

# *FARC Calls for Constituent Assembly in Place of Referendum*

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Bogotá, January 12 (RHC-teleSUR) -- The Revolutionary Armed Forces of Colombia (FARC) rejected the Colombian government's unilateral decision to pass a law that allows for the peace accords to be voted on in a referendum, proposing that a "constituent process" be organized instead.

The mechanisms for the implementation of the peace accords, including its approval by the Colombian people, is one of the items meant to be discussed at the peace negotiations in Havana.

"This approval process cannot be handled unilaterally, it must be decided at the table by the parties," said Victoria Sandino, one of the negotiators for the FARC, in a video posted online by the left-wing guerrilla group.

Sandino also rejected the viability of a referendum on the peace process, considering that it involves a number of different topics. Instead, the FARC advocates that a constituent process be organized in the lead up to a "National Constituent Assembly."

This assembly would be designed to guarantee the participation of groups that have been historically marginalized in Colombia, such as peasants, Afro-Colombians, Indigenous peoples, and women.

This constituent process would approve or reject the peace accords and also work to reach an agreement on topics that were not resolved at the negotiation table, said Sandino.

The FARC did not close the door completely to the idea of a referendum. Jesus Santrich, also a member of the FARC negotiation team, suggested a compromise could be found. He insisted that the most important aspect is guaranteeing the participation of the popular sectors of Colombian society.

The FARC is seeking a peace accord with the government not only to end the 50-year armed conflict, but also as a means to “refound” the country and increase the political participation of those who have been historically excluded from the country's political process.

It is for this reason that the guerrilla group is seeking a “National Constituent Assembly” as part of the broader peace process. This constituent assembly would be tasked with writing a new constitution for Colombia.

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