saying that her UNAM delegation's visit to the camp was purely for research purposes.

In testimony to the Mexican Senate, Medina said the PGR's investigation found no evidence linking Morett and the other UNAM students to the Colombian guerrillas (see NotiSur, 2008-10-10). "There is no arrest or detention order against Ms. Morett," the attorney general told senators.

Medina said the investigation remains open, but there are no legal obstacles preventing Morett from returning home. "There is nothing that would prevent her from returning to the country," he said.

Morett has opted to remain in Nicaragua because of a complaint brought before the PGR by ultraright organization Mejor Sociedad Mejor Gobierno, which has questioned the links that her UNAM group has developed with leftist organizations in the Americas. "We have asked for a meeting with the attorney general to ask that this charge against our daughter be thrown out," said Lucia's father Jorge Morett, who was present at the Senate hearing where Medina testified.

In addition, Morett's legal representatives are concerned about the ongoing Colombian and Ecuadoran investigations, which could result in an extradition request. UNAM faculty members also dismiss the notion that UNAM students are directly involved with the FARC and other guerrilla organizations. Martin Iniguez, who teaches international relations at UNAM, said Morett and the
students who were killed in Colombia were taken in by the presentations of representatives of international groups who visit UNAM for recruiting purposes. "They were in the wrong place at the wrong time," Iniguez told The Miami Herald.

Iniguez said the blame falls partly on the UNAM administration, which has lost oversight of many activities that occur on its campus. "The UNAM is a reflection of the microcosm of the Mexican political system: extreme tolerance because of a reluctance to pay the political cost," he said.

**Colombia, Mexico probe FARC connection to Mexican drug cartels**

Although there is no established link between UNAM students and the FARC, Mexican and Colombian officials say they have uncovered clear connections between the Colombian guerrilla group and Mexican drug cartels. "We are particularly worried about the strengthening connections between Mexican cartels and the FARC," Colombia's deputy defense minister Sergio Jaramillo said at a security meeting sponsored by the Organization of American States (OAS).

"The Mexican cartels are buying directly from the FARC." Jaramillo said Oliver Solarte, finance chief of one of the FARC's units, has been the main contact with the Mexican drug cartels. The Colombian official declined to offer further details because of concern that intelligence reports might be compromised.

During his testimony before the Senate, Medina Mora alluded to ongoing investigations into connections between Mexican drug cartels and the FARC but also declined to offer further details. Earlier this year, Colombian authorities said they were investigating allegations that the FARC had established connections in Mexico to expand its links to the Sinaloa and the Tijuana cartels (see SourceMex, 2008-04-02).

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