

# *Colombian Government Says It Wants to End the War*

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Bogota, July 14 (teleSUR-RHC)-- Colombia's chief government negotiator at the peace talks with the Revolutionary Armed Forces of Colombia (FARC) explained the historic announcement on Sunday regarding the de-escalation of the conflict, saying the purpose of the agreement is to build trust toward a bilateral cease-fire.

"On the progress made in Havana, if we can keep to (the de-escalation), this would show that the agreement is close and would be able to streamline the thematic aspects," Humberto de la Calle said Monday.

The official's statements come a day after President Juan Manuel Santos pledged to 'de-escalate' military action against the guerrillas if the rebels uphold their unilateral ceasefire.

The announcement provides a breakthrough in a peace process that has been going on for more than two years in Havana. The negotiations had been in question recently, after an increase in hostilities from both sides led the FARC to call off the unilateral cease-fire they had declared in December.

While De la Calle and Santos insisted the de-escalation was not the same as a bilateral cease-fire, Colombian Senator Ivan Cepeda told teleSUR the agreement adheres to the same framework as a truce.

"It seems that the government and the insurgency will gradually move in that direction, before signing the (final) agreement, because although the state did not agree to (a bilateral cease-fire), it has already entered into that logic," Cepeda said.

Pope Francis, who recently concluded a Latin America tour, called for the peace process in Colombia to go ahead and offered the Vatican's assistance if it might help.

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