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USDOS – US Department of State

Country Report on Terrorism 2019 - Chapter 5 - National Liberation Army (ELN)

Aka ELN; Ejército de Liberación Nacional.

Description: The National Liberation Army (ELN) was designated as an FTO on October 8, 1997. The ELN is a Colombian Marxist-Leninist group formed in 1964. The ELN remains focused on attacking the security services and economic infrastructure – in particular oil and gas pipelines and electricity pylons – and on extorting foreign and local companies and commits crimes and acts of terror throughout the country, including violence against civilian populations in Colombia and Venezuela

Activities: The ELN continued to target Colombia’s infrastructure, particularly oil pipelines. The ELN also launched mortars at police stations and the military; placed explosive devices near roads; and engaged in sniper attacks, roadblocks, and ambushes. Additionally, the ELN continued to kidnap civilians and members of the security services.

Throughout 2017, the Government of Colombia and the ELN conducted peace talks but did not ultimately reach an agreement. Peace talks were intermittent throughout 2018 after being suspended in January following a series of ELN bombings that killed several police officers and injured dozens more. The government ended talks following a January 2019 vehicle-borne improvised explosive device attack by the ELN on the General Santander National Police Academy. The attack was the deadliest Bogotá had experienced in years, killing 22 police cadets and injuring 87 more. Colombian officials also attributed a number of oil pipeline bombings to the ELN in 2019.

Strength: ELN consists of about 3,000 armed combatants.

Location/Area of Operation: Colombia and Venezuela

Funding and External Aid: The ELN draws its funding from the illicit narcotics trade, extortion of oil and gas companies and landowners, and illegal mining in Colombia and Venezuela. Additional funds are derived from kidnapping-for-ransom payments.

ecoi.net summary:

Brief description of the National Liberation Army (Excerpt of chapter 5 of the country report on terrorism 2019)



Countries:

Colombia, Venezuela

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