

# *UN defends Colombian peace treaty, calls on Duque to respect accord*

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United Nations, April 20 (RHC)-- The United Nations is calling on the Ivan Duque administration in Colombia to refrain from altering its peace agreement with the Revolutionary Armed Forces of Colombia (FARC).

The Colombian president announced last month his plans to amend six articles of the Statutory Law of the Special Jurisdiction for Peace (JEP), an integral part of country's 2016 Peace Accord to bring justice to the country's 50 year internal conflict.

"In a climate of uncertainty -- for victims, for those subject to the Special Jurisdiction for Peace (JEP), for members of the FARC who expect funds for economic and social reintegration and for communities that have suffered from the conflict -- the biggest uncertainty would be to reopen key elements of the peace agreement," said U.N. envoy to Colombia, Carlos Ruiz Massieu.

JEP is the backbone of the peace agreement signed in November 2016 between the Manuel Santos administration and the former Revolutionary Armed Forces of Colombia (FARC). It is charged with "investigating, judging and sanctioning the most serious crimes of the country's armed conflict," according

to the court. The guilty will be given alternate prison sentences, provided they confess, repair the damage done to victims and vow to abandon all forms of violence.

On entering the presidency in August, Duque made three objections which would allegedly upset the JEP and allow for extradition of FARC generals and militia to the United States. These were ultimately rejected by the House of Representatives and passed along to the Senate for their consideration.

The United Nations is pushing for the law to be implemented "as soon as possible" before these or other changes can be made. "The Statutory Law is the last missing element of the legal framework for the JEP and one necessary to guarantee that this institution can operate with the necessary independence and autonomy," Ruiz Massieu told a meeting of the UN Security Council.

Karen Pierce, British Ambassador to the U.N., said, "We hope that the JEP gets political and legal support to advance its progress." And Russian Ambassador Vasily Nebenzia to the U.N. said, "It is extremely important that the agreements already signed be carried out without any modification."

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