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**Colombian Government Pardons 30 FARC Guerrillas as Peace Gesture**

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“The national government decided, on the basis of its constitutional and legal authority, to grant a pardon, that is a pardon of the sentence, to 30 (FARC) guerrillas who are in the country’s prisons serving their sentences for the crime of rebellion,” said the Office of the High Commissioner for Peace in a communique.

Although the identities of the pardoned rebels and other details of the peace gesture are not publicly known at this time, the communique adds that the government will design a program for this first group of FARC members to receive the benefits of psychosocial help, access to education and training possibilities so that they can work and reintegrate themselves into society.

With the aim of establishing the conditions for the end of the internal half-century-old conflict, the government will also set up special areas within the prisons “to which the arrested or convicted members of the (FARC) can be transferred to facilitate the study of their legal situation” as a measure for preparing for their future reintegration into civilian life.

The pardon of the 30 rebels comes after the FARC leadership requested on Nov. 15 the release of 81 imprisoned guerrillas who it says are in a “delicate state of health.”

The guerrillas and the Colombian government, who launched a peace process in November 2012 in Havana, are currently discussing the two final points of the peace accord which deal with the victims of the conflict and the disarmament and demobilization of the rebels.

