

Francisco Santos Calderón Ambassador of Colombia to the United States

September 2018-Present



Francisco “Pacho” Santos Calderón is the current Ambassador of Colombia to the United States.

A journalist and human rights advocate, Santos served as Vice President of Colombia from 2002-2010. As Vice President, Santos led Colombia’s international promotion of trade, investment and tourism, and implemented policies combatting corruption, extortion and kidnapping.

Santos was Head of Debate for Colombia’s Democratic Center Party in 2017. In 2015, he ran for mayor of Bogotá on the Democratic Center Party ticket.

He has promoted democracy and civic engagement through the creation of Fundación Confianza Colombia (Trust Colombia Foundation).

In 1990, Santos was kidnapped by the Medellín Cartel, led by narco trafficker Pablo Escobar. He was released after eight months in captivity and went on to create the world’s first non-governmental organization (NGO) dedicated to fighting kidnapping, Fundación País Libre (Free Country Foundation). Santos also promoted the Anti-Kidnapping Statute, the only law enacted by public petition via signature collection in Colombia.

Due to threats from the guerrilla group the Revolutionary Armed Forces of Colombia (FARC), Santos was forced to leave Colombia between 2000 and 2002. He lived in Madrid, Spain for two years, where he worked at *El País*, the most prominent newspaper in Spain.

In the 1980s, he held several editorial positions at Colombia’s major newspaper, *El Tiempo*, including night Editor-in-Chief. Santos also taught journalism and international relations at Universidad Central, Universidad Javeriana and Universidad de Bogotá Jorge Tadeo Lozano, among others.

Santos completed his studies in the United States at the University of Kansas at Lawrence and at the University of Texas at Austin, earning degrees in Journalism and Latin American Studies.

He was awarded as a Nieman Fellow at Harvard University and won the Paul Harris Medal in 1993, the highest distinction given by Rotary International.

Born October 14, 1961 in Bogotá, Santos is married to María Victoria Garcia. Together, they have four children: Benjamin, Gabriel, Carmen and Pedro.