

DDR AND CHILD SOLDIER ISSUES

A MONTHLY REVIEW
MARCH 2017

USAID supports the International Organization for Migration (IOM) in Colombia through the **Recruitment Prevention and Reintegration (RPR) Program**. The RPR Program provides institutional strengthening for the Government of Colombia (GOC) to support legal, social and economic reintegration services to demobilized adults and disengaged children, as well as to prevent new recruitment.

The GOC supports demobilized adults through its **Colombian Reintegration Agency (ACR)**. The DDR initiatives of the ACR aim to fulfill the following objectives: 1) Create conditions for demobilized ex-combatants to become independent citizens, 2) Strengthen socio-economic conditions in receptor communities, and 3) Promote reconciliation.

Children and adolescents who disengage from illegal armed groups, recognized as victims, receive special attention through programs and policies led by the **Colombian Family Welfare Institute (ICBF)** through its Specialized Assistance Program, which aims to reestablish and guarantee rights with special emphasis on protection, education and health.

This monthly review, produced by IOM, provides a summary of news related to disarmament, demobilization and reintegration (DDR) in Colombia, along with statistics on ex-combatant adults and disengaged children.

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KEY DEVELOPMENTS

GOC and FARC-EP leaders meet to review the first 100 days

On Sunday, March 26th, President Juan Manuel Santos met with members of the FARC-EP leadership in Cartagena to review the first 100 days of the implementation of the final peace accord. Notable challenges in execution since D-Day (December 1, 2016) have included security guarantee provision, transition to legality, and the construction of the transitional zones and camps. The GOC committed to delivering the totality of all infrastructure supplies to all transitional zones, including the construction of the reception areas, in April.¹

After stalling, Congress votes YES on the Special Jurisdiction for Peace transitional justice mechanism

After strategic stalling and absenteeism tactics by the opposition during the first week of the month, Congress finally passed the JEP on Monday, March 13th with 61 votes in favor of the transitional justice mechanism designed to process FARC-EP members, members of the Public Forces, and any third party individuals charged with offenses related to the conflict. It passed only after the congressional deliberations resulted in 83 modifications to the original document.²

Constitutional Court approves popular referendum, overturns decree

On Thursday, March 9th, the Constitutional Court approved by a slight margin (5 to 4) the process that Congress used to pass the final set of peace accords following the October 2nd NO outcome in the plebiscite. However, in the same session, the Court overruled in a vote of 6 to 3 the first of the presidential decrees that Santos had issued to implement the accords: Decree 2204 (December 30, 2016) had moved the Agency for Land Renovation to the Administrative Department of the Presidency from its previous assignment within the Ministry of Agriculture. The Court noted that, while Legislative Act 01 of 2016 does grant extraordinary powers to the President for the implementation of the accords, the use of such powers must be sufficiently justified due to the significant decrease in spaces for deliberation when they are applied. In this case, the Court deemed that this requirement had not been met.³

FARC-EP militia members turn themselves in

On Monday, March 27th, 117 presumed FARC-EP militia members – among them, 17 minors - turned themselves and a small weapons cache in to authorities in Tumaco, Nariño, a major port for cocaine exiting the country. The Colombian Army announced that these militia members were part of the support network for the *Mobile Column Daniel Aldana* of the FARC-EP. This coordinated process resulted from a collaboration between the National Police, the Office of the Ombudsman, the International Committee of the Red Cross, the Catholic Church, and the Human Rights Office, in which they approached various militias in the barrios of Tumaco to arrange the handover.⁴

¹ <http://www.eltiempo.com/politica/proceso-de-paz/juan-manuel-santos-se-reunio-en-cartagena-con-las-farc-71588>

² <http://www.elespectador.com/noticias/politica/congreso-le-dijo-si-la-jurisdiccion-especial-para-la-paz-articulo-684406>

³ <http://www.elcolombiano.com/colombia/acuerdos-de-gobierno-y-farc/corte-constitucional-tumbo-primer-decreto-de-paz-firmado-via-fast-track-NX6123186>

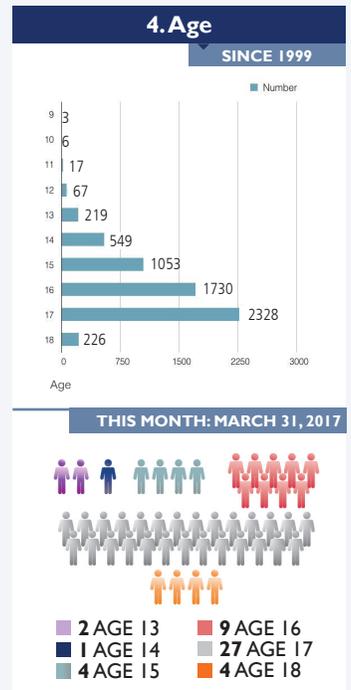
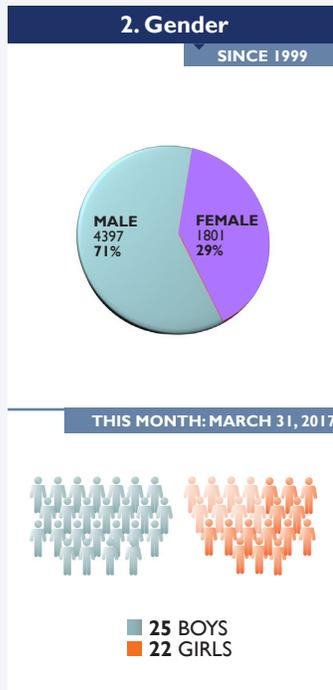
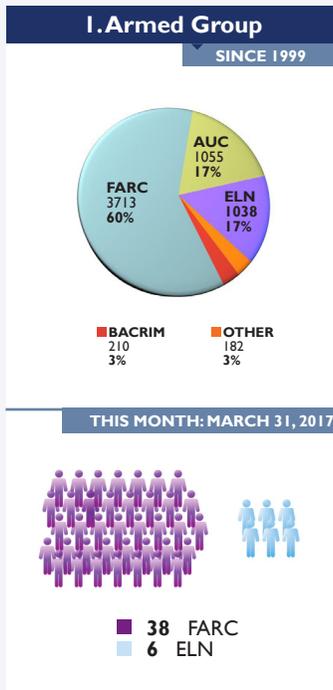
⁴ <http://www.semana.com/nacion/articulo/117-milicianos-de-las-farc-se-entregan-al-ejercito/519928>

FIGURES & TRENDS

* These data are estimates based on the information available

Disengaged Children & Adolescents

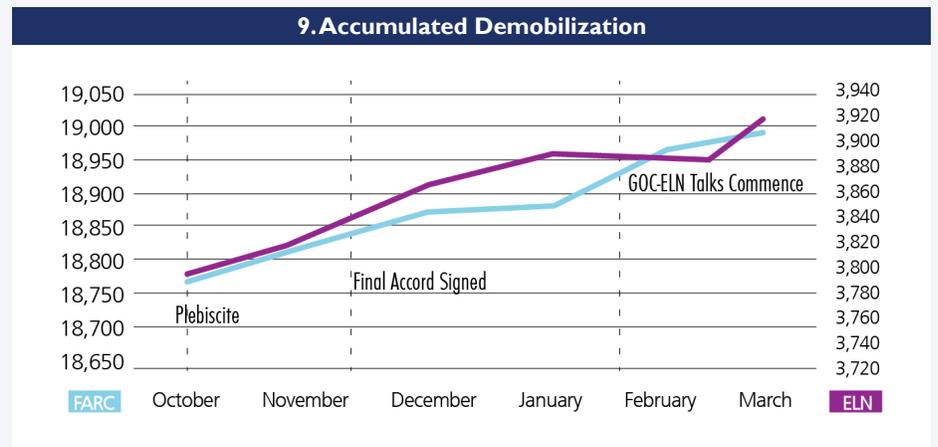
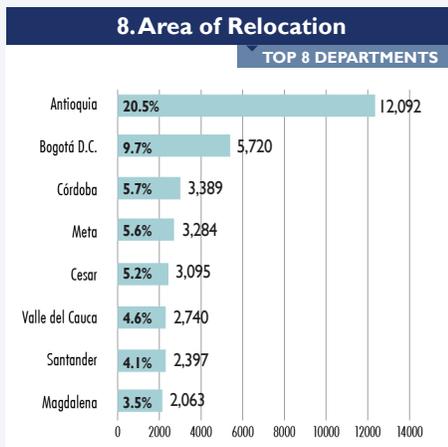
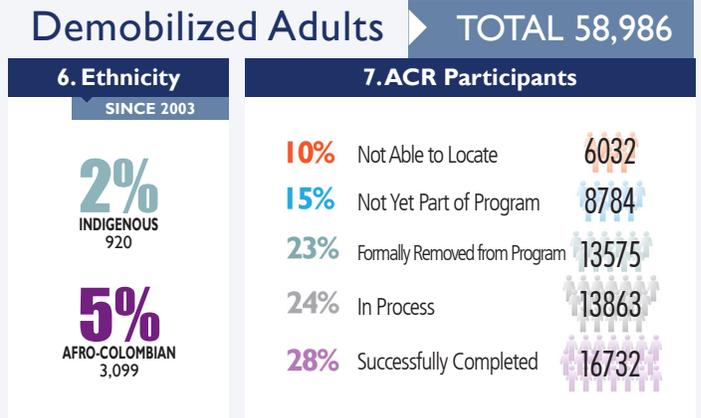
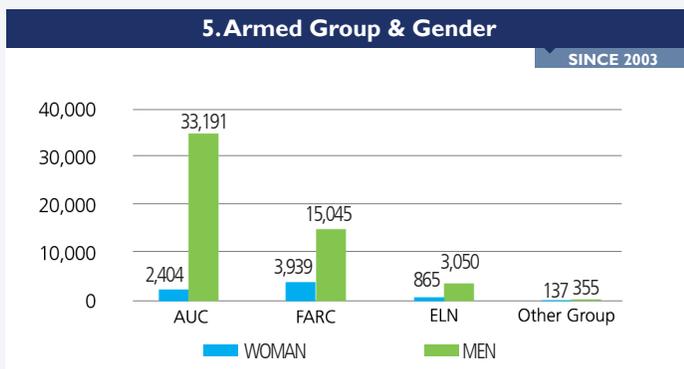
TOTAL 6,198



5:Victims of Forced Recruitment

Total 8,155** / Month to month 57**

** Number of cases of child recruitment reported to the Victims Unit.



Data up to January 31, 2017

Figure 1: Total number of disengaged minors grouped by gender. Boys have historically been more frequently recruited than girls.

Figure 2: Numbers of minors who disengaged from each IAG. Most disengaged children were recruited by the FARC.

Figure 3: Total number of disengaged minors by ethnicity. Indigenous groups are disproportionately affected by recruitment.

Figure 4: Numbers of disengaged minors in each age group. The average age of recruitment is between 15 and 18 years old. Sources for figures 1-4: ICBF Database, Unified Beneficiary Registry (RUJ)

Figure 5: Total number of male and female adults who demobilized from each IAG. The AUC had the lowest proportion of women.

Figure 6: The eight departments to which the highest numbers of ex-combatants

relocate for their reintegration process.

Figure 7: Demobilized Adults

Figure 8: Total number of demobilized adults by ethnicity. Sources for figures 5-7: ICBF Database and ACR Reintegration Information System (SIR)

Figure 9: Accumulated Demobilization

During March, six waves of minors exit FARC-EP camps

Leading up to the first round of minors exiting the FARC-EP transitional zones in 2017, the **National Reincorporation Council (CNR) released its third Communiqué**. In the document, the CNR noted that there were advances in the plans for releasing minors, that the minors would be brought to transitional zones, and that they would begin the “Differential life path” program which re-establishes their rights, provides comprehensive reparations, and facilitates reincorporation and social inclusion. The CNR also called on broader society to be willing to support the youth in their transition, and to respect their anonymity given their minor status.⁵ After a first set of minors exiting FARC-EP camps on March 4th,⁶ five more waves of adolescents emerged on March 10th (six children),⁷ March 15th (two),⁸ March 27th (seven),⁹ March 29th (1),¹⁰ and March 31st (5).¹¹ The transfers were coordinated by the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC), with support of IOM, UNICEF, the National Council for Reincorporation (NCR), and the Presidential Council for Human Rights.

FARC-EP Dissidents: Receive blow in Guaviare, Demobilize in Caquetá

In early March, the Colombian Army, Air Force, and National Police mounted an operation against FARC-EP dissidents – led by Iván Mordisco (alias) – in the Miraflores rural area of Guaviare (La Union hamlet). The ground troops were preceded by an aerial bombardment by the military, and the camp contained a small-scale explosive manufacturing site, information center, and food warehouse, which the troops dismantled. They also immobilized a key narco-trafficking route often used by the guerrilla leader to control the movement of illicit crops and subsequent cocaine production throughout Guaviare and Guainía. Iván Mordisco managed to escape along with thirty of his guerrillas, but the Armed Forces continue their offensive against him and other dissidents. At the time, the Army estimated 6% of the FARC-EP membership as dissident rebels (roughly 500 individuals) among the 1st, 7th, 14th, 44th, and Acacio Medina fronts.¹² Ten days later, Carlos Carvajal Torres (a.k.a. ‘Mojoso’), commander of a dissident group of guerrillas in the department of Caquetá, turned himself and his men over to authorities.¹³

IMPLEMENTATION OF THE PEACE ACCORDS

FARC-EP

Transitional zones experience significant construction delays

The High Commissioner for Peace, Sergio Jaramillo, and Transitional Zone Manager, Carlos Córdoba and Commander of the Strategic Transitional Command, General Javier Flórez cited three reasons for the slow construction of the transitional zones: 1) some zones were identified very late in the planning period; 2) some are very difficult to access; and 3) in many of the camps, the FARC commanders are obstructing development of the camps through, primarily, not completing obligations on their end and requesting materials and structures that were not previously agreed upon between the two sides. In turn, Rodrigo Londoño (ex-alias “Timochenko”) cited a lack of GOC commitment to the process as the principal reason for the delays in constructing the transitional zones.¹⁴

Registry and laying down of arms advances

On March 1st, the United Nations began registering FARC-EP weapons in all 26 of the transitional zones. The first arms registered were those already in the possession of each member of the FARC-EP. The United Nations also asserted that they still plan to complete the process of receiving FARC-EP arms by the end of May, which would conform to the D+180 original timeline (“D-Day” being December 1, 2016).¹⁵ President Juan Manuel Santos announced Friday, March 17th, that the FARC-EP arms inventory comprised 14,000 arms, roughly 11,000 of which are rifles.¹⁶ The Mission also received 140 individual arms from members of the FARC-EP who belong to the Monitoring & Verification Mechanism.¹⁷ By the last week of March, the FARC-EP laid down 350-400 arms and 85% of all of their arms had been registered. The next step is to collect the arms that remain in the caches where the FARC-EP were previously operating, which presents unique logistical challenges due to their remote locations.¹⁸

⁵ <http://www.derechoshumanos.gov.co/Prensa/2017/Paginas/comunicado-3-consejo-nacional-de-reincorporacion.aspx>

⁶ <https://www.icrc.org/es/document/colombia-primera-salida-de-menores-de-edad-de-las-farc-en-zona-veredal>

⁷ <https://www.icrc.org/es/document/colombia-avanza-salida-de-menores-de-edad-de-las-farc-en-zonas-veredales>

⁸ <https://www.icrc.org/es/document/colombia-tercer-grupo-de-menores-de-edad-salio-hoy-de-zona-veredal>

⁹ <https://www.icrc.org/es/document/colombia-siete-menores-de-edad-salen-de-zonas-veredales>

¹⁰ <https://www.icrc.org/es/document/colombia-un-menor-de-edad-salio-hoy-de-zona-veredal>

¹¹ <https://www.icrc.org/es/document/colombia-entrega-de-menores-de-edad-que-salen-de-las-farc-de-zonas-veredales>

¹² <http://www.elcolombiano.com/colombia/golpe-a-la-disidencia-de-las-farc-en-el-guaviare-LA6121638>

¹³ <http://www.elcolombiano.com/colombia/paz-y-derechos-humanos/jefe-de-disidencia-de-las-farc-en-caqueta-se-entrego-a-las-autoridades-BA6174102>

¹⁴ <http://www.eltiempo.com/politica/proceso-de-paz/balace-del-gobierno-sobre-las-zonas-veredales-de-las-farc/16835505>

¹⁵ <https://colombia.unmissions.org/misi%C3%B3n-de-la-onu-empieza-ma%C3%B1ana-verificar-la-dejaci%C3%B3n-de-armas>

¹⁶ <http://www.elespectador.com/noticias/paz/14000-armas-de-las-farc-serian-entregadas-la-onu-proximamente-articulo-685074>

¹⁷ <https://colombia.unmissions.org/comunicado-de-prensa-misi%C3%B3n-de-la-onu-recibe-140-armas-de-integrantes-de-las-farc-ep-en-el-mmv>

¹⁸ <http://www.eltiempo.com/politica/proceso-de-paz/onu-dice-que-farc-entregaran-400-armas-esta-semana-72866>

Guerrillas receive health coverage

The Ministry of Health and Education along with the Presidential Council for Early Childhood visited a transitional zone in Putumayo on the 11th and 12th of March. They announced that 7,300 FARC-EP guerrillas have been registered in the national health care system. Since the FARC-EP have begun to gather in transitional zones, the Ministry of Health and Education has conducted 40 health fairs and seen 5,633 individual patients.¹⁹

Report back on the first trimester of activities of the Monitoring & Verification Mechanism

Secretary General of the United Nations, Antonio Guterres, reported on the first trimester of activities of the UN Verification Mission in Colombia. Several contextual and procedural themes emerged in his address: 1) an assessment of a political environment increasingly shaped by the 2018 presidential election dynamics; 2) lagging implementation of the Amnesty Law; and 3) successes with gathering all FARC-EP members in transitional zones, beginning the laying down of arms, and UN Mission responses to specific incidents in the field. Guterres also noted that the Mission has formally identified seven failures to comply with the ceasefire agreement along with eight minor violations and two major violations of the same. In closing, he warned of high levels of insecurity around the transitional zones, bolstered by deeply-rooted illicit conflict economies.²⁰

PEACE PROCESSES

ELN peace talks continue with promise of joint demining initiative despite ongoing armed confrontations

ELN

An attack on Saturday, March 25th, in the department of Chocó left five people dead, one minor hospitalized and roughly 50 people displaced. Attorney General Néstor Humberto Martínez published through his Twitter account a picture of an ELN flag at the scene. For their part, the ELN responded through their own Twitter account that the evidence presented was falsified and that they were not responsible for the attacks.²¹ The following Thursday March 30th, chief guerrilla negotiator Pablo Beltrán announced along with the GoC that a pact to remove all antipersonnel mines would emerge on April 7th.²² Following, in the now all too familiar juxtaposition of slowly advancing peace talks and ongoing armed encounters between the GoC and the ELN, an air attack by the Colombian Air Force in the department of Norte de Santander, resulted in the deaths of a reported 7-10 members of the guerrilla group. The victims of the attack were alleged to have belonged to the particular unit responsible for the killing of a patrol officer, an attack against the caravan of the governor of the department, and an attempted kidnapping of Edwin González, the mayor of El Carmen. Five long-range weapons, one rifle, six hand guns, six hand grenades, and other various munitions and explosives - including 70 PVC antipersonnel mines - were also decommissioned in the operation.²³

INTERNATIONAL SUPPORT

U.N. Environment completes 12-day mission for post-conflict development in Colombia

Colombian President Juan Manuel Santos invited a multi-disciplinary team of experts from UN Environment to Colombia in order to assess the existing and potential environmental impacts from illegal extraction of minerals, deforestation, and mercury pollution. The mission identified priority actions towards mitigating the health and livelihood risks from the environmental damage in priority areas for post-conflict development. Rebel groups' use of hazardous chemicals such as mercury, and their extraction of minerals, other natural resources, illicit crops, and deforestation practices have negatively impacted large swathes of Colombia's territories. The UN Environment team held a series of meetings with approximately 150 stakeholders and conducted field visits in Chocó and Antioquia, along with aerial visits to the Quito and Atrato rivers.²⁴

¹⁹ <http://confidencialcolombia.com/es/1/actualidad/30024/7300-guerrilleros-de-las-Farc-ya-se-encuentran-registrados-en-la-Nueva-EPS-Guerrilleros-Salud-Nueva-EPS.htm>

²⁰ <http://www.eltiempo.com/politica/proceso-de-paz/informe-de-onu-sobre-logros-y-desafios-del-proceso-de-paz-con-farc-71424>

²¹ <http://www.semana.com/nacion/articulo/fiscalia-pide-al-eln-sinceridad-en-dialogos-de-paz/519841>

²² <http://www.elespectador.com/noticias/paz/acuerdo-de-desminado-entre-gobierno-y-eln-se-conocera-el-proximo-7-de-abril-articulo-687053>

²³ <http://www.fuerzasmilitares.org/notas/colombia/fuerza-aerea/7498-eln-fac.html>

²⁴ <http://web.unep.org/newscentre/un-environment-will-support-environmental-recovery-and-peacebuilding-post-conflict-development>

Cuba offers 1,000 scholarships for ex-FARC-EP to study medicine

Cuban ambassador to Colombia José Luis Ponce Caballero announced that the Cuban government of Raúl Castro will be offering 1,000 scholarships to ex-FARC-EP members to attend medical school in Cuba as part of the island country's contribution to the Colombian post-conflict process. The first 200 former guerrillas are scheduled to begin classes in September of this year. The program does not require that the participants have their grade school diploma; Ambassador Ponce Caballero noted that their experience in the war on matters of health is sufficient to prepare them for beginning their studies. Originally, the one thousand scholarships were divided evenly between the GoC (500) and the FARC-EP (500), but Post-conflict Minister Rafael Pardo informed the Cuban government that the 500 for the GoC would also go to FARC-EP members.²⁵

INSTITUTIONAL PROGRESS

Incarcerated members of public forces seek reprieve through JEP

Incarcerated members of the public forces who have served at least five years of their sentence, and who were found guilty of crimes within the framework of the armed conflict may be eligible for early release as long as they were not convicted of crimes covered in the Rome Statute or under International Humanitarian Law, such as rape, forced disappearance, and crimes against humanity, among others. On Friday, March 17th, Minister of Defense, Luis Carlos Villegas, signed a packet of 817 petitions for release to the Special Jurisdiction for Peace (JEP). The logic behind these releases is to create parity between members of the FARC-EP who may benefit from amnesties and pardons, and those of the Colombian public forces.²⁶

DIVERSITY ISSUES

Sixth Regional Conference of the Indigenous Guards addresses implementation priorities

This conference occurred in the mountainous region of Cauca and included Indigenous Guards from the Nasa, Kisgo, Ambalo, Polindars, Kokonucos, and Yanaconas peoples. A key purpose of the event was to examine the different perspectives of the indigenous movement within the new national political climate, inextricably linked to the peace negotiations and final set of accords signed by the GoC and the FARC-EP. In particular, the Indigenous Guards reflected on Points One (Rural Reform) and Four (Illicit Drugs) and discussed the challenges they anticipate with the implementation of these points: first, resistance by the elite few who hold the vast majority of the land in Colombia. Second, the ongoing practice of forced coca eradication in the event that collaborative substitution programs do not gain traction. They also reinforced strategies to ensure the effective implementation of the "Ethnic Chapter" of the peace accords, which, among many other things, guarantees indigenous peoples autonomous governance, previous consultation for all initiatives that would affect their land and cultures, the right to restitution for crimes committed during the armed conflict, and the protection of ancestral lands.²⁷

Female victims in Norte de Santander launch textile enterprise

The Colombian Ministry of Defense and the Governor's Office of Norte de Santander helped to both financially and technically support the launch of a textile operation employing 30 women. The women represent the Association of Zulian Women and Families (ASOFAZUL) in Zulia, Norte de Santander, which has been operating for more than 10 years. Many of the women faced significant challenges throughout the development of the project: for example, some had been displaced so many times that the Victims' Unit refused to register them again as displaced persons because they were thought to just be traveling the country. Some required as many as three appeals to finally be admitted to the Victims' Program. They have struggled against discrimination targeting the victim population - even more so for women - despite the fact that the confrontations between the FARC-EP and the paramilitaries in the Catatumbo region between 1980 and 2004 produced 66 massacres and resulted in more than 120,000 persons forcibly displaced by the violence.²⁸

²⁵ <http://colombia2020.elespectador.com/politica/mil-exguerrilleros-estudiaran-medicina-en-cuba>

²⁶ <http://www.semana.com/nacion/articulo/definicion-firma-resolucion-de-817-solicitudes-de-miembros-de-la-fuerza-publica-que-piden-libertad/518880>

²⁷ http://www.indepaz.org.co/wp-content/uploads/2017/03/Guardias-Indigenas_Fuerza-moral.pdf

²⁸ <http://colombia2020.elespectador.com/pais/mujeres-de-el-zulia-protagonistas-de-su-reparacion>

FURTHER READING

NGO Indepaz releases report on the transforming “Paramilitary Complex”

At the beginning of March, Camilo González Posso of *Indepaz* published a report that details the evolving “paramilitary complex,” which he defines as a multi-party alliance (1) that forms among organized armed groups involved in illegal businesses, *parapolitics*, or *paraeconomic* processes, (2) that requires some degree of complicity from agents of the State, and (3) that takes on public order functions from a position of criminality. The report argues that this Complex is a function of eight distinct illegal domains that, at different points in the country’s history, have had varying degrees of importance. Included in the report is an up-to-date accounting of the status of the largest paramilitary groups, including the Clan del Golfo, los Rastrojos, and Las Águilas Negras, as well as an in-depth analysis of the role of key illicit economies – narcotics trafficking and illegal mining – in sustaining these networks. The author goes on to argue that Colombia’s “new war” is that state-sponsored action against organized armed groups (OAGs), and that it may be framed as such due to the use of military force.²⁹

Organization of state land and agriculture agencies a significant challenge for implementing rural component of peace accords

This month, *VerdadAbierta.com* published an in-depth article citing the logistical and institutional challenges facing the implementation of Point 1: Rural Reform of the final set of peace accords. The article comes on the heels of the Constitutional Court’s finding last month that the Entity for Rural Agricultural Planning (UPRA), the National Land Agency (ANT), the Augustín Codazzi Geographic Institute, and the Superintendent of Notaries have all been remiss in their responsibilities to the rural inhabitants with insufficient or no lands. Already the National Plan for Clarifying and Recuperating Rural Lands is years behind schedule; without this first plan completed, it will not be possible to advance with implementing the rural reform component of the accords, which requires 3 million hectares of lands distributed for free to this population through a Land Trust within the first 10 years of accord implementation, with an additional 7 million hectares passed through formal titling processes. The challenges to realizing these linked processes are the following: 1) the decrees require effective collaboration among various state agencies, which is currently lacking; 2) existing data needed from now defunct government agency INCODER to advance is still in paper form; 3) those data provided electronically by the Superintendent of Notaries are incomplete and imprecise; 4) most of the involved agencies have delayed significantly in the realization of required processes; and 5) decentralization efforts have been ineffective, and regional presence thus lacking. Recommendations by the Public Ministry include updating the current census of untitled and unused rural lands, formalizing land titles through a process of constructing the histories of landholders up through the present, and launch pilot initiatives at the regional level rather than trying to take on the whole national project simultaneously.³⁰

²⁹ <http://colombia2020.elespectador.com/pais/las-mujeres-que-verifican-el-cese-del-fuego-con-las-farc>

³⁰ <http://www.mininterior.gov.co/sala-de-prensa/noticias/pueblos-rom-concertaran-normas-para-la-implementacion-del-acuerdo-de-paz>