



Colombia to Train 20,000 Police Officers in Central America

OE Watch Commentary: In recent years, the Colombian Armed Forces have trained police and military personnel in over 60 countries. They have been asked to do so because they have earned significant respect for their effectiveness in battling drug cartels and paramilitary organizations. Colombia has considerable experience in this, given that paramilitary groups such as the Revolutionary Armed Forces of Colombia (FARC) have been operational in the country for over 51 years, while drug cartels have wreaked havoc on society since the early 1980s. Thus, as the first passage points out, criminal organizations have forced the Colombian military and police to become experts in counterterrorism operations, intelligence gathering, anti-kidnapping tactics, and demobilization campaigns.

Although Colombia dealt with extreme instability for decades, the experience they gained from it is extremely valuable; especially in a region where drug cartels are expanding so rapidly that police and military forces cannot adequately address the new challenges they are facing because they have never received any type of training for it. In an effort to begin knowledge sharing, Colombia created pilot programs in 2012 to address training deficiencies, and since that time, more than 17,000 Central American police officers have received courses on conducting effective criminal investigations, combating drug trafficking, and attacking rampant extortion and corruption. These initial efforts have improved the quality of police forces in the region, but there is still a need to train more police. This is why, as the second excerpt discusses, Colombia is now committing itself to training over 20,000 police officers in Central America by 2020. **End OE Watch Commentary (Fiegel)**

“In 2018, we plan on continuing this cooperation and hope that by 2020, we will have trained more than 20,000 police officers in Central America.”

Source: “Fuerzas Armadas colombianas entrenan a sus pares de todo el mundo (Colombian Military Trains Armed Forces throughout the World),” *Dialogo*, 15 July 2017. <https://dialogo-americas.com/en/articles/colombian-military-trains-armed-forces-throughout-world>

The Colombian Military has the depth of experience and knowledge to help security forces throughout the world thanks to cooperation agreements they themselves have sustained with partner nations to obtain expertise in counter terrorism operations, intelligence gathering, anti-kidnapping tactics, and demobilization campaigns.

Source: “Colombia sube hasta 20,000 la cifra de policías que entrena en Centroamérica (Colombia to Train 20,000 Police Officers in Central America),” *El Nuevo Diario*, 17 July 2017. <http://www.elnuevodiario.com.ni/internacionales/centroamerica/431137-colombia-suba-20-000-cifra-policias-que-entrena-ce/>

We (Colombia) have made the decision to increase at least 90 different activities related to training and security cooperation in 2017. In 2018, we plan on continuing this cooperation and hope that by 2020, we will have trained more than 20,000 police officers in Central America.



Colombian National Police Vehicle, 2011.

Source: By National Police of Colombia via Wikimedia Commons, https://upload.wikimedia.org/wikipedia/commons/4/44/Veh%C3%ADculo_Polic%C3%ADa_Nacional_de_Colombia_%285558617915%29.jpg, CC BY-SA 2.0.