

Colombian government and ELN set up a dialogue table in Caracas

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The chief negotiators for the government will be Otty Patiño, a former member of the demobilized M-19, and Pablo Beltrán, for the ELN. | Photo: EFE

Caracas, November 21 (RHC)-- Delegations of the Colombian government and the National Liberation Army (ELN) set up a dialogue table in Caracas on Monday, with a view to advancing in a peace process.

The parties will restart the peace negotiations process suspended in 2018 by then right-wing President Iván Duque, and which presented a boost this year with the arrival to power of President Gustavo Petro.

The head of the government's negotiating team will be Otty Patiño, a former guerrilla of the demobilized M-19 and will include the participation of the president of the Colombian Federation of Cattle Ranchers (Fedegan), José Félix Lafourie, who has rejected the ELN's actions.

The head of the ELN delegation will be Israel Ramírez Pineda, known by the alias of Pablo Beltrán. The names of the rest of the members of this party are still unknown.

The dialogue with the ELN was reopened with the arrival to power of Gustavo Petro last August and since then both parties maintained contacts with the purpose of resuming the dialogues, with Venezuela, Cuba and Norway as guarantor countries.

Last Friday, the Colombian Attorney General's Office announced the suspension of the arrest warrants issued against the negotiators appointed by the ELN for the peace talks.

The director of the Institute of Studies for Development and Peace (Indepaz), Camilo González Posso, mentioned that this is the sixth attempt of negotiations with the ELN in the last 30 years, since 1991 in Tlaxcala (Mexico), until the failed talks in Havana (Cuba) during the government of Juan Manuel Santos.

"This time there is a new national and international political context, a government that is betting on change with a leftist language and at the same time with a national majority demanding total peace," commented the analyst in a video presented in the official Indepaz account on Twitter. "So that is what turns expectation into hope," he stressed.

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