



Colombian Peace Process: IOM Weekly Report

February, 2015

1

February 04,
2015.

1. Background

On September 4, 2012, President Santos announced the signing of a General Agreement for the Termination of the Conflict between the Government of Colombia and the FARC, initiating the fourth official peace talks with this group. The agenda includes: 1) integrated rural reform; 2) guarantees for political opposition and civic participation; 3) the end of the conflict (laying down arms and reintegration into civilian life); 4) illegal drugs; and 5) victims' rights. Preparatory talks started in Oslo on October 17, 2012 and substantive dialogues in Havana, on November 19, 2012. Three agreements have been reached: one on the first agenda point, integrated rural reform, on May 26, 2013; the second on the next point, political participation, on November 6, 2013; and another on the fourth agenda point, illegal drugs, on May 16, 2014.

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2. GOC – FARC Key Developments from January 28th – February 3rd

GOC and FARC return to dialogue table

The 32nd round of talks between the GOC and the FARC began on Monday after a break first for Christmas and then for both sides to conduct internal meetings on the next points on the agenda: victims, and the end of the conflict.¹ Although the GOC has made clear that its team has returned to Havana with instructions to accelerate the pace of the talks, the FARC stated last week that they do not consider a final agreement, or an accompanying bilateral ceasefire, to be close.² They also opined that the topic of possible referendum of final agreements should not be debated until discussions of the point on victims have concluded.³

¹ <http://www.elespectador.com/noticias/paz/lunes-se-inicia-una-de-etapas-mas-dificiles-del-proceso-articulo-541439>

² <http://www.elespectador.com/noticias/paz/acuerdo-final-no-esta-tan-cerca-timochenko-articulo-540790>

³ <http://www.eltiempo.com/politica/proceso-de-paz/farc-piden-seguir-el-orden-de-la-agenda-de-dialogos-de-paz/15183559>

Colombian Peace Process: IOM Weekly Report

February, 2015

FARC aim to ensure reparations for LGBTQI community

The FARC released a communiqué stating their aim to ensure that policy created to provide reparations for victims will include measures to incorporate a gendered approach, and within this a focus on the rights and diversity of the LGBTQI community.⁴

3. GOC – ELN Key Developments from January 28th – February 3rd

News of GOC-ELN talks announcement declared false

The news media published articles stating that the GOC and ELN would be announcing formal talks last week. President Santos was quick to deny these claims and state that work remains to be done in order to reach an agreement for formal ELN talks. He also said that as soon as talks with the ELN are formalized, Colombians will be made aware of the terms and details.⁵ Meanwhile, the civilian commission fulfilling a facilitator role in the exploratory GOC-ELN talks urged the two sides to reach an agreement and formalize their dialogues as soon as possible.⁶

ELN requests agreement with armed forces

ELN high commander alias 'Gabino' made a statement requesting that the Colombian armed forces sign an agreement to avoid confrontation and protect the civilian population. Suggested agreement points would include not using the civilian population as shields, not torturing the civilian population, and creating a no-conflict zone.⁷

4. International

Peace process support from Latin American countries at CELAC

At the third summit of the Community of Latin American and Caribbean States (CELAC) in Costa Rica last week, President Santos thanked Cuba, Venezuela, and Chile for their support of the GOC-FARC peace process. He also emphasized that peace in Colombia will facilitate poverty alleviation, which is the central topic of this year's summit.⁸

⁴ <http://www.eltiempo.com/politica/proceso-de-paz/farc-proponen-reparar-a-victimas-lgbti-del-conflicto/15189857>

⁵ <http://www.elespectador.com/noticias/paz/santos-dice-no-habra-anuncio-de-mesa-de-dialogo-el-eln-articulo-541295>

⁶ <http://www.elespectador.com/noticias/paz/comision-facilitadora-pide-al-gobierno-y-eln-instalar-p-articulo-540871>

⁷ <http://www.eltiempo.com/politica/proceso-de-paz/eln-pide-a-ff-aa-acuerdo-para-evitar-confrontacion/15184156>

⁸ <http://www.elespectador.com/noticias/paz/santos-agradecio-venezuela-cuba-y-chile-apoyar-el-proce-articulo-540622> and <http://www.elespectador.com/noticias/paz/paz-colombia-el-mayor-impulso-eliminar-pobreza-santos-articulo-540596>

Colombian Peace Process: IOM Weekly Report

February, 2015

UN Secretary General praises peace talks

UN Secretary General Ban Ki Moon made a statement about the GOC-FARC talks last week, congratulating President Santos for deciding to move forward with discussions of a possible bilateral ceasefire, and recognizing the FARC's ongoing unilateral ceasefire as a gesture of peace. He urged the two sides to continue to find ways to de-escalate the conflict.⁹

Nobel peace laureate highlights need for demining efforts

Jody Williams, who earned a Nobel Peace Prize for her work on demining, was in Cartagena to meet with GOC dialogue team leader Humberto de la Calle. She highlighted the need for the GOC and the FARC to work together in demining efforts around Colombia, emphasizing that mines will not disappear once a peace agreement is signed.¹⁰ Meanwhile, de la Calle confirmed that demining has been a topic of discussion at the dialogue table for many weeks now, and expressed hope that a specific plan for demining will be formed soon.¹¹

5. Other Voices

Ex-President Samper supports referendum of agreements

Ex-President Ernesto Samper, who is now the Secretary General of UNASUR, expressed his support of the proposed referendum of final peace agreements resulting from the GOC-FARC peace talks. The possibility of a referendum has been under scrutiny lately, as the FARC have been pressing for a constitutional assembly to approve final agreements, and the GOC maintains firm support for a referendum. Samper stated that this mechanism will be very important in gaining popular support for such agreements.¹²

6. Emerging Challenges and Responses

Santos invites Inspector General to discuss peace process

After Inspector General Alejandro Ordóñez criticized the supposed plans for integration of ex-FARC combatants into a new post-conflict rural police force, President Santos responded that such plans do not exist. He invited Ordóñez to discuss the peace process to resolve any questions he may have and provide him with correct information about the talks.¹³ Ordóñez confirmed that he will

⁹ www.eltiempo.com/politica/proceso-de-paz/onu-destaca-que-gobierno-y-farc-hablen-de-desescalar-el-conflicto/15171650

¹⁰ www.eltiempo.com/politica/proceso-de-paz/hemos-dicho-a-farc-que-debemos-avanzar-en-el-desminado-de-la-calle/15179897

¹¹ <http://www.semana.com/nacion/articulo/humberto-de-la-calle-rectifica-las-farc/416694-3>

¹² <http://www.elespectador.com/noticias/paz/ernesto-samper-apoya-consulta-popular-sobre-los-acuerdo-articulo-540439>

¹³ <http://www.elespectador.com/noticias/politica/creo-el-procurador-esta-muy-equivocado-creo-esta-sucedio-articulo-541451>



Colombian Peace Process: IOM Weekly Report

February, 2015

attend the meeting to reiterate his concerns about the peace process,¹⁴ and the meeting was set for next week, although an exact date has yet to be confirmed.¹⁵

National Planning Department's post-conflict plan released

A draft of the National Planning Department's post-conflict development plan was released to El Espectador last week. The news source stated that the ambitious plan includes "peace infrastructure" initiatives to protect and fulfill victims' rights, improve the administration of justice, consolidate security, reduce illegal mining, and alleviate poverty, among other goals. The plan also emphasizes the role of the private sector in providing economic support and opportunities that will facilitate post-conflict development.¹⁶

Citizen Integration Centers open around the country

As part of the GOC's efforts to begin implementation of peacebuilding and reconstruction efforts that do not depend on the signature of a final peace agreement, the Ministry of the Interior is in the process of opening 217 Citizen Integration Centers in violence-affected areas around Colombia. So far, 139 of these centers have been opened, with the goal of working with young people to resolve issues related to violence, prevent their involvement in illegal activities, and dissuade domestic violence in their homes. Other initiatives in the centers will include citizenship education, coexistence efforts, recreation, and environmental protection.¹⁷

7. Further Reading

Human Rights Watch 2015 report criticizes military, justice system

Human Rights Watch published its annual global report in January, and Colombia's section demonstrated mixed results compared to the previous year. While so-called false positive homicides by the military have decreased since their peak in 2009, the report states that extra-judicial killings continue to occur, and that the Santos administration is proposing justice measures that would decrease military accountability for these acts. The report also highlights continued attacks and activity by paramilitary successor groups and guerrilla organizations.¹⁸

HRW Americas Director José Miguel Vivanco discussed the report with El Espectador. The interview focused on the report's allegations that Minister of Defense Juan Carlos Pinzón has tried to discredit investigations of false positive cases. Vivanco also stated that all those responsible for

¹⁴ www.eltiempo.com/politica/proceso-de-paz/procurador-asistira-a-reunion-con-santos-para-hablar-de-proceso-de-paz/15184395

¹⁵ <http://www.eltiempo.com/politica/gobierno/reunion-entre-santos-y-ordonez-sera-la-proxima-semana/15173682>

¹⁶ <http://www.elespectador.com/noticias/politica/el-plan-el-posconflicto-articulo-541249>

¹⁷ <http://www.elespectador.com/noticias/politica/centros-construir-paz-articulo-541154>

¹⁸ <http://www.hrw.org/world-report/2015/country-chapters/colombia>

Colombian Peace Process: IOM Weekly Report

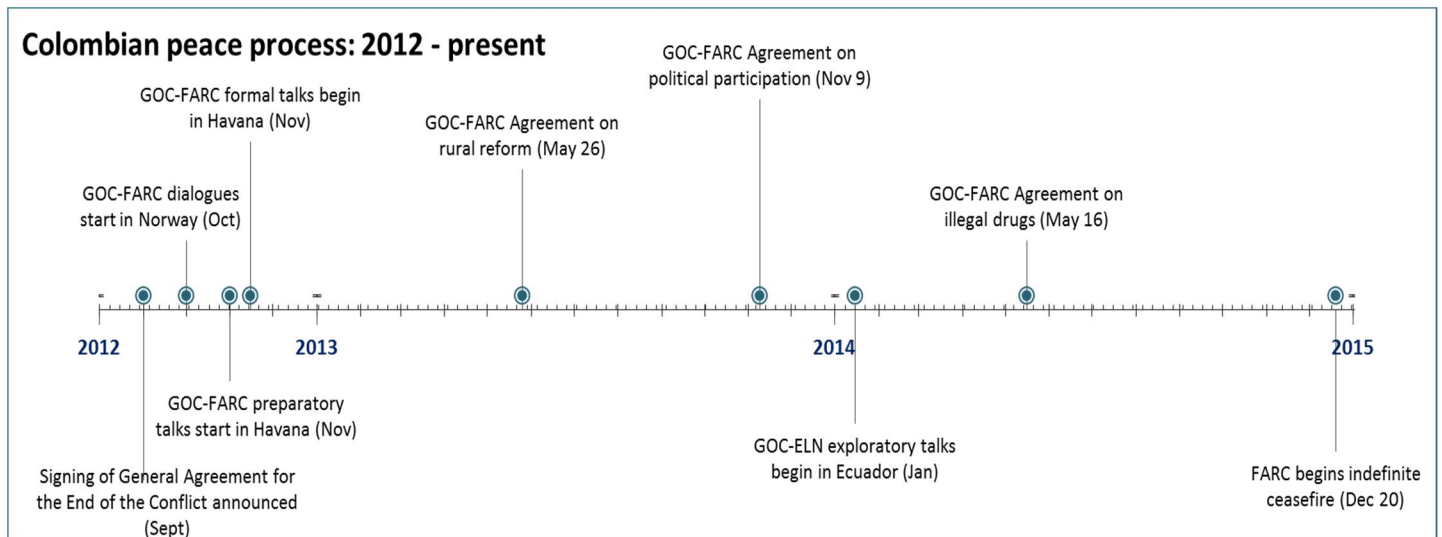
February, 2015

crimes against humanity should complete jail-time, and expressed his concern that current judicial plans for post-conflict allow impunity for these types of crime.¹⁹

Peace in Colombia will come with sacrifices: Javier Cercas

Spanish writer and historian of the post-Franco era Javier Cercas was interviewed by El Espectador. In the article, he discusses lessons that Colombia could learn from Spain's post-Franco transition, and opines that peace in Colombia will necessitate sacrifices from both sides of the dialogue table. He also emphasized that the key to a peace agreement is in finding the key between peace, justice, and freedom.²⁰

8. Timeline



¹⁹ <http://www.elespectador.com/noticias/politica/se-esta-gestando-una-pinata-de-impunidad-articulo-541242>

²⁰ <http://www.elespectador.com/noticias/paz/paz-colombia-no-llegara-sin-sacrificios-dice-escritor-j-articulo-541690>

Colombian Peace Process: IOM Weekly Report

February, 2015

2

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2. GOC – FARC Key Developments from February 4th – February 10th

Sub-commission on the End of the Conflict begins joint work

The Sub-Commission on the End of the Conflict, a 20-member technical working group dedicated to making DDR-related recommendations to the GOC and FARC dialogue teams, began work last week. The two groups of 10 representatives of the GOC and the FARC were working separately late last year, but last week began to jointly define strategies and mechanisms as input for the dialogue teams' discussions on the relevant agenda point, which includes DDR, a possible bilateral ceasefire, and other measures to bring an end to Colombia's conflict.²¹ Possible measures to de-escalate the violence while the dialogues progress include demining and the hand-over of FARC data on the location of disappeared people.²²

Historical Commission hands in final report

The Historical Commission on the Conflict and its Victims handed in its final report after four months of work. Formed of 12 national and international experts (6 chosen by the GOC and 6 by the FARC), the report aims to clarify the causes of the conflict, factors that contribute to its

²¹ <http://www.elespectador.com/noticias/paz/subcomision-el-fin-del-conflicto-inicia-labores-cuba-articulo-541977>

²² <http://www.semana.com/nacion/articulo/el-ano-de-la-paz/417126-3>

Colombian Peace Process: IOM Weekly Report

February, 2015

continuation, and its impact. The document provides input for understanding the conflict and its participants' responsibilities, and will be an informational base for a future truth commission as well as for discussions at the dialogue table. It has yet to be made public.²³

Commission members and their expertise are: Alfredo Molano Bravo - social impact of conflict; Gustavo Duncan - conflict dynamics; Vicente Torrijos - military strategy; Daniel Pécaut - historic violence; Francisco Gutiérrez – political violence; Jorge Giraldo – political economy of conflict; María Emma Wills – gender and conflict, historical memory; Renán Vega – insurgency and social movements; Darío Fajardo – conflict and land; Malcolm Deas – historic land conflicts and violence; Jairo Hernando Estrada – leftist movements, capitalism; Sergio de Zubiría – education and social justice; Eduardo Pizarro Leongómez (secretary) – reparations, reconciliation, and international justice; and Víctor Manuel Moncayo (secretary) – public policy and the State.²⁴

FARC propose seats in Congress for victims

The FARC proposed initiatives related to victims, which aim to facilitate more participation by victims in processes that affect the fulfillment of their rights. One measure was to guarantee seats in Congress for victims, and to complement this with participation by victims' organizations in the formulation of relevant public policy.²⁵ Another was to ensure that 3% of the national GBP be used for reparations.²⁶ Meanwhile, reassurances were also made that the FARC are maintaining their current unilateral ceasefire despite "attacks" by the armed forces.²⁷

Dilemmas of justice vs. peace highlighted

President Santos appealed to the international community to support the definition of mechanisms that serve both justice and peace. At a meeting with ambassadors and other representatives, he stated that the FARC do not want to hand over weapons and go to jail, but rather enter politics as previous guerrilla groups did in the 1990s. However, the president recognized that Colombia is bound by international and national laws that have evolved since that time, and that the balance between these two perspectives will be difficult to achieve.²⁸

²³ <http://www.eltiempo.com/politica/proceso-de-paz/proceso-de-paz-informe-sobre-historia-del-conflicto-armado/15225457>

²⁴ <http://www.elespectador.com/noticias/paz/comision-historica-no-obedece-expectativas-del-gobierno-articulo-511898>

²⁵ <http://www.elespectador.com/noticias/paz/circunscripcion-especial-victimas-del-conflicto-propone-articulo-542464>

²⁶ <http://www.elespectador.com/noticias/paz/farc-proponen-fondo-de-reparacion-de-victimas-equivalga-articulo-541992>

²⁷ <http://www.semana.com/nacion/articulo/piedad-cordoba-farc-mantendran-su-tregua-unilateral/417437-3>

²⁸ <http://www.elespectador.com/noticias/paz/guerrilla-no-quiere-ser-primera-historia-entrega-armas-articulo-542001>

Colombian Peace Process: IOM Weekly Report

February, 2015

Meanwhile, the FARC agreed they would hand over weapons and transform into a political movement if the GOC fulfills a range of conditions. These include a bilateral ceasefire, the suspension of mining and energy projects, military reform, and measures to combat corruption in government. The guerrilla group says that fulfillment of these conditions would allow them to contribute to political reform, to reparations, and to historical truth in Colombia.²⁹

3. International

International donors ready to support post-conflict phase

Devex reported international cooperation entities' post-conflict support plans for Colombia. The EU has plans for a \$77 million package aiming to address the causes of the conflict, and is considering a post-conflict fund, which would become active upon the signature of a peace agreement. The World Bank is also planning to add support to a range of existing initiatives, as well as providing additional financial, technical, and other support in the post-conflict phase.³⁰

ELN must get on the “peace train”: Samper

Ex-President Samper, currently UNASUR Secretary General, said the ELN must get on the “peace train” and take advantage of current conditions, which favor a peace agreement with the GOC. This comes at a time when alias ‘Gabino’, the ELN’s high commander, expressed that the group does not perceive that a peace agreement is possible in the short term.³¹ Samper also urged the GOC-FARC teams to agree on humanitarian minimums such as demining and an end to child recruitment while they work towards a final agreement.³²

Peace Nobel Laureates urge FARC to recognize responsibility for sexual violence

Jody Williams and Shirini Ebadi, who earned Nobel Peace Prizes for their work on sexual violence, urged the FARC to take responsibility for sexual violence in the conflict. They highlighted that the GOC has agreed to take the topic of sexual violence to the dialogue table, and the guerrilla group must now address it and contribute to reparations for its victims.³³

²⁹ <http://www.elespectador.com/noticias/paz/farc-cambiar-ias-armas-accion-politica-si-el-gobierno-cum-articulo-542667>

³⁰ <https://www.devex.com/news/as-colombia-anticipates-peace-deal-donors-prepare-to-roll-out-assistance-85294>

³¹ <http://www.elespectador.com/noticias/paz/eln-no-puede-dejar-pasar-el-tren-de-paz-secretario-de-u-articulo-542535>

³² <http://www.elespectador.com/noticias/paz/secretario-de-unasur-pide-minimos-humanitarios-dialogos-articulo-542331>

³³ www.eltiempo.com/politica/proceso-de-paz/farc-deben-reconocer-su-responsabilidad-en-casos-de-violencia-sexual/15204738



Colombian Peace Process: IOM Weekly Report

February, 2015

The first year of peace is key to its success: Fabrizio Hoschild

UN Resident Coordinator in Colombia, Fabrizio Hoschild, wrote an article in El Tiempo highlighting the importance of the first year after a peace agreement for the overall success of peace. The results of the dialogues and agreements must be perceived within the first year for peace to be sustainable, he stated, which implies that execution of resources and implementation of projects must be planned before the year begins. Hoschild also highlighted five areas the UN believes will be key focuses for peacebuilding: security; local institutional capacity; basic needs in rural communities; local economies; and victims' reparations.³⁴

4. Other Voices

Paramilitary victims warn of reparations challenges

Caracol Radio collected testimonies from victims of paramilitary groups around the country, who stated that very few of them have received reparations over the last decade. They highlighted that the challenges of providing reparations to large numbers of victims will likely apply to the victims of the FARC who will be entitled to reparations as a result of a final peace agreement with the guerrilla group. Overall, it was found that the paramilitary victims did not trust in the peace process for this specific reason – they do not believe that the talks will bring reparations and other fulfillments of rights to victims of the FARC.³⁵

Optimism about peace talks outweighs negativity

The company Cifras y Conceptos conducted a survey and found that 47% of Colombians believe that the GOC-FARC peace talks will end with a peace agreement, while 44% think they will not, and 9% does not know or did not respond. This represents a change from December, when the optimists represented 39% and those who did not believe an agreement possible were at 57%. On average in 2014, this survey showed that 60% of the population did not view the peace talks optimistically, so this latest survey represents a positive turn.³⁶

5. Emerging Challenges and Responses

FARC must take responsibility for disappearances: Inspector General

Inspector General Alejandro Ordóñez asked that the FARC recognize their responsibility for 2,670 forced disappearances in the conflict, to contribute to the truth and thereby fulfill the victims'

³⁴ <http://www.eltiempo.com/opinion/columnistas/la-paz-no-llegara-por-milagro/15209937>

³⁵ <http://www.elespectador.com/noticias/paz/victimas-del-paramilitarismo-no-confian-del-todo-el-pro-articulo-542786>

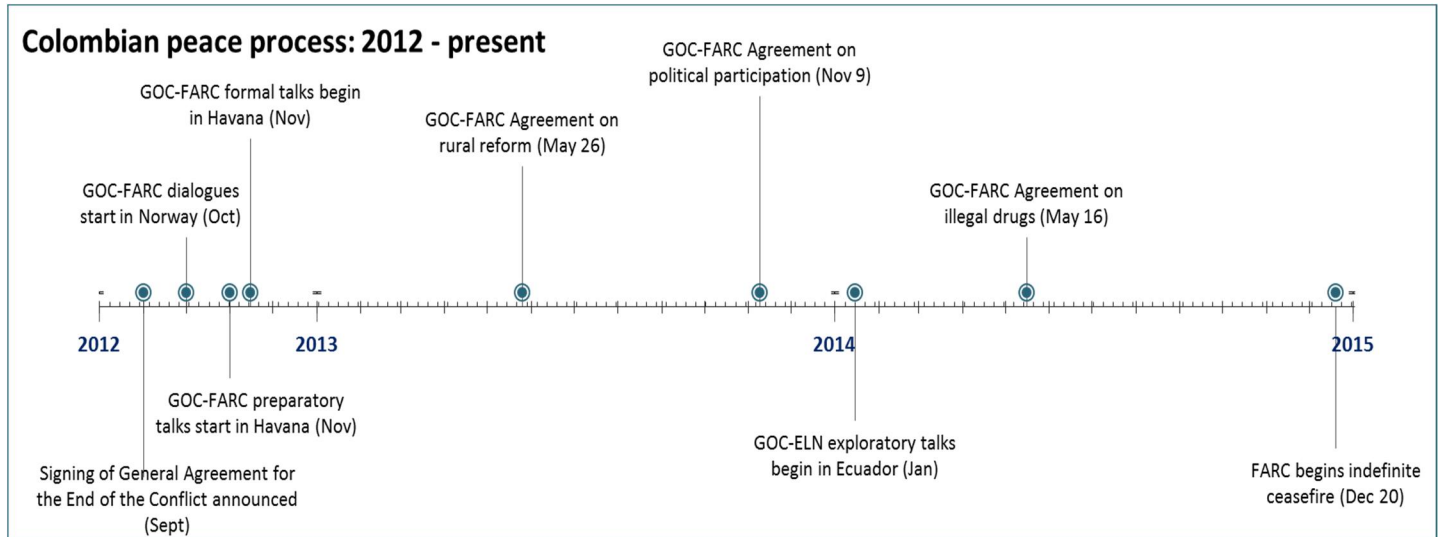
³⁶ <http://www.elespectador.com/noticias/paz/colombianos-creen-el-proceso-de-paz-tendra-un-final-pos-articulo-542425>

Colombian Peace Process: IOM Weekly Report

February, 2015

rights.³⁷ The FARC denied the accusations and stated that Ordóñez is trying to build false arguments against the guerrilla group, which work against the interests of peace.³⁸

6. Timeline



7. Further Reading

Colombian appointed to UN Peacebuilding Fund

Dr. Ana María Ibáñez of the Universidad de los Andes has been appointed to the UN Peacebuilding Fund, making her the only Colombian on the team. In interview with *El Tiempo*, she stated her belief that the nomination recognizes the efforts that Colombia has made to build peace after decades of war. She also expressed her hope that the GOC and FARC will sign a peace agreement and that the Fund will thereby be able to release resources to Colombia to support post-conflict initiatives.³⁹

³⁷ <http://www.elespectador.com/noticias/judicial/procurador-general-le-respondio-farc-sobre-informe-de-d-articulo-543049>

³⁸ <http://www.elespectador.com/noticias/judicial/farc-rechazan-acusacion-de-procurador-sobre-2760-desapa-articulo-542789>

³⁹ <http://www.eltiempo.com/politica/proceso-de-paz/la-colombiana-que-ban-ki-moon-recluto-para-la-paz/15217060>

Colombian Peace Process: IOM Weekly Report

February, 2015

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2. GOC – FARC Key Developments from February 11th – February 18th

Historical commission releases final report

The Historical Commission on the Conflict and its Victims released its report. Its 809 pages reach conclusions that include: 1) Colombian history is full of failed social reforms that fed the conflict; 2) land titling and related issues are at the conflict's root; 3) reintegration of ex-combatants is key to the post-conflict, as armed groups frequently "recycle" ex-combatants from previous groups; 4) there have been cycles of violence since the 1940s; 5) those in power have not fully supported the reforms necessary to resolve the conflict, and in some cases took advantage of illegal activity for their own gain; 6) the conflict has great regional differences that facilitate illegal groups' activity; 7) the rural civilian population is most affected by the conflict; 8) the conflict has highlighted the State's inability to monopolize force; 9) local elections facilitated political participation but resulted in representatives' connections to illegal armed groups; 10) neither the State nor the guerrillas have been successful in the conflict.⁴⁰

The report compiles the 12 Commission members' research, and represents various divisions of opinion, including whether or not an armed struggle was inevitable and the only option. However, concurrences include the reasons the conflict has endured, the responsibility of different armed actors,⁴¹ and the inequality and exclusion that have characterized the conflict's continuation.⁴² The report will serve as input for the dialogue table.

⁴⁰ www.reconciliacioncolombia.com/historias/detalle/679/10-conclusiones-del-informe-de-la-comision-historica-del-conflicto

⁴¹ www.eltiempo.com/politica/proceso-de-paz/informe-de-la-comision-historica-del-conflicto-habla-uno-de-los-relatores/15249518

Colombian Peace Process: IOM Weekly Report

February, 2015

FARC announces end to child recruitment

On Thursday, the International Day Against the Use of Child Soldiers, the FARC announced they will stop recruiting minors of 17 years old and under. The guerrilla group claimed that it has dissuaded children under 15 from joining voluntarily in the past, but will cease recruitment of all people under 17.⁴³ In a later statement, the FARC asserted that there are only 13 children under the age of 15 in their ranks, and committed to handing all of them over to the authorities.⁴⁴ Responses to these announcements are summarized below.

Second gender delegation visits Havana

The second delegation to travel to Cuba and meet with the sub-commission working on gender issues arrived in Havana on Wednesday. The group represented a range of interests and populations, including female victims, LGBTQI people affected by the conflict, ethnic groups, and other sectors.⁴⁵ This is reported as being the first time that the LGBTQI community has been directly represented in a peace process.⁴⁶

3. International

2015 will be decisive year for peace: Hoschild

UN Resident Coordinator in Colombia Fabrizio Hoschild stated in interview with El Tiempo that 2015 will be a decisive year for peace, and expressed his optimism that the talks will result in a positive ending. He discussed issues such as transitional justice and how to serve the interests of peace, justice, and reconciliation, and the differences of opinion regarding the FARC's punishment or alternative sentencing after the signature of a peace agreement.⁴⁷

Ex-President Uribe met with Congresspeople in Washington

Ex-President Uribe is on a trip to Washington D.C., Mexico, and possibly Europe, to share his thoughts about the peace process. In Washington D.C. he met with Chamber Representatives Eliana Ros-Letinen and Mario Diaz Balart from Florida, and Henry Cuellar from Texas. Uribe's Centro Democrático party stated that conclusions from the ex-president's tour will be published upon his return to Colombia.⁴⁸ Meanwhile, liberal politician Iván Cepeda travels to Spain next week to present his thoughts on the peace talks to representatives of the country.⁴⁹

⁴² <http://www.eltiempo.com/politica/proceso-de-paz/proceso-de-paz-informes-de-comision-sobre-el-conflicto/15234421>

⁴³ <http://www.eltiempo.com/politica/proceso-de-paz/farc-no-reclutaran-mas-menores-de-edad/15236821>

⁴⁴ <http://www.eltiempo.com/politica/proceso-de-paz/farc-dicen-que-sacaran-a-menores-de-edad-de-sus-filas/15258758>

⁴⁵ <http://www.elespectador.com/noticias/paz/segundo-grupo-de-expertos-temas-de-genero-ya-esta-haban-articulo-543441>

⁴⁶ <http://www.elespectador.com/noticias/politica/historica-presencia-de-comunidad-lgbti-un-proceso-de-pa-articulo-543426>

⁴⁷ <http://www.eltiempo.com/politica/proceso-de-paz/fabrizio-hochschild-de-la-onu-habla-del-proceso-de-paz/15253503>

⁴⁸ <http://www.eltiempo.com/mundo/ee-uu-y-canada/uribe-en-washington-gira-contr-proceso-de-paz/15233956>

⁴⁹ <http://www.elespectador.com/noticias/paz/ivan-cepeda-viaja-espana-promover-el-proceso-de-paz-articulo-544216>

Colombian Peace Process: IOM Weekly Report

February, 2015

Germany offers Colombia expertise in post-conflict transition

Frank Walter Steinmeier, Germany's Minister of Foreign Affairs, met with President Santos last week. He offered his country's expertise and support for Colombia's post-conflict transition, stating that Germany learnt that such processes are arduous, and can lend expertise in various aspects of transition including historical memory and reconciliation. He also expressed his optimism about the GOC-FARC peace talks.⁵⁰

Santos announces post-conflict fund

President Santos announced a Multi-donor Peace and Post-conflict Fund, led by the World Bank and the UN. The Fund will receive support from multiple countries, and aims to sustain and consolidate peace. The first program to be benefitted by the Fund will be the Collective Reparations Program of the Victims' Unit, which will receive 9,400 million pesos.⁵¹

4. Other Voices

Ex-President Gaviria opens public debate on transitional justice

Through an article published in *El Tiempo*, ex-President Cesar Gaviria proposed a number of measures to ensure the fairness and efficiency of transitional justice in the post-conflict phase. These included laws that would cover all armed actors involved in the conflict, and should also include informants, financial supporters, and other civilians linked to illegal armed groups who are not currently covered by the Justice and Peace Law and other relevant norms. Gaviria also suggested that the armed forces should be protected from the re-opening of conflict-related cases against them in the future, as has happened in other Latin American countries.⁵²

The FARC praised these proposals for recognizing that there is not just one armed actor in the conflict,⁵³ while President Santos also expressed support for the idea of "transitional justice for all."⁵⁴ A range of sectors including agriculture unions, exporting business associations, research entities, and the military also expressed their positive perception of Gaviria's statements, highlighting the importance of the debate he opened in terms of preparing for the post-conflict phase.⁵⁵ La Silla Vacía opined that Gaviria is trying to facilitate the support of ex-President Uribe and his party, by encouraging the protection of the armed forces among other measures, as he believes that this political sector will be key for the sustainability of peace.⁵⁶

⁵⁰ <http://www.elespectador.com/noticias/paz/alemania-ofrece-colombia-su-experiencia-juridica-el-pos-articulo-544547>

⁵¹ <http://www.eltiempo.com/politica/gobierno/fondo-para-la-paz-y-el-posconflicto/15260956>

⁵² <http://www.eltiempo.com/politica/justicia/expresidente-gaviria-habla-de-la-justicia-transicional-/15249538>

⁵³ <http://www.eltiempo.com/politica/proceso-de-paz/farc-dicen-que-sacaran-a-menores-de-edad-de-sus-filas/15258758>

⁵⁴ <http://www.eltiempo.com/politica/gobierno/santos-respalda-propuesta-de-cesar-gaviria-sobre-justicia-transicional/15262375>

⁵⁵ <http://www.eltiempo.com/politica/proceso-de-paz/propuesta-de-cesar-gaviria-sobre-justicia-transicional/15258689>

⁵⁶ <http://lasillavacia.com/historia/la-zanahoria-que-ofrece-gaviria-detractores-de-la-habana-49583>

Colombian Peace Process: IOM Weekly Report

February, 2015

5. Emerging Challenges and Responses

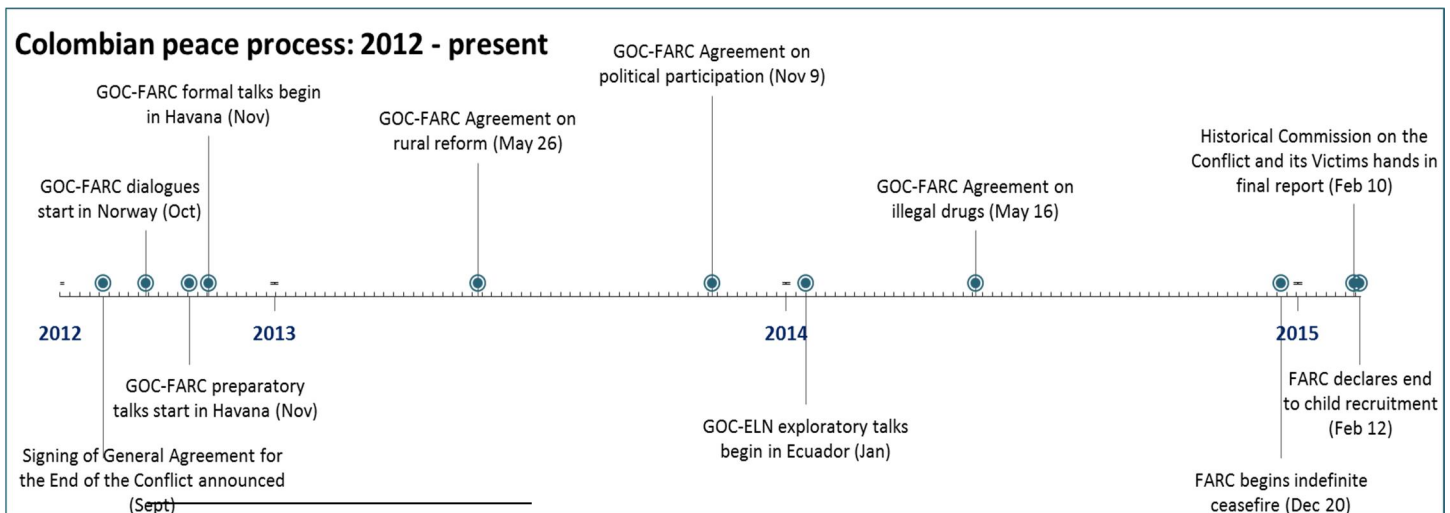
President, others react to FARC child recruitment announcement

President Santos and Humberto de la Calle responded that while the FARC's announcement that they will stop child recruitment is a step forward, it should commit to releasing all minors currently in its ranks.⁵⁷ Inspector General Alejandro Ordóñez agreed that the FARC should stop recruiting minors immediately.⁵⁸ UNICEF and the UN applauded the statement, emphasizing the role that reduced recruitment will have in de-escalating the conflict.⁵⁹ ICBF Director Cristina Plazas said the FARC should not try to negotiate children's rights, and questioned why they had stopped at children of 17 years old, when Colombian law defines minors as being under 18.⁶⁰ Hilda Molano, Director of the "Coalition against engagement of children to the conflict in Colombia" (COALICO) said the announcement represents progress and that the UN can verify child recruitment conditions and FARC commitment to this announcement.⁶¹

GOC asks FARC to contribute to de-mining efforts

Minister of the Interior Juan Fernando Cristo was in San Miguel, Putumayo, last week, and requested that the FARC contribute to demining efforts there. Cristo stressed that San Miguel is heavily affected by landmines, and that communities like it would benefit from a humanitarian agreement for demining efforts as part of current de-escalation of the conflict.⁶²

6. Timeline



⁵⁷ <http://www.eltiempo.com/politica/proceso-de-paz/santos-habla-de-anuncio-de-farc-sobre-reclutamiento/15238257> and <http://www.eltiempo.com/politica/proceso-de-paz/compromiso-de-farc-de-no-reclutar-menores-humberto-de-la-calle/15237104>

⁵⁸ <http://www.elspectador.com/noticias/judicial/procurador-general-califico-el-anuncio-de-farc-insufici-articulo-543697>

⁵⁹ <http://www.eltiempo.com/politica/proceso-de-paz/farc-anuncian-que-no-reclutaran-menores-de-edad/15238775>

⁶⁰ <http://www.elspectador.com/noticias/paz/derechos-de-ninos-y-adolescentes-no-son-negociables-icb-articulo-543877>

⁶¹ <http://www.eltiempo.com/politica/proceso-de-paz/compromiso-de-farc-de-no-reclutar-menores-reacciones-coalico/15237697>

⁶² <http://www.eltiempo.com/politica/gobierno/proceso-de-paz-gobierno-pide-a-farc-avanzar-con-desminado/15245958>

Colombian Peace Process: IOM Weekly Report

February, 2015

7. Further Reading

Violence against civilians has decreased during talks

Conflict research think-tank CERAC found that during the secret exploratory GOC-FARC talks from September 2010 to October 2012, there was a decrease in FARC violence. The entity said that since the beginning of formal talks, the group has carried out fewer attacks against the civilian population, but directed more violence at the military and strategic infrastructure targets.⁶³ Meanwhile, the People's Ombudsman's Office announced it has received numerous reports that the FARC continue to intimidate people in 11 mostly rural departments.⁶⁴

Verdad Abierta uncovers FARC 2013 plans to intensify activity

Verdad Abierta published a summary of the notes from a September 2013 meeting held by the FARC Ivan Rios Bloc, in which the group agreed to intensify operations in the Nudo de Paramillo National Park. Given that the peace talks had been underway for 11 months at that time, the publication asked the FARC for an explanation, but none has so far been offered.⁶⁵

⁶³ <http://www.elespectador.com/noticias/paz/durante-los-dialogos-de-habana-si-aumento-el-numero-de-articulo-543723>

⁶⁴ <http://www.elespectador.com/noticias/judicial/pese-cese-al-fuego-denuncian-intimidacion-de-farc-varia-articulo-543488>

⁶⁵ <http://www.verdadabierta.com/bloques-de-las-farc/5622-esta-vigente-agenda-de-las-farc-en-nudo-de-paramillo>

Colombian Peace Process: IOM Weekly Report

February, 2015

1. Background

On September 4, 2012, President Santos announced the signing of a General Agreement for the Termination of the Conflict between the Government of Colombia and the FARC, initiating the fourth official peace talks with this group. The agenda includes: 1) integrated rural reform; 2) guarantees for political opposition and civic participation; 3) the end of the conflict (laying down arms and reintegration into civilian life); 4) illegal drugs; and 5) victims' rights. Preparatory talks started in Oslo on October 17, 2012 and substantive dialogues in Havana, on November 19, 2012. Three agreements have been reached: one on the first agenda point, integrated rural reform, on May 26, 2013; the second on the next point, political participation, on November 6, 2013; and another on the fourth agenda point, illegal drugs, on May 16, 2014.

On June 10, 2014, the GOC announced that exploratory talks with the ELN were taking place to define an agenda for peace talks. These initial meetings have been held since January 2014, and the issues of victims and societal participation are the first two agenda points. The GOC and ELN will release information on the progress of the exploratory talks as they continue.

2. GOC – FARC Key Developments from February 19th – February 24th

USA announces special envoy to GOC-FARC peace process

Former US Assistant Secretary of State for Inter-American Affairs Bernard Aronson has been named special envoy to the GOC-FARC peace talks. Aronson was involved in peace efforts in both Nicaragua and El Salvador, and has extensive experience in Latin America. Secretary of State John Kerry stated that he and US President Obama agree that the new envoy's presence in Havana (but not at the dialogue table) aims to facilitate and encourage a positive end to the dialogues, given the USA's close relationship with Colombia.⁶⁶ Aronson will also report back to Washington on progress and goings-on in the dialogues.⁶⁷

President Santos and other high-level representatives highlighted the significance of Aronson's presence in Havana as a sign of US support for the talks.⁶⁸ The FARC praised the decision to send Aronson to the talks, stating that it was necessary for the US to be present in Havana due to the impact the country has had on the conflict, as well as in Colombia's economic and political life.⁶⁹

⁶⁶ <http://www.reuters.com/article/2015/02/20/us-usa-colombia-envoy-idUSKBN0LO1PF20150220>

⁶⁷ <http://www.eltiempo.com/politica/proceso-de-paz/la-paz-de-colombia-pasa-por-washington/15283199>

⁶⁸ <http://www.eltiempo.com/colombia/otras-ciudades/santos-habla-de-apoyo-de-ee-uu-al-proceso-de-paz-15282255> and <http://www.elespectador.com/noticias/paz/presencia-de-aronson-evidencia-credibilidad-internacion-articulo-545416> and <http://www.elespectador.com/noticias/paz/presencia-de-aronson-evidencia-credibilidad-internacion-articulo-545416>

⁶⁹ www.eltiempo.com/politica/proceso-de-paz/farc-saludan-llegada-de-enviado-especial-de-estados-unidos-a-cuba/15279058

Colombian Peace Process: IOM Weekly Report

February, 2015

Inspector General Alejandro Ordóñez, a frequent critic of the talks, stated that he is not happy with Aronson's presence in Havana, and believes that the US will use this influence to clarify its position about certain topics, such as drugs trafficking and extradition.⁷⁰

3. International

Peace is not an easy task: Kofi Annan

Santos met with Ex-Secretary General of the UN, Kofi Annan, to discuss the peace process and Annan's optimism that the talks will have a positive end even though reaching an agreement and implementing peace are not easy tasks. The leaders also discussed Colombia's transitional justice obligations under international law, and Annan's planned visit to Cuba to discuss the GOC-FARC peace talks with the dialogue teams there.⁷¹ Many consider Annan's presence in Colombia to be a significant indication of international support for the GOC-FARC peace talks.⁷² The ex-Secretary General also met with ex-President Uribe, who expressed his concerns about possible impunity and his rejection of the FARC's claim that they will not complete jail time.⁷³

Santos highlights broad international support for talks

President Santos highlighted increasing support from countries and entities including the United Nations, the European Union, the United States, and others, stating that this is essential for the success of peace.⁷⁴

4. Other Voices

Victims who participated in talks continue to receive threats

A group of victims who went to Cuba as part of five delegations that participated in the GOC-FARC talks made a statement to denounce continued threats against them. The intimidation and attacks include the murder of one of their children, according to the announcement. They asked that the threats be investigated by the Attorney General's Office, and urged the GOC and FARC dialogue teams to continue working towards a peace agreement.⁷⁵

⁷⁰ <http://www.elespectador.com/noticias/politica/procurador-dice-no-puede-ser-tan-alegre-presencia-de-be-articulo-545682>

⁷¹ <http://www.elespectador.com/noticias/politica/no-facil-hacer-paz-hay-persistir-articulo-545823>

⁷² <http://www.elespectador.com/noticias/paz/presencia-de-kofi-annan-demuestra-su-amplio-respaldo-pr-articulo-545801>

⁷³ <http://www.elespectador.com/noticias/politica/uribe-refuto-ivan-marquez-y-pidio-carcel-guerrilleros-articulo-545913>

⁷⁴ <http://www.eltiempo.com/politica/proceso-de-paz/juan-manuel-santos-y-kofi-annan/15288530>

⁷⁵ www.eltiempo.com/politica/gobierno/victimas-colombianas-que-fueron-a-dialogos-de-paz-denuncian-nuevas-amenazas-/15279695

Colombian Peace Process: IOM Weekly Report

February, 2015

Minister of Justice: transitional justice is not a general pardon

Minister of Justice Yesid Reyes was interviewed by El Espectador. He discusses ex-President Gaviria's proposal that transitional justice mechanisms and benefits should apply to all armed actors and their support groups, including the military. Reyes states that transitional justice does not mean a general pardon for all responsible for crimes in the conflict, and that if used correctly, it should not imply impunity. He also discusses other justice-related issues related to the peace process, and clarifies the differences between transitional and ordinary justice.⁷⁶

El Tiempo forum highlights peace-related debates

El Tiempo held a forum titled "Ideas for Peace" in which Ex-President of Costa Rica and Nobel Peace Laureate Oscar Arias stated that Colombians must understand that concessions will be made by both sides if peace is to function sustainably. GOC dialogue team leader Humberto de la Calle criticized the FARC for contradictory messages about whether they take responsibility for their victims, and supported the idea that transitional justice should cover all actors in the conflict. Various ex-High Commissioners for Peace discussed reconciliation, the history of negotiations with guerrilla groups, and the need for national unity about the peace process.⁷⁷

5. Emerging Challenges and Responses

Has FARC broken unilateral ceasefire?

The FARC announced a unilateral ceasefire on December 20th 2014, on the condition that they would retaliate to military action against them. CERAC confirmed that in the two months since, the guerrilla group has not carried out any attack on the armed forces, infrastructure, or the civilian population. However, CERAC believes that the FARC have continued illegal activity, and some information indicates the group has carried out territorial reorganization and training during this time.⁷⁸ Meanwhile, the People's Ombudsman reported that the FARC have been in combat against the military in Nariño and Cauca, possibly breaking the ceasefire terms.⁷⁹

FARC reiterates rejection of jail time

The FARC re-stated their rejection of the possibility of jail time as part of an alternative sentence at the conclusion of the peace talks, stating that no insurgency leaders in other countries have

⁷⁶ <http://www.elespectador.com/noticias/politica/justicia-transicional-no-un-perdon-general-articulo-545460>

⁷⁷ <http://www.eltiempo.com/politica/proceso-de-paz/foro-ideas-para-que-colombia-consiga-la-paz/15292856>

⁷⁸ <http://www.eltiempo.com/politica/proceso-de-paz/cesde-unilateral-e-indefinido-del-fuego-de-las-farc/15280836>

⁷⁹ <http://www.elespectador.com/noticias/politica/senalan-acciones-armadas-comprometerian-farc-medio-de-t-articulo-545932>

Colombian Peace Process: IOM Weekly Report

February, 2015

gone to jail after a peace process.⁸⁰ They also reiterated its plans not to hand over weapons.⁸¹ Inspector General Alejandro Ordóñez responded that the FARC leaders will have to complete jail sentences, given Colombia's legal obligations related to this matter.⁸²

Three mechanisms to de-escalate the conflict

Journalist Pablo Alberto Ortega wrote an article outlining three mechanisms that could support current efforts to de-escalate the conflict and legitimize the peace talks. The first is that the FARC could give up illegal economic activity, thereby cutting themselves off from their financing. The second is that the guerrilla group could begin demining efforts. Finally, the State should guarantee protection for human rights defenders, journalists, indigenous and Afro-Colombian leaders, and other social activists.⁸³

6. Further Reading

Oscar Arias discusses peace in Colombia

Ex-President of Costa Rica and Nobel Peace Laureate Oscar Arias was interviewed by El Tiempo. He discussed the need for all sides in a peace process to make concessions, and the balance between justice and peace. He also affirmed that the FARC should hand over their weapons as part of a final agreement, contrary to what they have stated this week.⁸⁴

Interview with Carl Meacham about special envoy appointment

Carl Meacham, of the Center for Strategic International Studies, addressed the appointment of Bernard Aronson as special envoy to the GOC-FARC peace process. Meacham stated that at a time when peace process critics such as ex-President Uribe are making their voices heard in the US, this show of support by the Obama administration should make clear that the USG believes that Santos' peace process model is viable. He highlighted that the move will be cited as part of Democratic party policy in the Latin American region, and could therefore reappear in future discussions of international relations in the next US presidential elections.⁸⁵

⁸⁰ <http://www.elespectador.com/noticias/politica/los-guerrilleros-cero-carcel-ivan-marquez-articulo-545665>

⁸¹ <http://www.semana.com/nacion/articulo/ivan-marquez-dice-que-guerrilleros-de-las-farc-no-pueden-ir-la-carcel/418869-3>

⁸² <http://www.elespectador.com/noticias/judicial/comandantes-de-farc-si-se-deben-imaginar-carcel-procura-articulo-545727>

⁸³ www.eltiempo.com/opinion/columnistas/como-desescalar-definitivamente-el-conflicto-pablo-alberto-ortega-columnista-el-tiempo/15291438

⁸⁴ <http://www.eltiempo.com/politica/proceso-de-paz/proceso-de-paz-entrevista-con-expresidente-oscar-arias/15291737>

⁸⁵ www.eltiempo.com/mundo/ee-uu-y-canada/enviado-especial-de-estados-unidos-a-dialogos-de-paz-habla-experto/15280016

Colombian Peace Process: IOM Weekly Report

February, 2015

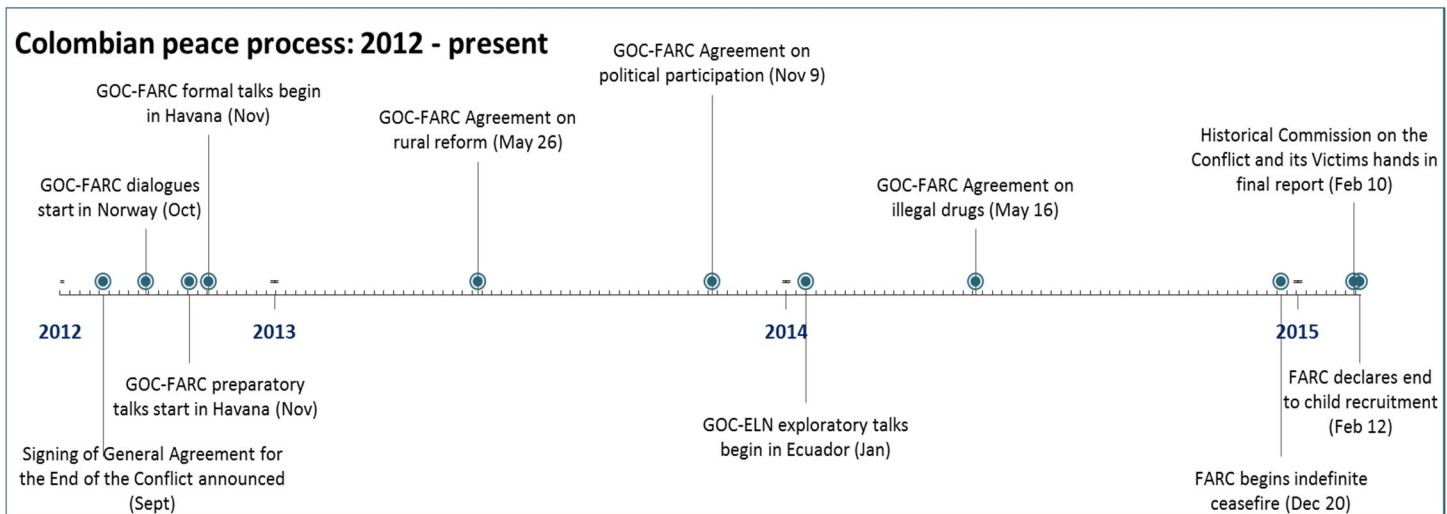
Ex-UN Peace Operations Director discusses peace in Colombia

Jean-Marie Guéhenno was Kofi Annan’s Director of Peace Operations for eight years. In interview with La Silla Vacía, he discusses the UN’s interest in the Colombian peace talks as an opportunity to save its credibility after weak attempts to support peace in other countries. Guéhenno also expresses the need for a bilateral ceasefire to generate trust in the dialogues, and highlights the importance of the UN role as a pacifier that can facilitate a positive ending.⁸⁶

FARC discuss transitional justice, child recruitment

FARC Secretariat members Pablo Catatumbo, Iván Márquez, and Joaquín Gómez were interviewed by Caracol Radio – a significant interview given the station’s nationally recognized status. They discussed the trust they have built with the members of the military who have participated in the talks, the agreement they hope to reach on victims, and their support for ex-President Gaviria’s suggestion that transitional justice should apply to all actors in the conflict, thereby distributing responsibility and not just blaming the insurgent groups. They also criticized the GOC for planning the judicial framework for peace and other transitional justice mechanisms unilaterally, as they believed they should be involved in that process.⁸⁷

7. Timeline



⁸⁶ <http://lasillavacia.com/historia/la-paz-en-colombia-puede-rescatar-la-onu-de-la-sensacion-de-fracaso-jean-marie-guehenno>

⁸⁷ http://www.caracol.com.co/audio_programas/archivo_de_audio/escuche-el-audio-del-debate-por-la-paz-de-hora-20-desde-cuba/20150216/oir/2635563.aspx