

## **First public peace talks with the ELN to be held in Ecuador in May**

The announcement was made on April 7 by the ELN, on their official Twitter account, that the first peace talks will be held in Ecuador in May<sup>1</sup>. The ELN released a police officer and a local politician, following the demand by President Santos that all hostages be freed before formal peace can talks begin<sup>2</sup>. However, the ELN also attacked police in the departments of Norte de Santander and Cauca<sup>3</sup>, and recruited children in Nariño<sup>4</sup>. When asked about these armed actions, the GOC negotiating team stated that armed forces will maintain an offensive stance until the guerrillas demonstrate a real commitment to peace<sup>5</sup>. According an ELN leader, the success of the peace dialogues depends on clarification of paramilitary activities and preventing their repetition<sup>6</sup>.

## **El Salvador will verify the disarmament of the FARC**

El Salvador was the first country to receive a formal invitation by the UN to participate in the verification of the disarmament of the FARC and the final ceasefire. The President of El Salvador accepted the invitation<sup>7</sup>, and emphasized the will of his Government to support the peace process in Colombia. During a visit to El Salvador, President Santos declined to set a specific date for the signing of the peace accords but affirmed that process was on track<sup>8</sup>. FARC leaders stated that they are close to reaching an agreement on a definitive and bilateral ceasefire, one of the last points on the agenda<sup>9</sup>.

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