

High Commissioner for Human Rights welcomes release of hostages in Colombia

The High Commissioner for Human Rights, Louise Arbour, expressed relief and satisfaction at the release, on 27 February, of four former Colombian parliamentarians, Ms. Gloria Polanco de Lozada, Mr. Luis Eladio Pérez, Mr. Jorge Eduardo Gechem and Mr. Orlando Beltrán. They had been held hostage by the Revolutionary Armed Forces of Colombia - People's Army (FARC-EP) for more than six years.

"All hostages held in Colombia must be released immediately and unconditionally", urged the High Commissioner, reiterating a call she has made before.

"Taking hostages is forbidden by international humanitarian law", said the High Commissioner, adding that "the illegal armed groups of Colombia must stop committing the crime of kidnapping."

She expressed sympathy for all the victims who are still held hostage and for their families while hoping that these hostages will gain their freedom as soon as possible.