

Children under 15 to be released from the FARC

On Thursday, May 19, the GOC and FARC delegations in Havana announced the formal installation of a Technical Committee for the release of children from the FARC, which is now working to develop protocols and a proposal for a Special Comprehensive Program for all released children.

The Technical Committee is led by the National Ombudsman's Office and the Advisory Office on Human Rights of the Presidency of the Republic, along with the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC), UNICEF, and the International Organization for Migration (IOM)¹.

According to the GOC, 170 child soldiers under 15 remain in the ranks of the FARC, and will be progressively disengaged from the armed conflict².

Stalled negotiations with the ELN

Several weeks may pass before peace talks formally begin between the ELN and the GOC, according to Ecuador's Minister of Foreign Affairs. Ecuador was announced in April as the initial epicenter for the dialogues³.

The ELN refuses to halt kidnappings, a main source of financing for the group, despite the GOC's demand that the ELN release all kidnapping victims before the talks can begin. The ELN responded that these "impositions" from President Santos are preventing the start of the peace dialogues. Colombia's National Police has registered seven cases of kidnapping this year by the ELN⁴.

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