



June 28-July 4, 2016

FARC Stated No More Armed Conflict, Calls for End to Extortion Practices

On Tuesday, June 28th, the FARC delegation stated that, even if the Colombian people vote “no” during the plebiscite, the FARC will not return to armed insurgency.¹ FARC leader Timoleón Jiménez (‘Timochenko’) has additionally ordered the guerrillas to suspend extortion and “taxes” in their areas of operations.² This order signifies a new willingness on the part of the guerrilla group to set aside one of their primary sources of revenue, an activity now expressly prohibited under the ceasefire agreement.³ Timochenko noted that these practices were previously in place to cover maintenance costs such as food, clothing, and other day-to-day supplies for the guerrillas.

Legislative Peace Act Passes in Wake of Bilateral Ceasefire Agreement

On Tuesday, June 28th, the Legislative Peace Act was signed, which contains the legal and political mechanisms required to implement the peace accords in the event that they pass the plebiscite.⁴ The signing of this act comes on the tail of the June 23rd bilateral ceasefire. Since the ceasefire, President Santos has seen progress in terms of public opinion, with his approval rating rising to 32% from 25% previously, and overall optimism towards the peace process climbing to 43% from 20%, marking one of the highest moments in Santos’s term.⁵

Regional Security Assessments, Planning, and Concerns

National and regional leaders also made progress regarding security assessment and planning in the areas in which the FARC will gather and lay down their arms. In the first of a series of regional security meetings planning for the demobilization, National Defense Minister Luis Carlos Villegas, along with Postconflict Minister Rafael Pardo, the governor of Antioquia, and several mayors, met in order to assess the current security situation in the department of Antioquia. The Defense Minister used the opportunity to announce the imminent assignment of particular hamlets within the already-identified municipalities where the FARC will demobilize. He also noted that aerial and satellite imaging, coupled with on-site visits, will enhance assessments of these zones.⁶

Despite these security advancements, threats to the peace process continue in certain areas of the country. In Córdoba, a paramilitary group, the *Autodefensas Gaitanistas de Colombia*, threatened rural community leaders intending to educate residents of the region on the contents of the peace accords to date.⁷