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Colombian Peace Process: IOM Weekly Report

February, 2013



1. Background

On September 4, 2012, President Santos announced the signing of a General Agreement for Termination of the Conflict between the Government of Colombia and the FARC, setting in motion the fourth official peace talks with this group. The initial agenda includes: 1) rural development, 2) guarantee of functional political opposition and civic participation, 3) end of conflict (laying down arms and reintegration into civilian life); 4) drug trafficking; and 5) rights of victims. Preparatory talks started in Oslo on October 17, 2012 and substantive negotiations, in Havana, on November 19, 2012.

2. Key Developments from January 29 to February 4

Kidnapped police officers to be released

FARC announced it would release the two recently kidnapped police officers. The Minister of Defense will work with the International Red Cross to coordinate the release. FARC also expressed its willingness to release a soldier captured in combat in Policarpa, Nariño.¹

Summary of attacks: FARC and military

FARC recently carried out five notable attacks: 1) Kidnapping three engineers in Cauca (subsequently released), 2) ambushing a patrol leaving three soldiers dead in La Guajira, 3) kidnapping two policemen in El Valle (release pending), 4) five attacks on oil pipelines in Putumayo and 5) most recently (Feb 4) a school bombing in Balsillas, Caqueta. This last attack, carried out by the mobile Teófilo Forero Front led by "El Paisa", left a schoolhouse that served 60 students destroyed.²

The military reported the death of the head of FARC's Front 5, Luis Carlos Durango Úsuga, alias "Jacobo Arango" and five other guerrillas as a result of an Air Force strike in Tierralta, Córdoba. Police Chief General Jose Roberto Leon Riano said Arango was the "right hand" of Ivan Marquez, the current chief FARC negotiator in Havana.³

845 FARC members "neutralized" since peace talks began

¹ <http://www.elespectador.com/noticias/paz/articulo-402641-santos-entrego-instrucciones-al-mindefensa-liberacion-de-dos-pol>

² <http://www.radionacionaldecolombia.gov.co/component/topcontent/article/1-noticias/32994-farc-destruyeron-escuela-en-balsillas-caqueta>

³ http://www.eltiempo.com/justicia/golpe-a-frente-a-5-de-las-farc_12572048-4 <http://www.vanguardia.com/actualidad/colombia/193184-nuevo-atentado-contraleoducto-en-putumayo>



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According to Defense Minister Juan Carlos Pinzon, since peace talks began 426 FARC have been captured (including 4 commanders), 320 voluntarily demobilized and 99 killed.⁴

3. Negotiations & Agenda

FARC set out disappointments

On February 1, FARC listed unsuccessful petitions made to the GOC, such as that: 1) negotiations be held in Colombia, 2) Simon Trinidad participate at the negotiating table, 3) a bilateral ceasefire be established, 4) a treaty to regulate the conflict be signed, 5) the ministers of Agriculture and Defense and General Navas participate in negotiations, 6) civil society permanently participate in the negotiations, and 7) a Constituent Assembly be held to validate the Agreements.⁵

FARC to continue “kidnapping” police and military

FARC emphasized it reserves “the right to capture members of security forces who have surrendered in combat as prisoners of war, as occurs in any conflict in the world,”⁶ and that this does not signify any setback in the peace talks.⁷

GOC upset over FARC’s Uribe slander

The GOC disapproved of the FARC’s referring to former President Uribe as a member of the mafia and a paramilitary. The name-calling was spurred by Uribe posting photographs on Twitter of two police officers killed by FARC.⁸

(Anti) Peace process becomes election platform

The Democratic Center Party—led by former President Uribe—will use their opposition to the peace process as part of their election platform. Uribe drew criticism from the GOC and media community for using the above mentioned photos for political gain.⁹

4. Other Voices

FARC’s use of child soldiers resurfaces

A recent article by La Silla Vacía leaves little doubt regarding FARC’s use of child soldiers, citing cases in Chocó, Cauca, Caquetá and Putumayo. Last year the UN reported children in Colombia were at risk of recruitment as early as eight years old.¹⁰

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http://www.elcolombiano.com/BancoConocimiento/M/mindefensa_afirmo_que_845_guerrilleros_han_sido_neutralizados_desde_el_inicio_de_los_dialogos/mindefensa_afirmo_que_845_guerrilleros_han_sido_neutralizados_desde_el_inicio_de_los_dialogos.asp

⁵ <http://farccom.blogspot.com/>

⁶ <http://www.elespectador.com/noticias/paz/articulo-401866-farc-afirman-seguiran-secuestrando-policias-y-militares>

⁷ <http://colombiareports.com/colombia-news/peace-talks.html>

⁸ http://www.eltiempo.com/politica/gobierno-rechaza-criticas-de-las-farc-a-lvaro-uribe-_12573222-4

⁹ <http://www.eltiempo.com/archivo/documento/MAM-5974684>



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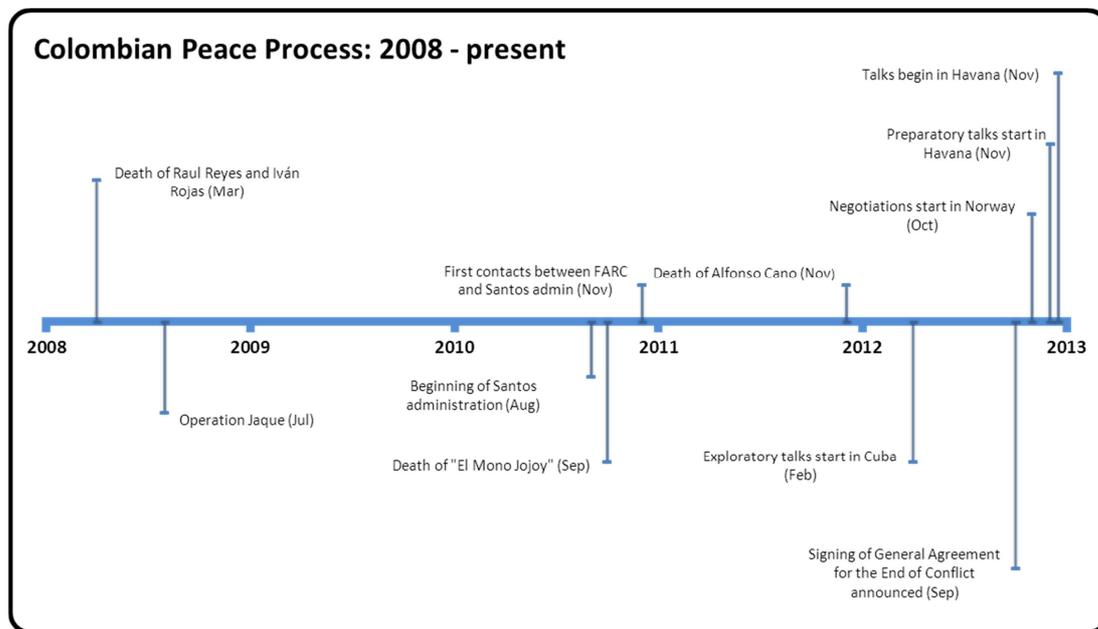
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5. International Context

Bolivia and Nicaragua to FARC: Stop

Presidents Morales and Ortega, of Bolivia and Nicaragua, respectively, asked FARC to end the conflict during the Community of Latin American and Caribbean States Summit in Chile.¹¹

6. Timeline



7. Further Reading

Human Rights Watch Director gives interview on the Colombia peace process

In an interview with *El Espectador*, Human Rights Watch Director José Miguel Vivanco spoke on the Colombian peace process, accentuating topics such as kidnappings and International Humanitarian Law. His overall message is to avoid renouncing justice to achieve peace.¹²

Santos aligns national policy to international anti-drug discourse

¹⁰ <http://www.lasillavacia.com/historia/la-verdad-que-deben-las-farc-siguen-reclutando-menores-41209>

¹¹ <http://m.eltiempo.com/politica/evo-morales-y-daniel-ortega-le-pideron-a-farc-poner-fin-al-conflicto/12559475/1/home>

¹² <http://www.elespectador.com/noticias/paz/articulo-402674-paz-no-cualquier-precio>



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An analysis by La Silla Vacía looks at how Santos has brought his international anti-drug policy discourse—where he has repeatedly asked the international community to rethink current policies—to Colombia through the creation of a new drug agency.¹³

¹³ <http://www.lasillavacia.com/historia/santos-comienza-aterrizar-su-discurso-internacional-sobre-las-drogas-41218>



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2. Key Developments from February 5 to February 11

Legal framework for peace on hold

Congress announced on February 7 that regulations to flesh out the legal framework for peace will not be developed until a peace agreement is signed.¹⁴

Car bomb explodes in Cauca

A car bomb detonated in a rural area of Caloto, Cauca, on February 5. According to an army general, the bomb was detected but could not be removed from a populated area before it exploded. One civilian and one soldier were killed. The incident led to clashes between the army and FARC nearby.¹⁵

Three ELN fighters killed and one FARC member captured

As part of the military “Blade of Honor” campaign, three ELN fighters from the Tarazá Heroes Front were killed, and José Antonio Sánchez Méndez, alias “Joselito”, leader of the Ismael Ayala Company of FARC’s Eastern Bloc, was captured.^{16,17}

3. Negotiations & Agenda

GOC: Negotiations going well

President Santos and GOC lead negotiator, Humberto de la Calle, confirmed that the pace of the negotiations has accelerated, with Santos believing peace can be achieved within the year.¹⁸ De la

¹⁴ http://www.eltiempo.com/politica/marco-para-la-paz-roy-ba_12583011-4

¹⁵ http://www.eltiempo.com/colombia/occidente/carro-bomba-en-cauca-deja-dos-muertos_12579603-4

¹⁶ http://www.elcolombiano.com/BancoConocimiento/A/abatidos_tres_guerrilleros_del_eln/abatidos_tres_guerrilleros_del_eln.asp

¹⁷

http://www.elcolombiano.com/BancoConocimiento/C/capturado_integrante_del_estado_mayor_del_frente_53_de_las_farc/capturado_integrante_del_estado_mayor_del_frente_53_de_las_farc.asp

¹⁸ <http://www.elespectador.com/noticias/politica/audio-403055-vamos-bien-cuba-nuestras-conversaciones-farc-santos>



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Calle remarked on the divergence between FARC's public discourse and their behavior at the negotiation table.¹⁹

FARC confirms progress on the first agenda item

Lead FARC negotiator, Iván Márquez, asserted advances in the rural development item, especially in "providing progressive land access for those who have no or insufficient access."²⁰

FARC proposes minimum political recognition and rights of peasants

On February 9, FARC emitted a statement with 10 proposals for the political recognition and rights of farmers and rural communities, building on their previously released rural development proposal. These proposals are summarized at the end of this report.²¹

Attorney General: Not all guerrilla fighters allowed in political sphere

The Attorney General noted that guerrillas who have committed crimes against humanity will not have a right to political participation, explaining that there are constitutional constraints that limit their political rights and render them ineligible for amnesties or pardons.²²

FARC and new GOC drug policy on common ground

A new drug policy slated to be submitted to Congress in March overlaps with some of FARC's rural development proposals. The Deputy Minister for Criminal Policy and Restorative Justice, Farid Benavides, labeled the overlap coincidental. Analysts highlight five points of agreement: 1) consideration of a more progressive drug policy, 2) the possibility of legalizing illicit crops, 3) restrictions on spraying, 4) voluntary manual eradication, and 5) mechanisms for FARC collaborators to avoid incarceration.²³

FARC questions GOC prison conditions

FARC negotiator, Jesus Santrich, derided the GOC for its prisons, claiming that conditions under which the FARC are held are "inhumane."²⁴

Context note: Over 11,000 prisoners in 21 jails across Colombia went on a hunger strike in August 2012 in response to "inhumane conditions."²⁵

¹⁹ http://www.eltiempo.com/politica/proceso-de-paz-gobierno-convencido-de-que-no-se-esta-desviando-el-camino_12588002-4

²⁰ http://www.eltiempo.com/politica/proceso-de-paz-gobierno-convencido-de-que-no-se-esta-desviando-el-camino_12588002-4

²¹ <http://www.cedema.org/ver.php?id=5449>

²² <http://www.semana.com/nacion/articulo/la-advertencia-del-procurador-para-paz/331984-3>

²³ <http://www.lasillavacia.com/historia/asi-encajaria-el-estatuto-de-drogas-del-gobierno-con-propuestas-de-farc-41328>

²⁴ <http://www.wradio.com.co/noticias/actualidad/las-farc-dicen-que-sus-rehenes-están-mejor-que-los-presos-en-carceles-de-colombia/20130208/nota/1838850.aspx>

²⁵ <http://libcom.org/blog/11000-columbian-prisoners-hunger-strike-better-conditions-17082012>



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4. International Context

Great Britain supports peace process

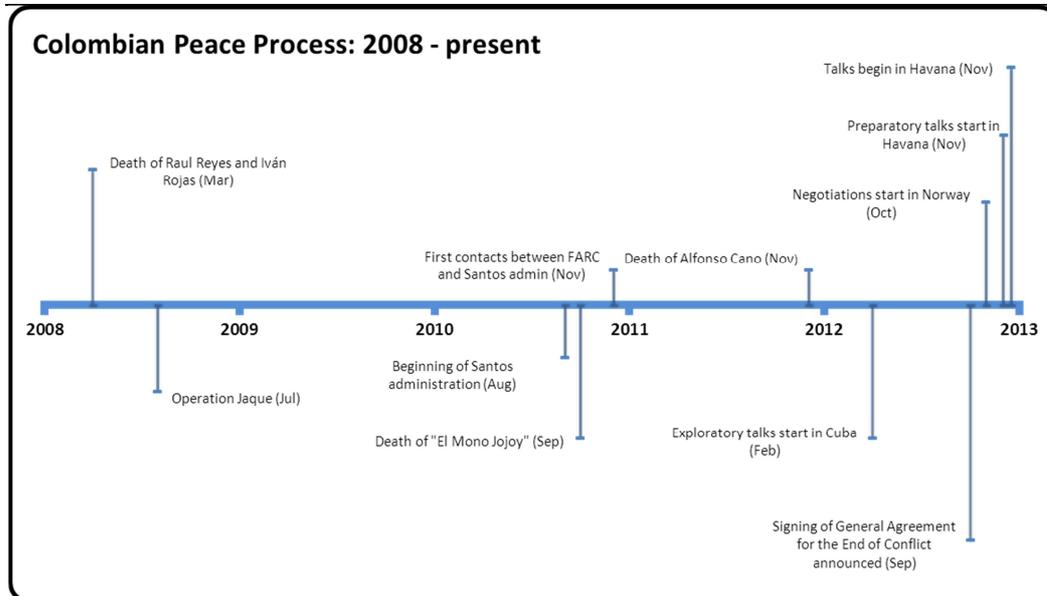
The new British Ambassador to Colombia, Lindsay Croisdale-Appleby, announced relations would be strengthened between the two countries and confirmed Great Britain's full support to the peace process.²⁶

ICRC President visits Colombia

President of ICRC, Peter Maurer, arrived in Colombia on February 10 as part of his first visit to Latin American since he was named president in July last year. Maurer commented on the humanitarian consequences of Colombia's prolonged conflict and underlined ICRC's commitment to neutrality and impartiality. The ICRC is ready to assist in the handover of the two police hostages held by FARC.²⁷

Context note: The ICRC expressed "serious concern" over GOC's improper use of the ICRC emblem in a 2008 hostage release operation that freed 15 hostages (including French-Colombian Ingrid Betancourt and three U.S. military advisors).²⁸

5. Timeline



²⁶ http://www.eltiempo.com/politica/embajador-britanico-opina-sobre-el-proceso-de-paz-en-colombia_12586015-4

²⁷ <http://www.elespectador.com/noticias/paz/articulo-403793-cicr-preocupado-prolongacion-del-conflicto-armado>

²⁸ <http://www.icrc.org/eng/resources/documents/news-release/2009-and-earlier/colombia-news-060808.htm>



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6. Further Reading

Talks timeline

El Tiempo released an “infographic” on the peace process timeline:

<http://www.eltiempo.com/Multimedia/especiales/proceso-de-paz-colombia/>

Summary of FARC’s minimum political recognition and rights of farmers proposal

1. Political recognition of rural communities based on the UN International Declaration on the Rights of the Rural Poor (presented 2012) and the ILO Rural Workers’ Organizations Convention (1975)
2. Institutionalize different forms of rural, Indigenous and Afro-Colombian land rights. Together with other land arrangements, Rural Reserve Zones or Rural Food Production Zones will be put in place
3. Institutionalize autonomy (political, administrative, economic, social, environmental, cultural and the administration of justice through community justice mechanisms) for rural communities
4. Recognize rural communities as key actors in protecting fragile ecosystems and natural resources for socio-environmental sustainability and food sovereignty
5. Properly and adequately finance rural communities and regions
6. Provide rural populations with the means of production, technical assistance and credit resources to ensure socio-environmental and economic sustainability
7. Recognize and promote at least nine million hectares of Rural Reserve Zones for socio-environmental protection, food production and diverse forms of rural organization
8. Establish at least seven million hectares as Rural Food Production Zones
9. Promote food self-sufficiency in rural areas and foster trade between rural communities
10. Support small and medium rural economies and protect them from violence, land dispossession and unwanted changes in land use



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2. Key Developments from February 12 to February 18

6th round of talks begins

After a break the 6th round of talks began on Monday, February 18 and will last 11 days.²⁹

FARC releases three kidnapped soldiers

On February 16, FARC released three soldiers to a humanitarian commission composed of the ICRC and Colombian NGO Colombianos y Colombianas por la Paz.^{30,31}

Over 1,000 guerilla fighters “neutralized” since peace talks begin

A Ministry of Defense report revealed the following statistics since peace talks began: 982 guerillas captured, 320 demobilized and 122 killed (total: 1,492 “neutralized”). Last year saw a 17% increase in these numbers for FARC and 22% increase for ELN compared to 2011.³²

Context notes:

As to FARC-led violence, Santos noted that FARC attack statistics are similar between 2011 and 2012, but that media outlets have been more active in 2012, causing more “noise” in the discussion. He also noted that a larger number of FARC demobilizations took place in the year and the armed forces suffered fewer losses.³³

In 2002 FARC had 20,000 fighters and ELN 4,000. They currently have 8,000 and 1,500, respectively.

67% of Colombians *do not* believe peace will follow a peace agreement

²⁹ <http://www.caracol.com.co/noticias/actualidad/bajo-tension-por-orden-publico-comenzara-la-sexta-ronda-de-dialogos-en-la-habana/20130217/nota/1843666.aspx>

³⁰ http://www.eltiempo.com/colombia/cali/ARTICULO-WEB-NEW_NOTA_INTERIOR-12599828.html

³¹ <http://www.elespectador.com/noticias/paz/articulo-405248-policias-liberados-farc-estables-aun-hospitalizados>

³² <http://www.elespectador.com/noticias/paz/articulo-405021-mas-de-mil-guerrilleros-fuera-de-combate-instalacion-de-dialogos>

³³ <http://www.elespectador.com/noticias/nacional/articulo-404241-farc-llegaron-su-maxima-capacidad-presidente-santos>



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A survey (sample size: 1,000) carried out in major Colombian cities in February showed 67% do not believe a peace agreement will lead to peace and only 20% believe it will. 52% are disappointed with how Santos is managing the negotiations.³⁴

3. Negotiations & Agenda

GOC negotiators meet with labor representatives and the private sector

Lead GOC negotiator, Humberto De la Calle, and High Commissioner for Peace, Sergio Jaramillo, met with the Trade Union Council and the National Business Association of Colombia to bring the private sector up to date on the negotiations.^{35,36}

Regional working groups to begin second round

A starting point was established for the second round of regional working groups in a meeting with the High Commission for Peace and the House and Senate Peace Commissions. This time civil society will be able to present proposals on the victims agenda item. Like the first round, the working groups will be supported by the United Nations and will take place in: Sincelejo, Barranquilla, Medellín, Bucaramanga, Bogotá, Popayán, Pasto, Villavicencio and Florencia.³⁷

FARC requests terminally ill prisoners be released

FARC released a statement asking the GOC to release terminally ill prisoners. GOC maintains it will not respond to requests that do not fall within the negotiation agenda.³⁸

Church declines to seek seat at table

A recent FARC statement considered inviting bishops to the negotiating table. The Church maintained that its only role for now is to sow peace in Colombia, not in Cuba.³⁹

Mayors in conflict areas consulted for peace talk

GOC invited Mayors of conflict zones to a meeting to discuss how they can participate in the implementation of the possible peace agreement in their regions.⁴⁰

4. International Context

European Parliament seeks release of kidnapped persons

³⁴ <http://www.wradio.com.co/noticias/actualidad/encuesta-w-colombianos-no-votarian-reeleccion-del-presidente-santos/20130218/nota/1843800.aspx>

³⁵ http://www.eltiempo.com/politica/dialogos-de-paz-de-la-calle-dice-que-proceso-no-valida-el-terrorismo_12591600-4

³⁶ <http://www.elespectador.com/noticias/paz/articulo-404455-estando-habana-veo-hay-una-oportunidad-real-paz>

³⁷ <http://www.elespectador.com/noticias/politica/articulo-404703-victimas-piden-palabra>

³⁸ <http://www.elespectador.com/noticias/judicial/articulo-404679-farc-piden-excarcelar-enfermos-terminales-y-cancer>

³⁹ <http://m.elespectador.com/noticias/politica/articulo-404703-victimas-piden-palabra>

⁴⁰ http://www.eltiempo.com/politica/ARTICULO-WEB-NEW_NOTA_INTERIOR-12598063.html



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The European Parliament President, Martin Shulz, urged FARC and ELN to release kidnapped persons, emphasizing that kidnapping civilians jeopardizes these groups' credibility as negotiators.⁴¹

Colombian Congress on deadlines

The Congress have brought to light a potential timing problem: a November deadline talks would not let the current Congress legislate the agreements in 2013.⁴²

5. Challenges and Responses

FARC mining practices

The El Mundo Newspaper has requested FARC supply information on where they have laid mines in Colombia. FARC has laid mines in 30 Departments (of 32) and has recently begun planting "ghost mines", which are more lethal than conventional anti-personnel mines.⁴³

Convention on the Rights of the Child anniversary emphasized in Colombia

On the anniversary of the Convention on the Rights of the Child, Vice-President Angelino Garzón demanded the release of child soldiers.⁴⁴

ELN peace talks?

ELN attacks have increased, including kidnapping two Germans in February, ostensibly to spur peace talks with GOC. The GOC feels these actions are in fact delaying the onset of talks.⁴⁵ A February 9 article in *El Espectador* confirmed contacts between the GOC and ELN, but noted that the kidnapping of two Germans has caused a stir and may delay the public announcement of talks, which could start in March.⁴⁶

In contrast, ELN also released three recently kidnapped Colombians and two Peruvians. The ICRC facilitated the release. President Santos criticized the group for not releasing a Canadian who had originally been kidnapped with the group of five.⁴⁷

UN representative in Colombia, Bruno Moro, recommended GOC begin talks with ELN.⁴⁸

⁴¹

http://www.elcolombiano.com/BancoConocimiento/P/parlamento_europeo_exigio_a_farc_y_eln_a_liberar_a_todos_los_s_euestrados/parlamento_europeo_exigio_a_farc_y_eln_a_liberar_a_todos_los_secuestrados.asp

⁴² <http://www.noticiascaracol.com/nacion/articulo-286659-el-tiempo-el-principal-enemigo-del-proceso-de-paz-advierte-congreso>

⁴³ http://www.elmundo.com/porta/opinion/editorial/que_den_la_cara_los_farc-minadores.php

⁴⁴ <http://www.elespectador.com/noticias/paz/articulo-404318-vicepresidente-rechaza-reclutamiento-de-ninos-guerra>

⁴⁵ <http://www.elespectador.com/noticias/paz/articulo-404274-eln-entre-el-secuestro-y-el-dialogo>

⁴⁶ <http://www.eluniversal.com.mx/notas/902163.html>

⁴⁷ <http://www.elespectador.com/noticias/paz/articulo-405068-eln-libera-dos-peruanos-y-tres-colombianos-secuestrados>



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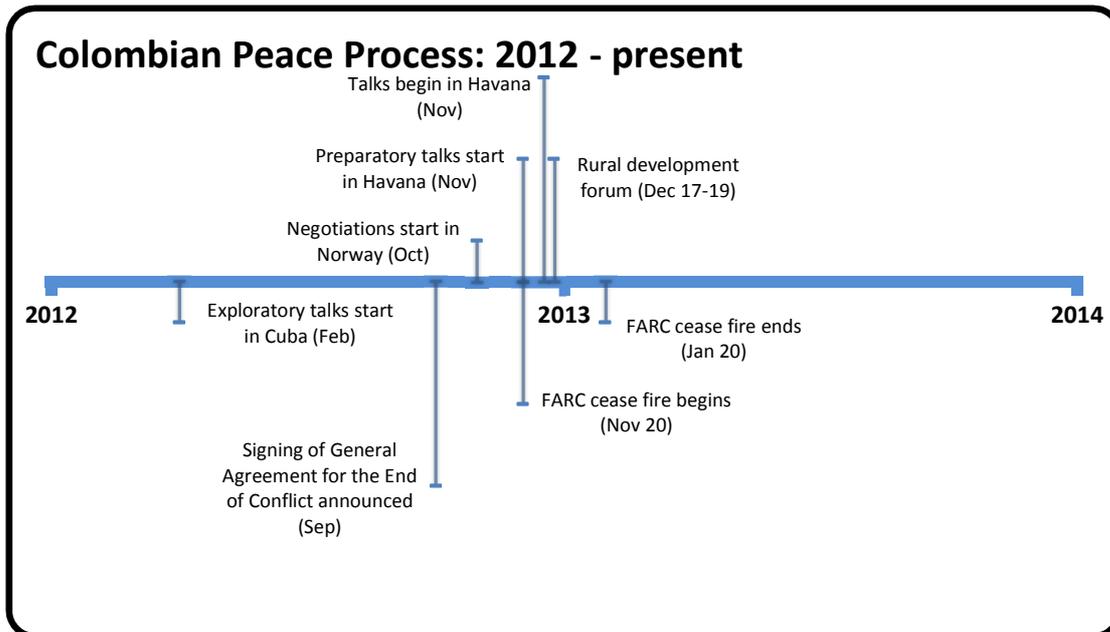


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6. Timeline



7. Further Reading

Analysis of the opportunities and barriers the agenda items and the legal peace framework

The legal peace framework (*Marco para la Paz*) was passed before news of peace talks with FARC broke. La Silla Vacía gives a brief history of the framework and what lies ahead for legislatures as a possible peace agreement looks more and more promising.⁴⁹

⁴⁸ <http://www.noticiascaracol.com/nacion/articulo-286659-el-tiempo-el-principal-enemigo-del-proceso-de-paz-advierte-congreso>

⁴⁹ <http://www.lasillavacia.com/historia/el-dilema-del-huevo-o-la-gallina-del-proceso-de-paz-41439>



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2. Key Developments from February 19 to February 25

Land bank announced

At a land titling event in San Vicente del Caguán on February 20, President Santos announced a land bank for distribution to an estimated 250,000 landless farmers. Sources of land are varied, such as holdings confiscated from the guerrilla (including some 130,000 hectares said to have belonged to Mono Jojoy), 1,000,000 hectares of unlawfully occupied state lands, and up to 500,000 hectares confiscated from drug traffickers.⁵⁰ (Calculation note: 1 hectare = 2.47 hectares.)

United Nations releases human rights report

The United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights released the annual Human Rights in Colombia report. In an interview, Todd Howland, UNHCHR Representative in Colombia, applauded the peace process and victim reparations and raised four concerns: 1) the reparations and restitution initiatives are ambitious, and the GOC may be unable to provide reparations to all victims; 2) the narrow definition of “victim” under the law excludes victims of criminal groups; 3) the demobilization process has not guaranteed non-repetition (violence has persisted); and 4) military justice should not be used in human rights violation cases.⁵¹

High level FARC member demobilizes, exposing internal rifts

Alexander García Villegas, alias Efrén Camacho, third-in-command of FARC’s Seventh Front, demobilized. He attributed the decision to inequalities within FARC and pressure from the

⁵⁰ <http://www.elpais.com.co/elpais/colombia/noticias/farc-querian-yo-viniera-caguan-presidente-santos>;
http://www.elcolombiano.com/BancoConocimiento/V/vuelta_a_la_civilidad_de_las_farc_sera_tarea_de_10_a_nos/vuelta_a_la_civilidad_de_las_farc_sera_tarea_de_10_anos.asp

⁵¹ <http://m.elspectador.com/noticias/temadeldia/articulo-406463-negacion-no-mejor-estrategia>



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Colombian military, adding that the FARC has lacked a clear vision since the death of Mono Jojoy, which has manifested in internal divisions.⁵²

3. Negotiations & Agenda

Governors agree on needs for peace process

In a Governor's Summit in San Andres this week, all 32 Governors released a statement requesting that consideration be given to autonomy and decentralization concerns within the peace process, given the implementation of a peace agreement will depend on regional action.⁵³

Rural reserve zones, not "independent republics"

Responding to FARC's request for autonomy of the rural reserve zones, Minister of Agriculture, Juan Camilo Restrepo, shot down the idea, quoting national sovereignty and a disinterest in parceling out "Colombia".⁵⁴

Context note: Rural reserve zones were created in the Samper (1994-98), Pastrana (1998-2002) and Uribe (2002-10) administrations to protect populations vulnerable to violence and land dispossession. Currently six departments have rural reserve zones totaling 831,000 hectares.

Iván Márquez demonstrates interest in "clean and legal politics"

In an interview with Semana Magazine, Iván Márquez, lead FARC negotiator, expressed his interest in political participation. He also underlined FARC's desire to set up a joint FARC-ELN-ICRC committee to investigate previous armed confrontations and missing persons as well as a constitutional assembly to institutionalize the peace accords. He ended by reiterating that FARC has completely given up kidnapping and does not have any police or military hostages.⁵⁵

4. International Context

Re-elected Correa labels peace process the most important news in a decade

⁵² http://www.eltiempo.com/justicia/las-razones-del-hombre-cercano-al-mono-jojoy-para-entregarse_12606261-4

⁵³ <http://www.elspectador.com/noticias/politica/articulo-405563-si-quieren-paz-debe-haber-autonomia-y-descentralizacion-gobernad>

⁵⁴ http://www.eltiempo.com/politica/ARTICULO-WEB-NEW_NOTA_INTERIOR-12614356.html

⁵⁵ <http://www.semana.com/nacion/articulo/deseo-hacer-politica-manera-abierta-legal/334349-3>



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Correa underlined the importance and urgency of the peace talks and noted that the Colombian conflict has seriously affected Ecuador, especially along the border where Ecuador spends some USD 60 million annual to assist over 50,000 Colombian refugees.⁵⁶

European Parliament supports peace process despite doubts

In a visit by members of the European Parliament to learn about the Victims Reparation and Land Restitution Law, the delegation acknowledged the GOC's will to move the law forward while noting various doubts as to the financial resources for its implementation, security for human rights defenders and land restitution leaders, drug trafficking and the isolation of local authorities, among others.⁵⁷

5. Other Voices

Cattle ranchers open to land-use changes

FEDEGAN President, José Felix Lafourie, has recognized Colombia has 38 million hectares in use for cattle, when in reality on 20 are needed. At least 600 cattle ranchers in Caquetá and Meta are interested in being the first to convert cattle land to agricultural use or reforestation.⁵⁸

Context note: Cattle ranchers often pay “vacunas” or dues to FARC and thus have an economic incentive to support the peace process.

Constitutional assembly campaign

The Marcha Patriótica Party announced an initiative to garner support for a constitutional assembly. Roughly 100 meetings are being scheduled with like-minded organizations around the country. Bogota Mayor, Gustavo Petro, welcomes the initiative. A march is planned in Bogota for April 9.⁵⁹

Indigenous leaders express concerns on process

⁵⁶ <http://www.elespectador.com/noticias/paz/articulo-405558-correa-pide-toda-america-latina-apoyar-el-proceso-de-paz-colombi>

⁵⁷ <http://www.elespectador.com/noticias/politica/articulo-405614-europa-y-expectativa-de-paz>

⁵⁸ http://www.eltiempo.com/politica/ARTICULO-WEB-NEW_NOTA_INTERIOR-12605570.html

⁵⁹ <http://www.elespectador.com/noticias/paz/articulo-406071-marcha-patriotica-tambien-busca-constituyente-paz>



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The President of the National Indigenous Organization of Colombia, Luis Fernando Arias, reiterated support for the peace process but also his prolonged concern that Indigenous communities are not being consulted, which he fears could lead to inter-ethnic tensions.⁶⁰

6. Emerging Challenges and Responses

“Civilian demining squad” in Colombia the first in the hemisphere

Initially skeptical, the GOC has recently allowed four civilian demining organizations—the Halo Trust, the Swiss Foundation for Mine Action, Indra-Atex and Ronco—to start training civilian demining squads in mapmaking, demining and as paramedics to address large numbers of anti-personnel mines and improvised explosive devices in Colombia. Successful in other parts of the world, this is the first of its kind in the hemisphere. Thirty one departments have some degree of landmine contamination.⁶¹

Context note: Colombia is one of the most heavily-mined countries in the world with over 10,000 victims in the last 22 years. As a signatory to the Ottawa Treaty, Colombia has pledged to clear all landmines by 2021.

FARC reintegration could take 10 years

Alejandro Eder, Director of the Colombian Agency for Reintegration, believes FARC’s reintegration could take 10 years, adding that the main problem faced by ex-combatants is social stigma.⁶²

7. Timeline

⁶⁰ <http://www.eluniversal.com.co/cartagena/nacional/indigenas-tienen-preocupaciones-sobre-el-proceso-de-paz-109572>

⁶¹ <http://www.mcclatchydc.com/2013/02/24/184010/colombians-join-the-hemispheres.html>

⁶²

http://www.elcolombiano.com/BancoConocimiento/V/vuelta_a_la_civilidad_de_las_farc_sera_tarea_de_10_anos/vuelta_a_la_civilidad_de_las_farc_sera_tarea_de_10_anos.asp



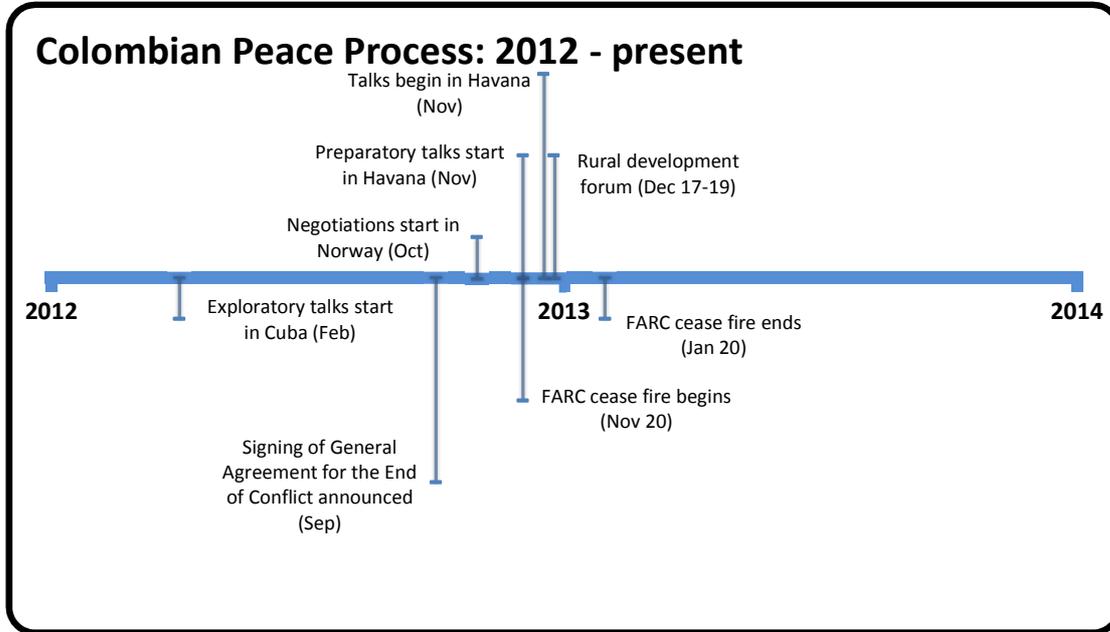
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8. Further Reading

The foundation of rural transformation: land

El Tiempo lays out the nuances and expectations of the “land bank” and the state of the art of Colombia’s land registry.⁶³

Army explains continued rationale for US support to Colombia

Major Michael L. Burgoyne, a U.S. Army Foreign Area Officer and currently the Andean Ridge Desk Officer at U.S. Army South, lays out four key points as to why Colombia should continue to receive US support to improve its security situation.⁶⁴

⁶³ http://www.eltiempo.com/politica/ARTICULO-WEB-NEW_NOTA_INTERIOR-12614356.html

⁶⁴ http://ricks.foreignpolicy.com/posts/2013/02/20/not_the_time_to_bug_out_on_colombia