

UN says new government in Colombia must target fight against crime

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The OHCHR recommends Petro's government to scale down and dismantle illegal armed structures and to consolidate the presence of the State in the areas most affected by violence. Jul. 26, 2022. | Photo: Twitter/@AlfonsoJavierL5

Geneva, July 28 (RHC)-- A report by the United Nations Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR) says Colombia's next government must prioritize bringing down illegal armed groups and criminal gangs.

According to a communiqué issued by the OHCHR: "The predominantly military response of the State has failed to stop the expansion of the groups, and the scarce presence of civilian institutions has aggravated the situation."

The OHCHR report recommends President-elect Gustavo Petro, who will take office next August 7, scale down and break up illegal armed structures while consolidating state presence in the most violence-stricken areas and implementing the 2016 peace agreement.

Petro has committed to the full implementation of Colombia's 2016 peace deal between the government and the now extinct Revolutionary Armed Forces of Colombia - People's Army (FARC-EP) and has also put forward proposals for talks with the National Liberation Army (ELN) armed group and criminal groups linked to the drug trade.

As a starting point for peace talks, Colombia's main criminal gangs linked to cocaine production and trafficking last week proposed a ceasefire to Petro's government once he is sworn in next month.

UN High Commissioner for Human Rights Michelle Bachelet said that protecting the population from violence by the state must be carried out in a way consistent with international human rights law.

Bachelet said that "the incoming government's approach to peace and regional implementation of the peace agreement is a sound approach that my office supports," as Gustavo Petro's administration is expected to prioritize addressing violence and the presence of armed groups.

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