

DON'T CLOSE THE DOOR TO PEACE

Communiqué by PAX

As a peace and human rights movement, we regret the emergence of a new guerrilla group in Colombia and call on both this new organization and the Colombian state to prevent breaking off all possibilities of ending a war that has already lasted for more than five decades.

PAX recognises that the peace process carried out with the FARC-EP has had failures and delays in its implementation, but we emphasize that the creation and operation of the Peace Tribunal has brought winds of hope, as well as the strengthening of Colombian justice system.

We highlight the words of the Interior Minister Nancy Patricia Gutiérrez that the agreements with those ex combatants that demobilised shall be fulfilled and the signed Peace Accords will be honoured; however, we ask the Colombian government to speed up the implementation of programs that benefit victims and carry out the social development plans in conflict zones, as stipulated in the Peace Accords.

As for the manifesto read by Iván Márquez, we point out that it leaves an open door for dialogue and that they will not fall back into the terrible practice of kidnapping for economic purposes. We urge this group not to participate in terrorist acts that further affect the civil, rural and urban population. After having accompanied various peace processes in different ways from 1989 onwards, we continue to believe that the military option is not the solution and that the two parties should not abandon the possibility to a negotiated solution of the conflict.

PAX is convinced that what has been built with so much effort can still be saved. Obviously drug trafficking has been the most obvious obstacle to peace, along with corruption, and more creative ways should be developed to resolve this, always with the criteria of non-revictimizing of the rural and indigenous population, and by carrying out programs of illicit crop restitution, as stipulated in the Peace Accords.

We highly urge the Colombian government to avoid escalation of the conflict and not underestimate the events that have been unfolding as of late, since they could have a serious impact on the national economy.

PAX will always be willing to support and endorse any initiative that benefits the victims of the conflict and to help find a negotiated way out of this undeclared war, which has reinvented itself so many times over the past decades.

Utrecht, the Netherlands
Bogota Colombia

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