

LAND OR DEATH COLOMBIA'S INDIGENOUS LAND DEFENDERS



A FILM BY
JESPER KLEMEDSSON SOTOMAYOR & SEBASTIAN PEÑA ROJAS

26 mins / 2022 / Spanish, English Subtitles / Sweden



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SYNOPSIS

After the Colombian government and the FARC signed a peace agreement in 2016, there was hope that the five decade-long armed conflict had come to an end, but Colombia has become one of the world's deadliest places for land rights defenders. Arm criminal gangs, including ex-FARC members, emerged in the power vacuum and fought for control. A tenacious grandmother, Celia, leads an unarmed indigenous civilian force that fights to defend their land. She is one of the highest-ranking members of an indigenous civilian defense force in the dangerous region. Celia longs to rebuild her troubled relationship with her family, but violence has returned to the area. When a close comrade is assassinated, Celia is forced to mobilize her community. It's an incredibly perilous task, as the Guards are entirely unarmed, but they are resolute and determined not to give in: "We have to make them understand that the control is ours and the territory is ours - that we, as indigenous guards, will always be in this territory."

DIRECTORS' STATEMENT

Colombia is the deadliest place in the world for land and environmental defenders. The Cauca region in the southwest parts of the country bears a disproportional share of the violence. This is where our film takes place.

One social leader has been killed every three days since the 2016 peace agreement. Indigenous communities are on the frontline against armed groups, multinational corporations, cartels and the Colombian state. All of them have gained momentum because of the vacuum left by the peace accord between the Colombian state and the FARC guerrillas that once dominated the region. Despite constant threats and killings, indigenous communities are calling for the liberation of Mother Earth.

While the world thinks that Colombia is at peace, it is more violent than ever. This is not a documentary about atrocities that happened years ago. This is happening right now. What might appear as a local crisis has worldwide implications in times of catastrophic climate change. This is the very frontline of the struggle and the indigenous people are leading the way.

Jesper Klemmedsson Sotomayor & Sebastian Rojas

DIRECTORS' BIOGRAPHIES

Jesper Klemmedsson Sotomayor is an award winning Swedish documentary filmmaker and visual storyteller. Working predominantly in Latin America with a special focus on the regions indigenous and social movements, land rights and social struggle. He is founder and member of Recapto – a documentary production company. He has a Master in Photojournalism from the University of Westminster in London.

Sebastian Peña is a documentary filmmaker, originally from Chile, based in Copenhagen. He is educated at Biskops-Arnö, Sweden and Escuela Nordica, Chile. In his work, he focuses on complex political, social and humanitarian issues. Sebastian is the founder of the production company Recapto.