

Colombia's opposition unites around FARC call for peace



Bogota, September 4 (RHC)-- In what observers say is a rare show of unity, all of Colombia's opposition parties stood with FARC leader Rodrigo Londoño as he held a press conference in which he called on all sides to respect the 2016 peace agreements. Condemning both the dissident split from within the FARC leadership, as well as the failure of the Colombian state to properly implement their end of the deal.

Londoño posted the video to facebook and other platforms on Monday evening, flanked by representatives of every opposition party with seats in Congress. The parties backing the FARC statement include the 'Decentes' coalition, the Verdes Party, MAIS, Polo Democrático Alternativo and Colombia Humana.

Londoño urged the state to meet their obligations set out in the 2016 peace deal, a failure which Londoño has previously blamed for the continued violence in the country. He said the 2016 agreement is "not just about offering assurances on the political and socioeconomic reincorporation of ex-guerrillas...The agreement is above all a route to a stable and lasting peace at a regional level, through the implementation of comprehensive rural reform, political reform, including the 16 seats for victims in the House of Representatives, certain guarantees of security for the political exercise of former guerrillas and social leaders, the dismantling of paramilitarism"

He also warned President Duque that any attempt by his allies to renege on the peace agreement would be met by a 'certain rejection' by Colombian society. Such comments were likely in response to Duque's ally, far-right former President Alvaro Uribe, who recently called on the government to scrap their peace deal with the FARC.

However, Londoño also condemned the minority faction within the FARC who recently split so as to take up arms again, forming the FARC-EP. One of the main figures leading the split is Jesus Santrich, who helped negotiate the 2016 peace accords, but who now says that the failure of the Colombian state to meet their obligations, forces the ex-guerrillas to take up arms once again.

Londoño responded during the statement on Monday, saying "The proven noncompliance of the state may not be responded by other failures to comply." The FARC leader closed his statement saying: "The unity of Colombians, without distinctions, must be around the noble purpose of a peace cemented on a basis of social justice. We cannot spend another 50 years in useless confrontations, future generations will not forgive us."

Although the FARC and 95% of its ex-combatants have complied with their obligations to lay down arms and enter politics peacefully, the state and far-right paramilitaries have failed to meet their end of the peace deal. Over 160 FARC members and at least 627 social activists have been killed since the peace accords were signed in 2016

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