

For over half a century, Colombia had been ravaged by conflict between Government forces and armed guerillas. The extent of the violence was such that as many as 220,000 people died, 25,000 disappeared and 5.7 million were displaced over the course of 52 years. Yet, with the signing of a peace deal between the Colombian Government and the rebel group known as FARC, this bloody insurgency was brought to an end.



To mark the [International Day of Peace](#) 2017, Ciné-ONU screened Marc Silver's third feature length film, 'To End A War'. The documentary provides a window into this pivotal moment in Colombia's recent history. With unprecedented access to President Juan Manuel Santos and FARC Chief Commander Timochenko, the documentary follows the torturous path towards peace - revealing the fears and hopes of both sides in post-conflict Colombia.

The screening was followed by a panel discussion chaired by Deborah Seward (Director of UNRIC), with three guest speakers: Rory Keane (Head of Office – UNLOPS); Peter Van De Velde (Director of the Americas Division – Federal Public Service Foreign Affairs of Belgium) and Rodrigo Rivera Salazar (High Commissioner for Peace – Colombia).



High Commissioner for Peace Rivera spoke of the next steps that would have to be taken in the peace process. He made it clear that reintegration of former guerillas into society was a key concern for the Colombian Government. However, he also highlighted the need for a process of

national reconciliation saying, “Reconciliation cannot be a government policy, it is *the* major personal decision facing all Colombians.”

When asked how Belgium and Europe would continue to assist in the peace process, Peter Van De Velde referred to the EU as a model for compromise and peace explaining that, “We have lived in an area of peace for over 70 years [...] because of the reconciliation of two former mortal enemies in France and Germany.” He believed that the EU’s experience in finding diplomatic solutions to crises could be beneficial to the process in Colombia and would go beyond Europe’s offer of financial assistance.



Rory Keane, head of UNLOPS, praised the nature of the UN mission in Colombia and attributed its success to the desire of the Colombian Government to bring about peace. For him, the UN’s mission was made far more successful by President Santos’ personal commitment to the cause. He summarised this by saying, “Ownership of a political process means success for a political process.”

Whatever the result of Colombia’s upcoming election, the three panelists seemed confident that

there would be no upset to the peace process. When an audience member asked whether this was a possibility, the High Commissioner for Peace replied simply that, “The Peace process is irreversible.”

The handout from our event is available [here](#)

For more info on ‘To End a War’ click [here](#)

Learn more about the [International Day of Peace](#)

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