

Colombia's ELN Rebels Send Best Wishes as FARC Begins Cease-Fire



Bogota, August 31 (RHC)-- The head of Colombia's National Liberation Army, or ELN, has written an open letter to members of the Revolutionary Armed Forces of Colombia-People's Army – the FARC-EP – wishing them success on the journey toward becoming a legal political organization.

“To all of you, our fraternal embrace and we continue to wish you success,” read the letter by Nicolas Rodriguez Bautista, the head of the ELN. In his letter, Bautista detailed the reasons why the ELN has not yet entered into formal talks, stating that they doubt the government's commitment to peace. But Bautista stated that the “destiny of Colombia cannot be war.”

The FARC-EP declared a definitive ceasefire at midnight Sunday, bringing an end to over fifty years of war between the country's largest guerrilla army and the Colombian state. The ELN, the second-largest guerrilla organization, is presently in exploratory talks with the government for its own peace process.

Bautista closed his letter repeating his best wishes to the FARC-EP, while adding that they expected to “continue to cross paths in the various spaces where the popular and revolutionary struggle place us.”

President Juan Manuel Santos and FARC-EP leader Timoleon Jiménez, also known as Timochenko, will officially sign the final peace agreement between September 20th and 26th, less than two weeks ahead of the plebiscite, which will be held on October 2nd that will ask Colombians to vote on whether or not to accept the agreement.

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