

# *Colombian Government and ELN close fourth cycle of peace talks*

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Caracas, September 4 (RHC)-- The Colombian government and the National Liberation Army (ELN) concluded this Monday in Venezuela the fourth cycle of peace talks, with which they seek a negotiated solution to the internal conflict. This phase of the dialogue began last August 14th, with the conviction of the parties on the transcendence of the participation of society in this process and of the transformations as a basis for peace and a national agreement.

Although the results of this period of talks are unknown, it was reported that the fifth cycle, after two months of recess, will take place in Mexico, where the second cycle also took place: the first was in Caracas and the third in Cuba.

Among the most important agreements of this process is the creation of the National Participation Committee, installed on August 3rd, and the bilateral cease-fire for six months in all Colombian territory, which came into effect that same day.

The creation of the Committee is an unprecedented event in the history of the search for peace with the ELN, which highlighted that the distinctive sign of this process begins to be the democratic construction of peace with the participation of the Colombian society in its diversity, according to the parties.

As for the Bilateral, National and Temporary Ceasefire, it implies the implementation of the Monitoring and Verification Mechanism (MMV) throughout the country and the opening of communication channels to avoid confrontations, they affirm.

The main objectives of the MMV in its National, Regional and Local instances are: to prevent incidents, solve problems, lower the intensity of the conflict, allow the participation of society in the peace process and improve the humanitarian situation of the population. "The Peace Dialogues between the Government and the ELN are very different from previous ones. Here, what is agreed upon is implemented. We do not have to wait years to see the results," assured the guerrilla delegation.

Shortly before the beginning of this cycle, the Attorney General of the Nation, Francisco Barbosa, announced through a press release and the media, the news of an alleged plan to make an attempt on his life, that of Senator María Fernanda Cabal and that of retired General Eduardo Zapateiro.

The rebel forces denied such statements and the government launched an investigation. The Joint Intelligence Board denied having knowledge of such attack and warned that this "serious fact and the way in which it was communicated to the public opinion could have affected the confidence between the parties and the Colombian society in relation to the agreed ceasefire."

The Dialogue Table decided to send this statement to the MMV "so that it may issue its opinion on this case." The parties reiterated their mutual trust for the continuity and strengthening of this peace process.

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