

Colombia Captures Top Guerrilla Recruiter

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The capture of Miguel Angel Villamizar, 28, was carried out with the help of the army and the air force in a rural part of the municipality of Yondo, in northwestern Antioquia province, according to a police communique.

Villamizar, police say, is responsible for 80 percent of the illegal recruitment of minors for the Middle Magdalena Bloc of the Revolutionary Armed Forces of Colombia (FARC).

The Middle Magdalena Bloc operates in the provinces of Bolivar, Santander and Antioquia.

Villamizar deceived women and children with promises of large sums of money in exchange for abandoning school and coming into the jungle to live and work with the FARC, authorities said.

“This capture not only has an effect on the ... FARC’s Middle Magdalena Bloc, but it reflects the interest in protecting Colombia’s children,” said Defense Minister Juan Carlos Pinzon.

The minister added that Villamizar deceived the minors, taking them to instruction camps where they were trained using carved wooden rifles and then forced to remain in the FARC ranks.

Villamizar is also accused of cocaine trafficking, extorting oil companies and businessmen, as well as carrying out attacks on the country’s energy infrastructures.