
Colombia creates FARC taskforce after ex-commanders call on rebels to pick up arms & resume fighting

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Colombian President Ivan Duque has announced the creation of a “special unit” devoted to the capture of former FARC militants, who recently called for renewed fighting with the government, threatening to revive a 50 year conflict.

Appearing in a [video](#) posted online on Thursday, a former FARC commander – known by his pseudonym, Ivan Marquez – urged for a “*new era of struggle*” in Colombia, three years after the guerrilla faction laid down its arms in a historic peace deal with the government, which the Marquez accused Bogota of failing to uphold.

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The president responded with a video of his own later on Thursday afternoon, announcing the launch of a new unit and offering a cash reward for information that leads to the former commander's arrest.

“I ordered the creation of a special unit for the persecution of criminals that appear in the video together with 'Iván Márquez',” the president [said](#). “For each of these criminals a reward of \$3 billion [Colombian pesos, or \$861,000 USD] will be set for information that leads to their capture.”

Duque stressed, however, that the government remains committed to peace with FARC

members who have participated in the reconciliation process and who have renounced all armed activity.

In another press conference on Thursday, Colombian High Commissioner for Peace Miguel Ceballos [accused](#) the ex-commanders of filming the video from Venezuelan territory, arguing there was “*clear support of the dictatorship of Nicolás Maduro*,” though he provided no evidence for the assertion.

Self-declared “*interim president*” of Venezuela Juan Guaido also weighed into the matter in a pair of [tweets](#), stating he’d spoken with Duque and denounced “*the use of Venezuelan territory under the protection of Maduro*” to spread the message of “*narcoterrorism*.”

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The previous conflict with FARC – or the Revolutionary Armed Forces of Colombia – raged on for over 50 years, taking some 220,000 lives, [according](#) to government figures. The Marxist guerrilla faction and the government finally reached a peace deal in 2016, and many members of the armed group have since taken part in Colombia's democratic process.
