



International Center for Religion & Diplomacy

Bridging the Political and Religious Spheres in Support of Peacemaking

Monthly Update

February 28, 2013

Sealing the Deal in Colombia

In our December Update, we listed our project areas for the coming year, one of which was Colombia. As you may be aware, the Government of Colombia has entered into negotiations with the Revolutionary Armed Forces of Colombia (FARC) to end the hemisphere's longest-running conflict.

Key to establishing a stable peace will be the reintegration into civil society of thousands of ex-combatants in a climate burdened by the festering wounds of war and powerful economic incentives tied to drug production. Deep ethnic and political divisions exacerbate the lack of confidence in a peace process that has failed so often in the past. Reconciliation between the former combatants and their communities will be crucial to bridging the gap until other critical programs, like vocational training, can be developed in due course.

To address this challenge, **ICRD will engage Colombia's religious communities and the formidable capabilities of its women's networks in addressing the reentry problem** faced by guerrilla fighters who, after laying down their arms, are often not welcome in their communities and have difficulty finding suitable employment. In the absence of other options, many will rearm and join militia groups or narcotics networks as their only options.

The Colombian government is enthused about the project and has agreed to co-finance it, once half of the required funding has been raised from outside sources. It has also indicated a desire to collaborate in its implementation.

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FARC Soldiers
in Colombia

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With Best Wishes,

Doug Johnston
President
ICRD