

FARC Calls on Colombian Government to Expedite Truth Commission



Bogota, July 24 (teleSUR-RHC)-- Members of the FARC called on the Colombian government to speed up the creation of a truth commission to investigate violence and abuses perpetrated over the course of the country's decades-long internal conflict as a new round of peace negotiations started in Havana, on Thursday.

The Revolutionary Armed Forces of Colombia, known as FARC, urged that the work of the proposed truth and reconciliation commission get underway before the end of November of this year, pushing to expedite the agreement between negotiating parties last month that stated the commission's investigations would begin once a peace deal is signed.

"The most important thing now is to end the configuration of the Commission of Truth Clarification, Peaceful Coexistence, and Non-Repetition," said the FARC rebel known as Joaquin Gomez. "In this regard we must do everything necessary to put it in motion before the end of November."

The FARC has emphasized the importance of the commission work to help inform the peace process, saying opening up of history archives will help provide necessary truth foundation for the process of peace and justice.

The truth commission would carry out an independent and impartial investigation into abuses and violence committed in the country's more than five decades of civil war that has claimed the lives of more than 220,000 people and displaced or disappeared tens of thousands.

The 39th round of peace talks, which got underway on Thursday in Havana, with the presence of U.N. accompaniment, will focus on measures to end the conflict, including compensations to victims of the conflict.

The latest phase of the ongoing peace process that began more than two years ago comes just days after the FARC launched a unilateral cease-fire, a move that has been applauded by human rights groups for helping to accelerate conflict resolution. The government of Colombia also agreed to “de-escalate” aggressions against the guerrillas beginning Monday for the next four months, but made it clear that this is not a cease-fire. It is estimated that there have been more than 6.7 million victims in Colombia's 50-year internal conflict.

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