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Colombia: Santos, FARC's Timochenko Nominated for Peace Prize

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Colombia's president, Juan Manuel Santos, and Timoleon "Timochenko" Jimenez, commander of the Revolutionary Armed Forces of Colombia (FARC), along with five victims of the armed conflict have been nominated for the 2016 Nobel Peace Prize.

The group was nominated by Norwegian lawmaker Heikki Holmas for their efforts at ending the five-decade-long armed conflict in Colombia.

The five victims nominated alongside Timochenko and Santos are Leyner Palacios, Luz Marina Bernal, Constanza Turbay, Jineth Bedoya and Jose Antequera.

According to Benedicte Bull of the Norwegian Latin America Research Network, the Colombian nominees are well positioned to be awarded the prestigious prize.

Recent decisions by the Nobel committee has been heavily criticized for straying from Alfred Nobel's mandate that the prize be awarded to champions of peace in the world.

"I think in this case, a peace agreement would be in the spirit of Alfred Nobel and it will have good chance of winning," Bull told Blu Radio.

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The nomination of representatives of victims alongside the leader of the Revolutionary Armed Forces of Colombia and the head of the Colombian state is unique.

"This nomination is an acknowledgment of the logic and will of those who have championed the cause of peace in Colombia, and specifically, my father and my mother, among millions of others," wrote Jose Antequera, one of the

nominees representing victims.

Neither Santos nor Timochenko are members of their respective negotiating teams, but their political support for the peace talks, which have been taking place since 2012, has allowed the process to proceed further than any other previous effort at achieving peace in Colombia.

A final deal is expected in late March 2016. The winner of the Nobel Peace Prize will be announced in November, with a ceremony to be held Dec. 10.

Nominees are normally a well-guarded secret, this year over 200 names have been put forward, including Pope Francis.

Santos and Timochenko were floated as contenders for the 2015 peace prize, which was ultimately awarded to the Tunisian National Dialogue Quartet.

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