

Cuba's commitment to peace in Colombia

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By María Josefina Arce

Cuba is once again hosting the peace dialogue, now between the government of Colombian President Gustavo Petro and the guerrilla National Liberation Army, at the request of both parties who have highlighted the Caribbean nation's permanent and neutral commitment to the reconciliation of Colombians.

Last August, in a meeting in Havana with the Colombian Minister of Foreign Affairs and Peace, Álvaro Leyva, the Colombian High Commissioner for Peace, Iván Danilo Rueda, and ELN Commander Pablo Beltrán, Cuban President Miguel Díaz Canel ratified that his country will make every effort for peace in the South American nation.

The Cuban capital is hosting as of Tuesday the third round of talks. The first took place last November in Caracas, Venezuela, and the second in Mexico City, which concluded last March and in which progress

was made on important issues, without which, both parties emphasized, it was impossible to develop this process with clarity and firmness.

Let's remember that the negotiations between the government and the ELN were interrupted for four years, under the mandate of today's former president Iván Duque, 2018-2022, who never really bet on peace.

Duque even failed to comply with the implementation of the peace agreement between the government of his predecessor Juan Manuel Santos and the once guerrilla Revolutionary Armed Forces of Colombia-People's Army (Fuerzas Armadas Revolucionarias de Colombia-Ejército del Pueblo).

A historic agreement signed precisely in November 2016 in Cuba, and whose role as guarantor of the process has been widely highlighted.

Humberto De La Calle, who was head of the negotiating team of the government of Juan Manuel Santos, has described as extraordinarily important the role played by our country in the negotiations that culminated in the agreement.

Cuba, he pointed out, perfectly understood its role as guarantor and in that sense was absolutely neutral, as expected. It also underlined the generosity of the hosts during the long period of negotiations.

The UN has emphasized that the Greater of the Antilles, together with Norway, another of the guarantors, has been one of the nations most committed to the peace process in Colombia.

The Cuban government respected at all times the protocols established for this type of talks, especially when Duque broke off the dialogue with the National Liberation Army, initiated by Juan Manuel Santos and which also took place in the Cuban capital.

As a recognition, in 2021 the Colombian Congress awarded the Grand Cross with Gold Plaque to the then Cuban ambassador in Bogota, José Luis Ponce, for his contribution to the peace process.

Now will be no different, Cuba will fully comply with its obligations as guarantor of the dialogue and, as stated by the country's top leadership, every effort will be made to bring it to a successful conclusion.

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