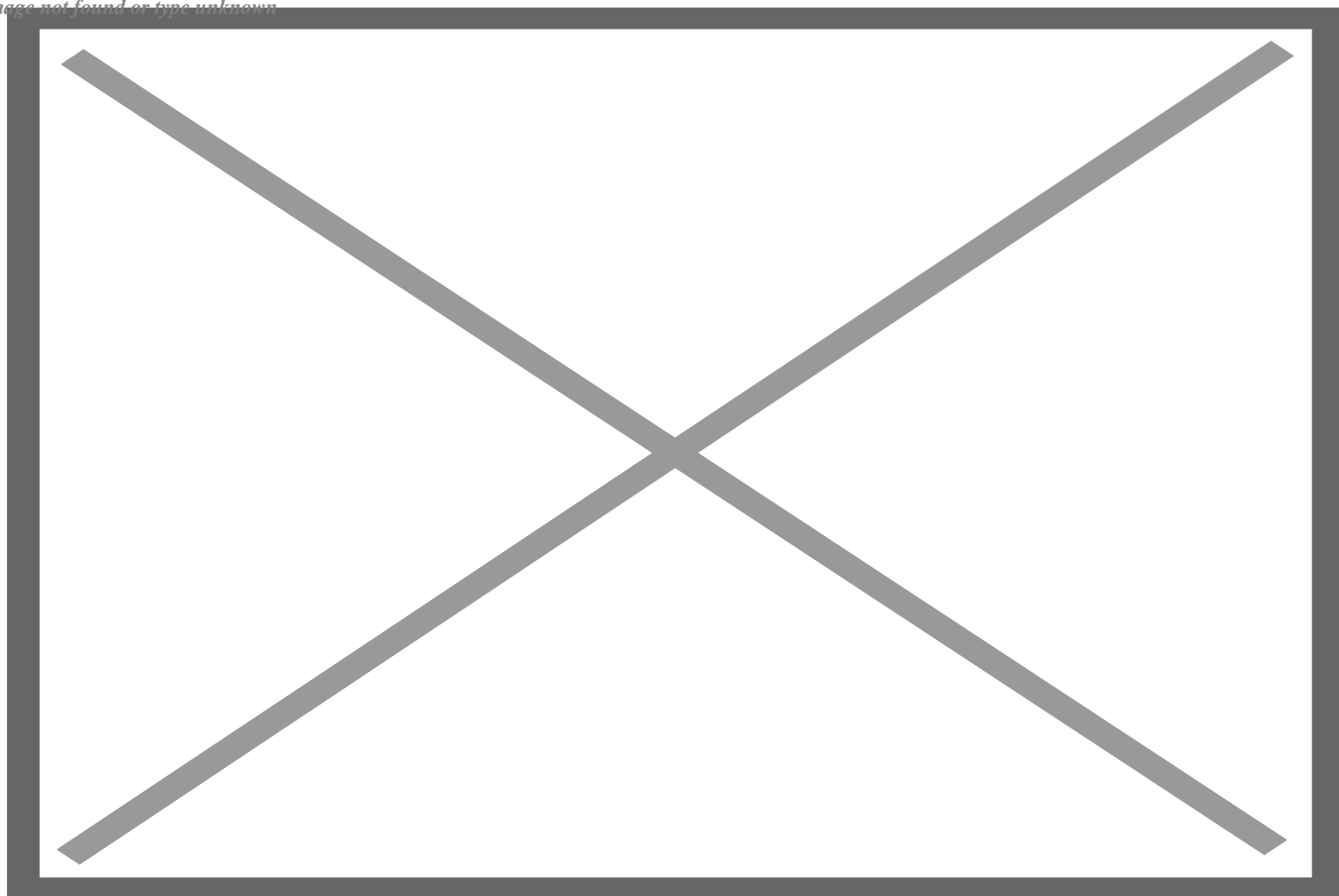


Colombian Congress decorates ambassadors of Cuba and Norway

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Havana, December 8 (RHC)-- The Colombian Congress awarded the Grand Cross with Gold Plaque to the ambassadors of Cuba, José Luis Ponce, and Norway, John Petter Opdahl, for their contributions to peace in the South American nation.

In a ceremony on Tuesday, both diplomats were distinguished with that order, at the request of the Comunes party bench and processed by Senator Julián Gallo Cubillos, of that political force born of the Peace Agreement (2016).

"Cuba has been linked to several attempts to achieve a peace agreement in Colombia both within its territory and in attempts that have taken place on Colombian soil. As fate would have it, we were the venue for talks that successfully culminated in an agreement that is now five years old," said Ponce.

He stressed that it has not been easy to reach this first goal, but it has been achieved thanks to the fact that a majority of the Colombian people support the agreement and demand its implementation.

The Cuban diplomat assured that this majority has found in the international community a first-class ally for the Colombian State and the Comunes party to persist in fulfilling what has been agreed.

He recalled that the Peace Agreement was conceived for implementation by several governments.

In a speech after receiving the order, Ponce added that he wishes for the next five years that the assassinations of former combatants have ceased, that it is not a danger to life to defend the rights of all Colombians and that there is a greater understanding that this agreement is a tool for the goal of a more just and equitable Colombia.

For his part, the Norwegian ambassador emphasized that peace and mediation are a priority for his country's diplomacy, which has sought to lend its support for the resolution of conflicts. Hence the parties have placed their trust.

"Together with Cuba, we have had the privilege and the great responsibility of being the guarantors of the peace process in Colombia, and we deeply value it," he stressed.

"Now as ambassador to Colombia, our diplomatic and cooperation efforts have been concentrated on the implementation of the Agreement", Petter Opdah remarked.

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