

## **Former FARC Combatants leave Bogota to Study Medicine in Cuba**

Report from Cubadebate.cu, August 26, 2017

Source: <http://www.pacocol.org/index.php/noticias/educacion/2282-despiden-en-embajada-cubana-en-bogota-a-exmiembros-de-las-farc-ep-que-estudiaran-medicina-en-cuba>

August 27 -Two hundred former combatants of the Revolutionary Army Forces of Colombia (FARC-EP) chosen to be students at the Latin American School of Medicine (ELAM) in Havana were given a farewell sendoff today at the Cuban Embassy in Colombia where they signed the code of ethics.

The young Colombians present at the Embassy were former insurgents and others from poor families associated with the guerrilla movement. At the event, many were accompanied by family members. A few hours later they would be leaving for the Caribbean island, where next month they will begin their course of study.

In the farewell ceremony for the future doctors, Pastor Alape, a member of the FARC-EP Secretariat, judged the group to be the First Contingent of Doctors for Peace who will be going to prepare themselves in Cuba. This was happening because of 1000 scholarships the island's government was offering over the next five years to young people of the now demobilized movement.

The FARC commander who in recent years lived in Havana as part of the insurgent delegation to the peace talks told the students that in the Caribbean nation they will find a country very different from their own, one where they will discover what true international solidarity is.

For his part, Cuba's ambassador in Colombia, José Luis Ponce, pointed out that this offer from his country represents a contribution to the peace process and to the post-conflict situation in this Andean nation after the relinquishing of arms by the FARC-EP and as it transfers into civilian life.

Cuba has created conditions for teaching and provided necessary materials, the Cuban diplomat said, "so that you can study and in the future, at the end of six years of study, can return to work as medical professionals in your country."

The project known as ELAM forms part of the integrated health program with which Cuba extends medical collaboration in a spirit of solidarity to various countries. Ponce cited it as an example of what a nation with scarce economic resources but one that is rich in human resources and political determination can do.

He commented also that it resulted from the thinking of the historic leader of the Cuban Revolution Fidel Castro who can be thought of as the author of this solidarity project.

In recent weeks in this capital a process of academic selection and aptitude took place. Cuban health professionals with long work experience in teaching at ELAM were in charge of it.

See video at: [200 estudiantes becados en Medicina viajan a Cuba](#)

*Translation by Tom Whitney*

**Excerpts from two other reports on the Colombian Students at ELAM appear below:**

**From Colombia** -- August 19 - The process of selecting the first people to benefit from studying to be a doctor in Cuba culminated this week. It was carried out by a board made up of a committee of teaching and methodology professionals from the Latin American School of Medicine (ELAM), of officials from the Cuban embassy, and of delegates of the Revolutionary Armed Forces of Colombia (FARC). The selection process took place between July 19 and August 16. The 200 persons chosen as scholarship recipients come from a peasant background and most are ex-combatants of the FARC. They had been stationed in the Temporary Village Areas [set up for demobilizing guerrillas.] ...

Ignacio Cabrera, a member of the ELAM Graduates Foundation, pointed out that, "Today in our country we work to build peace. To achieve this, we are at war continually against that most cruel of enemies called inequality. From each mountain, from each millimeter of Colombian land, we extend to them our infinite gratitude for carrying out such important and magnificent work" ...

The doctors will be trained within the perspective of the family doctor model, which the Colombian government is relying upon in order to improve the health situation and strengthen primary care to go along with what the country needs.

Source: <http://insurgente.org/cuba-cumple-su-compromiso-con-la-paz-entre-las-farc-y-el-gobierno-colombiano-200-becas-de-familias-pobres-para-estudiar-medicina/>

**From Cuba** -- August 27 - A group of Colombian scholarship students arrived at this capital [today] to study medicine, and thus put into practice the offer Cuba made to the South American country and to the Revolutionary Armed Forces of Colombia ...

On their arrival on the island, this Saturday, the 189 future doctors were received by officials of the Foreign Ministry, and the Ministries of Public Health and Foreign Trade and Investment, and also those of the Latin American School of Medicine (ELAM) where the young, demobilized FARC members will be studying. Joining them will be others who were displaced or who are victims of armed conflict that extended for more than half a century in that nation ...

María Camila Bedoya, originally from Medellin, showed great emotion at the opportunity Cuba had given her, and, in her view, not everyone offers such things. "I have always wanted to study medicine and this is a possibility that I now have." The young 18-year-

old added that on finishing the course she will return to her country “to help those with the most needs, those who can’t pay for medical care” ...

Sebastián Rodríguez, also from that Colombian city, the capital of Antioquia Department, aspires to “enter onto the road ahead and become a good health professional.” His object is to offer the help and knowledge that his community needs.

Source: <http://www.cadenagramonte.cu/articulos/ver/72801:en-cuba-jovenes-colombianos-desmovilizados-de-las-farc-ep-para-estudiar-medicina-fotos>



*photo: Radio Cadena Agramonte*

**Despiden en Embajada cubana en Bogotá a exmiembros de las FARC-EP que estudiarán medicina en Cuba**

CUBADEBATE . 26 AGOSTO 2017

Los 200 excombatientes de las FARC-EP seleccionados para estudiar en la Escuela Latinoamericana de Medicina (ELAM) de la Habana fueron despedidos hoy en la sede de la embajada cubana en Colombia, donde firmaron el código de ética.

Los jóvenes colombianos ex miembros de la insurgencia y otros procedentes de familias humildes vinculadas al movimiento guerrillero, asistieron a la sede diplomática, muchos de ellos acompañados de su familia, a pocas horas de partir hacia la isla caribeña, donde iniciarán el curso escolar desde el próximo mes.

En la ceremonia de despedida de los futuros galenos, el miembro del Secretariado de las FAR-EP, Pastor Alape, calificó al grupo como el Primer Contingente de Médicos por la Paz que ira a prepararse a Cuba, del millar de becas ofrecidas por el Gobierno de la isla para los próximos cinco años a jóvenes del desmovilizado movimiento.

El comandante de las Fuerzas Armadas Revolucionarias de Colombia-Ejército del Pueblo,

quien vivió en los últimos años en La Habana, como parte de la delegación guerrillera en las conversaciones de paz, dijo a los alumnos que en la nación antillana encontrarán un país distinto al suyo, donde descubrirán qué es la verdadera solidaridad internacional.

Por su parte, el embajador de Cuba en Colombia, José Luis Ponce, manifestó que este ofrecimiento de su país representa una contribución al proceso de paz y al postconflicto en esta nación andina, tras la deposición de las armas por las FARC-EP y su paso a la vida civil.

Cuba ha creado las condiciones docentes y materiales necesarias para que ustedes puedan estudiar y en el futuro regresar a desempeñarse como profesionales de la medicina en su país, transcurridos seis años de estudios, manifestó el diplomático cubano.

El proyecto de la ELAM forma parte del programa integral de salud, con el que Cuba extiende solidariamente la colaboración médica a diversos países y que es un ejemplo de lo que puede hacer una nación de escasos recursos económicos, pero rica en capital humano y en voluntad política, añadió Ponce.

Comentó que se trata del resultado del pensamiento del líder histórico de la Revolución cubana, Fidel Castro, a quien puede considerarse como artífice de este proyecto solidario.

En las últimas semanas se realizó en esta capital un proceso de selección académica y de aptitud, que estuvo a cargo de profesionales cubanos de la salud, de larga experiencia en el trabajo docente de la ELAM.

Video.- 200 estudiantes becados en Medicina viajan a Cuba