

May 2 - 8 2017

UN Security Council visits rural Colombian community for first-hand view of peace process

On May 5, the 15 members of the United Nations Security Council led by the Uruguayan Ambassador, Elbio Rosselli, visited the community of La Hermosa in the Department of Meta to directly observe the implementation of what they termed the 'irreversible' peace process. During the visit, members of the UN Security Council met with the Commissioner for Peace, Sergio Jaramillo, the head of the UN Observer Mission, General Javier Perez Aquino, leaders of the FARC, Ivan Marquez and Pastor Alape, the governor of Meta, as well as local community members and ex-guerrillas. The Security Council learned first-hand of the logistical and geographic difficulties in implementing the peace accords, listened to the fears of local community members of what will happen after the 180 days, and also the hope for a more stable and safe Colombia. At the conclusion of the visit Ambassador Roselli noted that, "we leave with the feeling that we are witnessing an irreversible peace process, to which the UN Security Council commits to providing all required assistance." The visit of the UN Security Council, which has oversight of the mandate of the Observer Mission, initiated with a meeting with President Juan Manuel Santos in Bogota as part of a three day visit to Colombia to show support for the implementation of the peace accords.¹

FARC expected to lay down individually held arms by May 31 for UN collection, but not all arms

In compliance of the D+180 timeline, approximately 7,000 arms are expected to be laid down for collection by the UN Observer Mission by May 31, according to top FARC commander, Rodrigo Lodoño. However, there is serious doubt that the collectively stored arms depots located outside of the 26 FARC transition camps will be registered for collection by the UN Observer Mission by that date. In April of this year the FARC informed the UN Mission of 949 arms caches that exist hidden throughout rural Colombia which has presented immense logistical and operational challenge to locate, register and store all armaments given the current timeline agreed to in Havana, Cuba. In addition, 60% of the armaments in the hidden caches are explosives which cannot be stored, but must be properly and safely destroyed on site. Some in the government are discussing an extension of almost three months to carry out the work. The signed peace accords stipulate a gradual laying down of all arms by the FARC during a 180 period ending May 31, 2017.^{2, 3}

FARC to meet with ELN in Cuba

Leaders of the FARC will meet with ELN leaders in Cuba to discuss peace. The meeting between the two groups was approved by the Government of Colombia. The logistics of the trip of the FARC leaders will be organized by the International Committee of the Red Cross. The second round of peace negotiations between the GOC and ELN, that begun in February of this year, has been postponed to allow the ELN and FARC to meet in Cuba to discuss a "complete peace" in Colombia.⁴