

Colombian violence forces scores to flee

by UPI

BOGOTA - Thousands of Colombians fled their homes in 2006 for fear of being swept up in the country's conflict, the Red Cross said Thursday.

"In 2006 once again, thousands were forced to flee their homes as a result of pressure to participate in hostilities, death threats, killing of family members and the danger of being caught in crossfire," said Barbara Hintermann, head of the delegation in Colombia of the International Committee of the Red Cross. "We are deeply concerned about the growing plight of civilians in this conflict."

Colombia's left-wing rebels have been battling the Colombian government for more than 40 years. President Alvaro Uribe has made cracking down on rebels a priority of his administration while at the same time pushing for the disarmament of the paramilitaries that combat the rebels.

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