

Red Cross finds 11 bodies in Colombia

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CALI, Colombia --

The Red Cross said Saturday it has recovered all 11 bodies presumed to be lawmakers who were killed in a shootout while held hostage by leftist rebels.

The still-unidentified cadavers were found in an undisclosed area whose coordinates were provided by the Revolutionary Armed Forces of Colombia, or FARC, the International Committee of the Red Cross said in a statement.

The corpses were to be transported Sunday by helicopter to the southern city of Cali, where forensic experts supervised by the Organization of American States will try to untangle the confused events surrounding the hostages' deaths.

In late June, the FARC announced the lawmakers had been killed when an unidentified military group attacked the jungle camp where they were being held.

The government denied attempting a military rescue and initially accused the rebels of executing the hostages. It later said they died in a mistaken clash between two guerrilla fronts.

Hostages' family members were optimistic they will soon see an end to their ordeal, five years after guerrillas disguised as soldiers nabbed the lawmakers during a raid on the state legislature in Cali.

"Finally we'll be able to have the certainty we've been waiting for and close this sad chapter in my life," said John Jairo Hoyos, son of one of the legislators.

The FARC holds another 45 prominent hostages, including three American defense contractors whose plane crashed in the jungle while on an anti-narcotics mission in 2003.