



U.S. DEPARTMENT of STATE

Press Statement

**Sean McCormack, Spokesman**

Washington, DC

April 10, 2007

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

On April 4, 2007, Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice 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. This determination and certification, which is pursuant to Section 556(a) of the FY 2006 Foreign Operations, Export Financing, and Related Programs Appropriations Act, permits the full balance of FY 2006 funds designated for assistance to the Colombian Armed Forces to be obligated.

Supporting human rights in Colombia remains a top priority for the U.S. Government. We are encouraged by positive developments in the Colombian government's efforts to protect human rights. The Colombian government has shown its commitment to improve respect for human rights throughout all sectors of society and remains committed to working with the international community to further its progress on human rights. That said, we recognize there is still progress to be made. The United States takes seriously all reports of human rights abuses and is committed to continue engaging the Government of Colombia and supporting programs to achieve further progress in improving the human rights performance of its armed forces, severing military-paramilitary ties, and ensuring effective investigation and prosecution of human rights violations.

To accomplish these goals, we - both in Washington and through the U.S. Embassy in Bogota - regularly engage Colombian NGOs and civil society groups, as well as U.S. and international human rights organizations, regarding Colombia's human rights performance. The work of these organizations is invaluable in expanding our understanding of the human rights situation in Colombia.

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