

Plebiscite in Colombia Slated Two Months After Deal Reached



Bogota, May 9 (RHC)-- Colombia's Constitutional Court is presently examining whether the use of a plebiscite to approve a final peace deal with the FARC is constitutional.

Colombian President Juan Manuel Santos confirmed that an eventual peace deal with the Revolutionary Armed Forces of Colombia would need to be approved through a plebiscite, which would be held approximately two months after the final deal is signed.

Santos delivered an impassioned speech about the ongoing peace process to the assembled parliamentarians, saying "this will change the history of the country." He called on the lawmakers to advocate in favor of the peace process and to help convince the public about the importance of the deal.

A final deal was meant to be signed by late March but differences at the negotiating table delayed a deal and it is now expected by June, though no fixed date has been set.

The use of a referendum to approve the peace deal is not without controversy. The Revolutionary Armed Forces of Colombia, known as the FARC, have pushed for a constituent assembly to be held instead.

Colombia's Constitutional Court is presently examining whether the use of a plebiscite is constitutional and whether the peace deal should be regarded as being on a par with an international treaty.

The FARC argues that the final peace deal should be seen as an extension of the constitution and protected as such. National Forum of Lawmakers for Peace and Democracy issued a declaration backing the peace process and affirmed the conviction of participants to back efforts to approve a final deal.

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