

Colombian Government and FARC Rebels Begin Clearing Landmines



Havana, May 30, (RHC), – The Colombian government and FARC guerrillas have begun working together on clearing the country's landmines, officials said Friday, but their peace talks remain fragile amid a surge in fighting.

FARC members and an army battalion carried out a preliminary seven-day mission to locate anti-personnel mines in the northern department of Antioquia, said officials from Cuba and Norway, the countries facilitating the talks.

The pilot mission is the first step in a March agreement between the government and the Marxist guerrillas to disable all mines placed during half a century of civil war.

Subsequent missions will remove and destroy the mines, officials said. Colombia has the second highest number of landmine casualties in the world after Afghanistan. Since 1990, mines have killed more than 2,000 people and wounded more than 9,000.

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