

Antonio Guterres Wraps Visit to Colombia, Urges Resumption of talks Between Government and ELN



Bogota, January 15 (RHC-Agencies) United Nations Secretary-General António Guterres has expressed hopes for the future and for the peace process in Colombia.

“I am extremely happy to see the enthusiasm and commitment of the authorities, of the communities, and of the ex-combatants to the process of peace building in Colombia,” Guterres said in a statement to the press from Mesetas, Meta, where he visited a territorial area for the training and reintegration of former Revolutionary Armed Forces of Colombia (FARC) soldiers.

Regarding the renewed violence between the ELN and the government after the end of a bilateral ceasefire, Guterres urged the two sides to renew the negotiations.

He instructed his special representative in Colombia, Jean Arnault, to take "all the necessary actions to facilitate the return of the two sides to the negotiating table", and he renewed the UN's commitment to a fair solution to the conflict.

On Sunday, the UN Secretary General wrapped up a two-day visit to the South American nation where he took stock of achievements that followed the peace agreement between the Government and the FARC signed in November 2016, as well as the formal talks with the ELN that have been taking place for nearly a year in Quito, Ecuador.

Last week Colombian president Juan Manuel Santos withdrew his negotiating team from the Ecuadoran capital and temporarily suspended the negotiations claiming presumed attacks by the rebel group against civilians and the armed forces.

ELN representatives regretted the decision. The rebels said that for months now the Government is not fulfilling its commitment, because of the persistence of the murdering of social leaders by paramilitary groups and government forces.

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