

---

**FARC Urges Colombia to Include ELN Rebels in Peace Talks**

14/05/2015



Colombia's FARC leftist guerrilla organization stressed in a statement Wednesday the importance of Colombia's smaller rebel group ELN being included in the ongoing peace process with the government that seeks to bring an end to over 50 years of armed conflict in the country.

"We believe that not only for us as a revolutionary movement is it urgent and necessary that the ELN is brought into the peace talks," said FARC (Revolutionary Armed Forces of Colombia) leader Rodrigo Londoño Echeverri, also known as Timoleon Jimenez or Timochenko, in an online statement. "It is also urgent for the government and for the Colombian people. It is the right and practical thing to do."

Timochenko added in the statement that ELN (National Liberation Army) leader Nicolas Rodriguez, also known as Gabino, is "deeply convinced" of the importance of the peace process.

Colombian President Juan Manuel Santos confirmed this week that Timochenko met with Gabino in Havana to urge the ELN to join the peace talks.

While ELN has not confirmed it will participate, head of the FARC peace delegation Ivan Marquez commented in the following tweet that the sister guerrilla organizations share a common aspiration of working through the same peace process.

ELN has already begun preliminary talks with the government. Ecuador hosted meetings between Colombian government officials and ELN rebels, and President Rafael Correa said Wednesday he is open to a continued role in mediating negotiations.

"If they need Ecuador to make this space available again for these talks, obviously we are at Colombia's disposal," Correa said.

Colombian President Juan Manuel Santos has said that peace talks with the ELN would take place abroad, like the process with the FARC. Santos has also said FARC and ELN talks would take place separately.

The ELN, founded in 1964 inspired by the Cuban revolution, is smaller and less well known than the FARC.

Peace negotiations between the government and the FARC in Havana, Cuba have been ongoing for two years and have covered concerns including land reform, political participation, drug trade, and reparations for victims. A joint land mine removing effort is currently underway.

The peace process aims to bring an end to more than 50 years of armed conflict that has claimed more than 220,000 lives and millions of other victims.

---