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Steps by the Colombian Government towards a Humanitarian Agreement

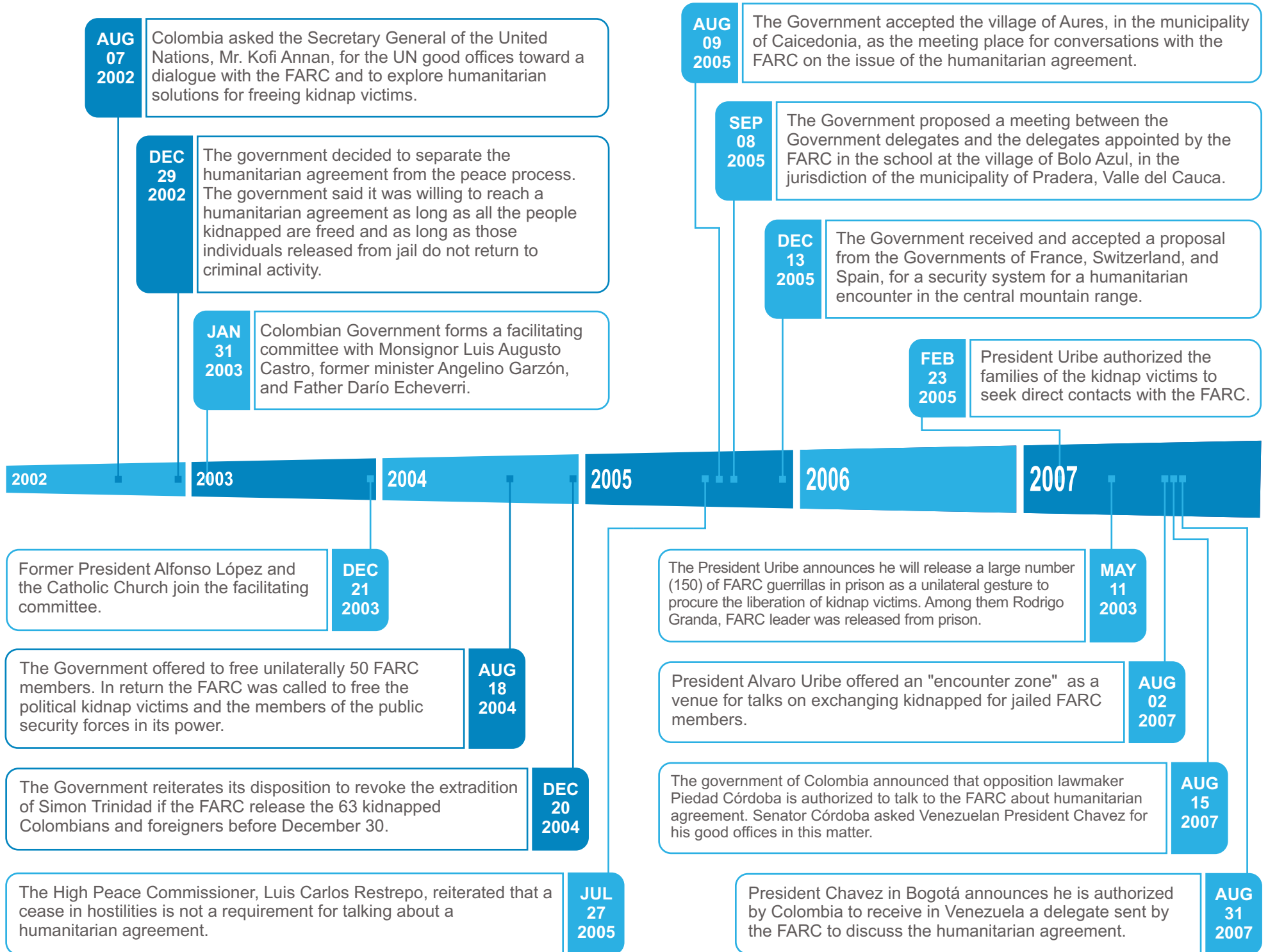
August 2002-August 2007

This document contains five years of public statements and proposals that demonstrate our will to achieve the return of all citizens kidnapped by the FARC. So far the FARC have rejected all previous proposals made by the Colombian Government, families of the victims and third countries.

Republic of Colombia



Timeline 2002-2007 ▶



Statements and proposals ▶

2002→



Inauguration speech by the new head of state, Álvaro Uribe Vélez

AUG
07
2002

“(…) I have asked the Secretary General of the United Nations, Mr. Kofi Annan, for the good offices of that institution to work toward a useful dialogue based on a form of relief to society which should be a cease in hostilities. In this framework we will explore humanitarian solutions for freeing kidnap victims, based on agreements that will give a glimpse of definitive peace as something possible”.

By: **Álvaro Uribe Vélez**
President of Colombia



Press release from the Presidential Palace

DEC
29
2002

The Government is not opposed to having the Red Cross act as a facilitator, but not to replace the UN (...) The Government has made the decision to separate the humanitarian agreement from the peace process, under reasonable conditions.”

By: **Álvaro Uribe Vélez**
President of Colombia

“I cannot stop fighting for kidnapping to end, so that there may be no kidnapping victims in the present and the future of Colombia.”

Álvaro Uribe Vélez, President of Colombia
Press conference, Jun 4/2007

2003→



Press release from the Presidential Palace

DEC
29
2002

“I campaigned under the thesis that for there to be a humanitarian agreement, simultaneous with it there would have to be a cease in hostilities and the beginning of dialogue (...)

Ten or 12 weeks ago, in a meeting with Kofi Annan and after learning details on some of the kidnap victims, I changed what had been my position in the first weeks of my administration (...) I accepted developing a humanitarian agreement through the United Nations as long as all the people kidnapped are freed and as long as those individuals do not return to criminal activity (...)

In good faith those people should make a commitment to not go back to committing crimes and a willing country should act as a guarantor to confirm their good behavior.”

By: **Álvaro Uribe Vélez**
President of Colombia



Communiqué by the High Peace Commissioner

JAN
31
2003

“The National Government has asked Monsignor Luis Augusto Castro, former minister Angelino Garzón, and Father Darío Echeverri to engage in a facilitating mission to work toward a humanitarian agreement between the Government and the FARC, with the good offices of the United Nations.”

By: **Luis Carlos Restrepo**
High Peace Commissioner

New proposal

“(Let us reiterate...) our refusal to grant a demilitarized zone, our refusal to allow released guerrillas to go back to criminal activity, to kill, to kidnap, to commit extortion, to traffic drugs, those are two immovable points.”

Álvaro Uribe Vélez, President of Colombia
Press conference, Jun 4/2007

2003 →



Press release from the
Presidential Palace

SEP
08
2003

“(…) In the presence of the families of the kidnap victims, the President of Colombia spoke on the phone with the United Nations official delegated for this case by the Secretary General and with Monsignor Luis Augusto Castro from the Facilitating Commission. With both of them, **the Head of State reviewed the terms and ratified the Government's desire for a humanitarian release.**”

By: **Álvaro Uribe Vélez**
President of Colombia



Press release from the
Presidential Palace

SEP
16
2003

“**The United Nations (UN) reported** yesterday to the President of Colombia, that **there has been no concrete advance toward possible conversations with the FARC.** President Uribe, on his part, repeated his position that the United Nations must exercise good offices in complete confidentiality.”

By: **Álvaro Uribe Vélez**
President of Colombia

2004 →



Press release from the
Presidential Palace

DEC
21
2003

“**1. Former President Alfonso López and the Catholic Church will form facilitating committees** to work toward the release of kidnapped countrymen; 2. There must be no agreement made counter to the Democratic Security Policy; 3. The President reiterates that **any guerrilla member released from prison must commit to not return to criminal activity.**”

By: **Álvaro Uribe Vélez**
President of Colombia



Communiqué from the
High Peace Commissioner

AUG
18
2004

“On July 23, the Government gave the following proposal addressed to the FARC to one of the facilitators:

“**The Government will free, according to Colombian law and unilaterally, 50 guerrillas who have been charged or convicted for rebellion.** They will be offered alternatives for their incorporation into society. Two possibilities will be offered to them: to live outside the country, or to enter the National Government's reintegration program in Colombia. These alternatives will take place with France and the Colombian Church as guarantors.

Immediately thereafter, the guerrillas will release the political kidnap victims and the members of the public security forces in its power. **Switzerland, France, and the ICRC will support the release.**”

By: **Luis Carlos Restrepo**
High Peace Commissioner

→ New proposal

**Letter to Monsignor Beniamino Stella,
Papal Nuncio**OCT
28
2004

New proposal

"(...) the **Government confirms its disposition to work toward a humanitarian agreement under the terms expressed to the Government of Switzerland on July 23rd of this year** and the information published on August 18th (...)

To advance toward this agreement of wills, the National Government proposes the following procedure:

- The Government will free 15 guerrillas who are in prison for the crime of rebellion.
- Immediately thereafter the guerrillas will free, as a good will gesture, a similar number of kidnap victims in its power.
- There will then immediately be a meeting with the FARC in an Embassy in Bogotá. Or at the headquarters of the Papal Nuncio in Colombia.
- The meeting will be held for no longer than 5 days, with the sole purpose of working out an agreement.
- The **International Red Cross** will carry out the transportation of the FARC members to Bogotá and their return trip, with support from the Colombian Church.
- In no part of the country will military actions be suspended."

By: **Luis Carlos Restrepo**
High Peace Commissioner

"While we hold firm on those two points, which we consider to be of the greatest importance for our Democratic Security Policy, I believe it is important to make a unilateral gesture to procure the liberation of our kidnap victims. I believe it is important to free a good quantity of FARC members who are in jail."

Álvaro Uribe Vélez, President of Colombia
Press conference, Jun 4/2007

**Press release from the
Presidential Palace**DEC
20
2004

New proposal

1. **The Government reiterates its disposition to revoke the extradition of Simon Trinidad if the FARC release the 63 kidnapped Colombians and foreigners before December 30.**
2. **The Government is willing to meet immediately with the FARC in any Church, rural or urban, in the country**, if it will free a first group of kidnap victims as a good will gesture. The meeting will be held with the sole purpose of reaching an agreement to release all the 63 kidnap victims before December 30.
3. **The transportation of FARC members to the meeting site and their return will take place under the protection of the Colombian Church."**

By: **National Government**

**Press release, Office of the
High Peace Commissioner**JUL
27
2005

"The High Peace Commissioner, Luis Carlos Restrepo, **reiterated today that a cease in hostilities is not a requirement for talking about a humanitarian agreement**, but a good will gesture by the FARC to generate confidence is a requirement.

The Commissioner insisted that **the Government is willing to hold a direct and immediate meeting with the FARC**, and toward offering reasonable security conditions to that guerrilla group so that the meeting can be held.

"**If some National or international accompaniment is needed for the security conditions to be credible, we are willing to look for that accompaniment,**" pointed out Restrepo. He clarified, however, **that to hold that meeting, "demilitarization is neither viable nor necessary"**.

By: **Luis Carlos Restrepo**
High Peace Commissioner

**Press release SNE
State News Service**AUG
09
2005

New proposal

“The Government today accepted the village of Aures, in the municipality of Caicedonia, as the meeting place for conversations with the FARC on the issue of the humanitarian agreement.

The proposal was put together by the families of the Valle deputies and sent to the Government and to the FARC on April 11 /2005.”

By: Luis Carlos Restrepo
High Peace Commissioner

**Speech by President Uribe at the 60th
anniversary of Fenalco, Atlántico**AUG
16
2005

“(…) There is continued insistence on a demilitarized zone. Now it is said Florida and Pradera would need to be cleared out for 30 days. The Government cannot do this”.

By: Álvaro Uribe Vélez
President of Colombia

**Press release, Office of the
High Peace Commissioner**AUG
22
2005

“The President reiterated that if these guerrilla groups accept a cease in hostilities, not only would they have every guarantee, but the Government would suspend offensive military operations.”

By: Álvaro Uribe Vélez
President of Colombia

**Proposal to the FARC for achieving
a humanitarian agreement**SEP
08
2005

New proposal

“(…) in order to define a humanitarian agreement, the National Government proposes a meeting between the Government delegates and the delegates appointed by the FARC in the school at the village of Bolo Azul, in the jurisdiction of the municipality of Pradera, Valle del Cauca. The meeting would be for conversations for a maximum period of 10 days. Likewise, the following methodology is proposed:

- Verification of the conditions at the meeting site by National and international guarantors (one day).
- Entrance to the meeting site by FARC delegates with the accompaniment of guarantors (two days).
- Conversations between the Government team and FARC delegates (five days).
- The withdrawal of the FARC delegates with the accompaniment of guarantors (two days).

The Government will guarantee the security conditions for the FARC delegate or delegates during transportation to the meeting site and return to their place of origin.

The verification of the security conditions agreed to will be the responsibility of National and/or international guarantors agreed on ahead of time. In addition, special safe-conducts will be issued, and therefore the suspension of current arrest warrants.

During the time set aside for the meeting there will be no military or police actions taken by the public security forces near the meeting site.”

By: Luis Carlos Restrepo
High Peace Commissioner



Words by the President of Colombia, Álvaro Uribe Vélez, during the inauguration of the Biarritz Forum

SEP
29
2005

“(…) We have accepted many citizens as facilitators, including former President Samper. The Catholic Church will be a facilitator, as well as the French and Swiss Governments. We have demanded the released of all the kidnap victims, that **there be no demilitarized zones**, and that **those who are released from prison will not return to criminal activity**, and that there will be mediation by the United Nations (…) the Government will accept releasing guerrillas in a humanitarian agreement, but **not allowing them to go back to committing crimes**.

We have accepted that leaving the country is not the only valid option. On the suggestion of the Catholic Church, we have also accepted that they could get involved in the reintegration process.

(…) **As an alternative we have offered not a demilitarized zone but a place.** We have said an Embassy, the Nuncio in Bogotá, a Church, a school, and let the FARC say who will conduct them to that site. Let them say what National or international organization will guarantee all the security.

By:

Álvaro Uribe Vélez
President of Colombia

Today, after midday, Mr. Rodrigo Granda was released from prison. (FARC leader captured in January 2005). “The National Government reiterates that it will give every guarantee, every guarantee, for him to be able to carry out work as a peace promoter.”

Álvaro Uribe Vélez, President of Colombia
Press conference, Jun 4/2007



Press release from the Presidential Palace

DEC
13
2005

“The National Government has received a proposal from the Governments of France, Switzerland, and Spain, for a security system for a humanitarian encounter in the central mountain range. This proposal has been delivered simultaneously today to the Government and to the FARC.

The proposal produced by the exploratory technical mission is: El Retiro, in the municipality of Pradera, Valle del Cauca. It describes the security system around the meeting site, security buffer zones, observation points and steps, the duration of the international observation, and the role of the International Committee of the Red Cross.

The proposal has been formally delivered through the Swiss Federal Department of Foreign Affairs, in the name of Spain, France, and Switzerland, to both the Colombian Government and to the FARC. It is the result of an exploratory technical mission that came to Colombian territory and carried out its work in the central mountain range from November 28th to December 2nd, 2005.

By:

Luis Carlos Restrepo
High Peace Commissioner



Declaration by President Uribe in La Paz, Bolivia

JAN
21
2006

“The National Government celebrates the evidence that the deputies [from Valle del Cauca] are OK. The National Government believes that the main thing is for those countrymen to be released as soon as possible to return to their families. **The Government accepts their going to the sister Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela under any condition they desire.** If the condition is asylum, the Government has no objection, and we are sure that President Chavez will grant it”.

By:

Álvaro Uribe Vélez
President of Colombia



Communiqué from the National Government on the proof of life for the kidnapped deputies from Valle del Cauca

SEP
24
2006

1. The National Government celebrates the proof of life for the kidnapped deputies.
2. The National Government reiterates its desire for a humanitarian agreement and for a peace agreement with the FARC”.

By:

Álvaro Uribe Vélez
President of Colombia



Words from President Uribe at the Fenalco Congress

SEP
27
2006

The Government is willing to accept the establishment of a meeting zone to meet with the FARC, with the right conditions for reaching an effective humanitarian agreement and peace agreement. The conditions would be agreed on. **This cannot be a zone where crime can take refuge.** It cannot be an area for military recovery for terrorism, pressured by political war. It should be a meeting zone that will demonstrate to Colombians and to the international community that there is good faith for peace.

By:

Álvaro Uribe Vélez
President of Colombia

“So far we have defined the liberation, the prison release, of 150 FARC members. This prison release could go up to 170-180. Tomorrow the first 50 will come out with an amnesty. And the 150- 170 will be completed on Wednesday or Thursday at the latest.”

Álvaro Uribe Vélez, President of Colombia
Press conference, Jun 4/2007



Words by the President of Colombia at the XV International Insurance Convention 2006

OCT
10
2006

The President of Colombia cannot release every type of prisoner because we have constitutional and legal limitations.

The third condition has been made clear for the last four years by the Government, that **in the event FARC prisoners are released, they cannot return to the FARC.**

If we have to appeal to a mechanism for an international delegation to be there to provide protection, the Government is willing to do that.”

By:

Álvaro Uribe Vélez
President of Colombia



Interview with the Minister of Defense, in El Espectador

JAN
13
2007

“(…) **Our duty is to free the kidnap victims.** That is what the Constitution mandates for us. Moreover, we must give the same treatment to all the kidnap victims, because we cannot have first and second class kidnap victims.

I, as Minister of Defense, cannot make a commitment to ask permission from all the families before an operation. What if we reach a camp where there are five kidnap victims, and we have the opportunity to free them, but we can't do it because one family doesn't approve of the operation?

(…) For us, the release of the kidnap victims is a priority and **what better way could there be to do it than through a humanitarian exchange?**

By:

Juan Manuel Santos
Minister of Defense

**Press communiqué
Ministry of Defense**JAN
16
2007

For the Government a military rescue is not the only way to free the kidnap victims, and whenever this option is chosen the primary thing is to rescue them safe and sound.

(...)The Government cannot promise to consult with the families in every case before beginning a military rescue operation.

By: Juan Manuel Santos
Minister of Defense

**Declaration by the President on
the humanitarian agreement**FEB
10
2007

“At this time the delegates from France, Spain and Switzerland are authorized for a new effort. There is also one individual authorized by the Government for a mission as a facilitator.

What concerns us is that the FARC has often said to the European countries that it is ready for a humanitarian agreement but it is lying to them. (...)

(...) We have two limitations. One limitation is the issue of demilitarization.

The other limitation that we have is that we cannot accept prison release for FARC guerrillas only to have them go back to criminal activity.

By: Álvaro Uribe Vélez
President of Colombia

**Interview given by the President
to the French media**FEB
21
2007

“(...) I see three obstacles to a humanitarian agreement.

First: the FARC is not sincere. The FARC talks of a humanitarian agreement but does not facilitate it.

In addition we have accepted a meeting zone that the FARC did not want to accept. I should make this comment: **what the Colombian Government cannot accept is a demilitarized zone. (...)**

The other thing I have said is that we cannot allow guerrillas to leave prison only to rejoin the FARC in order to commit crimes.

By: Álvaro Uribe Vélez
President of Colombia

**Declaration made by the President
of Colombia at the CATAM
military airport**FEB
22
2007

“The three European countries are still authorized. The authorized Colombian citizen got in touch with the FARC. He met with them in the jungles in the south of Colombia.

The FARC says that the only way to reach a humanitarian agreement is for the Government to unconditionally demilitarize Pradera and Florida, and for the FARC to verify it. You know that the Government cannot accept this.”

By: Álvaro Uribe Vélez
President of Colombia

**Communiqué from the Office of the President of Colombia**FEB
23
2007

New proposal

“The President of Colombia this afternoon, Friday, February 23rd, authorized the families of the kidnap victims to seek direct contacts with the FARC”.

By: **Álvaro Uribe Vélez**
President of Colombia

**Letter from the High Peace Commissioner to a group of Congressmen from the USA**MAR
21
2007

“(…) In response to your letter from March 8th, **the Colombian Government is grateful for your interest in the release of the kidnap victims in the power of the FARC.** It is also grateful for your support for the proposal presented by France, Switzerland, and Spain in December 2005 for a security zone for a dialogue between the Government and the FARC. The Government of Colombia values your willingness to be guarantors of a security zone for conversations, and your willingness to contribute with your support and advice to the success of the conversations.”

By: **Luis Carlos Restrepo**
High Peace Commissioner

“These 150-170-180 FARC countrymen who are released from jail have made a commitment to not go back to criminal activity. They have promised not to return to kidnapping, to extortion, or to drug trafficking. This is something very important in the unilateral nature of this humanitarian gesture.”

Álvaro Uribe Vélez, President of Colombia
Press conference, Jun 4/2007

**Press conference by the High Commissioner of Peace**MAY
11
2007

New proposal

The President of Colombia is willing to release a significant number of FARC guerrillas in prison. He has asked me to look, in coordination with other National authorities, for an agile, quick, and expedited mechanism (...) that will allow us to move ahead on this liberation.

In this way the National Government wants **to advance quickly so that the FARC might make a similar gesture leading to the liberation of the kidnap victims.**

By: **Luis Carlos Restrepo**
High Peace Commissioner

**Words by President Uribe in Bogota's Bolivar Square** [Source: EFE News Service]AUG
02
2007

New proposal

President Alvaro Uribe offered an "encounter zone" as a venue for talks on exchanging kidnapped for jailed FARC members. "If the FARC frees the hostages with the participation of the international community, the government will accept an 'encounter zone' for peace talks (over a period of) 90 days with the FARC," he said in Bogota's Bolivar Square.

"There is firmness here, but the doors to peace are not closed. (...)The government is willing to free guerrillas if they free hostages." He added however, that he would not release insurgents who committed atrocities or those unwilling to abandon armed struggle.

Uribe made his remarks in responding to questions from people who went to Bolivar Square to witness his meeting with teacher Gustavo Moncayo, who walked more than 900 kilometers (560 miles) from the southwestern province of Nariño to plead for the release of his son, army Cpl. Pablo Emilio Moncayo, in FARC hands since late 1997.

By: **Álvaro Uribe Vélez**
President of Colombia

**Announcement by High Peace
Commissioner Luis Carlos Restrepo**AUG
15
2007

New proposal

The government of Colombia announced that opposition **lawmaker Piedad Córdoba has been authorized to talk to the FARC about humanitarian agreement.** The announcement was made jointly by presidential Peace Commissioner Luis Carlos Restrepo and Senator Piedad Cordoba, who has been an outspoken critic of Uribe's administration.

After her appointment Senator Córdoba announced she would ask Venezuelan President Chavez for his good offices in this matter.

By: Luis Carlos Restrepo
High Peace Commissioner

**Words by President of Venezuela,
Hugo Chávez during his visit to Bogotá**AUG
31
2007

New proposal

We have accepted to undertake this task “as a request, on the first place from Senator Piedad Córdoba and then with the consent of President Uribe. We would never have undertaken this task without the president's green light”.

President Uribe sees with good eyes that I receive in Venezuela a delegate sent by the FARC to discuss this issue.

That is indispensable, and will be very helpful, to start comparing positions, to try and reflect deeply on the causes, problems, and possible solutions, of which there are many. I know there are many, there are many possibilities. If there is the will, the will can achieve anything.

By: Hugo Chávez
President of Venezuela

“There is firmness here, but the doors to peace are not closed. (...)The government is willing to free guerrillas if they free hostages.”

Álvaro Uribe Vélez, President of Colombia
Words pronounced in Bogota's Bolivar Square, Aug 2/2007

We have accepted to undertake this task “as a request, on the first place from Senator Piedad Córdoba and then with the consent of President Uribe. We would never have undertaken this task without the president's green light”.

Hugo Chávez, President of Venezuela
Words pronounced during his visit to Bogota, Aug 31/2007



Republic of Colombia

The Government of Colombia thanks
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