

10-7-2016

What's Next for Colombia?

University of Dayton

Follow this and additional works at: https://ecommons.udayton.edu/news_rls

Recommended Citation

University of Dayton. "What's Next for Colombia?" (2016). http://wayback.archive-it.org/4727/20161206204809/https://www.udayton.edu/news/articles/2016/10/camilo_perez_bustillo_human_rights_center_colombia_peace_deal.php

This News Article is brought to you for free and open access by the Marketing and Communications at eCommons. It has been accepted for inclusion in News Releases by an authorized administrator of eCommons. For more information, please contact frice1@udayton.edu, mschlange1@udayton.edu.

Friday October 7, 2016

What's Next for Colombia?

Colombian President Juan Manuel Santos won the Nobel Peace Prize for his work negotiating a peace deal with the rebel group FARC to end nearly six decades of war, a deal voted down by the Colombian people. And despite Santos saying a ceasefire agreement could end Oct. 31, reports indicate both Santos and FARC leader Timochenko still want peace. So why can't there be peace?

"Powerful political sectors in the country led by former president Alvaro Uribe want veto power over the peace process and oppose several key aspects of the peace deal. They say it gives too much to FARC," said Camilo Pérez-Bustillo, executive director of the University of Dayton Human Rights Center who was among a U.S. human rights delegation observing the Oct. 2 vote. "The NO campaign was successful in manipulating these issues and creating the impression the deal favored FARC."

Pérez-Bustillo, a Colombian national with U.S. citizenship, supports the peace deal and says it's grounded in international human rights conventions and international criminal and international humanitarian law, including a United Nations peace mission authorized by the U.N. Security Council. He's further discouraged because much of the YES vote came from areas affected most by war.

"In effect, the votes of the most direct victims of the war were outweighed by those least connected and impacted by war," he said. "As the Nobel committee emphasized, the Peace Prize, in addition to recognizing President Santos' efforts to sustain the peace process, is a tribute to the Colombian people's quest for peace and reconciliation and the struggle for dignity, truth and justice for the countless victims of the country's armed conflict."

The NO vote success may further embolden Uribe and strike a blow against human rights, according to Pérez-Bustillo.

"The results propel Uribe into the front ranks of Santos' likely successors. This is especially disturbing from the perspective of human rights issues since Uribe has been closely associated with the paramilitary sectors most responsible for the largest number of serious human rights violations since the 1980s," he said.

Pérez-Bustillo, a former adviser to the United Nations and coordinator of a project on human rights along the U.S.-Mexico border, became the first executive director of the University of Dayton Human Rights Center this summer.

He came to the University of Dayton from New Mexico State University where he was a visiting professor in the departments of government and criminal justice and coordinator of the Border Human Rights Documentation Project.

Pérez-Bustillo, who served as an adviser on poverty and human rights to the United Nations Human Rights Council, is the author of several books, chapters and articles regarding human rights issues. His book, *Human Rights, Hegemony and Utopia in Latin America: Poverty, Forced Migration and Resistance in Mexico and Colombia*, written with human rights advocate and documentary photographer Karla Hernández Mares, came out June 16.

He also is a fellow of the Comparative Research Programme on Poverty, a project of the International Social Sciences Council based at the University of Bergen in Norway.

Pérez-Bustillo's experience also includes 20 years in Mexico as a human rights scholar and advocate, plus another decade as a civil rights lawyer specializing in the educational rights of immigrant children and youth.

The University of Dayton is a pioneer in human rights education. It started the country's first undergraduate human rights program in 1998 and offered one of the nation's first bachelor's degrees in human rights studies in 2008.

For more information, contact Shawn Robinson, associate director of media relations, at 937-229-3391 or srobinson@udayton.edu.