



U.S. DEPARTMENT of STATE

Press Statement

Adam Ereli, Deputy Spokesman

Washington, DC

September 24, 2004

Colombia: Determination and Certification of Colombian Government and Armed Forces With Respect to Human Rights Related Conditions

On September 21, 2004, Secretary of State Colin L. Powell determined and certified to Congress that the Colombian Government and Armed Forces are meeting statutory criteria related to human rights and severing ties to paramilitary groups. These conditions are: that the Colombian Armed Forces are suspending military officers credibly alleged to have committed gross violations of human rights or to have aided or abetted paramilitary organizations, cooperating with civilian prosecutors and judicial authorities in prosecuting and punishing such members, severing links with paramilitary organizations, and dismantling paramilitary leadership and financial networks; and that the Colombian Government is prosecuting and punishing those members of the Armed Forces credibly alleged to have committed gross violations of human rights or to have aided or abetted paramilitary organizations.

The Secretary's determination was based on a thorough, careful evaluation of the conditions in U.S. law and the relevant actions and policies of the Government of Colombia and the Colombian Armed Forces. The Secretary made the decision to certify based on our discussions with the Government of Colombia and Colombia's Armed Forces, consultations with non-governmental human rights organizations, and input from our Embassy in Bogotá.

Promoting respect for human rights is central to our policy in Colombia. While there has been progress, more needs to be done to improve the human rights situation in Colombia. President Uribe is committed to working with us on concrete measures the Government of Colombia should take to achieve these objectives.

In accordance with Section 563(a)(1) of the FY 2004 Foreign Operations, Export Financing and Related Programs Appropriations Act, 75 percent of funds for assistance to the Colombian Armed Forces have already been obligated. This determination and certification by the Secretary of State, which is pursuant to Section 563(a)(2), permits another 12.5 percent of those funds to be obligated. As explained in Section 563(a)(3), a second certification will be required in order to obligate the final 12.5 percent of FY 2004 funds for assistance to the Colombian Armed Forces.

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 [BACK TO TOP](#)

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