



Written by [Paul Dragu](#) on August 12, 2025

## Right-wing Colombian Presidential Hopeful Dies After Assassination Attempt

Colombian senator and presidential hopeful Miguel Uribe Turbay died Monday, two months after being shot in the head during a campaign event.

A 15-year-old boy (some reports say he was 14) allegedly shot the 39-year-old candidate three times, twice in the head and once in the knee, while he was talking to supporters in a park just west of Bogotá on June 7. The suspect shouted, “I did it for money for my family,” as police arrested him, according to [reports](#) citing video from the scene.

The senator was rushed to the hospital and has had several operations since — but it was not enough.



AP Images  
Miguel Uribe Turbay

### Cartel Mastermind?

In addition to arresting the shooting suspect, investigators have arrested the getaway driver and a woman suspected of producing the gun used in the crime. Police also arrested and charged Elder Joe Arteaga, who goes by the name “El Costeño,” for coordinating the assassination logistics. He is charged with attempted aggravated homicide, aggravated manufacture, trafficking, carrying of firearms or ammunition, and the use of minors for committing crimes. Arteaga is a suspected gang leader.

Reports suggest that while Arteaga is suspected of coordinating the attack, he is not considered the “original mastermind.” Investigators claim they hope that Arteaga may lead them to the true mastermind behind the assassination. [According](#) to Colombia Reports, the prevailing suspicion is that drug cartels are behind the assassination:

Details of the investigation that have been leaked to corporate media suggest the involvement of the so-called New Drug Trafficking Junta, a multinational drug trafficking organization that controls many of Bogotá’s gangs. Members of this organization may have been hired by a third party to assassinate Uribe, who was campaigning to become the CD’s presidential candidate next year.

### Uribe’s Background

Uribe comes from a well-known Colombian political family. His grandfather was former president Julio César Turbay Ayala, who led the country from 1978 to 1982. His mother was journalist Diana Turbay, who was kidnapped by Pablo Escobar’s Medellín cartel and killed during a 1991 rescue operation that went awry.

The senator was the conservative presidential candidate for the opposition Democratic Centre party. He frequently [criticized](#) the policies of the current president. But his views on domestic security and coca



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eradication had likely earned him his most ardent enemies.

## Drug Problem

Medellín Cartel kingpin Pablo Escobar may be gone, but Colombia is still one of the largest cocaine producers, despite numerous promises and efforts by the government to change that. The country hit a record low of 48,000 hectares used for coca production in 2012, but by 2019 that number had skyrocketed to 154,000. And as of 2018, 90 percent of the cocaine confiscated in the United States came from Colombia. A 2021 [report from the International Crisis Group](#) said that coca crops had recently set record yields.

In 2016, the Colombian government struck an agreement with the guerrilla Revolutionary Armed Forces of Colombia (FARC). According to the International Crisis Group, “that accord promised to institute a nationwide crop substitution program enabling roughly 200,000 coca-growing families to pursue other legal businesses.” The idea was “to sever links between the insurgency and drug trafficking” while establishing state control in parts of the country where criminals were in charge and cocaine production was thriving. But those promises came to naught. Coca production rose to historic highs as new armed groups swooped in and fought for control of the supply chain.

## Destroy the Fields

Uribe supported destroying the drug industry by eradicating coca fields with glyphosate, and replacing coca production with legal crops. He had [proposed](#) militarizing the regions around the cities to protect civilians from cartels. He also doled out especially ardent criticism of the current government’s fight against drug trafficking. Uribe posted on his X account on March 14, 2024:

Zero hectares of coca eradicated in January. What kind of world do they live in? And they come out and tell us, in a very nice government newspaper, that they’re already winning the battle against drug trafficking. Man, don’t be shameless. We have a clear problem here, and it’s drug trafficking.

Cero hectáreas de coca erradicadas en enero. En qué mundo viven y salen y nos dicen a, en un periódico muy lindo del gobierno, que es que la batalla contra el narcotráfico ya la están ganando. Hombre, no sean sinvergüenzas, aquí tenemos un problema evidente y es narcotráfico. [pic.twitter.com/pA4Ko4GhvE](https://pic.twitter.com/pA4Ko4GhvE)

— Miguel Uribe (@MiguelUribeT) [March 14, 2024](#)

Uribe was the top right-wing candidate for next year’s presidential elections. He died just days after Álvaro Uribe, a former president who leads the Democratic Center party that Miguel Uribe was part of, was sentenced to 12 years of house arrest for bribery and abuse of process. It turns out that Álvaro Uribe’s government had worked with the United States to take down Marxist rebels. There is no relation between the two Uribes.

Álvaro Uribe said this about Miguel Uribe’s death: “Evil destroys everything; they killed hope. May Miguel’s struggle be a light that illuminates the right path for Colombia.”



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