



AMERICA/COLOMBIA - Unilateral truce announced by the FARC, but dialogue for peace continues

Havana (Agenzia Fides) - Yesterday, Monday, November 19, peace talks between the representatives of the Colombian government and the FARC (Revolutionary Armed Forces of Colombia) restarted in Cuba. The delegation of the FARC, breaking the agreed protocol, arrived at the Centre, which houses the dialogue, and gave a reading of its statement announcing a unilateral ceasefire for Christmas, from midnight on Tuesday, November 20 until January 20, 2013. The statement stresses "the suspension of all kinds of offensive military operations against the security forces, and acts of sabotage against public or private infrastructures," as a decision to "welcome the cry for peace of the Colombians." The statement also states that the unilateral ceasefire is "a sign of the desire to create a political environment conducive to the progress of the talks."

The Colombian Government, through the Minister of Defense, Juan Carlos Pinzón, confirmed its position and said it would continue to fight the guerrillas because it is "his duty." In a brief press conference, Pinzon said he will continue to prosecute those who have violated all the rules and have taken the lives of so many compatriots. This line of action follows the position taken by President Santos, who before the meeting in Havana had stated that the talks would not have been accompanied by a "ceasefire" on behalf of the government, until an end to the conflict is established. According to data gathered by Fides, the government's position is motivated by similar long-standing experiences: every truce requested by the guerrilla served to strengthen its lines and to stock up with weapons without any control.

Meanwhile, peace talks continue today, examining the points on the agenda: land ownership and rural development, political participation and the opposition, the end of the armed conflict, drug trafficking and the compensation of victims (see Fides 18/10/2012). (CE) (Agenzia Fides 20/11/2012)