

Colombians abducted 10 years back may be alive: Official

Bogota, Sep 8 (EFE) The Colombian army has found proof that several hostages held by the FARC guerrilla group, including some kidnapped in 1998, are alive. A man who was carrying the information in a USB computer memory stick has been arrested, an official has said.

The proofs seized by the army are photos of 10 of the 23 soldiers and police that the Revolutionary Armed Forces of Colombia (FARC) guerrilla group is holding captive, acting Attorney General Guillermo Mendoza said.

They are 'specifically photographs and details of personnel of the armed forces that are being held hostage', Mendoza said at a press conference in Bogota.

He also discussed the arrest of Ramiro Valbuena Ospina, a FARC courier, that occurred Saturday as he was riding a motorcycle on the highway between the central city of Villavicencia and Bogota.

The suspected rebel, who belongs to the FARC's 44th Front, was carrying a USB computer memory stick with information about four soldiers and six policemen, some of them kidnapped as long ago as 1998.

'This is proof contained in electronic media,' Mendoza said.

A judge Monday ordered the release of Valbuena Ospina because the soldiers and judicial authorities taking part in his arrest and investigation violated his due process rights.

On July 2, 2008, the Colombian army rescued former presidential candidate Ingrid Betancourt, US military contractors Thomas Howes, Keith Stansell and Marc Gonsalves, and 11 other Colombian police officers and soldiers.

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