
Colombia's FARC to Probe Rebel Unit's Opposition to Peace Deal

08/07/2016



The FARC leadership said it was confident of unity within rebel ranks, despite one public sign of discord.

A leader of Colombia's FARC rebel group said Thursday it is investigating why a breakaway unit is opposing a [potential peace deal](#) with the government that would end five decades of war.

ANALYSIS: [7 Key Points: What Comes After the Cease-Fire in Colombia?](#)

The Armando Rios First Front, a unit of Colombia's Revolutionary Armed Forces of Colombia, announced Wednesday that it will not lay down arms or demobilize under a potential peace deal with the government, the first public sign of opposition to an accord from within the rebel ranks that may set back efforts to end five decades of war.

FARC commander Pastor Alape said the group's leadership was looking into the reasons behind the statement from Armando Rios First Front, which once gained notoriety for detaining ex-presidential candidate Ingrid Betancourt and three American contractors hostage.

But Alape told Reuters the leadership was confident of unity within rebel ranks, despite the public sign of discord.

"We need to talk with the people, see what the problem is and what the real intentions are," Alape, 57, told Reuters. "The other fronts are supporting the line (of peace)."

The statement by the Armando Rios First Front, a 200-strong guerrilla unit in the southeastern jungle province of Guaviare, comes after leaders of the FARC and the Colombian government announced a cease-fire deal on June 23 following more than three years of peace talks.

ANALYSIS: [The Final Sprint: Colombia on the Cusp of Peace](#)

"We have decided not to demobilize, we will continue the fight for the taking of power by the people for the people, independent of the decision taken by the rest of the members of the organization," the unit said in a statement.

The unit said the deals being reached at talks in Cuba will not solve the social and economic problems which first motivated the Marxist guerrilla group to take up arms in 1964.

Armando Rios First Front, which is known to have links to the drug trade, said it would respect any FARC rebels who agree to peace but called on other units to join forces to continue the fight.

"We invite all guerrillas and militia who are not in agreement with demobilization and the laying down of FARC weapons to join forces and continue united as an organization," the statement said.

Santos said earlier on Wednesday that any FARC unit that does not adhere to a peace agreement would end up "in a grave or jail."
