

Cuban President Raul Castro Arrives in Colombia for Signing of Peace Agreement



Bogota, September 25 (RHC)-- Cuban President Raul Castro has arrived in Colombia for the signing of the peace deal on Monday. The presidents of El Salvador, Costa Rica and Peru have also arrived, and other leaders of the region are expected to fly to Cartagena Monday.

Accompanying the Cuban president is the Havana City Historian, Eusebio Leal, along with Havana's ambassador to Bogota, José Luis Ponce.

The heads of state of Argentina, Bolivia, Chile, the Dominican Republic, Ecuador, Guatemala, Honduras, Mexico, Panama, Paraguay, and Venezuela have all confirmed their attendance.

The deal, which will bring an end to over five decades of armed conflict, is widely considered to be one of the most significant events in the history of Colombia, with repercussions for the rest of the region.

Approximately 2,500 people in total are expected to witness the signing of the deal with another thousand journalists also expected to cover the event.

The ceremony will be an all-day event with the actual signing occurring at 5 p.m. local time. The deal will be signed by President Juan Manuel Santos and the leader of the Revolutionary Armed Forces of Colombia, Timochenko.

The text of the pact will later be submitted to a popular vote in a plebiscite to be held next Sunday, October 2nd. Polls indicate the deal will be approved by a wide margin.

A number of former presidents, including Jose Mujica of Uruguay and Felipe Gonzalez of Spain, will also attend.

U.N. Secretary General Ban Ki Moon, a supporter of the Colombian peace process, will also travel to Cartagena, alongside the High Commissioner for Human Rights Zeid Ra'ad al Hussein and Gerard van Bohemen, the head of the Security Council.

U.S. Secretary of State John Kerry along with the heads of the Organization of American States, World Bank, International Monetary Fund and the Inter-American Development Bank will also participate.

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