

# *Colombian President Says Release of Prisoners of War Important for Peace*

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Bogota, November 26 (PL-RHC)-- Colombian President Juan Manuel Santos has welcomed the release of soldiers Paulo César Rivera and Jonathan Díaz, who were held by the FARC-EP rebels, and described the event as an important step for the peace talks.

According to Santos, this release reinforces the peace process to move on and shows its maturity. Rivera and Díaz were captured by the Revolutionary Armed Forces of Colombia-People's Army (FARC-EP) on November 9th as prisoners of war after clashes in Arauca.

"We are waiting now for the prompt return of General Ruben Dario Alzate, lawyer Gloria Urrego and Corporal Jorge Rodriguez," added Santos during a visit to Putumayo. Alzate, the commander of Titan task force, has been held by the FARC-EP guerrilla for over a week now. He was captured in a war zone in Choco department.

Spokespersons for the guerrilla group announced that Alzate and the two people accompanying him would be released soon. However, top rebel leader Rodrigo Londono denounced Tuesday the increase in military operations in that region, on the banks of Atrato River, where there have been machine-gunning

and bombings, among other maneuvers, and warned that such actions are in violation of agreements and constitute obstacles to materialize them.

In the wake of Alzate's holding by the guerrillas, President Santos temporarily suspended the rounds of talks with FARC-EP that were underway for two years in Havana.

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