



**APQSA:** Advisory Panel on the Question of South America

**Student Officer:** Begüm Burçak

**Issue:** Tackling the ELN insurgency in Colombia

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Committee: Advisory Panel on the Question of South America (APQSA)  
Issue: Tackling the ELN insurgency in Colombia  
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## I. Introduction

The National Liberation Army (Ejército de Liberación Nacional – ELN) is Colombia's last active insurgent group and one of Latin America's most formidable criminal organizations. In recent years, the group has expanded and strengthened its presence in Venezuela, solidifying its status as a binational guerrilla force.



Initially founded as a nationalist movement inspired by the Cuban Revolution, the ELN focused on

activities like kidnapping, extortion, and sabotage of oil infrastructure. While it avoided involvement in the drug trade for decades, it has since become deeply entrenched in international drug trafficking.

The ELN comprises over 6,000 members, including networks embedded within civilian populations. This force operates across both Colombia and Venezuela but with differing objectives in each country. In Colombia, the ELN has traditionally waged an armed revolution against the state and clashed with other criminal organizations. Meanwhile, in Venezuela, it functions more as a paramilitary group aligned with the government of Nicolás Maduro.

Despite its criminal activities on both sides of the border, the ELN's leadership maintains a political agenda, participating in multiple rounds of peace talks with the Colombian government over the years.



## II. Involved Countries and Organizations

### Colombia

President Gustavo Petro of Colombia introduced the **Total Peace Policy** as part of his broader agenda to address the country's longstanding armed conflicts, including issues with the **National Liberation Army (ELN)**. The policy aims to establish dialogue and negotiate peace agreements with multiple armed groups, including guerrilla organizations, drug trafficking cartels, and other criminal entities, to achieve comprehensive national reconciliation. President Petro said: "The government delegation has always made it clear to the ELN that trade with human beings has no kind of justification, and its elimination is not the subject of any transaction," "Kidnapping only leads to drug trafficking. The path to peace is not to turn...the human body into a commodity,".

In Colombia, peace has consistently influenced elections, with voters deciding on negotiations and leniency toward insurgent groups. A recent poll shows that while 55% support continued talks with the ELN, 63% believe President Petro's **Total Peace** project is on the wrong track.

The ELN's hardline demands—such as prisoner releases, political participation, economic reforms, and subsidies for ceasing kidnappings—give it significant leverage, as it is not constrained by political timelines like Petro's government. However, many of these demands lack public and international support, especially if they undermine principles of truth, justice, and reparations.

Petro's insistence on achieving peace "at any cost" risks his credibility, particularly if agreements appear excessively lenient. While the ceasefire may reduce violence temporarily, enduring peace remains a distant goal. Public opinion on the negotiations could also shape Colombia's local elections.

### Venezuela

The ELN has used Venezuela as a strategic refuge since the 1980s to escape operations by Colombian authorities. The border state of Apure became the group's international stronghold. Initially, Venezuelan governments were hostile toward the ELN, especially after the guerrilla group killed eight Venezuelan soldiers in 1995. In 1998, Venezuela even authorized Colombian forces to pursue the ELN across its border.

This dynamic shifted in 1999 when Hugo Chávez became president. Chávez adopted a more sympathetic stance toward both the ELN and the FARC (Revolutionary Armed Forces of Colombia), allowing these groups greater freedom to operate in Venezuelan territory. As Colombian military forces and





paramilitary groups (like the United Self-Defense Forces of Colombia, or AUC) increased pressure on the ELN, the guerrillas expanded their activities within Venezuela.

After the FARC signed a peace agreement in 2016 and vacated strategic territories along the Colombia-Venezuela border, the ELN filled the power vacuum, seizing control over key drug trafficking and smuggling routes. The border regions provided the ELN with both a sanctuary to evade Colombian military operations and a platform to launch attacks back into Colombia.

Currently, the ELN's influence in Venezuela extends beyond the border. The group operates in at least 40 municipalities across eight states, including regions far from the Colombian border, such as Anzoátegui on the Caribbean coast. Their operations have diversified to include illegal mining, control of cocaine production zones, and dominance over state-sponsored food distribution networks like the CLAP program.

In regions like Apure, the ELN exerts significant social control, acting as a de facto government by resolving disputes and maintaining criminal governance. It has also established clandestine radio stations to consolidate its presence. With an estimated 6,000 fighters overall, roughly 1,000 of them are believed to operate from Venezuela, highlighting the country's critical role in the group's expansion and survival. The ELN's foothold in Venezuela allows it to evade Colombian forces while strengthening its financial and operational capacity.

The ELN's key alliances in Venezuela involve elements of the Venezuelan state, including security forces and local governments, particularly in regions bordering Colombia. These relationships enable the group to operate with relative freedom but are transactional and potentially unstable. Former ELN commander Pablo Beltrán suggested that the guerrillas and the Venezuelan government share common enemies, highlighting the strategic basis of their cooperation: "Sometimes we have common enemies, it is true. For example, when (in January 2019) the leader of the opposition, Juan Guaidó, was taken to the Colombian side. A narco-paramilitary group called the Rastrojos was in charge of transporting him and securing him. In that area where Guaidó passed through, we fought with that group. Not because that group fights with the Maduro government. But because it uses that area as a coca export corridor and because it massacres the peasant and indigenous populations there. So, when the Rastrojos are on our side, we fight them. And when they go over to the Venezuelan side, they fight them. So, I can tell you: (the ELN and Maduro) are fighting a common enemy."



## Ecuador

In 2019, Ecuadorian security forces were placed on high alert after reports suggested Colombia's ELN guerrillas were planning a cross-border attack. Colombian authorities warned that the ELN might target military or police facilities in the border regions of Mira in Carchi and San Lorenzo in Esmeraldas.

The motive for the attack was believed to be politically driven. Sources suggested it could be retaliation against Ecuador for expelling ELN leaders after ceasing to host peace talks in 2018 or a reaction to Ecuador's support for Venezuelan opposition leader Juan Guaidó, given the ELN's ties to Venezuelan President Nicolás Maduro.

While the ELN had no verified armed presence in Ecuador, some resources indicated their operations near the Ipiales-Tulcán border crossing and efforts to establish support networks within Ecuador, including connections with local leaders and officials during their time in the country for peace talks. This raised concerns about potential logistical and political support systems aiding the ELN in the region.

## Brazil

Brazil's stance on the ELN (National Liberation Army) is somewhat complex, shaped by broader geopolitical considerations, particularly regarding its relationships with neighboring countries like Venezuela and Colombia. While Brazil has largely maintained a neutral or pragmatic position regarding the internal conflicts in Colombia, including the activities of guerrilla groups like the ELN, its policies are influenced by regional security concerns and its desire to manage relations with both Colombia and Venezuela.

Brazil has historically been a proponent of regional stability and has sought to mediate conflicts involving groups like the ELN. For instance, Brazil has participated in discussions around peace processes, occasionally aligning with other South American countries to promote dialogue between the Colombian government and armed groups, including the ELN. However, Brazil's involvement is often cautious, as it does not want to antagonize Colombia or other international allies while simultaneously seeking to maintain good relations with Venezuela, where the ELN also operates.

In recent years, Brazil's focus has been on broader regional security issues, such as combating organized crime, drug trafficking, and illicit activities that are often linked to groups like the ELN. The country has been concerned about the spillover of violence from Colombia into its borders, particularly in the Amazon region, which has seen increasing activity by armed groups. This concern has led Brazil to adopt a more vigilant stance on regional security but without directly confronting the ELN or engaging in military operations aimed specifically at the group.



## Cuba

Cuba has historically provided significant support to the Colombian guerrilla group ELN (National Liberation Army), offering sanctuary and resources. The country's relationship with the ELN has been one of political solidarity, particularly aligned with Cuba's broader stance of supporting revolutionary movements in Latin America. For instance, Cuba has sheltered key members of the ELN leadership, including Nicolás Rodríguez Bautista ("Gabino") and Eliécer Chamorro Acosta ("Antonio García"). García, who became the ELN's leader in 2021, has enjoyed considerable protection in Cuba for decades. He lived in Havana in the 1990s, where he had Cuban identification and was even provided with an apartment and logistical support, including vehicles and gasoline, during Cuba's "Special Period" in the 1990s.

Cuba has consistently refused Colombia's extradition requests for ELN (National Liberation Army) leaders, citing peace negotiation protocols. This includes requests related to the 2019 Bogotá police academy bombing, which killed 22 and injured 87. Cuba's government denies that ELN members use its territory to plan attacks. Still, fugitive ELN leaders remain in Havana under the protection of the Cuban regime while the group continues its violent activities in Colombia. Additionally, FARC dissidents, who abandoned Colombia's peace process and returned to violence, have reportedly sought support from Cuba. Cuba's role in supporting groups like the ELN and FARC dissidents is part of its broader alliance with Venezuela's Nicolás Maduro regime, which also provides refuge to former FARC leaders like Iván Márquez and Jesús Santrich.

Additionally, Cuba has played a role in peace talks between the ELN and the Colombian government, acting as a mediator. For example, Cuba was involved in facilitating negotiations for a ceasefire in 2020 despite ongoing tensions due to the ELN's activities. This diplomatic role underscores Cuba's continued association with the ELN, even as the Colombian government and other international actors criticize the island's stance.

## United States

The U.S. government has taken a strong stance against the ELN, categorizing it as a foreign terrorist organization (FTO) since 1997. The ELN's involvement in illegal activities like drug trafficking, narcoterrorism, extortion, and kidnapping has made it a key target for U.S. law enforcement. The U.S. has actively pursued its members, including through the extradition of ELN members involved in drug trafficking, such as Yamit Picon-Rodríguez and Henry Trigos-Celon, who were brought to Texas in 2021 to face charges related to narco-terrorism. Additionally, the U.S. supports Colombia in its efforts to combat the ELN's operations, including offering rewards for information leading to the arrest of key figures and providing assistance to



Colombian authorities. The U.S. Department of State also monitors the ELN's activities, with a focus on its criminal and terrorist operations.

### III. Focused Overview of the Issue

#### 1. History

The ELN, founded in Colombia's Santander department in 1964 during the aftermath of *La Violencia*, began as a small, ideologically driven guerrilla group rooted in Marxism and liberation theology. Inspired by figures like Camilo Torres, it initially focused on social justice and gained support from students, unions, and political activists.

The group launched its insurgency in 1965 by overtaking Simacota but suffered significant setbacks in 1973 when Colombia's military offensive in Operation Anorí nearly dismantled it. This forced the ELN to relocate to regions like Arauca and the Colombia-Venezuela border, setting the stage for its later expansion.

By the 1990s, the ELN had transformed into a decentralized organization leveraging local criminal opportunities, such as extorting oil companies in the Eastern Plains and taxing cocaine and marijuana production. Despite early clashes with the FARC over control of resources and territories, the two groups occasionally collaborated when threatened by paramilitary forces or Colombian military operations.

Today, the ELN has evolved into a decentralized, well-funded criminal-terrorist network with significant operations along the Colombia-Venezuela border. Its activities are supported by the region's instability and criminal networks, marking a shift from its ideological roots to a more pragmatic and profit-driven structure. In recent years, there has been increased collaboration with the FARC following the latter's 2016 peace agreement.

#### 2. Structure

The ELN (National Liberation Army) is a decentralized organization divided into seven Colombia-oriented "fronts," or eight if urban operations are included. Its membership is difficult to quantify due to ambiguity between armed fighters and broader supporters, some of whom can be mobilized for combat. The ELN's leadership includes a National Congress that meets every five years, a Central Command (COCE) for daily operations, and a National Directorate (DINAL) overseeing 20 regional commanders.

The military structure includes six "war fronts," 22 rural fronts, and an urban front for city operations. Key leaders include:



1. **Nicholas Rodriguez Bautista ("Gabino")** - Former top leader until June 2021.
2. **Eliécer Erlington Chamorro Acosta ("Antonio Garcia")** - Focuses on international operations and strategy.
3. **Israel Ramírez Pineda ("Pablo Beltran")** - Involved in peace talks and linked to Venezuela.
4. **Rafael Sierra Granados ("Ramiro Vargas")** - Tied to the group's finances, including illegal income from Venezuela.
5. **Gustavo Anibal Giraldo ("Pablito")** - Commands the Eastern front, managing operations on the Colombia-Venezuela border, with funding from the drug trade and illegal mining.

The ELN operates extensively in Colombia and Venezuela, combining military actions with illicit activities to finance its operations.

### 3. Post- Covid

The COVID-19 pandemic created conditions that enabled the ELN to expand its influence and activities in Colombia and Venezuela, exacerbating threats to regional stability and governance with indirect implications for the United States. The economic hardship caused by the pandemic in Colombia, such as a doubling of unemployment (from 9.4% in 2019 to 19.8% in 2020) and a rise in poverty (from 26.9% to 38%), increased the susceptibility of some Colombians to ELN recruitment and bribery. Reports highlighted the recruitment of minors from impoverished families unable to support their children.

The pandemic also weakened the Colombian state's ability to respond effectively, as security forces were diverted to address the crisis, while Venezuela's weakened Maduro government struggled to counter ELN activities. The ELN took advantage of this situation to consolidate power in areas it controlled, distributing relief supplies, enforcing pandemic regulations, and imposing brutal consequences for non-compliance. In some regions, it acted as a pseudo-government, using the pandemic to gain community support.

Additionally, the ELN proposed "humanitarian ceasefires" in May and October 2020, though these were rejected by the Colombian government. Over the long term, the increased government spending on healthcare and emergency programs strained Colombia's budget, potentially leading to cuts in security, infrastructure, and social development. This financial strain limits the Colombian state's ability to counter the ELN's influence and provide alternatives to the populations in affected regions.

The ELN's strategic exploitation of pandemic conditions underscores its adaptability and the ongoing challenges to regional security and governance.





#### 4. Financing

The ELN (National Liberation Army) has established various illicit income streams in territories under its control, particularly through extortion from businesses, especially in the oil and extractive sectors. It has also skimmed local government revenues, including those from oil production. A common tactic includes bombing pipelines, such as the Caño Limón-Coveñas pipeline, to force extortion payments, although they avoid damaging it so severely that it disrupts their own revenue sources.

Ransom kidnappings became another major revenue source for the group, especially in the 1980s, and escalated dramatically between 1996 and 2001. Additionally, the ELN has been involved in illegal precious metals mining, particularly after the 2008 financial crisis, expanding its operations in regions like Chocó and Venezuela. Though initially opposed to drug trafficking on ideological grounds, the ELN shifted its stance in the mid-2000s, eventually collecting taxes from coca and cocaine producers.

#### 5. Goals

As a defender of those left out of Colombia's political and economic structures, the ELN places a strong emphasis on the rights and empowerment of marginalized groups, including Indigenous peoples, Afro-Colombian communities, and rural farmers. With the goal of overthrowing imperialist exploitation and inequality structures, it presents its activities as part of a "people's war" against systemic injustices. Building bonds with local communities through political education and assurances of social and economic advancements is a common component of this strategy. Critics counter that these goals are compromised by the ELN's use of force and brutality.

In order to solve inequalities in Colombia's rural and urban areas, the group envisions participatory democracy that entails transferring income and power. The ELN seeks to undermine what it sees as a government-corporate partnership that disenfranchises local communities by focusing on the mining and oil sectors, which it views as emblems of capitalist exploitation. In addition to being economic measures, its attacks on pipelines and extortion of global firms are also acts of ideological disobedience.

The ELN is distinct from other armed groups in Colombia in that it largely relies on its ideological and religious foundations, especially liberation theology. This movement influences the group's rhetoric and recruitment tactics by fusing Catholic teachings with a dedication to social justice and sympathy with the underprivileged. The ELN's theological foundation continues to set it apart from previous insurgencies like the FARC, which placed a greater focus on Marxist-Leninist doctrine without the same religious emphasis, as many of its early commanders were motivated by clergy calling for extreme social change.



## IV. Key Vocabulary

**Ceasefire Agreements:** Temporary or permanent halts to hostilities between the ELN and the Colombian government, often negotiated to build trust during peace talks.

**Demobilization:** The formal process of disarming and disbanding rebel groups like the ELN, transitioning their members into civilian life.

**Reintegration:** Efforts to assist former ELN combatants in adapting to civilian society through economic support, education, and psychological counseling.

**Humanitarian Zones:** Areas established to protect civilians from violence by declaring them off-limits to armed actors, often a demand in negotiations with the ELN.

**Liberation Theology:** A religious framework that combines Catholic teachings with activism for social justice, deeply influential in shaping the ELN's ideology.

**Illicit Economies:** The ELN's involvement in illegal activities, such as drug trafficking and gold mining, provides financial resources for their insurgency.

**Environmental Degradation:** A consequence of ELN attacks on oil pipelines and illegal mining, often used as leverage against the government and corporations.

## V. Important Events & Chronology

Date	Event
1964	The National Liberation Army (Ejército de Liberación Nacional - ELN) is founded in Colombia. Inspired by the Cuban Revolution, it sought to overthrow the government and establish a Marxist-Leninist regime focused on social justice and agrarian reform. Initial support comes from students, workers, and rural populations.
1983	The ELN formally adopts kidnapping as a key strategy to fund its operations. The group faced significant financial challenges due to dwindling external support, particularly after the decline of international Marxist movements and Soviet aid. Kidnapping became a lucrative method to finance their insurgency, targeting wealthy landowners,



	<p>businesspeople, and politicians. The ELN used rural strongholds to hold hostages and demanded ransoms, creating fear among local elites and financing their growing operations.</p>
1985-89	<p>The ELN expands its kidnapping operations alongside extortion, particularly targeting Colombia's oil industry. The group begins attacking pipelines and oil facilities, demanding "war taxes" from companies operating in their controlled territories.</p>
1991	<p>Peace talks with the Colombian government began but quickly failed due to mutual distrust. ELN leaders demand extensive reforms, including nationalizing natural resources, but the government resists.</p>
1999	<p>A new round of negotiations under President Andrés Pastrana collapses after a series of ELN attacks, including the mass kidnapping of 160 people during a church service in Cali. This "La María Church Massacre" showcases the group's brutal tactics and disrupts any goodwill for peace efforts.</p>
2002	<p>President Álvaro Uribe launches the <b>Democratic Security Policy</b>, intensifying military operations against insurgent groups, including the ELN. As a result, the ELN lost several key leaders and operational capacity but remained active in rural areas.</p>
2004	<p>Despite setbacks, the ELN continues extortion and sabotage campaigns, focusing on infrastructure, particularly oil pipelines. Their kidnapping operations grow more systematic, targeting international companies operating in Colombia.</p>
2010	<p>The ELN begins solidifying its presence in Venezuela, taking advantage of weak border controls and aligning with factions within Nicolás Maduro's government. This expansion provides the group with a safe haven to regroup and plan operations.</p>



2016	Following the Colombian government's peace agreement with FARC (Revolutionary Armed Forces of Colombia), the ELN emerged as the country's most significant guerrilla threat. The group increases its involvement in drug trafficking while maintaining traditional strategies like kidnapping and extortion.
2017	Peace talks with the ELN officially begin in Quito, Ecuador, marking another attempt to end the conflict. These talks are hindered by continued ELN attacks, including the bombing of oil pipelines and ongoing kidnappings.
2019	The ELN bombs the General Santander Police Academy in Bogotá, killing 22 police cadets and injuring dozens. This attack, one of the deadliest in years, leads President Iván Duque to suspend peace talks and launch a military crackdown.
2020	During the COVID-19 pandemic, the ELN announced a temporary unilateral ceasefire but resumed operations soon after. The ELN continues expanding its influence in Venezuela, collaborating with local armed groups and allegedly receiving support from Maduro's regime.
2023	President Gustavo Petro's administration prioritizes peace negotiations with the ELN, proposing a holistic approach that includes addressing rural poverty and inequality.

## VI. Past Resolutions and Treaties

- [United Nations Security Council Resolution 2694](#)

<https://documents.un.org/doc/undoc/gen/n23/229/59/pdf/n2322959.pdf>

United Nations Security Council Resolution 2694, adopted on August 2, 2023, expanded the mandate of the UN Verification Mission in Colombia to monitor the bilateral ceasefire agreement between the Colombian government and the ELN. The ceasefire, which began on August 3, 2023, is set to last six months, with the potential for renewal after joint evaluations by both parties. The resolution tasked the UN Mission with overseeing adherence to the ceasefire and assessing its impact on humanitarian conditions, particularly in conflict-affected areas. To ensure effective





implementation, the resolution authorized an increase of 68 international observers and additional civilian resources for the mission. It also underscored the importance of improving humanitarian conditions to build trust in conflict-impacted regions. Regular reporting by the UN Secretary-General was mandated to evaluate the ceasefire's contributions to peace and stability, reflecting the broader peacebuilding efforts in Colombia. These efforts include addressing the root causes of conflict, protecting vulnerable communities, and supporting the reintegration of former combatants.

- [United Nations Security Council Resolution 2366](#)

<https://documents.un.org/doc/undoc/gen/n17/208/95/pdf/n1720895.pdf>

The United Nations Security Council Resolution 2366, adopted on July 10, 2017, established a second UN Verification Mission in Colombia, tasked primarily with monitoring key elements of the peace process between the Colombian government and the FARC (Revolutionary Armed Forces of Colombia). While the resolution did not explicitly focus on the ELN, it indirectly shaped Colombia's broader conflict-resolution framework. The mission was responsible for verifying the reintegration of former FARC combatants into society and ensuring the implementation of security guarantees to protect communities and political participants from violence.

This resolution emphasized the necessity of transitioning from conflict to enduring peace, advocating for comprehensive strategies involving coordination between the Colombian government, regional actors, and civil society. Its focus on trust-building, local community engagement, and international oversight set a precedent for later approaches to negotiating with other armed groups, including the ELN. By promoting frameworks centered on inclusion and mutual accountability, the resolution became instrumental in guiding peacebuilding efforts across Colombia, influencing strategies for dealing with multiple actors involved in ongoing conflicts.

## VII. Failed Solution Attempts

A combination of military and diplomatic measures have been used in the attempts to address the National Liberation Army (ELN) problem, but these strategies have not been successful due to major obstacles. A number of ceasefire agreements and peace negotiations have been attempted over the years to curtail the ELN's operations, but they have not produced long-term outcomes.

The Colombian government began negotiations with the ELN in the 1990s, and under Andrés Pastrana's presidency (1998-2002), a peace process was completed. The ELN's continuing use of violence and kidnapping, including the bombing of infrastructure such as oil pipelines, caused these attempts to fail. It was challenging to build a trust-based discourse because of the group's refusal to abstain from violence



at the negotiating table and their engagement in unlawful operations, including kidnapping and extortion. The government's suspicion of the ELN's intentions and the group's internal differences contributed to the failure of subsequent peace attempts in the mid-2000s, including the idea for bilateral ceasefires.

The government started to change its approach in more recent years to incorporate negotiations with the ELN as part of a larger peacebuilding framework, especially with the peace process during President Juan Manuel Santos's administration (2010–2018). Due in major part to the ELN's continued illegal activities, which include drug trafficking, extortion, and violent attacks on the populace and infrastructure, peace talks in Havana, Cuba, once again fell short of a lasting solution. The ELN's desire for a political and ideological overhaul of Colombia, which many in the government and the general public felt intolerable, posed a significant obstacle to these talks.

Aerial bombs, ground offensives, and military raids on suspected ELN camps are only a few of the military measures the Colombian government has taken to combat the ELN. Although the ELN has not been completely eradicated, these attempts have been successful in undermining the organization's command structure and decreasing its power in some areas. Due to their decentralized organization and dependence on local assistance, the ELN has been able to remain resilient and carry on with their activities in isolated locations, especially in the area that borders Venezuela, where they have taken asylum and collaborated with other criminal groups.

The ELN has demonstrated the capacity to adjust and thwart these attempts at resolution in spite of the ongoing military pressure and diplomatic initiatives. The organization continues to be heavily involved in illicit activities that give them substantial financial resources, including mining, extortion, and drug trafficking. Negotiations for peace are more challenging because of their ideological reasons, which also set them apart from other Colombian guerrilla groups like the FARC. Peace talks have also been made more difficult by the Colombian government's weak authority over rural areas and the continued existence of paramilitary groups.

The ELN's continued criminal activity, the absence of a coordinated strategy within the Colombian government and the international community, and the group's ideological dedication to revolutionary objectives are ultimately the primary causes of the failure of previous solutions. Achieving sustainable peace with the ELN will continue to be a difficult task as long as these dynamics exist.

## VIII. Possible Solutions

Delegates should think of a comprehensive strategy that incorporates military, diplomatic, and economic tactics in order to handle the National Liberation Army's (ELN) ongoing insurgency. They should



also concentrate on the underlying causes of the conflict. In Colombia, where the ELN operates, a multifaceted approach can increase the likelihood of enduring peace and stability.

Promoting inclusive peace negotiations with the ELN, with international mediation to guarantee openness and equity, is one important way to solve the problem. The absence of mutual trust and willingness has been the main reason why previous peace attempts with the organization have failed. All stakeholders' concerns, especially those of the rural and Indigenous populations that the ELN purports to represent, can be addressed by a better-organized negotiating process that involves not just the government and the ELN but also civil society, marginalized groups, and local community leaders. A more favorable atmosphere for peace negotiations may result from recognizing and resolving the complaints of these groups, which include land rights, poverty, and the absence of government presence in rural areas.

International participation in observing ceasefires and demobilization procedures would be crucial in guaranteeing the ELN complies with agreements, much like the UN Verification Mission has done in the context of the FARC peace process. The UN may extend its authority to supervise any ceasefire or peace process with the ELN, fostering trust in the process by making sure all parties follow the terms of the agreement. This would also entail keeping an eye on ex-combatants' reintegration and helping them adjust to civilian life by providing them with educational and career options.

Addressing the political and socio economic injustices that have stoked the ELN's rebellion is crucial. In the most impacted areas, delegates ought to support development initiatives that prioritize infrastructure, employment prospects, healthcare, and education. In order to provide alternatives to criminal activities like drug trafficking and illegal mining, these efforts should give priority to rural areas where the ELN maintains substantial support bases. The group's recruitment base may be lowered by financial incentives for lawful mining and alternate sources of income for rural communities.

The Colombian government must bolster its security apparatus while maintaining dialogue, but not at the expense of further marginalizing rural people. Maintaining public trust requires reforming the security forces to make sure they are not complicit in corruption or violations of human rights. Furthermore, enhancing the competence and professionalism of Colombia's police and military personnel will aid in better territorial control without resorting to violent repression, which only serves to intensify complaints.

International collaboration is essential in the fight against the ELN because it finances its operations through illicit mining, extortion, and drug trafficking. This involves collaborating with other nations to cut off their sources of income, especially Venezuela, where the ELN is well-established. This might entail stepping up border security, blocking drug routes, and going after the financial networks that support the ELN's activities.



In ELN-controlled territories, humanitarian assistance and post-conflict recovery initiatives can serve to improve conditions and foster trust among the local populace. Rebuilding infrastructure, helping victims of violence, and reintegrating ex-combatants into society are a few examples of this. Furthermore, the profound rifts in Colombian society might be healed with the aid of peacebuilding projects, such as educational efforts that promote reconciliation.

The ELN is a highly ideological organization that adheres to Marxist ideas and liberation theology. Delegates should think about how to discuss the ELN's ideological concerns in addition to tackling socio economic difficulties. This could entail talking about how democratic methods, as opposed to violent conflict, can be used to create a more just society.

## IX. Useful Links

“Who are Colombia's ELN, the National Liberation Army?”

[https://youtu.be/gcjkI2RpC\\_o?si=dB\\_pAqQu15RwJCwr](https://youtu.be/gcjkI2RpC_o?si=dB_pAqQu15RwJCwr)

“Why Colombia’s Peace Deal is Failing”

[https://youtu.be/V34r\\_ITZNjg?si=34Tfi43xXWquELI](https://youtu.be/V34r_ITZNjg?si=34Tfi43xXWquELI)

“Eluding Peace? Negotiating with Colombia’s ELN”

[https://d1wqtxts1xzle7.cloudfront.net/40304497/1\\_Eluding\\_Peace-Negotiating\\_with\\_Colombia\\_ELN\\_-\\_A\\_Civico-libre.pdf?1448309024=&response-content-disposition=inline%3B+filename%3DEluding\\_Peace\\_Negotiating\\_with\\_Colombia.pdf&Expires=1732140708&Signature=Rr8eFEtWDUa2W-s5ileTAljiKnzrZBs5wt~OWjEjXBYdZ3cQoqtykr-75i0pgGXM0rih-Rr8TIQ61p6wJipdhuex5HI9wPKEQIQ~06vDGHSL~xRp7k79zK6zAtvFTFg2mtn0~GFEOadE38~MpcNYCsFO1arE9pmyeQIOqPdo0YIizuHXdndhEqSp2O6EWPSUgXOYHCZVLj-29qFGJ3YlrAVO5eAeFt15LU-8w4Kelfgho18sk98LOV3X1UDaAUXHtb3kxzM-j4PJZ8r6BejDOJSYFJUUhKXqHyZ2JUeaYX3w6Ebmr-hgCYQUgrxEdagml1d7Z2NzodeansbeiHcoQ\\_&Key-Pair-Id=APKAJLOHF5GGSLRBV4ZA](https://d1wqtxts1xzle7.cloudfront.net/40304497/1_Eluding_Peace-Negotiating_with_Colombia_ELN_-_A_Civico-libre.pdf?1448309024=&response-content-disposition=inline%3B+filename%3DEluding_Peace_Negotiating_with_Colombia.pdf&Expires=1732140708&Signature=Rr8eFEtWDUa2W-s5ileTAljiKnzrZBs5wt~OWjEjXBYdZ3cQoqtykr-75i0pgGXM0rih-Rr8TIQ61p6wJipdhuex5HI9wPKEQIQ~06vDGHSL~xRp7k79zK6zAtvFTFg2mtn0~GFEOadE38~MpcNYCsFO1arE9pmyeQIOqPdo0YIizuHXdndhEqSp2O6EWPSUgXOYHCZVLj-29qFGJ3YlrAVO5eAeFt15LU-8w4Kelfgho18sk98LOV3X1UDaAUXHtb3kxzM-j4PJZ8r6BejDOJSYFJUUhKXqHyZ2JUeaYX3w6Ebmr-hgCYQUgrxEdagml1d7Z2NzodeansbeiHcoQ_&Key-Pair-Id=APKAJLOHF5GGSLRBV4ZA)

“Elite Bargains and Political Deals Project: Colombia Case Study”

[https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/media/5c190fc0ed915d0b9211b9c0/Colombia\\_case\\_study.pdf](https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/media/5c190fc0ed915d0b9211b9c0/Colombia_case_study.pdf)

“Colombia Back from the Brink: From Failed State to Exporter of Security”

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