

 PEACE MAIL

September 27-October 3, 2016

Colombia Votes NO in October 2nd Plebiscite

On Monday September 26th, Colombian President Juan Manuel Santos and FARC leader and chief negotiator Rodrigo Londoño (alias 'Timochechnko') signed the proposed peace accord in Cartagena de Indias. All that ostensibly remained for the accords to go into effect was citizen ratification in the October 2nd plebiscite this past Sunday, an outcome predicted by all major polling outlets in the days leading up to the vote. GOC and FARC negotiators in Havana had previously selected the plebiscite as the mechanism for democratic participation and popular referendum of the accords. Colombian voters gathered at their respective polling stations to vote YES or NO on the following ballot question: "Do you support the final accord for ending the conflict and building a stable and durable peace?" In order to pass the plebiscite, the YES votes would need to total a minimum threshold of 13% of Colombia's registered voters, or some 4.5 million people, and the YES votes had to outnumber the NO votes. By the end of the day, NO votes would win out by a mere 53,894 ballots nationwide. Of 12.8 million valid votes, just fewer than 6.4 million voted for YES, while just over 6.4 million voted for NO.¹

Disarmament process freezes, new challenges emerge after rejection of the peace accords

Although both the GOC and the FARC have announced intentions to maintain the bilateral ceasefire that went into effect on June 23rd, the processes outlined in the final set of peace accords remain in a state of limbo after their rejection by the Colombia voting population. Among these core early processes is the concentration of the FARC members in the transitional zones and their disarmament. Many had already begun moving to these zones, and for now, this movement will cease until further information becomes available.²

The day following the plebiscite vote, President Santos met with leaders from various political parties at the Presidential Palace. The result of the three-hour meeting was an invitation extended to the leaders of the NO campaign in order to continue dialogues on the peace accords with their participation. As of the writing of this Peace Mail, ex-President and leader of the NO campaign, Alvaro Uribe, has rejected the invitation to go to Havana and re-negotiate contentious aspects of the accord with the GOC and FARC teams.³ The situation is still very uncertain, and most operators and institutions are awaiting new developments in order to revise planning.

Signs of life in ELN peace negotiations follow on October 2nd upset

Despite the severe complications in the peace accord process between the GOC and the FARC, the ELN has announced this past Monday that it recognizes that there exists among the Colombian people "a clamor for peace," and that they hope to release "good news" in the coming days about the peace talks between the 1,500 member guerrilla organization and the GOC.⁴

<http://www.eltiempo.com/politica/proceso-de-paz/que-se-viene-para-los-acuerdos-de-paz/16717733>

<http://www.elspectador.com/noticias/politica/uribe-descarta-mesa-tripartita-habana-o-renegociar-acue-articulo-658465>

<http://www.elspectador.com/print/658376>