

Colombian Rebels to Free General, Opening Door to Resume Peace Talks



Havana, November 20 (RHC)-- The Revolutionary Armed Forces of Colombia (FARC) has agreed to release an army general captured by its Western command over the weekend, a move that may lead to a resumption of peace talks and defuse a crisis that threatened to extend five decades of war.

The FARC promised to free General Ruben Dario Alzate and four others captured in the past two weeks "as soon as possible" after reaching an agreement on liberation terms with the government and guarantor nations Cuba and Norway.

President Juan Manuel Santos's office responded immediately to the announcement, pledging to resume talks as soon as the hostages are free.

Alzate and two others were seized on Sunday by a FARC patrol as they left a boat in the poor and crime-ridden coastal region of Choco, prompting Santos to halt the peace talks underway in Cuba.

Earlier this week, FARC negotiators in Havana criticized President Juan Manuel Santos' decision to suspend the peace talks, reminding the government of its agreement not to let events in the country affect

the negotiating table.

The suspension of talks is the most serious setback to peace efforts after months of complicated discussions resulted in partial accords on three out of five agenda items.

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