

Colombian Government Agrees to Bilateral Ceasefire with FARC Rebels



Bogota, June 22 (RHC)-- The Colombian government and the Armed Revolutionary Forces of Colombia (FARC) have reportedly agreed to a bilateral ceasefire agreement, marking an important step in the negotiations to end 50 years of war.

According to the newspaper *El Espectador*, FARC officials have confirmed they will issue a joint announcement with Colombian President Juan Manuel Santos regarding the bilateral ceasefire in Havana on Thursday.

Colombian peace activist Piedad Cordoba said: "This represents a historic milestone in our country that will open doors to the elimination of armed confrontations within the places of war."

Reports say that the ceasefire accord is set to contain details on how the rebels will demobilize. However, sources close to the negotiations say that the accord won't be implemented immediately but rather will outline the steps for it to begin once a final peace agreement deal is reached.

The chairman of the Senate's Peace Commission, Senator Roy Barreras, confirmed these reports on Wednesday in an interview with Caracol Radio in which he stated that the ceasefire agreement will serve as a blueprint for the exact location as to where the FARC troops will demobilize.

The peace talks have already successfully led to partial agreements on agrarian reform, political participation of former rebels, curbing production and trafficking of illicit substances, and the rights of victims and transitional justice.

Negotiators missed a self-imposed deadline for signing a deal in March, and Santos has come under fire over the past week for comments about the referendum he has promised will take place to approve a deal. The final peace accord, which must be confirmed by a popular vote, is awaiting approval from the country's constitutional court.

The much-anticipated peace agreement is set to bring an end to over 50 years of armed conflict between the Colombian government and the FARC that has affected more than six million people.

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