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Colombian Government, ELN Start Peace Talks in Ecuador

07/02/2017



Quito, Feb 7 (Prensa Latina) Representatives of the Colombian government and the National Liberation Army (ELN) are starting today a public phase of the peace talks in this South American country, to end an armed conflict that has lasted more than 50 years.

The place chosen for the talks is Hacienda Cashapamba, a property of the Pontifical Catholic University of Ecuador, located at the Sangolqui parish, south of Quito.

The agenda, defined since March 2016 at a meeting held in Caracas (Venezuela), consists of six items: Participation of the society in peacebuilding, Democracy for Peace, Transformations for Peace, Victims, End of the Conflict and Implementation.

The negotiating team of the government of President, Juan Manuel Santos, will be led by former Minister, Juan Camilo Restrepo, and composed of former Minister of Environment, Luz Helena Sarmiento; Major General, Eduardo Herrera Berbel; as well as specialists Alberto Fergusson, Jaime Avendaño and Maria Alejandra Villamizar.

Chief negotiator Pablo Beltran, who will accompany Aureliano Carbonel, Gustavo Martinez, Bernardo Tellez and Consuelo Tapias, will participate for the ELN.

The talks were agreed, after resolving differences and complying with conditions imposed on both sides since October 2016, when negotiations were initially planned.

After a period of silence, the two sides announced to the world in January that they would give

in to these conditions and will begin the formal talks on February 7th, in this country, which should be the permanent seat of those meetings.

Besides Ecuador, four other countries as guarantors (Chile, Cuba, Norway and Venezuela) are participating in the talks.

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