

FARC to EU: Support Peace by Removing FARC from Terrorist List



Bogota, January 29 (RHC-teleSUR) -- The FARC urged the European Union Thursday to cut the group from its list of terrorist organizations in the name of supporting the group's integration into Colombian society and politics after a peace agreement with the government is finalized in the coming months.

"The most fair and consistent thing is to erase the FARC from the list of terrorist organizations with the same swiftness with which we were included," chief FARC peace negotiator Ivan Marquez argued to the European Parliament Committee on Foreign Affairs via video conference Thursday.

According to Marquez, slashing the Revolutionary Armed Forces of Colombia, also known as the FARC, from the terror list would cut out a "serious obstacle" to the reintegration of former FARC militants once they demobilize as well as facilitate "the normalization of (the group into) Colombian political life."

The FARC was added to the E.U. list of terrorist organizations in 2002. The group

has been considered a terrorist organization by the United States since 1997.

The FARC is set to transform into a legal political movement allowing its militants to re-enter civilian life when they demobilize at the end of the conflict.

But the FARC has also stressed that it would be unrealistic for the armed guerrilla group to commit to becoming a legal political group without "certain guarantees" that the paramilitary forces involved in the armed conflict would also be dismantled.

Meanwhile, the Colombian government's High Commissioner for Peace Sergio Jaramillo thanked the E.U. Parliament for supporting the peace process and called for ongoing support after a peace deal is signed.

FARC and Colombian negotiators are expected to sign a final peace agreement by March 23, putting an end to over 50 years of internal armed conflict that has claimed the lives of 220,000 and displaced more than 6 million more victims.

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