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Embassy of Colombia in the United States

Update on the Status of Colombia's Peace Agreement

As a key stakeholder in the U.S.-Colombia bilateral relationship, we want to keep you up to date on Colombia's Peace Process and implementation of the Peace Agreement. Since our last update, the Colombian Constitutional Court announced a unanimous decision in support of the Agreement.

October 11, 2017

On October 11, the Colombian Constitutional Court ruled unanimously in support of the Peace Agreement, providing stability and legal security to the Agreement (referred to as the Final Agreement), its implementation and the building of a stable and lasting peace.

The Court's ruling stated:

"The institutions and authorities of the State have the obligation to comply in good faith with what is established in the Final Agreement. As a result, actions of all the institutions and authorities of the State, the provisions of the Final Agreement and their interpretation and application should be with coherence and completeness with what was agreed upon, preserving the contents, commitments, spirit and principles of the Final Agreement."

October 5, 2017

On October 5, the UN Security Council unanimously voted to expand the UN Verification Mission in Colombia by including as an additional task the monitoring and verification of the ceasefire between the government of Colombia and the ELN. The ceasefire agreement, which was reached on September 5 and went into effect on October 1, marked the first agreement reached with that guerrilla group in 50 years. The ceasefire is expected to remain in effect until mid-January 2018.

Permanent Representative of Colombia to the United Nations María Emma Mejía stated:

"We believe this can help a lot in this historical moment because of the meaning it has. A guerrilla organization like the National Liberation Army, which in its 53-year history, even older than the FARC, had signed a bilateral cease-fire, and we believe this could be a good sign of better times."

September 14, 2017



UN Security Council. Photo taken by the UN.

On September 14, the UN Security Council unanimously adopted a resolution detailing recommendations for and the characteristics of a UN Verification Mission in Colombia set to begin on September 26. The resolution included Secretary-General António Guterres' recommendations regarding the size, operational aspects and mandate of this second mission in Colombia. The mission was announced on July 10, and will involve verifying the process of former FARC combatants' reintegration into civilian life in Colombia.

The first UN mission took place in the disarmament phase of Peace Agreement implementation and was focused on monitoring and verifying the laying down of arms by the FARC, a mission which successfully concluded in August.

According to the UN:

"In a briefing to the Security Council last week, the Secretary-General's Special Representative for Colombia, Jean Arnault, said that as the Verification Mission prepares to begin its activities, he hoped that, with the Council's support, the new operation should be able to strengthen the country's confidence for a stable peace."

September 7, 2017



First Lady of Colombia María Clemencia Rodríguez and President Santos present gifts to the Pontiff, including a silver rosary from Ciénaga de Oro, a clay angel from Ráquira and an Arhuaca backpack.

His Holiness Pope Francis arrived in Colombia on the evening of Wednesday, September 6 for a five-day visit to Bogotá, Villavicencio, Medellín and Cartagena – the first papal visit to the nation since 1986. Both before arriving and during his visit, Pope Francis has expressed support for Colombia's efforts to achieve stable and lasting peace and has delivered a message of peace and reconciliation.

On Thursday, September 7, Pope Francis delivered a number of addresses before the Colombian people. In a speech at the presidential palace in Bogotá – Casa de Nariño – during a meeting with President Santos, First Lady María Clemencia Rodríguez, the Cabinet and Diplomatic Corps, Pope Francis stated:

“This meeting offers me the opportunity to express appreciation for the efforts that have been made, over the last decades, to put an end to armed violence and find ways of reconciliation. In the last year, certain progress has been made in

particular; the steps taken give rise to hope, in the conviction that the search for peace is an open task, a task that does not give way and requires the commitment of all. Work that asks us not to fall in the effort to build the unity of the nation and, despite obstacles, differences and different approaches on how to achieve peaceful coexistence, persist in the struggle ... I pray for you, for the present and for the future of Colombia.”

The Pope's visit added new energy to the reconciliation process among Colombians in the context of Peace Agreement implementation. Around 70 percent of the Colombian population is Catholic.

September 5, 2017

The government of Colombia announced on September 5, that it reached a bilateral and temporary ceasefire with the ELN, the first agreement reached with that guerrilla group in 50 years – a historic achievement. The government's chief negotiating team, including former Minister of Agriculture and Rural Development Juan Camilo Restrepo and current Minister of Defense Luis Carlos Villegas, made the announcement. During a press conference at the presidential palace in Bogotá, they explained the scope of the agreement, which was reached under the framework of the third round of talks between the government and ELN in the Ecuadorian capital of Quito.

Former Minister Restrepo highlighted the significance of the agreement:

"The first thing I want to emphasize is the importance of this agreement. It is the first of its kind of agreements reached with the ELN in 50 years."

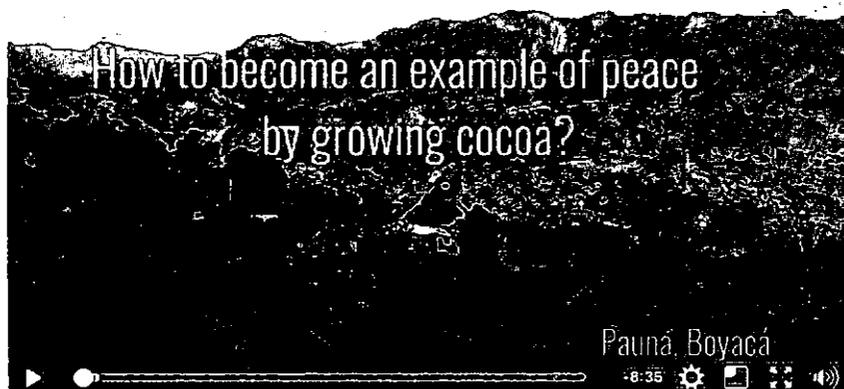
Minister Villegas stated:

"... [T]his negotiation that ended last night is a decision that alleviates suffering, creates tranquility and improves security, including for our own Armed Forces, which have suffered casualties, which have suffered injuries for so long."

August 29, 2017

Reintegration efforts include the transformation of rural communities through crop substitution programs for farmers who prior to peace grew illegal coca crops. Through these programs, in many places across the country, chief among them Boyacá, former coca growers have turned away from illicit drug cultivation and are now growing cocoa – the key ingredient in chocolate and chocolate treats.

The Colombian Ministry of Justice and Law released a [video](#) featuring communities in Pauna and San Pablo de Borbur in the Boyacá Department (state) that have stopped growing illicit coca crops and are instead cultivating cocoa. The Colombian government has made substantial investments in crop substitution as part of Peace Agreement implementation and its counter-narcotics strategy, and cocoa is one of many "crops of peace."



(Click [here](#) or on the image above to watch the video with English subtitles.)

The video notes:

"In Pauna, San Pablo de Borbur and eight other municipalities in western Boyacá have turned cocoa-growing into their livelihoods, and they are on the brink of consolidating themselves at the national level as a powerful cocoa-producing region. In Pauna alone, they are producing 180 tons per year and they expect to reach 200 tons this year. Many of them are supplying the national industry and many others are seeking to create the whole production chain from growing the plants to the cup and commercializing their cocoa themselves."

We will continue to update you as implementation progresses.

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