

Colombian President Declares 2015 a Year of Peace and Progress



Bogotá, December 25 (RHC-PL) -- President Juan Manuel Santos has reiterated his confidence that 2015 will be a year of progress, equality and peace for all Colombians, who have suffered from the effects of an armed conflict which has dragged on for more than half a century.

In his traditional Christmas Day address to the nation Wednesday, the president highlighted the progress made in talks between representatives of the government and the Revolutionary Armed Forces of Colombia-People's Army (FARC-EP) to achieve a negotiated solution to the conflict, which has affected directly about six million people.

The head of state praised the active participation of victims in the dialogue, which has been hosted in Havana since 2012, and the willingness of both sides to keep the peace process going. According to Santos, the topic of peace transcends the meetings with the FARC-EP, which closed its 31st cycle.

If 2014 was the year of hope, the next one will be one of peace and progress,

emphasized Santos, who said that as a result of the discussions between the government and the FARC-EP team, consensus was reached on issues such as land reform, political participation, and illicit drugs.

What remained now were discussions on issues of transitional justice, end of conflict, disarmament and re-integration into society of the guerrillas, considered to be the most complex issue.

Activists, community leaders and politicians say that December ends in the middle of an indefinite, unilateral ceasefire decreed by the insurgent movement in response to the demand made by the society to minimize the victimization of the population, and move towards the end of the war period, a measure that will have to be complemented with reciprocal actions from the government.

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