

U.S. Rep. Pocan: Joins U.S. Reps. Ellison and Johnson to urge Colombia's new president-elect to advance peace process

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Members reaffirm Congressional support for implementing Colombia's Peace Accord and advancing human rights

WASHINGTON, DC – U.S. Representatives Mark Pocan (WI-02), Keith Ellison (MN-05), and Henry C. “Hank” Johnson (GA-04) issued the following statement today congratulating Iván Duque for winning Sunday’s presidential election and urging him to fully implement and uphold Colombia’s landmark peace accord.

“We congratulate President-Elect Iván Duque on his victory in a peaceful election, and applaud his public commitment to unite and serve all Colombians. Colombia finds itself at a turning point in its history. After more than 50 years of civil conflict that left hundreds of thousands dead, over 80,000 disappeared, and over seven million displaced, at long last it appears that peace is being made between the Colombian government and the Fuerzas Armadas Revolucionarias de Colombia (FARC). The peace accord also provides a chance for Colombia to move away from organized crime, toward sustainable and legitimate economic development, and the full recognition of social, cultural, economic and political rights for disenfranchised Afro-Colombian and indigenous communities. Under a fully implemented accord, coca crops are to be substituted with licit products, helping to end the scourge of violence that has afflicted so many communities both in Colombia and the United States.

“In the spirit of advancing President-Elect Duque’s call for national unity, we respectfully urge him to distance himself from those who seek to dismantle the peace process. Forces opposed to peace have been wreaking havoc in an attempt to sabotage the peace agreement, killing some 200 social movement leaders, human rights defenders, and other activists since the ceremony marking the beginning of peace in January 2017. Colombia teeters, in danger of falling back into an era of human rights atrocities, unending armed conflict, kidnappings, disappearances, and displacement. As before, these problems will not be contained within Colombia’s borders, but will spread far beyond them.

“At this historic moment, and as Mr. Duque’s government prepares to take office, we urge Colombians to unite around the objective of promoting peace and human rights. We ask Colombia’s next government to continue to fully implement and uphold the historic peace accord. As a longstanding financial, diplomatic and security partner, the U.S. Congress stands ready to work with the incoming administration toward these aims.”