

Colombia Passes Law for Citizens to Vote on Peace Agreement



Bogotá, January 8 (RHC-teleSUR) -- The Colombian government passed a law allowing citizens to vote on whether to approve the terms of the peace negotiations, if an agreement to end the country's 50-year conflict is reached between the government and the Revolutionary Armed Forces of Colombia (FARC) is reached in time for the country's October elections.

The two sides have been undergoing peace talks in Havana, Cuba, since November 2012 in an attempt to bring peace to Colombia. The ongoing conflict has resulted in over 220,000 deaths.

The two sides have already reached agreements on three of the six points on the negotiating agenda regarding land reform, political participation, and drug trafficking. They remain hopeful that a deal can be reached for the remaining points this year, which would include rights of victims, disarmament of the rebels, and the implementation of the peace deal.

President Juan Manuel Santos has made it clear that a peace deal should be reached before October 25th, when the country is holding local elections so that citizens can vote on the outcome of the negotiations while they are at the polls.

Santos signed the new law approving the referendum on Tuesday, in what the President said would be the "final agreement for the end of the conflict."

In addition to voting on the peace process, the elections in October will chose governors, mayors, regional legislators and town councilors.

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