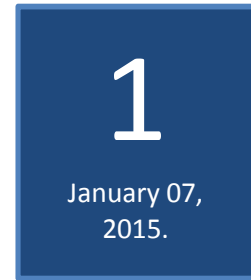




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1. Background

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 December 24th – January 6th

FARC ceasefire continues, accompanied by GOC “de-escalation” of conflict

The FARC initiated an indefinite unilateral ceasefire on December 20th, on the condition that they will break the ceasefire and retaliate to any attack by the armed forces. Over the last two weeks, the group has reminded the GOC, the armed forces, and the public about this condition and their desire for a bilateral ceasefire.¹

The GOC continually responds that a bilateral ceasefire will only occur upon signature of a final peace agreement.² President Santos stated that the armed forces and GOC dialogue team are looking for ways to “de-escalate” the conflict, but did not specify what this could mean.³ After rumors that “de-escalation” laid the groundwork for a bilateral ceasefire, and that Santos had asked the armed forces to stop bombing and air operations against the FARC, he clarified that “de-escalation” does not refer to a change in military instructions, but a step to resolve the disconnect

¹ <http://www.eltiempo.com/politica/proceso-de-paz/el-2015-sera-un-ano-decisivo-para-la-paz-dicen-las-farc/15019595> and <http://www.elespectador.com/noticias/politica/farc-advierten-esta-riesgo-el-cese-al-fuego-y-tregua-in-articulo-535678>

² <http://www.elespectador.com/noticias/paz/solo-existira-cese-al-fuego-bilateral-firmada-paz-articulo-534965> and

<http://www.elespectador.com/noticias/paz/fuerzas-armadas-no-renuncian-su-obligacion-de-defender-articulo-535715>

³ <http://www.eltiempo.com/politica/proceso-de-paz/proceso-de-paz-desescalamiento-de-la-confrontacion-armada/15057615>



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between the talks and conflict dynamics.⁴ Minister of Defense Pinzón reiterated that the military has a constitutional duty to continue to defend the citizenry and territory.⁵

Closed-door “retreat” to discuss 2015 peace process strategy

President Santos, the GOC dialogue team, and international experts met in Cartagena the first weekend in January to discuss the peace process strategy for 2015. Experts included Joaquin Villalobos, Salvadoran ex-guerrilla leader and politician who has advised many Colombian peace initiatives, William Ury, from Harvard University, Jonathan Powell, a member of British Prime Minister Blair’s Cabinet and participant in the Northern Ireland peace process, and Israeli ex-Chancellor Shlomo Ben Ami.⁶ The meetings aimed to form a strategy to accelerate the dialogues. Santos stated that the GOC dialogue team has a clear mandate for its upcoming return to Cuba: to make every effort to conclude the Colombian conflict as soon as possible.⁷

FARC addition to the commission on the end of the conflict

Alias ‘Joaquín Gomez’, commander of the FARC’s Southern Bloc and 33-year member of the guerrilla group, joined his colleagues in Cuba to form part of the commission on the end of the conflict. Gomez is a key player in the political wing of the FARC, and has a violent history within the conflict, where he has maintained close relationships with drugs traffickers.⁸ His presence means that all members of the FARC Secretariat are now in Cuba, which some analysts believe aims to show group unity with respect to the talks, and effort to increase the dialogues’ pace.⁹

Santos gives final approval for referendum law

President Santos gave final approval of a law to permit a referendum of the peace process on the same day as local elections on October 25th 2015. This referendum would allow Colombians to vote on political reforms resulting from a peace agreement.¹⁰

Three campaigns are expected to occur before the referendum. One will promote a “yes” vote, another will promote a “no” vote, and another will propose abstention from voting in the referendum, which needs 7.5 million votes to be considered valid.

⁴ <http://www.eltiempo.com/politica/gobierno/santos-instrucciones-a-fuerza-publica-no-han-cambiado/15059895> and <http://www.eltiempo.com/politica/proceso-de-paz/se-acaba-desconexion-entre-negociacion-y-conflicto-santos/15057615>

⁵ <http://www.elespectador.com/noticias/paz/fuerzas-armadas-no-renuncian-su-obligacion-de-defender-articulo-535715>

⁶ <http://www.elespectador.com/noticias/paz/santos-y-negociadores-de-paz-planear-agenda-del-proceso-articulo-536252>

⁷ <http://www.elespectador.com/noticias/paz/negociadores-regresan-un-unico-mandato-acelerar-el-proc-articulo-536297>

⁸ <http://www.elespectador.com/noticias/paz/joaquin-gomez-comandante-del-bloque-sur-de-farc-traslad-articulo-535280>

⁹ <http://www.elespectador.com/noticias/paz/33-anos-de-monte-joaquin-gomez-llega-habana-articulo-535352>

¹⁰ <http://www.eltiempo.com/politica/gobierno/santos-sanciono-ley-para-avalar-acuerdos-de-paz-en-elecciones-/15060735>

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3. GOC – ELN Key Developments from December 24th – January 6th

ELN encouraged to instigate unilateral ceasefire

President Santos invited the ELN to initiate a unilateral ceasefire similar to that being held indefinitely by the FARC. He also encouraged the guerrilla group to formalize peace talks with the GOC and make concrete steps towards peace.¹¹

ELN celebrates anniversary

The ELN will celebrate its 50th anniversary on January 7th. The guerrilla group said it will issue an important statement on that day, although it was not clear if this communiqué will relate to possible peace talks, address the 50-year trajectory of the group, or discuss other topics.¹²

4. International

There must be criminal sentences for peace to be legitimate: international expert

Israeli ex-Chancellor Shlomo Ben Ami was interviewed about his opinions on the Colombian peace process. He stated that transitional justice processes must have the support of the international community, and that after so many years of conflict, it would be unthinkable not to have criminal sentences for those ultimately responsible. He did qualify this statement by saying that imprisonment can take various forms, but that impunity was not an option.¹³

Swedish Ambassador discusses peace in Colombia

Marie Andersson, the Swedish Ambassador to Colombia, was interviewed by El Espectador. In the interview she discusses the history of diplomatic relations between the two countries, the type of support Sweden has provided to Colombia, and her optimism about the peace process and specifically the role of women in the post-conflict phase.¹⁴

5. Emerging Challenges and Responses

Armed forces were key in establishing peace talks: Santos

President Santos stated that the effectiveness and performance of the armed forces are the reason the FARC agreed to peace talks. He highlighted that the armed forces have weakened the guerrilla group and that is why its leaders felt that they should enter dialogues.¹⁵

Demining and child recruitment: two key points for FARC

¹¹ www.eltiempo.com/politica/proceso-de-paz/cese-del-fuego-unilateral-y-pronto-acuerdo-propuestas-de-santos-a-eln/15057838

¹² <http://www.elespectador.com/noticias/paz/eln-prepara-importante-anuncio-el-7-de-enero-articulo-535399>

¹³ <http://www.elespectador.com/noticias/politica/experto-dice-el-proceso-de-paz-sea-creible-tiene-haber-articulo-536391>

¹⁴ <http://www.elespectador.com/noticias/politica/comunidad-internacional-respalda-santos-articulo-536198>

¹⁵ <http://www.elespectador.com/noticias/paz/hoy-se-habla-de-paz-colombia-porque-cuenta-el-mejor-eje-articulo-534613>

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Alias ‘Pastor Alape’, a FARC dialogue team member, stated that the demining of rural areas, and the resolution of the presence of children under the age of 15 in the guerrilla group’s ranks, are two issues currently being closely considered by the guerrilla group. These two points are key for the international community as well as for the de-escalation of the conflict.¹⁶

Uribe proposes entity to verify disarmament and demobilization

Ex-President Uribe proposed that his political party, the Centro Democrático, could organize a Transitory Legislative Body to fulfill functions related to the verification of FARC disarmament and demobilization. He stated that this mechanism would avoid the possibility that the GOC would make too many allowances to the FARC in these sensitive areas.¹⁷ This proposal has met with criticism from many politicians who consider such a body unnecessary given that other parts of government can fulfill the same functions.¹⁸

Bogotá Mayor Petro initiates efforts to support peace

Mayor of Bogotá Gustavo Petro announced a broad effort to support peace, which will be replicated by the GOC in other parts of the country. In Bogotá, 10,000 volunteers will be trained in human rights and peace, and will use a variety of spaces and mechanisms to explain the partial agreements already reached to citizens across the city, as well as implementing other efforts to support peace in their roles as “multipliers of peace”.¹⁹

6. Further Reading

Carlos Lozano: 2015 is the year for peace

Carlos Lozano is Director of the publication “Voz” and has been closely monitoring the peace process since its beginning. He will publish a book on the topic in March, and was interviewed by El Tiempo to discuss the book and his opinion on the talks. He criticized the suspension of the dialogues upon the kidnapping of General Alzate in December, and expressed his hope that no such interruptions will occur this year. He also addressed the differing opinions that the GOC and the FARC possess with regard to the guerrilla group’s disarmament.²⁰

National and international post-conflict roles and responsibilities

Jerónimo Ríos Sierra, a professor of International Relations at the Jorge Tadeo University, wrote an article discussing the fact that although the international community must support the post-conflict phase, most efforts must be designed and implemented by national actors. These efforts

¹⁶ <http://www.elespectador.com/noticias/paz/minas-antipersona-y-combatientes-menores-de-edad-temas-articulo-535177>

¹⁷ <http://www.elespectador.com/noticias/paz/uribe-propone-crear-organo-legislativo-verifique-desmov-articulo-535377>

¹⁸ www.eltiempo.com/politica/proceso-de-paz/polemica-por-idea-para-avalar-acuerdos-propuesta-por-alvaro-uribe/15034378

¹⁹ <http://lasillavacia.com/historia/el-caballito-de-la-paz-protagonista-en-el-ultimo-ano-de-petro-49348>

²⁰ <http://www.eltiempo.com/politica/proceso-de-paz/el-2015-va-a-ser-el-ano-de-la-paz-carlos-lozano/15049955>

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must be based on the decentralization of peacebuilding and development financing and initiatives in order to address post-conflict needs at the local level.²¹

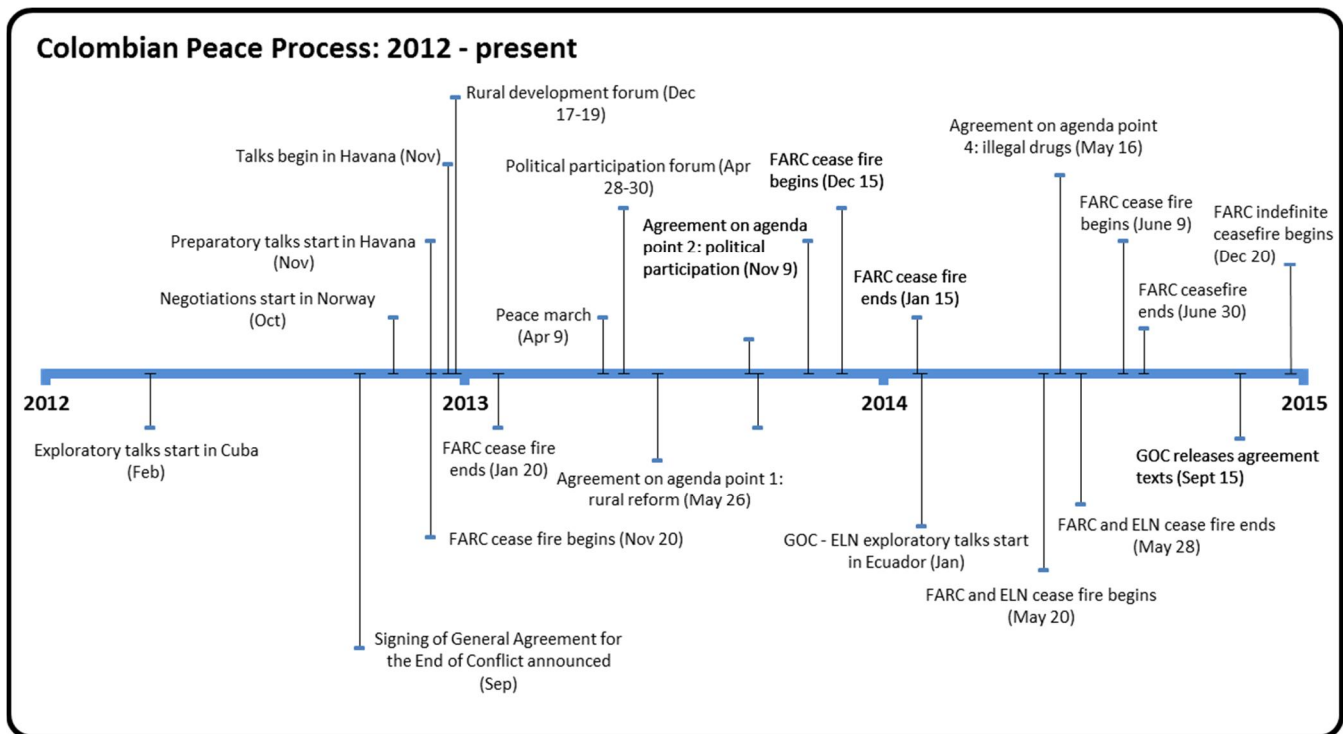
El Tiempo evaluates German lessons for Colombia

An article in El Tiempo highlighted post-conflict lessons that Germany could lend Colombia, especially in historical memory efforts such as monuments to honor the victims.²²

The importance of dialogues with the ELN

ELN expert Víctor de Currea-Lugo wrote an article for El Espectador discussing why it is important to formalize peace talks with the ELN. He stated that the guerrilla group should not be considered as a purely violent force but rather a politically-minded entity that has great differences with the FARC and will not cease criminal activity until it has signed a peace agreement that addresses its own specific concerns and goals.²³

7. Timeline



²¹ <http://www.elespectador.com/noticias/politica/posconflicto-de-nacional-internacional-articulo-535938>

²² <http://www.eltiempo.com/politica/justicia/reconstruccion-de-la-memoria-en-alemania-un-ejemplo-para-colombia/15056735>

²³ <http://www.elespectador.com/noticias/politica/y-los-dialogos-el-eln-articulo-535994>



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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 7th – January 13th

FARC continue to threaten to end ceasefire

After highlighting how President Santos had stated that their upholding of the ceasefire was a positive sign,²⁴ the FARC now say that continued military activity against them puts their conditional unilateral ceasefire at risk and could force them to break it altogether.²⁵ The guerrilla group also reiterated their request that Santos declare a ceasefire on the part of the armed forces.²⁶ CERAC found that since the FARC unilateral ceasefire began, the conflict has registered its lowest levels of violence since the mid-1980s.²⁷

²⁴ <http://www.elespectador.com/noticias/paz/farc-celebra-santos-reconozca-su-cumplimiento-de-cese-articulo-536565>

²⁵ <http://www.elespectador.com/noticias/paz/farc-reitera-continua-asedio-militar-contra-tregua-articulo-537328>

²⁶ <http://www.elespectador.com/noticias/paz/farc-pide-santos-declarar-cese-de-operaciones-cuanto-articulo-537299>

²⁷ <http://www.elespectador.com/noticias/paz/cese-al-fuego-de-farc-habria-reducido-conflicto-nivel-articulo-537141>

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Next round of talks to start January 26th

The next round of GOC-FARC talks will begin on January 26th, bringing the Christmas break to a close. The GOC dialogue team will meet in Havana one week before that date for internal discussions on the upcoming agenda points: the end of the conflict, and victims.²⁸

3. GOC – ELN Key Developments from January 7th – January 13th

ELN makes statement about dialogues

In celebration of their 50th anniversary on January 7th, the ELN released a statement that they are willing and ready to enter talks with the GOC, and are examining the GOC's commitment to peace. If this analysis leads them to believe that the conditions are correct, they may consider the possibility of laying weapons aside.²⁹ This announcement seemed vague to some analysts, who thought the ELN would make a more substantive statement about progress in the exploratory talks with the GOC.³⁰

4. International

Israeli Ex-Chancellor evaluates peace debates

Israeli Ex-Chancellor Shlomo Ben-Ami, who has advised President Santos on the current peace process, wrote an article for El Tiempo. He discusses some debates currently surrounding the peace process and the dilemmas faced by Santos. These include how to deal with the reintegration of ex-members of the FARC, and the transitional justice models to be used in the post-conflict phase.³¹

German Chancellor believes in peace in Colombia

German Chancellor Günter Kniess was interviewed by El Tiempo. He discussed German support for the peace talks and post-conflict aid commitment. He also expressed his optimism about the talks and praised the GOC's release of partial agreement texts in September 2014.³²

²⁸ <http://www.elespectador.com/noticias/paz/el-26-de-enero-se-reanudaran-los-dialogos-de-paz-habana-articulo-537317>

²⁹ <http://www.eltiempo.com/politica/proceso-de-paz/gobierno-dice-que-quiere-salida-politica-vamos-a-crear-el-eln/15062595>

³⁰ <http://www.eltiempo.com/politica/proceso-de-paz/analistas-esperaban-mas-del-anuncio-del-eln/15067675>

³¹ <http://www.eltiempo.com/politica/proceso-de-paz/los-dilemas-de-liderar-el-paso-de-la-guerra-a-la-paz/15082455>

³² <http://www.eltiempo.com/politica/proceso-de-paz/creo-firmemente-que-este-ano-va-a-ser-el-de-la-paz/15085506>



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El Salvador and Guatemala provide examples for Colombia

Verdad Abierta published interviews with experts from El Salvador and Guatemala who highlighted lessons their countries contribute to Colombia. The discussions about El Salvador stated that 80% of the agreements were fulfilled, and addressed political participation by ex-FMLN guerrilla members, and the relative success of the peace process overall.³³ In Guatemala, however, 95% of the agreements have not been fulfilled, the agreements themselves were not specific enough about the reforms and programs needed to address the root causes and effects of the conflict, and reparations, among other areas, have been inefficient and slow.³⁴

5. Other Voices

The ELN cannot stay in the margins of the process: Alias 'Felipe Torres'

Alias 'Felipe Torres', or Carlos Velandia, is an ex-member of the ELN high command who spent 10 years in jail and now supports analysis and reporting on the guerrilla group and its conflict dynamics. In interview with El Tiempo, Torres stated that peace will not be possible without an agreement with the ELN, and examined the various attempts at peace with the guerrilla group conducted by previous presidents.³⁵

The FARC have not fulfilled their ceasefire: Centro Democrático

Alfredo Rangel, a member of the conservative Centro Democrático party, was interviewed by El Tiempo. His responses, which he stated were representative of the official stance of the party, highlighted the belief that the FARC have not fulfilled their unilateral ceasefire as President Santos claimed last week. He also addressed his party's suggestion that the FARC should be concentrated in contained areas while the peace process advance, rather than allowing the conflict to continue.³⁶

6. Emerging Challenges and Responses

Citizen security efforts begin to address predicted post-conflict needs

This weekend, President Santos launched a nationwide initiative that brings Citizen Integration Centers to conflict-affected communities all over the country. These centers will provide

³³ <http://www.verdadabierta.com/procesos-de-paz/farc/5565-procesos-de-paz-en-centroamerica-el-salvador>

³⁴ <http://www.verdadabierta.com/procesos-de-paz/farc/5566-las-lecciones-del-proceso-de-paz-de-guatemala-para-colombia>

³⁵ <http://www.eltiempo.com/politica/proceso-de-paz/uribe-es-necesario-para-una-paz-solida-felipe-torres-exjefe-eln/15082457>

³⁶ <http://www.eltiempo.com/politica/proceso-de-paz/entrevista-al-senador-alfredo-rangel-el-cese-unilateral-no-se-ha-cumplido-santos-engana-al-pais/15089015>

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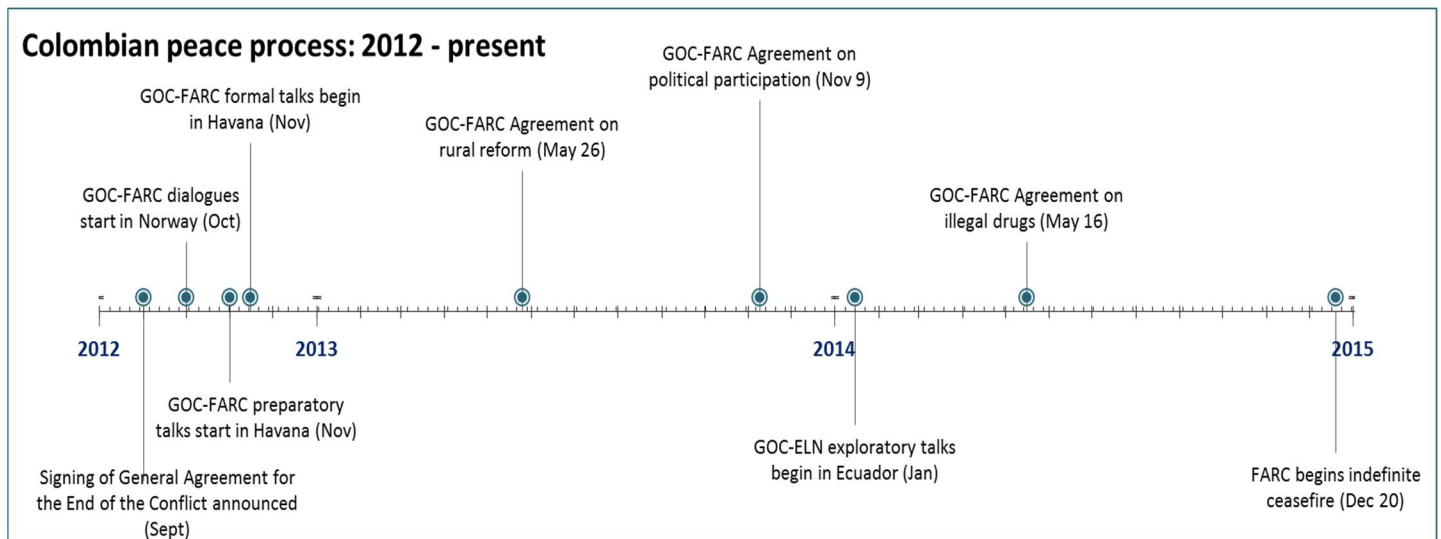
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recreational spaces for sport and cultural events, as well as holding community meetings and facilitating efforts to bring community members together to address their security and development needs. This initiative is one component in a broader citizen security strategy to be implemented between now and 2018.³⁷

Former peace advisor suggests alternative referendum mechanism

Carlos Holmes, a former Peace Advisor and member of ex-President Uribe's Centro Democrático party, was interviewed by El Tiempo. In the discussion, he addressed the mechanism to be used to gain popular approval and legitimacy in the case of a final peace agreement. Holmes suggested that rather than the referendum model that has been used in the past, a new constitutional mechanism should be established to avoid the associated practical challenges.³⁸

7. Timeline



8. Further Reading

ELN documents uncovered

El Espectador gained access to and summarized a series of ELN strategy documents. Most of the 2012-2014 documents focus on the guerrilla group's goals of stimulating a political movement,

³⁷ www.eltiempo.com/politica/proceso-de-paz/con-seguridad-ciudadana-gobierno-comienza-a-pensar-en-el-posconflicto/15085510

³⁸ www.eltiempo.com/politica/proceso-de-paz/proponen-pacto-politico-y-de-estado-para-refrendar-acuerdos-de-paz/15088743



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regaining their legitimacy and the favor that the term “revolution” had 60 years ago, and confronting neoliberal initiatives. Older documents addressed ELN finance sources and various models of peace talks that they considered in 2003.³⁹

Analysis of conflict dynamics since beginning of talks

Despite accusations that the conflict has intensified since the beginning of GOC-FARC talks, and that Santos has lowered the morale of the armed forces, El Espectador published the results of a report by the Ministry of Defense that says 8,530 members of the FARC have left the ranks of the guerrilla group, principally as a result of military capture. The report also states that the armed forces have successfully diminished the financial resources of the FARC.⁴⁰

Transitional justice expert discusses peace process

Rodrigo Uprimny, a well-known expert on transitional justice in Colombia, was interviewed by La Silla Vacía. In the interview, he discussed the need for strong transitional justice mechanisms that avoid impunity while providing judicial benefits for demobilized guerrilla combatants and members of the armed forces, as well as jail time for those ultimately responsible for crimes against humanity.⁴¹

³⁹ <http://www.elespectador.com/noticias/judicial/los-documentos-ineditos-del-eln-articulo-537251>

⁴⁰ <http://www.elespectador.com/noticias/judicial/radiografia-del-conflicto-tiempos-de-dialogo-articulo-537130>

⁴¹ <http://lasillavacia.com/historia/si-uno-quiere-una-paz-solida-tiene-que-haber-unos-minimos-de-justicia-rodrigo-uprimny-49361>

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2. GOC – FARC Key Developments from January 14th – January 20th

Next round of talks moved to February 2nd

The start of the next round of talks, initially planned for late January, moved to February 2nd to coincide with the publication of a report by the Sub-Commission on the End of the Conflict on February 10th. The next delegation of organizations to meet with the Sub-Commission on Gender will arrive in Havana on February 11th.⁴²

Santos asks GOC team to begin discussion of bilateral ceasefire

President Santos ordered the GOC dialogue team to initiate discussions of a bilateral ceasefire with the FARC, but clarified that such a truce would not start until the point on disarmament and demobilization has been resolved.⁴³ General Oscar Naranjo, part of the GOC dialogue team, explained that this order did not mean the armed forces would decrease activity against the

⁴² <http://www.elespectador.com/noticias/paz/proximo-ciclo-de-conversaciones-entre-gobierno-y-farc-i-articulo-538572>

⁴³ <http://www.elespectador.com/noticias/paz/santos-ordena-discutir-cese-al-fuego-bilateral-farc-articulo-537958> and <http://www.eltiempo.com/politica/proceso-de-paz/cese-bilateral-depende-de-los-otros-puntos-de-la-agenda-santos/15116615>

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FARC.⁴⁴ The FARC said they are ready for a bilateral ceasefire.⁴⁵ Meanwhile, the Ombudsman's Office confirmed the FARC has upheld its unilateral ceasefire since December 20th.⁴⁶

Government consolidates messages on peace process

President Santos asked his ministers to create a strategy to unify their messages about the peace process and the post-conflict phase. This strategy aims to encourage the legitimacy of the peace process, and ensure that the GOC has a standardized discourse on the topic.⁴⁷

3. GOC – ELN Key Developments from January 14th – January 20th

ELN leader reveals six agenda points

ELN leader Antonio García revealed six points that the ELN consider key to an agenda for peace talks with the GOC: 1) Societal participation (already announced in 2014); 2) Democracy for Peace; 3) Transformations necessary for peace; 4) Victims (already announced in 2014); 5) End of the conflict; and 6) Implementation. García stated that the GOC's attitude of imposing its own methods and opinion in the talks has prevented an agenda from being agreed, and admitted that points 3) and 5) have yet to be addressed. The GOC has not responded to the ELN's statement or confirmed that these points would be included in a GOC-ELN agenda.⁴⁸

4. International

UNASUR reiterates support for peace process

The Union of South American Nations (UNASUR) reiterated its support for the GOC-FARC peace process last week, and offered support in implementing a final agreement.⁴⁹

Spain proposes demilitarization peace mission

In a meeting of European Union leaders, Spain proposed the creation of a peace mission to Colombia, to support the demilitarization of the country in the post-conflict phase. This mission would be led by Spain and would provide technical support to the Colombian government in

⁴⁴ <http://www.elespectador.com/noticias/paz/no-hay-una-orden-de-suspension-de-los-bombardeos-oscar-articulo-537999>

⁴⁵ <http://www.elespectador.com/noticias/paz/farc-asegura-estar-lista-el-cese-bilateral-al-fuego-articulo-537974>

⁴⁶ <http://www.semana.com/nacion/articulo/farc-han-cumplido-la-tregua-unilateral-segun-informes/415277-3>

⁴⁷ <http://www.eltiempo.com/politica/gobierno/ministros-a-defender-los-dialogos-de-cuba/15094117>

⁴⁸ www.reconciliacioncolombia.com/prensa/detalle/314/-antonio-garcia-revela-seis-puntos-de-agenda and www.eltiempo.com/politica/proceso-de-paz/los-puntos-que-conformarian-agenda-de-negociacion-entre-eln-y-gobierno/15115098

⁴⁹ <http://www.elespectador.com/noticias/paz/unasur-respalda-juan-manuel-santos-y-reitero-apoyo-al-p-articulo-538119>

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demining, demilitarization, and demobilization. A complementary financial fund would also be created to provide resources to a range of post-conflict initiatives.⁵⁰

China support for agriculture essential for post-conflict phase

Chancellor Maria Angela Holguin stated that China's ongoing support for agriculture in Colombia will be key in the post-conflict phase, when the agreements reached at the dialogue table – including that on rural reform – will be implemented. She also highlighted that technology applied in the countryside will be important in rural post-conflict development.⁵¹

5. Other Voices

NGOs call on FARC and GOC to lower intensity of conflict

A collective of 260 NGOs, called the Colombia-Europe-United States Coordination, called on the GOC and FARC to decrease the intensity of the conflict, and encouraged the FARC to maintain its unilateral ceasefire.⁵²

Referendum is not necessary to approve peace agreement: Attorney General

Attorney General Eduardo Montealegre opined that a referendum to gain popular support of a peace agreement is not necessary. He stated that a statutory law to modify the constitution could be proposed, and approved by Congress and then the Constitutional Court. GOC dialogue team leader Humberto de la Calle responded that the GOC maintains its position that a referendum must be held, so that the Colombian population can participate in the process of approving and implementing the content of a final agreement.⁵³

GOC cannot sign a peace agreement without disarmament

Ex-military commander Manuel Bonnet was interviewed by El Tiempo. In the article, he discusses the possibility of a bilateral ceasefire, the need to have plans for a ceasefire ready before an agreement is signed, and the need for the signature of a peace agreement and a ceasefire to be conditioned on disarmament of the FARC.⁵⁴

⁵⁰ <http://www.eltiempo.com/mundo/europa/espana-propone-en-la-ue-mision-de-paz-para-desmilitarizar-a-colombia/15118977>

⁵¹ <http://www.eltiempo.com/politica/gobierno/china-podria-ser-clave-para-agro-colombiano-si-hay-paz-canciller/15071733>

⁵² <http://www.elespectador.com/noticias/paz/piden-farc-y-gobierno-acciones-bajar-intensidad-del-con-articulo-538190>

⁵³ www.eltiempo.com/politica/proceso-de-paz/fiscal-recomienda-que-se-debe-descartar-la-refrendacion-de-los-acuerdos-de-paz/15121395 and <http://www.eltiempo.com/politica/proceso-de-paz/gobierno-dice-que-colombianos-si-van-a-refrendar-el-acuerdo/15122175>

⁵⁴ <http://www.eltiempo.com/politica/proceso-de-paz/cese-bilateral-del-fuego-antes-o-despues-del-acuerdo-de-paz/15115635>

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6. Emerging Challenges and Responses

Citizen Integration Centers to serve conflict-affected regions

One post-conflict responsibility of Minister of the Interior Juan Fernando Cristo is to oversee the administration of Citizen Integration Centers, which are to open in conflict-affected areas around the country. The centers will provide citizens, especially young people, with spaces and activities that focus on recreation, culture, pedagogy and other efforts to prevent violence.⁵⁵

Enrique Santos publishes book on peace talks

Writer and journalist Enrique Santos (brother of President Juan Manuel Santos) published a book called *That's how it started: The first secret face-to-face between the government and the FARC in Havana*. The book divulges some previously unknown details of the peace process, as well as clarifying some issues that had caused controversy or false rumors.⁵⁶

Transitional justice, especially jail time, greatest challenge for talks

El Tiempo published an analysis of challenges to come in the peace talks with the FARC. These include transitional justice and the fact that some sectors do not consider it a necessary or legitimate option, and specifically the fact that the guerrilla group has said that its leaders will not agree to jail time.⁵⁷ Meanwhile, GOC dialogue team leader Humberto de la Calle stated that Colombians must prepare to adjust to international standards on crime, impunity, and victims' rights, which will involve challenges in transitional justice and reconciliation.⁵⁸

Resources for war will be redirected for social investment

President Santos said resources currently spent on the conflict will be redirected to social projects such as education and housing, as well as to citizen security, in the post-conflict.⁵⁹

⁵⁵ <http://www.elespectador.com/noticias/politica/tarea-de-cristo-el-posconflicto-articulo-538591>

⁵⁶ <http://www.elespectador.com/noticias/paz/genealogia-del-proceso-de-paz-articulo-537911>

⁵⁷ www.eltiempo.com/politica/proceso-de-paz/que-retos-le-esperan-al-gobierno-en-la-mesa-de-dialogos-con-las-farc/15119696

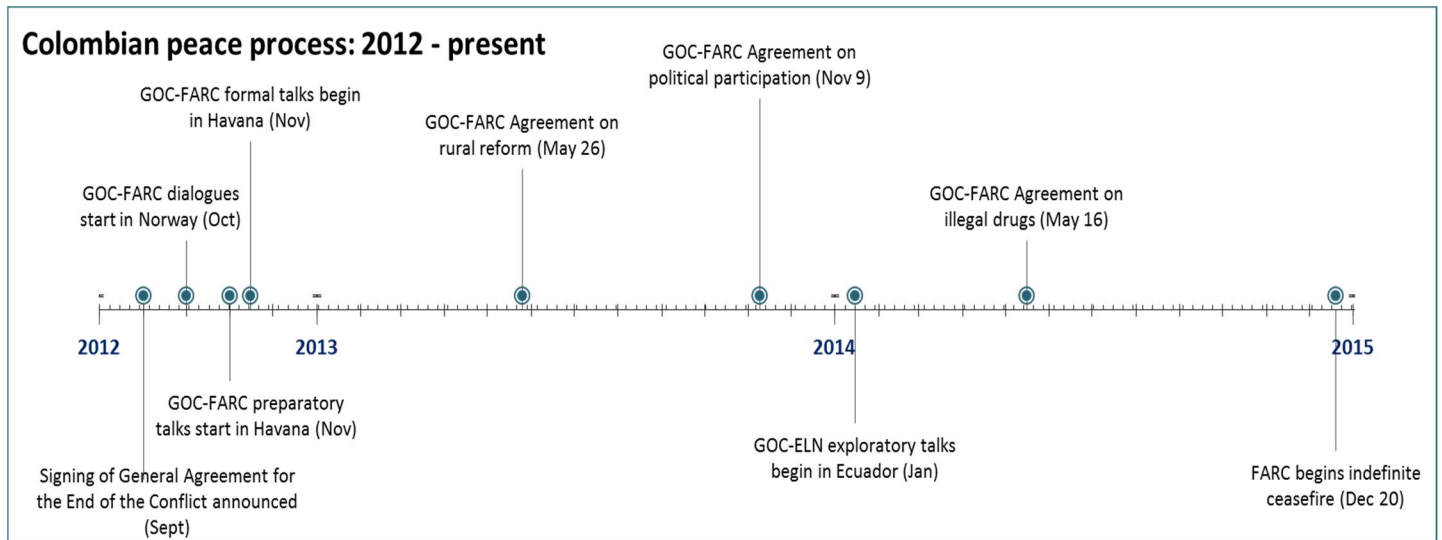
⁵⁸ <http://www.eltiempo.com/politica/proceso-de-paz/preparemos-el-animo-para-la-discusiones-dificiles-de-la-calle/15117338>

⁵⁹ <http://www.eltiempo.com/politica/gobierno/si-se-firma-la-paz-gastos-de-guerra-iran-a-inversion-social-santos-15111016>

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7. Timeline



8. Further Reading

NY Times piece “The Men Who Haunted Me as a Child in Colombia”

The New York Times published the article “The Men Who Haunted Me as a Child in Colombia”, written by Ernesto Londoño, a member of the editorial board. Londoño highlights his experience growing up in a wealthy family in Bogotá and the way the violence affected him as a child. He discusses his recent meetings with FARC dialogue team members in Cuba, and the need to trust them – even when it is very difficult to do so – in the interests of peace.⁶⁰

The challenges of ceasefires around the world: Reconciliación Colombia

The website “Reconciliación Colombia” published an overview of ceasefires in different parts of the world. The article highlights the differences of opinion about a ceasefire experienced in Sierra Leone, El Salvador, and Guatemala, and the different points in time that a ceasefire was agreed in relation to the start or end of peace talks. It also mentions that the Escola de Pau in Barcelona found that 60% of ceasefires around the world have been violated multiple times.⁶¹

⁶⁰ <http://www.nytimes.com/2015/01/18/opinion/sunday/the-men-who-haunted-me-as-a-child.html?smid=nytcore-ipad-share&smprod=nytcore-ipad&r=1>

⁶¹ <http://www.reconciliacioncolombia.com/historias/detalle/639/-como-se-dieron-los-ceses-bilaterales-en-otros-procesos-de-paz>



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Interview with Vicenc Fisas, peace and conflict expert

Vicenc Fisas, Director of the Escola da Pau in the University of Barcelona, was interviewed by El País. He discussed the need for a bilateral ceasefire to support the peace negotiations, as well as highlighting lessons learned from other ceasefires around the world and challenges to the Colombian peace process in 2015.⁶²

⁶² <http://www.elpais.com.co/elpais/judicial/noticias/cese-fuego-bilateral-siempre-tendra-detractores-experto-paz>

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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 January 21st – January 27th

Santos meets with Sub-Commission to plan ceasefire strategy

President Santos met with the Sub-Commission on the End of the Conflict, comprised of high-level military representatives, to plan a strategy for peace talk discussions of a bilateral ceasefire with the FARC.⁶³ High Commissioner for Peace Sergio Jaramillo, who was also in the meeting, emphasized that such planning is necessary because a bilateral ceasefire cannot be improvised, but must rather be well-designed to ensure its effectiveness and sustainability.⁶⁴ Discussions of this point will be led by the Sub-Commission and will begin on February 2nd, the start-date of the next round of talks in Cuba.⁶⁵ Meanwhile, the FARC have once again stated that ongoing military operations against them threaten to force them to break their current unilateral ceasefire, which was conditioned on a decrease in such military activity.⁶⁶

⁶³ <http://www.elespectador.com/noticias/paz/santos-y-mandos-militares-definen-plan-de-comision-trat-articulo-539736>

⁶⁴ <http://www.elespectador.com/noticias/paz/cese-al-fuego-farc-no-puede-ser-improvisado-comisionado-articulo-539563>

⁶⁵ <http://www.elespectador.com/noticias/paz/santos-y-mandos-militares-definen-plan-de-comision-trat-articulo-539736>

⁶⁶ <http://www.semana.com/nacion/articulo/farc-acusa-santos-de-reiniciar-el-fuego/415918-3>

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GOC would invest up to 2.7 billion pesos for FARC DDR

In the case of a final peace agreement with the FARC, the GOC would have to invest between 1.8 and 2.7 billion pesos in DDR-related public policy. This was calculated using the average amount invested in each demobilized person from 2006 to 2014, which was 66 million pesos.⁶⁷

Rural post-conflict police suggestion causes controversy

Colombia's plans for post-conflict development include agrarian training centers and a rural police force to consolidate post-conflict security in areas especially affected by the violence.⁶⁸ President Santos announced that France has committed to supporting these two initiatives, and expressed that the GOC is open to the possibility that ex-FARC combatants could join a rural police force, as long as it is defined in a peace agreement.⁶⁹ Inspector General Alejandro Ordóñez interpreted this as an indication that the GOC is negotiating the structure of the armed forces with the FARC, which Santos denied.⁷⁰ Meanwhile, Governor of Antioquia Sergio Fajardo stated that integrating members of the FARC in a rural police force would cause unnecessary tensions in rural communities, thereby preventing reconciliation.⁷¹

3. International

Peace will change Colombia: US Ambassador

In interview with *El Tiempo*, US Ambassador Kevin Whitaker discussed drug production and trafficking in Colombia, the FARC's involvement with this illegal activity, and his optimism regarding the GOC-FARC peace talks. He highlighted that Colombia will be a changed country in peacetime, with better security, more foreign investment, and more employment.⁷²

⁶⁷ <http://www.eltiempo.com/politica/justicia/costo-de-la-desmovilizacion-de-las-farc-/15150395>

⁶⁸ <http://www.eltiempo.com/politica/proceso-de-paz/colombia-implementara-policia-rural-para-el-posconflicto/15145378> and

⁶⁹ www.eltiempo.com/politica/proceso-de-paz/francia-ayudara-a-implementar-escuelas-agrarias-para-el-posconflicto/15142836 and www.eltiempo.com/politica/proceso-de-paz/santos-no-descarta-que-las-farc-puedan-hacer-parte-de-policia-rural/15150177

⁷⁰ <http://www.eltiempo.com/politica/justicia/dura-respuesta-de-santos-a-ordonez-por-criticas-a-la-policia-rural/15153297>

⁷¹ <http://www.elespectador.com/noticias/judicial/rechazan-posibilidad-de-integrar-desmovilizados-de-farc-articulo-540325>

⁷² <http://www.eltiempo.com/politica/gobierno/estados-unidos-no-quiere-ser-un-obstaculo-para-la-paz-de-colombia/15144435>

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4. Other Voices

Social investment necessary for peace: Jairo Parra

The President of the Colombian Institute for Procedural Law, Jairo Parra, stated that social investment in initiatives that decrease inequality in Colombia are crucial to the sustainability of peace. Mr. Parra highlighted that inequality was a key factor in the creation of the guerrilla groups and the start of the conflict, and that living conditions in the countryside must improve in order for peace to be legitimate and strong.⁷³

Conservative Party reiterates support for referendum

The Conservative Party re-stated its opinion that the Colombian public must be allowed to vote for or against implementation of a peace agreement by referendum. They also expressed that a bilateral ceasefire should only begin if and when the FARC have handed over their weapons, when it will be safer for the armed forces to terminate operations against them.⁷⁴

Governors speak on post-conflict hopes and plans

El Espectador interviewed governors of departments including Cundinamarca, Antioquia, Atlantico, Bolivar, and Caldas about their plans for the post-conflict phase and the message they wanted to send to Havana. Points upon which many agreed included the need to adopt a more rapid pace in the GOC-FARC dialogues, worries about the cost of implementing a final peace agreement, hopes that the military will de-escalate operations, and efforts to highlight the importance of agriculture for post-conflict development.⁷⁵

Demobilized EPL member discusses GOC-FARC talks

El Espectador interviewed Gerardo Vega, who demobilized from the EPL guerrilla group in 1991. In the article, he discusses the NGO he manages which focuses on land redistribution, his support for a bilateral ceasefire as soon as possible, and his opinion that there must be opportunities for political participation for high-ranking FARC commanders. He also highlights the importance of education in the post-conflict context.⁷⁶

⁷³ <http://www.elespectador.com/noticias/paz/fundamental-hacer-inversion-social-superar-desigualdad-articulo-539890>

⁷⁴ <http://www.elespectador.com/noticias/paz/colombianos-deben-tener-ultima-palabra-acuerdos-de-paz-articulo-539489>

⁷⁵ <http://www.elespectador.com/noticias/paz/gobernadores-hablan-del-posconflicto-articulo-539813>

⁷⁶ <http://www.elespectador.com/noticias/paz/el-tema-ya-no-tierra-educacion-articulo-540104>

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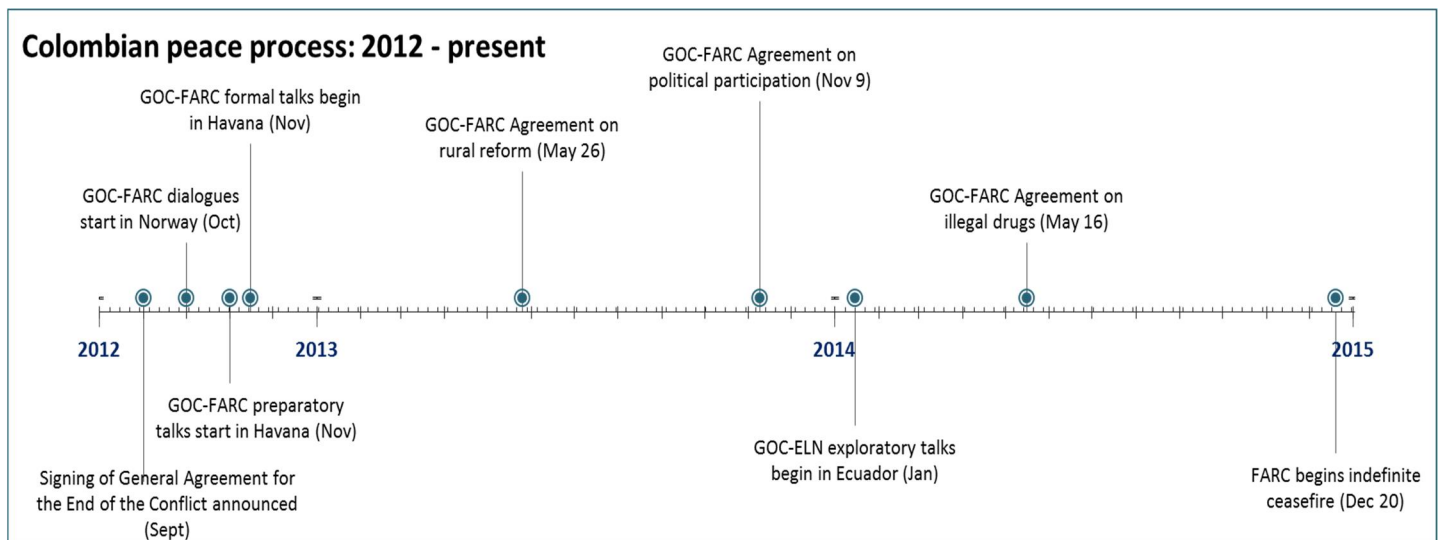
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5. Emerging Challenges and Responses

GOC exploring post-conflict benefits for military

Political parties that form the National Unity group will meet on February 5th to examine justice options to apply to members of the military who are guilty of crimes in the armed conflict. The goal of this discussion, which will be ongoing, will be to avoid what happened during the 1990s, when some members of the military were jailed while demobilized guerrilla members were given judicial benefits and in some cases entered politics.⁷⁷

6. Timeline



7. Further Reading

Analysis of the environment and peacebuilding

El Espectador analyzed the importance of environmental conservation during the post-conflict phase, highlighting that this period could be an opportunity for Colombia to ensure the conservation of its national parks. Such an effort would have to be designed and implemented in conjunction with land restitution plans and other rural development initiatives.⁷⁸

⁷⁷ www.eltiempo.com/politica/partidos-politicos/unidad-nacional-explora-alternativas-penales-para-uniformados/15136157

⁷⁸ <http://www.elespectador.com/noticias/paz/el-desafio-del-medio-ambiente-el-posconflicto-articulo-539075>



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Ex-ELN member writes open letter to ‘Gabino’

Verdad Abierta published an open letter from an un-named ex-member of the ELN to Commander ‘Gabino’, sharing some of his experiences within the group and using them as the basis for the argument that ‘Gabino’ should commit to peace.⁷⁹

Referendum: necessary or not?

An article in Semana Magazine considered Attorney General Eduardo Montealegre’s recent controversial statement that constitutionally speaking, a referendum of a final peace agreement would not be necessary as the accord could be approved by the President alone. The article states that although this is true, the GOC’s stance that a referendum is necessary makes more sense, as it will give legitimacy and public commitment to the peace agreement that would not otherwise exist.⁸⁰

⁷⁹ <http://www.verdadabierta.com/procesos-de-paz/eln/5578-carta-a-gabino>

⁸⁰ <http://www.semana.com/nacion/articulo/no-habria-referendo-para-los-acuerdos-de-paz/415608-3>