

# In Bogotá, UN Secretary-General Guterres expresses full support for peace process in Colombia

13 January 2018 – In an official visit to Colombia, United Nations [Secretary-General](#) António Guterres on Saturday met with the country's President in the capital, Bogotá, where the UN chief said it is the duty of all the citizens of the world to support the peace process there.

"We see that there are more and more new conflicts and that old conflicts have no solution. That is why what happens in Colombia is of fundamental symbolic importance for the world," Mr. Guterres told a press conference at Palacio de Nariño, Colombia's presidential palace, following a meeting with President Juan Manuel Santos.

"I believe that it is the duty of all the citizens of the planet to fully support the peace building process in Colombia for the Colombian people," the UN chief added.

The purpose of Mr. Guterres' visit is to take stock of achievements that followed a peace agreement between the Government and the Revolutionary Armed Forces of Colombia-People's Army (FARC-EP) in November 2016, which ended 50 years of conflict.

The UN chief seeks to reinvigorate the implementation of the peace deal, including the process of reintegrating former rebel combatants into society, and ensure that Colombians are committed to stay the course.

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"This mission is clearly a mission of solidarity with Colombia and with the Colombian people in a historical moment and of enormous importance for Colombia, for Latin America and for the world," Mr. Guterres said.

His visit also comes ahead of legislative elections in March and presidential elections in May, and at a time when a temporary ceasefire agreement between the Government and another rebel group, the National Liberation Army (ELN), has just expired.

The UN chief said Colombia embarked on the challenge of not only building peace but also guaranteeing the presence of the State throughout the Colombian territory, including administrative presence, security, public services, education, health, development.

"It is a huge challenge, it is something that is not done by miracle, but I want to reiterate the commitment of the United Nations to support the

Colombian government in this project of enormous importance to build peace but at the same time build an inclusive democracy,&#8221 he said.

&#8220There is no justification for armed violence. Peace is the only answer that can solve the problems of poverty, development, equality and democracy,&#8221 he said.

President Santos thanked the Secretary-General for his visit and the continuing support of the United Nations and the [UN Verification Mission in Colombia](#), which is currently monitoring compliance with the agreements established in the peace agreement.

The President highlighted the effort of Colombia to end the conflict and reiterated, to Mr. Guterres, his Government determination to continue moving in that direction.

&#8220It is a process, we are the first to recognize the challenges that we are facing, the most important has to do with the issue of security in rural areas, which suffered so long in the armed conflict ... As I always say, peace is like a cathedral and must be built brick by brick,&#8221 he said.

On Saturday, Mr. Guterres were to meet with officials of the Government and Armed Forces, as well as with FARC-EP leadership and the Catholic Church.

On Sunday, 14 January, the Secretary-General will travel to the Department of Meta, where his agenda will include, among other activities, a visit to a territorial area for training and reintegration of former FARC-EP combatants.