
FARC Reiterates Call for Ceasefire, Santos Rejects Idea

01/12/2014



The Revolutionary Armed Forces of Colombia (FARC) reiterated its call for a bilateral ceasefire Sunday [in a communique](#) released shortly after the humanitarian release of General Alzate. Meanwhile Colombian President Juan Manuel Santos defended [in his communique](#) his strategy of negotiating a peace agreement without agreeing to a ceasefire.

The FARC holds the position that without a ceasefire, what happens on the battlefield should not affect or interrupt the peace negotiations that have been under discussion for the past two years. President Santos unilaterally suspended the peace negotiations after General Alzate was captured by FARC soldiers earlier this month.

The rebel group reiterates the need for a ceasefire in order to avoid any further interruptions to the peace process, saying, "Now is the time for a bilateral ceasefire, of an armistice, so that no military incident on the battlefield can be used as justification for the interruption of a very beautiful and historic task, that is, a peace agreement for a nation longs for that outcome."

The FARC also heavily criticized Santos for suspending the peace negotiations, as they claimed that it broke the general agreement, which specified that the negotiations should not be interrupted for any reason. The guerrilla army declared a unilateral ceasefire when the negotiations first began but without a willing partner in the Colombian government, were forced to resume combat operations.

Santos maintains that a ceasefire would lead to a situation where the negotiations would drag out indefinitely. He has already stated that he would like to see the negotiations conclude by the end of 2015. The negotiating teams have so far successfully reached an agreement on three of the five agenda items.

Both the FARC and the Colombian Government seem poised to return to the negotiating table. However it is unclear if the lack of a ceasefire will dissuade the FARC from continuing the negotiations. In a scathing letter posted on the FARC website, Commander Rodrigo Londoño — alias Timochenko — harshly criticized President Santos for refusing to agree to a ceasefire.

The FARC's release of General Alzate, the highest ranking military officer ever captured by the rebels, and their expressed agreement to negotiate, even after the assassination of Commander Alfonso Cano, suggests that the FARC is willing to compromise, despite Santos' unilateral decision to suspend the talks.
