

# *Colombian government suspends bilateral ceasefire with ELN*

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**The ELN and the government of Gustavo Petro are holding peace negotiations, the first round of which concluded in December in Caracas, Venezuela | Photo credit: EFE**

Bogota, January 4 (RHC)-- The Colombian government announced Wednesday that the ceasefire decree with the National Liberation Army (ELN) is suspended, after the rebel group's statement in which it assured that an agreement was never reached with the government of Gustavo Petro.

The statement was made by the Minister of Interior, Alfonso Prada, who explained: "We made the decision to suspend the legal effects of this decree until the table (of dialogues) is reactivated in the coming days."

This statement comes a day after the Colombian Government released decrees in which it set the parameters for the bilateral ceasefire for six months with five armed groups, among them the ELN.

After the ELN's refusal, Minister Prada said that "We invite them to declare a verifiable truce." The rebel group explained as causes for not joining the bilateral ceasefire that it had not yet been discussed with the government and the talks so far were ongoing.

In fact, the head of the Interior Ministry himself explained that "The ELN on several occasions has raised the importance of advancing in a bilateral ceasefire."

"On December 19, precisely, after declaring the unilateral ceasefire, this organization requested that the Government act in accordance with its will for peace and study the possibility of responding with a bilateral ceasefire."

The ELN communiqué states that "The ELN dialogue delegation has not discussed with the Government of Gustavo Petro any proposal for a bilateral ceasefire, therefore there is still no agreement on this matter."

In this sense, the ELN announced that the organization only complies with what is agreed at the dialogue table in which it participates and the issue will be addressed soon in the round of dialogues in Mexico.

The ELN and the government of Gustavo Petro are conducting peace negotiations, the first round of which concluded in December in Caracas, Venezuela.

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