

Ingrid Betancourt Freed at last!

by Michelle K. Beckett



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French-Colombian politician Ingrid Betancourt and 14 other hostages flew to freedom in a helicopter after rebels holding them were tricked into handing them over.

Ms. Betancourt was kidnapped on 23 February 2002 by a group of rebels in a region of southern Colombia controlled by the Farc (Revolutionary Armed Forces of Colombia). The Farc has been fighting to overthrow the Colombian government for 40 years, and Ms Betancourt was their highest profile captive.

On 2 July 2008, after being held for more than six years, Ms. Betancourt was finally freed from her jungle prison along with 14 other hostages in a daring rescue by Colombian forces.

When the hostages were told that they were free, "the helicopter almost fell from the sky because we all jumped, shouted, cried and embraced," Ms. Betancourt said. "We couldn't believe it," she added.

She showed her ordeal didn't diminish her political ambition: "I continue to aspire to serve Colombia as president."