

Chile offers to host ELN peace talks after Ecuador withdraws



Santiago de Chile, April 24 (RHC)-- Chile has offered to act as the guarantor of peace negotiations between the Colombian government and guerrilla organization the National Liberation Army (ELN) after Ecuador recently withdrew from the role, the Chilean foreign ministry announced.

AFP reported that a source in the Chilean government says President Sebastian Piñera made the offer to Colombian President Juan Manuel Santos during a telephone call. Although some reports have said Chile could be the most likely option, Brazil, Cuba and Norway have also offered to host the negotiations, leaving the possibilities open.

ELN chief negotiator Pablo Beltran told teleSUR English that the ELN was looking forward to continuing the peace dialogues. "We have decided to continue the peace dialogues in whichever country that we choose," Beltran said. "We hope that in the time remaining in negotiations we can arrive at a new truce that must be better than the last one... Colombia can count on us that we will maintain the effort to find a political solution."

Ecuador's President Lenin Moreno withdrew Ecuador from its role in the negotiations following the kidnap and murder of three Ecuadorean newspaper staff near the Colombian border. The move was praised by far-right former Colombian President Alvaro Uribe, of the Centro Democrático party.

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