First public peace talks with the ELN to be held in Ecuador in May

The announcement was made on April 7 by the ELN, on their official Twitter account, that the first peace talks will be held in Ecuador in May¹. The ELN released a police officer and a local politician, following the demand by President Santos that all hostages be freed before formal peace talks begin². However, the ELN also attacked police in the departments of Norte de Santander and Cauca³, and recruited children in Nariño⁴. When asked about these armed actions, the GOC negotiating team stated that armed forces will maintain an offensive stance until the guerrillas demonstrate a real commitment to peace⁵. According an ELN leader, the success of the peace dialogues depends on clarification of paramilitary activities and preventing their repetition⁶.

El Salvador will verify the disarmament of the FARC

El Salvador was the first country to receive a formal invitation by the UN to participate in the verification of the disarmament of the FARC and the final ceasefire. The President of El Salvador accepted the invitation⁷, and emphasized the will of his Government to support the peace process in Colombia. During a visit to El Salvador, President Santos declined to set a specific date for the signing of the peace accords but affirmed that process was on track⁸. FARC leaders stated that they are close to reaching an agreement on a definitive and bilateral ceasefire, one of the last points on the agenda⁹.