



IN THE MIDST OF THE COVID-19 PANDEMIC, CHOCÓ INSISTS ON A NEGOTIATED EXIT TO THE ARMED CONFLICT

Quibdó, Chocó. March 31, 2020.

On March 27, 2020, the Chocó Inter-Ethnic Solidarity Forum (FISCH) issued a statement titled "Chocó: Between the Pandemic and the War", in which it demanded that all illegal armed groups in Chocó needed to immediately issue a ceasefire and end hostilities, given the current state of emergency declared by the government due to the COVID-19 pandemic. The ethno-territorial organizations of Chocó represented by FISCH have analyzed the March 30th pronouncement of the National Liberation Army (ELN), in which the group announced a temporary unilateral ceasefire, effective from April 1 to 30 of the current year. We receive this announcement positively, given that a ceasefire is a key demand of our communities and comprises the first point of our [Humanitarian Agreement Now! For Chocó](#), the peace platform of Chocó's ethnic peoples. Following up on the ELN announcement, the organizations that make up FISCH demand:

1. To the ELN: an indefinite extension to the ceasefire. This is the most effective way to generate a scenario that would allow for negotiations between the ELN and the government, suspended on January 18 of 2019 by the national government, to resume.
2. To the National Government: give systematic attention and response to the assassination of social leaders and the recent expansion of the armed conflict by implementing the 2016 Peace Agreement in its entirety.
3. We furthermore urge the National Government to continue with the commitment to address the COVID-19 pandemic, highlighting in particular the need to coordinate with ethnic groups.
4. To the ELN: as a humanitarian gesture demonstrating its commitment to building peace, to withdraw all children and adolescents from its ranks, and to stop actions that lead to displacement and confinement of the communities of Chocó and in the rest of the country.
5. To the National Government, headed by the President of the Republic, Iván Duque Márquez: designate a team of experts accompanied by international guarantors to resume dialogue with the ELN as well as the other illegal armed groups. In doing so, the Colombian government responds to the fundamental right to peace enshrined in the Colombian Constitution, as well as the guarantees established in the 2016 Peace Agreement and the

Humanitarian Agreement Now! For Chocó, which establishes in point 5 the responsibility of the government to dismantle the illegal structures present in the Chocoan territories.

6. To the National Government: systematically strengthen its institutions, in particular the health infrastructure, that allow the country to effectively confront future humanitarian crises.

"For the right to peace in the midst of the health crisis"

Humanitarian Agreement Now in Chocó!