

Colombia's FARC party willing to meet With Duque to maintain peace



Bogota, June 19 (RHC)-- After Colombia's President-elect Ivan Duque announced he will review the peace agreement reached between the government and the demobilized insurgent group, the Common Alternative Revolutionary Force, the FARC, expressed their willingness to meet Duque and keep working on peace.

"Good judgment is necessary now; the country is asking for comprehensive peace that will lead us to the expected reconciliation, based on well-being, truth, justice, integral reparation for the victims of the conflict and a promise it won't happen again. Ignoring that purpose can't be a government plan," said the FARC in a press release. "Now more than ever unity is urgent between every sector that believes in the possibility of a future different from the road the nation has taken since the declaration of our independence."

The communique also recognizes the fact that this was the most peaceful electoral process in Colombia in decades, which they praised as a result of the agreements and a new reality in the country, and said that the campaign of Gustavo Petro, the center-left candidate, represented a growing discontent within the Colombian population towards the traditional political elites and their economic policies.

Many think that the victory of Duque and Uribe could represent a great setback for the peace agreement reached between the government of President Juan Manuel Santos and the former guerrillas, as Duque has repeatedly promised to “review” it. If the agreements are not respected and enforced, the communique says, the nation could enter “a new cycle of continuous violence.”

The National Liberation Army (ELN), which has also been in peace talks with the Colombian government, had announced a unilateral ceasefire during the elections so citizens could exercise their right to vote.

Just a few days before the elections, the ELN expressed their concerns regarding Duque's stance on the peace processes, which could undermine efforts between the guerrilla group and the government.

Alirio Sepulveda, a delegate of the ELN's peace commission, said it is important to remember who is behind Ivan Duque. “It's Alvaro Uribe Velez and Alvaro Uribe Velez, when he was governor of Antioquia and then president, those were the times of the biggest massacres in the country and when leaders and a part of Colombian society were persecuted and sentenced.”

Regarding the peace process with the ELN, Duque has said that the talks should focus on disarmament, demobilization and reintegration into society, while the insurgent group is asking for a more comprehensive process involving different actors: participation of society in peace-building, democracy for peace, transformation for peace and ending the armed conflict.

“Today we're all friends with the ones that want peace, and peace must allow the guerrilla base to reintegrate into public life. That peace we're craving for needs corrections so the victims are at the center of the process and we can guarantee truth, justice, reparation and non-repetition,” the new president said.

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