
Colombia's ELN Rebels Call on Gov't to Agree to a Cease-Fire

02/11/2015



Colombia's rebels from the National Liberation Army (ELN) have called on President Juan Manuel Santos to accept a bilateral cease-fire within the context of peace talks with them, officials said late Sunday.

"We insist to agree to a bilateral cease-fire that along with the start of a phase of peace talks could create a favorable environment," the Central Command of the ELN published on Twitter. The warned, however, that without a truce in place, their operations would continue.

The tweet reads, "above all, we reaffirm our will to agree to a bilateral cease-fire within the phase of public (peace) talks."

The government has not yet replied to the petition by the ELN who are two soldiers after capturing them in an attack that killed 12 troops and a police officer last week. Since 2014, both sides have been trying to establish a peace process but no deal has been reached.

With around around 2,500 members, the ELN is the second-largest rebel group in Colombia after the FARC guerrilla, with whom the government has been negotiating a peace agreement since 2012.

The ELN group has been battling the government since 1964, attacking government soldiers, kidnapping people and targeting the country's infrastructure.

After last week's attack President Santos said if the insurgents think these actions will strengthen them in the event negotiations take place with his government, "they are completely wrong."

More than 220,000 people have lost their lives and millions have been displaced in over five decades of armed conflict between government forces, rebels, paramilitary groups and drug traffickers.
