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www.afgazad.com

afgazad@gmail.com

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The struggles and hopes of the people are ours

Along with these forces of mass social mobilization and that majority electoral force in the country is the revolutionary guerrillas of the ELN, ready to resume the Peace Talks with the New Government so that their results bring peace with social justice for all of Colombia.



The First Commander of the National Liberation Army (ELN) welcomes the arrival of the New Government, values the popular force that pushes the changes in the country and recalls the popular root that gave rise to this guerrilla on July 4, 1964.



Comrades of the National Liberation Army and People of Colombia:



Today the ELN commemorates 58 years of revolutionary struggle up in arms, to achieve transformations that change the lives of all Colombians, especially the impoverished, excluded, marginalized and persecuted; causes of social and armed conflict that continue to await solutions.

The ELN began to be born before July 4, 1964, the efforts for its construction date back to 1961, gathering the first rebels in the cities, young students and workers was wasteful work; then in October 1962 the José Antonio Galán National Proliberation Brigade was constituted, with the purpose of initiating the construction of a revolutionary guerrilla force independent of any political interference by the traditional Parties, Liberal and Conservative, which had used the struggles of the guerrillas in their interparty war and then betrayed them; now it would be different, it would be led by the same people with their popular leaders who had been participating in their struggles.

The struggles of the oil workers of Barrancabermeja contributed by going on strike in 1963, with the support of the peasants of the region, where their leaders even their poor

homes were burned and they had no other option in swelling the ranks of that nascent guerrilla.

The first military actions were carried out in June 1964 in 6 cities of the country and there the first combatant of this new guerrilla force, comrade Gilberto Reinaldo Arenas Martínez, offered his life, were actions to support the student struggle that was brewing at the Industrial University of Santander (UIS), which would culminate in a general Civic Strike in Bucaramanga on June 20.

That strike organizes a great march to Bogotá, meanwhile the 17 comrades who will give rise and foundation to the rural guerrillas of the ELN come together, while this group of guerrillas marched in its first days, so did the students of the UIS towards the capital of the country to spread the reasons for their struggle generating a great national impact.

This initial group of guerrillas would be the step of non-return as a collective decision sealing the commitment until achieving the objectives that the social struggles of workers, peasants and students, placed again and again to governments that until today have ignored, negotiated, failed to comply and repressed.

Then came the incorporation into the ELN of Camilo Torres, the country's main and largest rebel leader, and his early death in combat, which until today the State has kidnapped his body.

The guerrillas grew, multiplied, the small group became hundreds and then thousands, many comrades have remained on this route of struggle and resistance, the same has happened with the thousands of Political Prisoners without wavering for a single moment, for more than these 5 decades.

We will continue to persist in that struggle for change where not only do the rich and powerful live well, and the enjoyment of our wealth is extended to the greatest number of people; that there be justice, stop the Genocide against social leaders, respect and guarantee Human Rights, there is a true democracy and where society is the protagonist in decision-making.

We have held talks during 5 less governments with Duque who refused to comply with what was agreed with the previous government, and here we continue on the route to make Colombia a fairer, more equitable and more democratic country.

Just as we have continued to accompany the diverse and rich experiences of struggle and resistance of the communities at the national and regional level, we have felt ours their struggles and hopes, such as those lived in the previous three years that culminated in the great day of the 28A, from there a massive and strong social force has been born that placed the right-wing establishment in check; the youth in this year became known to the country and the world as a force for change that together with women, workers, urban dwellers, peasants, black communities, indigenous peoples and LGBTIQ + communities open the way to a New Colombia.

That force converged in the electoral results that gave the triumph to Gustavo Petro and very surely it will be the force that will defend and demand that it be a Government for all the people, for all Colombians, they expect a great National Dialogue where the Agreements that other Governments agreed and breached are resumed and fulfilled; it is the democratic left that will pay the debts that the previous governments of the oligarchy failed to fulfill.

Along with these forces of mass social mobilization and that majority electoral force in the country is the revolutionary guerrillas of the ELN, ready to resume the Peace Talks with the New Government so that their results bring peace with social justice for all of Colombia.

With feelings of Homeland.

Antonio Garcia

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Edited by [María Piedad Ossaba](#)

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