

ELN Guerrillas Say Colombian Government Stalling Talks



Bogota, February 3 (RHC-teleSUR) -- The Colombian government and the ELN (National Liberation Army) rebels are having a hard time getting peace talks off the ground, with both sides accusing the other of stalling negotiations in the past several days.

The accusations began Sunday, when the ELN, the country's second-largest guerrilla group, released a statement saying the government has failed to set a date for the beginning of the formal public peace negotiations.

The two sides have been engaged in preliminary talks for months, with the ELN saying that "our delegation for the dialogue has been ready since last November to attend the cycle that should finalize the confidential phase of these talks and initiate the public phase."

However, on Tuesday government negotiator Frank Pearl said the ELN is not "willing or ready" to continue with the talks. He also warned the insurgent group that it is "running ou **ELN Guerrillas Say Colombian Government Stalling Talks** t of time to be part of the political solution to the armed conflict in Colombia."

The back-and-forth comes as the FARC guerrillas and the Colombian government continue their peace negotiations in Havana, Cuba, where they have been discussing for three years how to bring an end to

the armed conflict. The two sides are closer than ever to signing a final peace deal, which is expected to come by their self-imposed deadline of March 23.

Colombia has seen over 50 years of civil war, with fighting between guerrilla fighters, the Colombian army and paramilitary groups killing over 200,000 people, while displacing or disappearing millions more.

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