

GSUM Radar

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Colombia

The Renegotiation of Peace



Venezuela

Dialogue Amid Tensions



BRICS Policy Center Centro de Estudos e Pesquisas - BRICS



GSUM

Global South Unit for Mediation



Colombia

The Renegotiation of Peace

After the initial shock of the public rejection of the Havana Agreements settled in (*see Radar n.19*), and in light of the impulse guaranteed by President Juan Manuel Santos's Nobel Peace Prize, two topics shared attentions in Colombia in the past few weeks. On the one hand, an effort was put in motion to save the agreements already reached with the *Fuerzas Armadas Revolucionarias de Colombia* (FARC), now being renegotiated with the support of the "No" campaigners. On the other hand, with the announcement that the public phase of dialogues between the government and the National Liberation Army (ELN) will begin, a new avenue towards peace has opened.

A few days after his defeat in the plebiscite, Santos met with Senator Álvaro Uribe and other leaders of the opposition in search of alternatives to unlock the peace process. At the occasion, commissions were created to deal with the aspects of the agreement that were rejected by the "No" campaign. On October 12, the Democratic Center delivered to the government's negotiating delegation a document called "*Bases for a National Peace Agreement*", designed to communicate its proposals for adapting the content of the points agreed over the last four years. On the following day, Santos communicated to the country that the ceasefire's deadline would be postponed until the December 31.

Some of the proposals of the opposition, however, represent significant challenges to the balance reached between the FARC rebels and the Santos government. Three main questions can be highlighted in this sense: i) The *uribista* intention of annulling the possibility that the guerrillas form a political party; ii) the opposition's attempt to eliminate the axis of direct democracy from the agreements, which pointed to a strengthening in the social organizations' decision-making power; iii) the rejection of bilateralism and of the symmetry assumed by the parties of the dialogue – something considered non-negotiable by the FARC, which refuses the label of the only perpetrator of crimes related to the conflict. While Uribe opposes several points of the justice agreement, in particular the structure of the Special Peace Jurisdiction, the leader of FARC, Rodrigo "Timochenko" Londoño, has already announced his resolute disagreement with making any changes to this topic. Santos, for his part, reiterated to the opposition "not to present impossible proposals", signaling that fundamental changes to the original agreement represent risks to peace.

The polarised discussion of the gender agenda, not only in its importance to the negotiations but also in its role in the defeat in the plebiscite, is also symptomatic of the complexity of the next steps. Although the negotiating table has promoted gender inclusion initiatives in order to reach a fair deal from this perspective, the topic was communicated to conservative portions of the Colombian electorate as a supposed "gender ideology".

Despite the challenges of renegotiations ahead, which could drag on for several months, Santos's Nobel Peace Prize and the momentum of the protests held in recent weeks have become sources of hope for the successful conclusion of the current peace process. Regarding the prize awarded by the Norwegian committee, the President stated that it is "a mandate from the whole world for us all to continue... seeking and consolidating this peace we all desire". He further announced that the award of eight million Swedish kronor would go to compensation for victims. Meanwhile, popular demonstrations have taken the streets and social networks with demands for #AcuerdoYa (Agreement Now!). On October 12, in a protest entitled "March of Flowers", led by indigenous and student movements, thousands of Colombians took the streets of several cities holding white roses in their hands.

Finally, the beginning of the public phase of negotiations between the government and the ELN helped renew the hopes of building a "complete peace". On October 10, it was reported that the negotiating table, which will be based in Quito (Ecuador), will be installed on October 27 and will start its work on November 3. In an official statement about the new peace process, Santos said it was crucial for this purpose that the guerrilla demonstrated willingness to release hostages. The Secretary General of the United Nations (UN), Ban Ki-moon, expressed hope that an agreement will be reached "as soon as possible", while Luis Almagro, Secretary General of the Organization of American States (OAS) applauded "the willingness of the parties to return to the table and begin an inclusive dialogue process that grants a very active role for civil society and for the rest of the Colombian population".

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La primera negociación en la historia del ELN. (10/10/2016): <https://goo.gl/Qpv8IA>

❖ Washington Office on Latin America (WOLA)

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Post-Plebiscite Process Is on the “Best-Case Scenario” Track. (13/10/16): <https://goo.gl/GE9JgM>

❖ Colombia Calls by Virginia Bouvier

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❖ Open Democracy

La “ideología de género”: ¿un spoiler para la paz? (15/10/16): <https://goo.gl/HVswgY>

❖ Fundación Ideas para la Paz (FIP)

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❖ **La Silla Vacía**

Las mujeres se oponen a que las "purguen" del Acuerdo. (12/10/16): <https://goo.gl/Ez1CMY>
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Declarations

❖ **FARC-EP**

El premio Nobel de Paz ha sido otorgado al presidente Juan Manuel Santos y al pueblo colombiano: Timoleón Jiménez. (08/10/16): <https://goo.gl/RP38i5>

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Saludamos respaldo ciudadano al Acuerdo Final. (12/10/16): <https://goo.gl/uEpnkn>

❖ **Presidencia de Colombia**

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Alocución del Presidente Juan Manuel Santos sobre los avances del Diálogo Nacional para la Unión y la Reconciliación. (13/10/16): <https://goo.gl/Vsiik2>

❖ **Alto Comisionado para la Paz**

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❖ **Centro Democrático**

Bases de un Acuerdo Nacional de Paz. (12/10/16): <https://goo.gl/gdCZKV>



Venezuela

Dialogue Amid Tensions

On October 15, the Venezuelan President Nicolás Maduro met with the ex-president of Spain, José Zapatero. According to the Venezuelan Chancellor, Delcy Rodríguez, the objective of the meeting was to “advance the national dialogue for peace and for the defense of sovereignty”. However, organizations such as the International Crisis Group believe that the dialogue between the Venezuelan government and the opposition depends on a greater participation of regional actors.

The meeting took place ten days before the beginning of President Maduro’s recall referendum. The National Electoral Council of Venezuela (NEC) announced the official calendar of the procedure and stipulated the 26th, 27th and 28th of October as the voting date. On 28th and 29th November, the NEC will state if the vote has passed. If it passes, the agency has 90 days to hold new elections, which in this case would be in early 2017.

However, certain groups, such as the opposition and the research center Washington Office for Latin America (WOLA), claim that the CNE is trying to delay the referendum process both by not utilizing all existing ballot boxes and by counting the required 20% on a regional basis and not in relation to the total number of Venezuelan voters.

On October 13, President Maduro signed, by decree, the Venezuelan budget for 2017. Nevertheless, the budget was not subject to National Assembly scrutiny, since the Supreme Court (SC) waived the need for the Assembly to analyze the budget. According to the SC, this attitude was due to a “need to achieve another stage in the legal formation [of the country]”. The Venezuelan opposition promptly responded to this attitude stating that the SC’s decision “violates the Constitution”.

Another important aspect is the ongoing Venezuelan economic crisis. Shortages of basic food have not only impacted the diet of citizens, but also contributed to an increase in the number of malnourished children. According to the doctor Ingrid Soto, “[the number of malnourished children] increased, and we believe that this was due to the worsening of the country’s crisis”. According to Soto, in 2012 and 2013 there were an average of 30 cases of severe malnutrition per year, but in 2016, there have already been more than 79 cases.

The crisis has also resulted in an increase in the number of Venezuelans who cross the border to Brazil. According to the Brazilian **Ministry of Justice and Citizenship**, the number of requests made by Venezuelans for refugee status this year already exceeds the sum of the number of requests in the last five years. On October 17, the government of the state of Roraima announced the creation of an emergency cabinet to “**support the Venezuelan refugees**”.

Regarding the international realm, Venezuela participated in the 10th meeting of the Bi-regional Negotiation Committee between MERCOSUR and the European Union. The meeting took place on October 14 and included the presence of all members of the regional bloc. During the meeting, Héctor Rosales represented Venezuela and stated that “**the meeting was an additional step to advance towards the conclusion of a possible Agreement of Strategic Association between the regional blocs**”.

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❖ Consejo Nacional Electoral

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CNE aprobó cronograma para recolección del 20% de solicitudes para activar referendo revocatorio. (21/09/16): <https://goo.gl/JQU5ku>

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❖ International Crisis Group

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❖ Washington Office for Latin America (WOLA)

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❖ Open Democracy

Venezuela, choose your President. (03/10/16): <https://goo.gl/QpB003>

❖ Observatorio Venezolano de Conflictividad Social

Conflictividad social en Venezuela en septiembre de 2016. (18/10/16): <https://goo.gl/REky4b>

About the Radar

The GSUM Radar is a platform for biweekly monitoring of the present conflicts in Latin America.



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