

 PEACE MAIL

August 9-15, 2016

Processes for political opposition and Special Jurisdiction for Peace (JEP) announced

On Tuesday, August 9th, Joint Communiqué #84¹ named Sergio de Zubiria and Pablo Julio Cruz as representatives of political opposition. They will be accorded formal roles in the peace negotiations. At the end of the week, Joint Communiqué #88² announced the selection processes for judges who would form the JEP. The five-person independent selection committee comprises Pope Francisco, Secretary General of the United Nations Ban Ki Moon, and the Criminal Chamber of the Supreme Court. These individuals, along with a delegation from the New York-based International Center for Transitional Justice, and the Permanent Commission of the State University System, will also propose the possible candidates. The committee must approve judge selections in a 4/5 vote, and the selected judges must conform to various professional and nationality criteria outlined in the Communiqué. While some critiqued the use of foreigners (who lack deep understanding of the Colombian context) and the Pope (who implicates the influence over the Catholic Church over the outcomes),³ the announcement was generally lauded.

Technical visits completed in all proposed FARC transitional zones

Also on Tuesday, Joint Communiqué #85⁴ announced the successful completion of technical visits by the FARC-EP and GOC to FARC transitional zones planned for the department of Meta. That same day, President Juan Manuel Santos assured citizens that the “communities would not be affected in any way, and that there is no reason to worry...there is not going to be any problem for the [civilian] population.”⁵ The remaining technical visits to the proposed FARC transitional zones occurred over Wednesday (Joint Communiqué #86),⁶ Thursday (Joint Communiqué #87),⁷ Friday (Joint Communiqué #89),⁸ Saturday (Joint Communiqué #90),⁹ and Sunday (Joint Communiqué #91).¹⁰

ELN movement across Colombia-Venezuela border, violence continues

The Colombia-Venezuela border region has seen a recent large displacement of ELN guerrillas to Venezuela, in the Táchira and Apure states in particular, which border the Colombian states of Norte de Santander and Arauca, respectively. They have reportedly increased recruitment of children for their ranks as well as narco-trafficking operations in the region.¹¹ Meanwhile, rural inhabitants reported forced displacements by the ELN in the Colombian department of Antioquia, despite the March 30th announcement that the ELN would begin peace talks with the GOC - a process that has yet to achieve notable advances.¹²