



## Colombia

🕒 This article is more than 2 years old

# Colombia protests against police brutality leave at least 10 dead

**Unrest sparked by police killing of lawyer in Bogotá  
Disturbances spread to Medellín, Cali and Manizales**

---

---

---

**Joe Parkin Daniels** *in Bogotá*

🐦 @joeparkdan

Fri 11 Sep 2020 18.31 BST

At least 10 people have been left dead in cities across [Colombia](#) after a second night of protests against police brutality.

The unrest was sparked by the killing on Tuesday night in Bogotá of an unarmed lawyer, Javier Ordóñez, by police who pinned him down and repeatedly shocked him with a Taser for over two minutes as he begged “please, no more”.

Footage of the incident swiftly went viral.

Two nights of demonstrations then racked the capital, with 17 police kiosks torched on Wednesday night. Police beat protesters and fired teargas and “less-lethal” baton rounds. Some demonstrators launched rocks towards the police, which officers in riot gear returned.

The government supplied the figure of 10 dead but no details of where, when and how they died. A total of 209 civilians were reported injured along with 194 police.

Most of the unrest took place in Bogotá, though on Thursday night it spread to Medellín, Cali and Manizales - all cities in the country’s western interior.

The Bogotá newspaper *El Espectador* on Friday reported that authorities had determined that Ordóñez died from a blow to his head while in custody. He had been detained for drinking alcohol in public, which can lead to a fine in the capital.

In La Soledad, a middle-class neighbourhood in the city, protesters gathered on Thursday evening in front of the remains of a police kiosk that had been torched the night before, as heavily armoured riot police stared them down. While the demonstrators were largely peaceful - with people holding signs and playing drums - when one woman approached the police barricade, officers responded with flash-bangs and teargas.

“*Cerdos asesinos*”, or “murderer pigs”, was the cry from protesters as they ran for cover.

“We’re sick of them,” said Laura, a government employee who did not give her full name. “We’re sick of them killing us with impunity, of demanding bribes when we walk down the street, of acting like they own us.”

Bogotá’s mayor, Claudia López, on Friday morning [tweeted](#) that police had not been authorized to fire on protesters, saying that officers had “disobeyed direct instructions”.

In the wake of López’s revelations, analysts worried about a rogue police force. “Evidently there is confusion over the role of the police and who is in charge of the police,” said Sergio Guzmán, a Bogotá-based political risk analyst. “And that doesn’t bode well for restoring public safety or trust in the police.”

account could work for restoring public safety or trust in the police.

Colombia's defence minister on Friday apologised on behalf of the police for the killing of Ordóñez, though it is unlikely to quell wider discontent that first appeared late last year in a spate of protests, which were interrupted by the coronavirus pandemic.

"This is a consequence of systematic abuse of power, not only in the police but across the board," said Mafe Carrascal, an activist who has been protesting this week. "People are sick of the fact that if the Covid-19 doesn't kill them, the government will."

President Ivan Duque said all the deaths in the protests would be investigated swiftly and no abuse by security forces would be tolerated.

---

---

---

---

---

---

## Most viewed

---