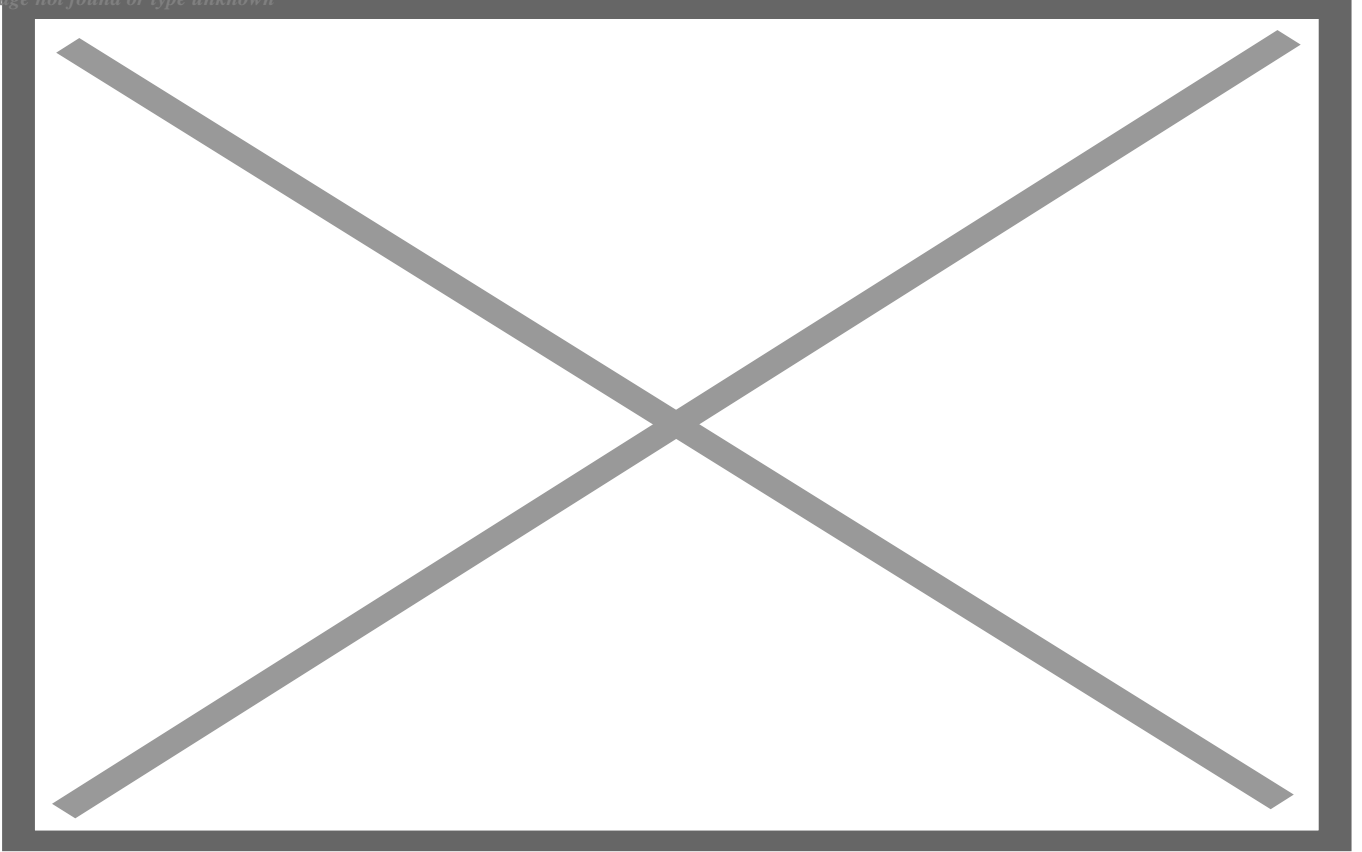


Building total peace in Colombia

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By María Josefina Arce

The construction of peace in Colombia requires the active participation of all citizens, one of the points agreed upon in Havana in the third cycle of negotiations currently being held between the government of President Gustavo Petro and the insurgent National Liberation Army.

The aim, as expressed by both parties, is to address the causes that gave rise to the armed conflict for a true transformation of the country and the achievement of peace.

Hence, in a transcendental event, the National Participation Committee, a special and transitory instance articulated to the Dialogue Table, is officially installed in Bogota, the capital city.

In the next few hours, the members of this body in charge of designing and promoting the involvement of the whole society in the peace process will be announced.

Representatives of social movements and unions make up the Committee, which will gather the proposals

and recommendations of the various Colombian sectors during national and regional meetings.

The importance of listening to workers, peasants, indigenous peoples, Afro-Colombian communities, students and even the prison population has been emphasized. It is our intention that no citizen be left out of this vital process.

The installation of the Committee precedes another historic step: the entry into force on August 3 of the bilateral, national and temporary ceasefire agreement for 180 days, until January 2024.

The monitoring and verification mechanisms include the participation of the UN and the Catholic Church.

Undoubtedly, with the installation of the Committee and the ceasefire, an important and decisive stage of the peace negotiations between Petro's government and the guerrilla National Liberation Army, installed in November last year in Venezuela, is entered.

Precisely in Caracas, the Venezuelan capital, the dialogue will return to its fourth cycle, from the 14th to the 23rd of this month.

The agreements between the two parties and their implementation represent a significant step forward for peace in Colombia. They are also in addition to the historic Peace Agreement signed in Havana in 2016 between the government of then President Juan Manuel Santos and the once guerrilla Revolutionary Armed Forces of Colombia-People's Army (Fuerzas Armadas Revolucionarias de Colombia-Ejército del Pueblo).

Colombia, under the presidency of Gustavo Petro, is working hard and responsibly to build, among all, a true and total peace, so longed for by a society bled dry after decades of armed conflict.

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