

FARC Says Colombian State Must Respect, Defend Human Rights



Havana, April 29 (teleSUR-RHC)-- At the resumption of peace negotiations on Tuesday, the Revolutionary Armed Forces of Colombia (FARC) denounced the deaths of 19 human rights defenders and threats issued to a further 249 activists during the first quarter of 2015.

Death threats represented three times the amount of threats over the same period last year. Commander Pastor Alape, a member of the FARC's negotiating team in Havana, made the comments in light of the opening of the 36th round of peace talks underway in Havana with the government of Juan Manuel Santos.

"In no other country in the world have there been presidents that organize and lead narco-paramilitary armies, or who publicly proclaim before television cameras that they have committed war crimes," said Alape, referring to the government of Alvaro Uribe which regularly boasted about killing FARC commanders. Uribe is currently facing investigations for his links with paramilitary forces.

Alape said that the state must meet its obligations under international law, as well as respect its own laws on the matter of protection of human rights. "It is evident, then, that the state in Colombia is an Offender

State; despite the fact it is sitting at the dialogue table for more than two years now with the aim of ending a prolonged political and armed social conflict, it continues to maintain its long-standing habit of failing to comply with its own commitment and its own laws,” said Alape.

Former senator and advocate of the Colombia peace process, Piedad Cordoba, was recently attacked outside her home in Bogota.

The peace process faced a serious test after an armed clash in April left 11 government soldiers and two guerrillas dead. The government claimed its soldiers were ambushed, which the FARC vehemently denied, saying the actions by the guerrillas were defensive in nature.

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