

DDR & CHILDREN'S ISSUES: A BI-MONTHLY REVIEW

SEPT-OCT 2014

1. BACKGROUND

The Colombian Reintegration Agency (ACR)'s DDR initiatives aim to fulfill the following objectives: 1) create conditions allowing demobilized ex-combatants to become independent citizens, 2) strengthen socio-economic conditions in receptor communities, and 3) promote national reconciliation.

Disengaged children and adolescents have received special attention through programs and policies led by the Colombian Family Welfare Institute (ICBF). The ICBF Assistance Program aims to reestablish and guarantee the rights of each disengaged child and adolescent, with special emphasis on their protection, education and health.

USAID supports two IOM program areas that strengthen these initiatives: the Community-Oriented Reintegration of Ex-Combatants (CORE) Program, which has supported the GOC's DDR work since 2006, and the Institutional Strengthening Program to Support Child Ex-Combatants and Children and Youth at risk of Recruitment by Illegal Armed Groups (CHS), which has supported the ICBF's assistance to victims of child recruitment since 1999.

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2. KEY DEVELOPMENTS

TEXT OF THREE AGREEMENTS MADE PUBLIC

The texts of the agreements reached so far in the peace process were made public.⁽¹⁾ They have been kept confidential so far to allow the dialogue teams to progress without external interference.⁽²⁾ The divulgence of the agreements aims to counter opposition efforts to spread untrue rumors about their content and resolve doubts about what is being decided at the dialogue table.⁽³⁾ El Tiempo identified 8 "myths" that are debunked by the texts' publication:

Integrated rural reform: 1) Myth: The economy will change to a socialist model. Reality: A land bank and provisions for equal land holding will be created. 2) Myth: Private property will be limited. Reality: Measures will end informal land titling, but private property rights are upheld. 3) Myth: Holdings of more than 100 ha. will be prohibited. Reality: Land access is guaranteed. Industrial holdings will be secure, but small and medium producers will have more protection.

Political participation: 4) Myth: FARC high commanders will be given seats in Congress. Reality: Democratic participation by all citizens is facilitated. The FARC can form a political party by fulfilling criteria which apply to all parties. 5) Myth: Colombia is heading towards communism. Reality: Democracy will be broadened, including opposition guarantees.

Under the illegal drugs agreement: 6) Myth: The dialogue teams are negotiating the future of the armed forces. Reality: The armed forces have never been discussed in any of the three agreements. 7) Myth: There will be no more crop fumigation. Reality: Crop fumigation will continue in areas that do not agree to substitution and manual eradication is impossible. 8) Myth: The FARC have not admitted their role in drug trafficking. Reality: Although the FARC does not elaborate on this point, they agree to end any relationship with drugs trafficking. ⁽⁴⁾

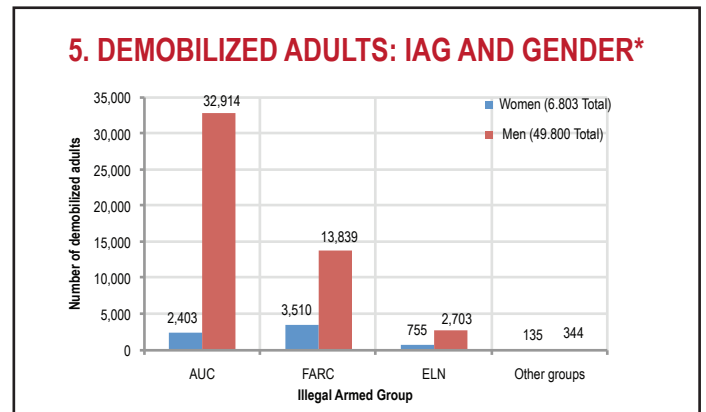
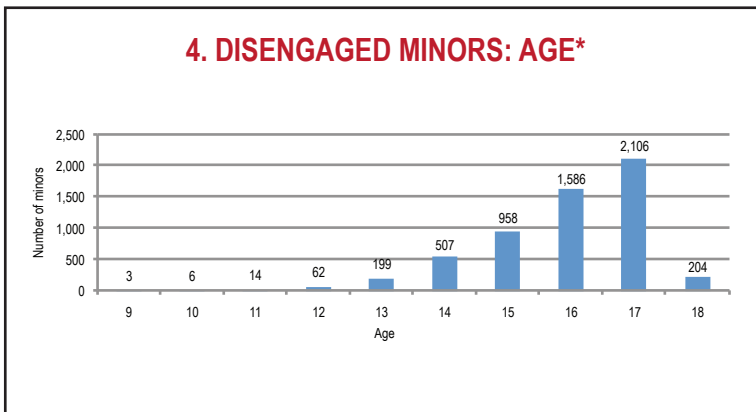
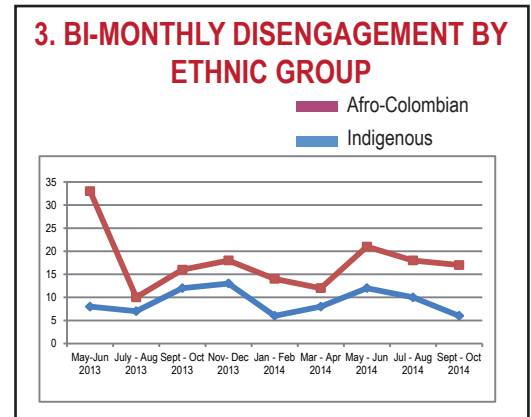
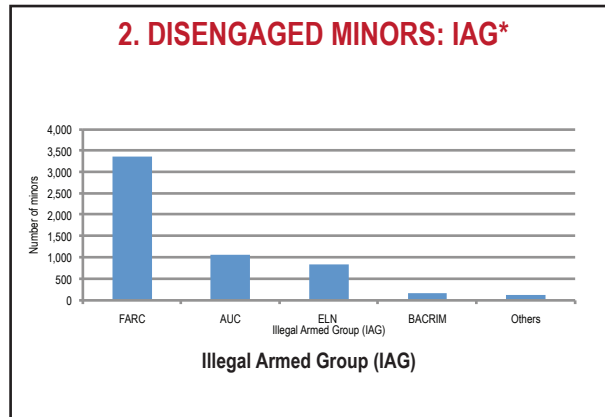
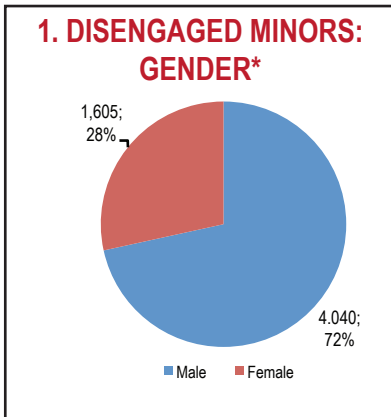
CHILD RECRUITMENT CONTINUES AS A SYSTEMATIC AND WIDESPREAD PRACTICE

Systematic and widespread child recruitment continues. A member of the FARC who demobilized in October said there are FARC orders to increase recruitment of minors, and the Armed Forces confirmed this information.⁽⁵⁾ COALICO confirms 53 cases of forced recruitment in the first quarter of 2014 – including 25 by FARC, 7 by ELN and 21 by "post-demobilization groups." The FARC reportedly use toys and even theater as tactics, promising children better living conditions, according to a demobilized member recruited as a child and later forced to recruit children himself. However, the Office of the Ombudsman warns that criminal groups are now the main recruiters of minors. In addition to incorporation into the criminal group, recruited minors can be used for intelligence activities, which are difficult to detect.⁽⁶⁾ A recent study also reveals that 47% of the current members of the FARC were recruited as minors, and that child recruitment is higher in areas with natural resources.⁽⁷⁾

3. PROGRESS REPORT: DISENGAGED MINORS & DEMOBILIZED ADULTS*

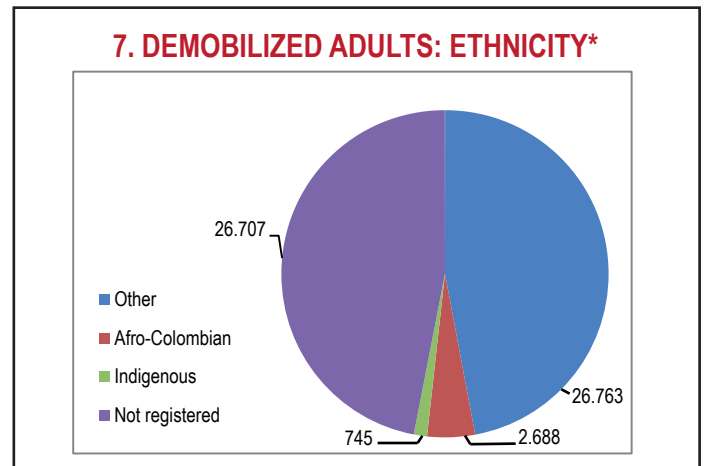
Total disengaged minors: 5,645

Total demobilized adults: 56,903



6. TOP 8 DEPARTMENTS FOR ADULT RELOCATION*

Department	Number	%
Antioquia	11,656	20%
Bogotá D.C.	5,669	10%
Córdoba	3,380	6%
Cesar	3,075	5%
Meta	3,026	5%
Valle del Cauca	2,609	5%
Santander	2,249	4%
Magdalena	2,056	4%



*Data up to October 31, 2014

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

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

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

Figure 4: Numbers of disengaged minors in each age group. The average age of recruitment is between 15 and 18 years old.

Source: ICBF Database, Unique Beneficiary Registry (RUI)

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

Figure 6: The eight departments to which the highest numbers of ex-combatants relocate for their reintegration process.

Figure 7: Total number of demobilized adults by ethnicity.

Sources: ICBF Database and ACR Reintegration Information System (SIR)

4. PEACE PROCESS

VICTIMS' DELEGATIONS GO TO HAVANA TO PARTICIPATE DIRECTLY IN TALKS

Two of the four delegations of victims who have so far gone to Cuba to participate directly in the GOC-FARC peace talks travelled in early September and October. Each delegation has 12 members chosen by the UN and the Universidad Nacional. Fabrizio Hoschild, UN Resident Coordinator in Colombia, said that total representativeness is impossible, as there are 6.8 million victims and only 60 will go to the talks in the five delegations.

EFFORTS TO INCLUDE PERSPECTIVE OF CHILDREN, ADOLESCENTS AND YOUTH

University students collected over 100,000 signatures in September to support request that the GOC allow a delegation of young people to go to Cuba to address the topic of children and youth. They are concerned about the future of young people who are currently members of the FARC and therefore at risk of joining criminal groups after demobilization.⁽⁸⁾ In Medellin, 50 children between 3 and 8 years old created 21 proposals for achieving peace. The initiative, led by the Better World Foundation, ended in a public reading of a manifesto in Bolivar Park, presented to the Minister of the Interior to be delivered to President Santos.⁽⁹⁾ Finally, forum was held in Cartagena on “Peace is also made with children and adolescents” to promote the construction of an inclusive peace, and influence and strengthen public policies to support child victims and those at risk.⁽¹⁰⁾

5. DIVERSITY ISSUES

CONFLICT IMPACTS GIRLS THROUGH RECRUITMENT, OTHER VICTIMIZING ACTS

At least a million girls under 18 years of age have suffered as victims of the armed conflict between 1985 and 2014, according to the Victims Unit, including those who were forcibly displaced, witnessed killings, lost loved ones, or were recruited by illegal armed groups. Of the 28,389 trust funds provided in accordance with the Victims Law of 2011, 13,853 (49%) were provided to girl children and adolescents. 3,879 assistance and comprehensive reparations plans were created for girls to identify skills, needs and life goals. Sexual violence, which most directly impacts girls between 11 and 17 years of age, was included as a criterion to prioritize access to comprehensive reparations.⁽¹¹⁾

6. INSTITUTIONAL ADVANCES

INSTITUTIONAL PREPARATIONS FOR PEACE

The GOC has begun preparations of the institutional architecture that will be necessary for peace. This includes the creation of a new Ministry of Citizen Security, headed by General (r) Oscar Naranjo – current member of the GOC dialogue teams – who will be the Minister of Post-Conflict, Human Rights, and Security. This Ministry will cover a range of functions including an as-yet undefined role in the design and implementation of reintegration programs for ex-combatants.⁽¹²⁾

Another institutional preparation was the reactivation of the National Peace Council, which will respond to the need to raise awareness about the peace process and any final agreement reached. The Council includes members from civil society, business sectors, politics, academia, different regions, and different ethnic groups. The objective is to increase regional public awareness about the peace process.⁽¹³⁾

ACR DIRECTOR ALEJANDRO ÉDER RESIGNS AND IS REPLACED

After eight years working in the Colombian Reintegration Agency (ACR), four of them in the position of Director, Alejandro Eder has resigned for personal reasons. Under his direction, the ACR has incorporated differential focuses, extended benefits to the families of demobilized people, and included a broader community approach in the reintegration process.⁽¹⁴⁾ He has also been key in disseminating the GOC's message about the importance of regional design and implementation of peace initiatives as part of the peacebuilding process after a possible peace agreement. Éder will be replaced by Joshua Mitrotti, who previously worked for the ACR for six years, and his most recent position was as Senior Manager of Public Affairs for Burson-Marsteller.⁽¹⁵⁾

7. FURTHER READING

CONCLUSION OF THE TRAINING FOR COLOMBIAN JOURNALISTS HOW TO NARRATE PEACE?

More than 250 journalists from seven Colombian regions participated in the How to narrate peace? Peacebuilding, historical memory, and reconciliation workshop in 2014. This was a series of twelve workshops that began with five sessions in 2013 and seven in 2014. The workshops were led by three government institutions: National Center for Historical Memory, Colombian Reintegration Agency, and the Attorney General's Office. The goal was to generate spaces of trust and institutional exchange to strengthen the implementation of transitional justice processes in the country.

The workshops How to narrate peace? had the objective of motivating journalistic exercises that contribute to lasting and sustainable peace in Colombia, and to the distribution of information about reconciliation and reintegration based on transparent concepts and according to the norms that have been established in the country, specifically Law 1424 of 2010 (the Demobilized People's Law).⁽¹⁶⁾

BOOK ON CHILD RECRUITMENT BY FARC AS AN INTERNATIONAL CRIME

Written by Luis Andres Fajardo Arturo and published by University Sergio Arboleda. Reclutamiento de niñas y niños. Como crimen internacional de las Farc en Colombia, Bogotá: Editorial Planeta, 2014, 262 páginas. The book throughout its four chapters shows how the FARC uses children in the armed conflict by identifying the causes, activities carried out and the effects of their use as instruments of violence. ⁽¹⁷⁾

1 At the time of writing, the peace process had been suspended on November 17th due to the kidnapping of General Rubén Darío Alzate Mora, Captain Jorge Rodríguez Contreras, and lawyer Gloria Urrego in Chocó department. Details of this significant interruption to the peace process will be included in the November – December Issues report.

2 ¡No más secretos en los diálogos de paz!! 'Semana, September 27 2014. www.semana.com/nacion/articulo/no-mas-secretos-en-los-dialogos-de-paz/404171-3

3 'Discurso de Humberto de la Calle al momento de presentar los documentos completos de los acuerdos' El Espectador, September 24 2014. www.elespectador.com/noticias/paz/discurso-de-humberto-de-calle-al-momento-de-presentar-l-articulo-518679

4 'Ocho mitos sobre los diálogos de paz que se quedaron sin piso', El Tiempo, September 27 2014 www.eltiempo.com/politica/proceso-de-paz/ocho-mitos-sobre-los-dialogos-de-paz-que-se-quedaron-sin-piso/14603459

5 'Desmovilizada de las Farc asegura que esta guerrilla sigue reclutando menores en sus filas,' Teleantioquia Noticias, October 3 2014, <http://www.teleantioquia.co/v/34742-15397.html>

6 'El reclutamiento infantil sigue siendo un flagelo sistemático y generalizado en Colombia,' Pulzo.com, October 20 2014, <http://www.pulzo.com/nacion/227966-el-reclutamiento-infantil-sigue-siendo-un-flagelo-sistemático-y-generalizado-en>

7 The conclusions are contained in a book by the main investigator, Luis Andres Fajardo, "Reclutamiento de niñas y niños como crimen internacional de las FARC en Colombia", published by University Sergio Arboleda. "El 47 % de los integrantes de las FARC fue reclutado en la niñez," Semana, October 29 2014, <http://www.semana.com/nacion/articulo/el-47-de-los-integrantes-de-las-farc-fueron-reclutados-siendo-ninos/407422-3>.

8 "Los jóvenes quieren ir a Havana," El Espectador, September 13 2014, www.elespectador.com/noticias/politica/los-jovenes-quieren-ir-havana-articulo-516430

9 "Más días felices y fin de la violencia piden los niños en un manifiesto," El Colombiano, September 13 2014, http://colombia.mmi-e.com/portal/tmp/zona_5/pdf/20140913CL007.PDF

10 "Con los niños, niñas y adolescentes también se hace paz," El Universal, October 10 2014, http://colombia.mmi-e.com/portal/tmp/zona_5/pdf/20141010UV003.PDF

11 "Un millón de niñas colombianas han sufrido rigores del conflicto," La Opinión, October 10 2014, http://colombia.mmi-e.com/portal/tmp/zona_5/pdf/20141010OP006.PDF

12 'Reparos al ministro del posconflicto', El Espectador, August 17 2014 <http://www.elespectador.com/noticias/politica/reparos-al-ministro-del-posconflicto-articulo-511064>

13 'Quedó instalado el Consejo Nacional de Paz, clave en el posconflicto', ElTiempo, October 10 2014, <http://www.eltiempo.com/politica/proceso-de-paz/quedo-instalado-el-consejo-nacional-de-paz-clave-en-el-posconflicto/14666458>

14 'Renuncia director general de la Agencia Colombiana para la Reintegración', Noticias ACR, October 22 2014. <http://www.reintegracion.gov.co/es/sala-de-prensa/noticias/Paginas/2014/22.aspx>

15 'Un historiador y periodista para la Agencia de Reintegración'. Caracol, October 28 2014. <http://www.caracol.com.co/noticias/actualidad/un-historiador-y-periodista-para-la-agencia-de-reintegracion/20141028/nota/2482973.aspx>

16 'Santa Marta será sede del taller para periodistas ¿Cómo narrar la paz?' IOM News, October 6 2014. <http://www.oim.org.co/noticias/43-reconciliacion-y-reintegracion/3158-santa-marta-sera-sede-del-taller-para-periodistas-como-narrar-la-paz.html>

17 Velázquez, Fernando. "Reclutamiento ilegal de Menores," El Colombiano, Opinión, Noviembre 9 2014, http://www.elcolombiano.com/BancoConocimiento/R/reclutamiento_ilegal_de_menores/reclutamiento_ilegal_de_menores.asp