

# DDR AND CHILD SOLDIER ISSUES

A MONTHLY REVIEW  
JUNE 2016

USAID supports the International Organization for Migration (IOM) in Colombia through the **Recruitment Prevention and Reintegration (RPR) Program**. The RPR Program provides institutional strengthening for the Government of Colombia (GOC) to support legal, social and economic reintegration services to demobilized adults and disengaged children, as well as to prevent new recruitment.

The GOC supports demobilized adults through its **Colombian Reintegration Agency (ACR)**. The DDR initiatives of the ACR aim to fulfill the following objectives: 1) Create conditions for demobilized ex-combatants to become independent citizens, 2) Strengthen socio-economic conditions in receptor communities, and 3) Promote reconciliation.

Children and adolescents who disengage from illegal armed groups, recognized as victims, receive special attention through programs and policies led by the **Colombian Family Welfare Institute (ICBF)** through its Specialized Assistance Program, which aims to reestablish and guarantee rights with special emphasis on protection, education and health.

This monthly review, produced by IOM, provides a summary of news related to disarmament, demobilization and reintegration (DDR) in Colombia, along with statistics on ex-combatant adults and disengaged children.

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## KEY DEVELOPMENTS

### June 23rd bilateral ceasefire and disarmament agreement

On Thursday, June 23, the FARC and the GOC announced agreement on a final, bilateral ceasefire, the process for laying down arms, security guarantees, and the plebiscite mechanism for public endorsement of the Final Agreement, dependent upon approval by the Constitutional Court.<sup>1</sup> The signing ceremony in Havana was attended by UN Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon, the presidents of Chile, Cuba and Venezuela and the foreign minister of Norway as witnesses, among other high-profile figures.

The announcement was greeted with excitement and optimism by the international community; numerous heads of state, senior UN officials and social leaders reiterated their support for the peace process in Colombia.<sup>2</sup> At the same time, it is important to keep in mind that more work remains before a Final Agreement is reached. Key final issues in the peace talks include reincorporation of the FARC into civilian life, transformation of the guerrilla group into a political movement, and monitoring and implementation mechanisms<sup>3</sup>

## PEACE PROCESSES

### FARC “transitional zones” announced

Following the ceasefire and disarmament agreement between the FARC and the GOC, the Ministry of Defense released the list of sites where the FARC will gather its forces at 23 ‘transitional zones’ and 8 smaller ‘camps’ for a six-month process, during which they will lay down their arms, in phases, and begin their reincorporation into civilian life.<sup>4</sup> The UN verification mission will be responsible for monitoring the process and collecting the arms.

### President Santos estimates July 20th for concluding peace negotiations

President Santos announced July 20 as an estimated date for concluding the peace negotiations with the FARC, which have been ongoing for over three years in Havana. The announcement was made in a meeting with leaders of Congress and political party representatives.<sup>5</sup> In response, FARC leader ‘Timochenko’ cautioned against setting deadlines, stating that progress is being made but that setting dates only damages the process, especially when those dates are not mutually agreed upon.<sup>6</sup>

FARC

<sup>1</sup> “Comunicado Conjunto Acuerdo sobre Cese al fuego y de hostilidades bilateral y Definitivo y Dejaración de Armas, Garantías de Seguridad y Referendación.” Office of the High Commissioner for Peace. 23 June 2016. <http://www.altocomisionadoparalapaz.gov.co/procesos-y-conversaciones/documentos-y-comunicados-conjuntos/Paginas/Comunicado-Conjunto-Acuerdo-sobre-Cese-al-fuego-y-de-hostilidades-bilateral-y-Definitivo-y-Dejaracion-de-Armas.aspx>

<sup>2</sup> “El mundo celebró el Acuerdo del punto de Fin del Conflicto.” Office of the High Commissioner for Peace. 24 June 2016. <http://www.altocomisionadoparalapaz.gov.co/Prensa/Paginas/2016/Junio/El-mundo-celebro-el-Acuerdo-del-punto-de-Fin-del-Conflicto.aspx>

<sup>3</sup> “Agreements on the End of the Conflict and the Referendum Bring Peace in Colombia Closer.” International Crisis Group. 23 June 2016. <http://www.crisisgroup.org/en/publication-type/statements/agreements-on-the-end-of-the-conflict-and-the-referendum-bring-peace-in-colombia-closer.aspx>

<sup>4</sup> “Comunicado de prensa - Ministerio de Defensa Nacional.” Ministry of Defense. 24 June 2016. <https://www.mindefensa.gov.co/trj/portal/Mindefensa/contenido/noticiamdr?idXml=809f9f51-491c-3410-03bc-902925338e78&date=24052016>

<sup>5</sup> “Santos dice que el 20 de julio podría haber cierre de negociaciones.” El Colombiano. 20 June 2016. <http://www.elcolombiano.com/colombia/yo-creo-que-ya-para-el-20-de-julio-habremos-podido-cerrar-las-negociaciones-en-la-habana--santos-BY4427838>

<sup>6</sup> “Timochenko niega ponerle fecha al proceso de paz.” El Espectador. 21 June 2016. <http://www.elespectador.com/noticias/paz/timochenko-no-le-pone-fecha-paz-articulo-639051>

### Kidnappings contribute to stalled ELN peace talks

The release of three journalists kidnapped by the ELN guerrilla group, including Spanish journalist Salud Hernandez, highlights the continued practice of kidnapping by the group. President Santos has stated that the ELN must cease kidnappings and release all hostages before formal peace talks can begin. In a statement this week, ELN leader Gabino reiterated that the ELN view as a condition unilaterally imposed by President Santos after the agenda was mutually agreed upon. The ELN claim they have “always been clear” that kidnappings should be kept to a minimum, and that the group has actually reduced kidnappings recently, but civil society is unaware of this because they are ‘manipulated’ by the media.<sup>7</sup> The GOC has insisted that the ELN cease kidnapping since the formal talks were first announced on March 30.<sup>8</sup>

### Civil society calls on ELN to stop kidnappings

Dozens of Colombian NGOs and activists sent a letter to the ELN on June 16, calling on the guerrilla group to cease kidnappings. Signatories include think tanks, victim organizations and leftist organizations.<sup>9</sup> Soon after the agenda for formal peace negotiations with the ELN was announced in March, President Santos established the precondition that the ELN halt kidnappings and release all hostages before the talks can begin. The group has been refusing to end the practice, and kidnappings have continued. As the activists and NGOs state in the letter, “if the ELN uses society as a reference in negotiations, as it has said on numerous occasions, it cannot remain deaf to the demands of society to bring an end, once and for all, to this condemnable behavior.”<sup>10</sup>

### ELN wants in on the FARC-GOC bilateral ceasefire

The ELN, Colombia’s second largest guerrilla group, called for inclusion in the bilateral ceasefire agreement announced with the FARC. This is despite continued delays in the start of the formal peace talks between the GOC and ELN, which were announced in March. The group claims the GOC is moving forward with the FARC while ‘freezing’ the process with the ELN.<sup>11</sup>

## INTERNATIONAL SUPPORT

### United States commits \$33 million to demining

The United States, Canada, and Mexico will offer “strong support” for the peace accords, with particular attention to the demining process. The United States has offered \$33 million and technical support for demining operations in zones under guerrilla influence.<sup>12</sup>

### United Nations observers begin to arrive

A first group of 23 UN observers arrived in Bogota following the announcement of the bilateral ceasefire, joining another 20 members of the advance group working to set up the verification mission.<sup>13</sup>

<sup>7</sup> “El afirma que ha reducido el secuestro de manera significativa.” Vanguardia. 12 June 2016. <http://www.vanguardia.com/colombia/361853-eln-afirma-que-ha-reducido-el-secuestro-de-manera-significativa>

<sup>8</sup> “Paz con el ELN: Gabino culpa a Santos.” Semana. 13 June 2016. <http://www.semana.com/nacion/articulo/proceso-de-paz-con-el-eln-gabino-culpa-a-juan-manuel-santos/477592>

<sup>9</sup> “Colombian NGOs urge ELN rebels to release hostages, begin peace talks.” Colombia Reports. 19 June 2016. <http://colombiareports.com/colombian-ngos-urge-eln-rebels-release-hostages-begin-peace-talks/>

<sup>10</sup> “Open letter to the ELN.” <http://www.ipc.org.co/agenciadeprensa/wp-content/uploads/2016/06/carta-abierta-ELN-final.pdf>

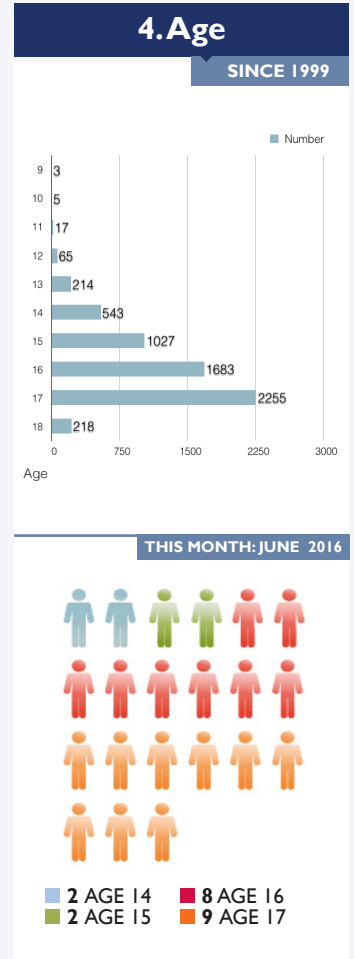
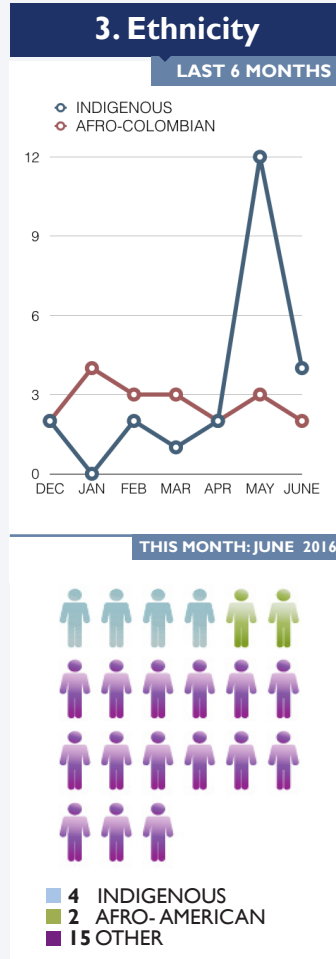
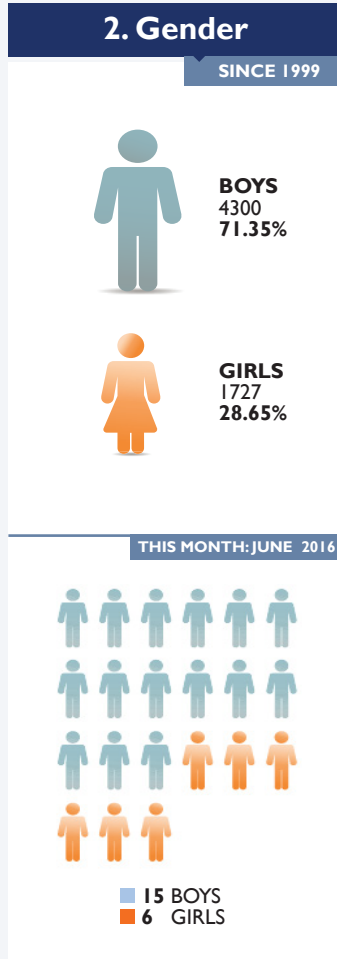
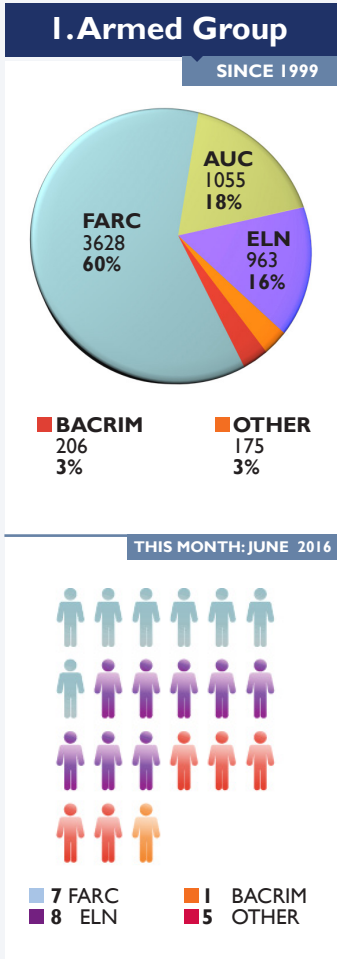
<sup>11</sup> “Firmar y Congelar, Una Táctica.” Portal Voces de Colombia. 27 June 2016. <https://www.eln-vooces.com/index.php/vooces-del-eln/comando-central/editorial/699-firmar-y-congelar-una-tactica>

<sup>12</sup> “EE, UU, Canadá y México darán ‘fuerte apoyo’ a acuerdos de paz.” El Tiempo. 29 June 2016. <http://www.eltiempo.com/politica/proceso-de-paz/ee-uu-canada-y-mexico-apoyan-fin-del-conflicto-y-acuerdos-de-paz-en-colombia/16633203>

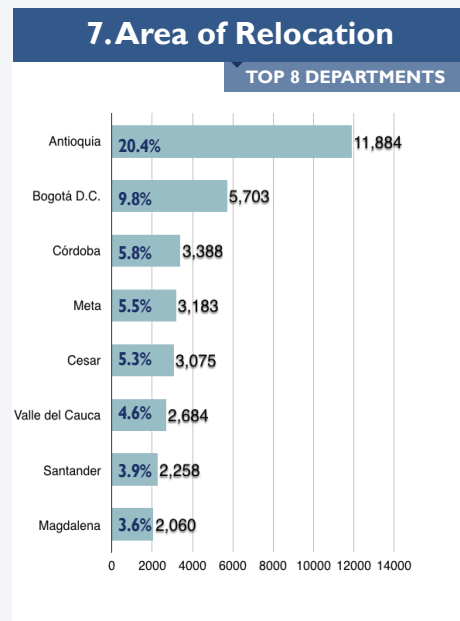
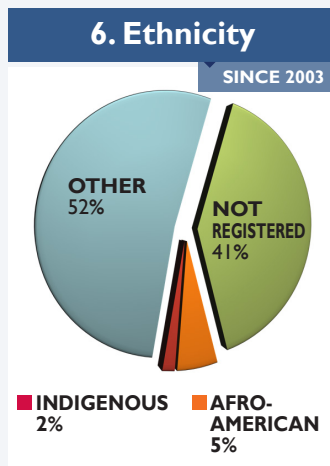
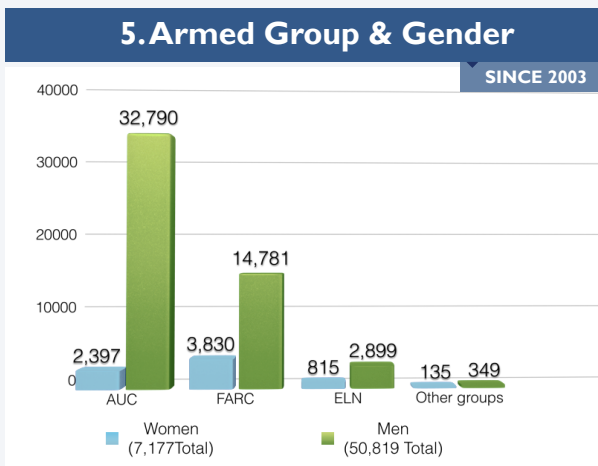
<sup>13</sup> “Observadores de las naciones unidas llegan a Bogotá luego del reciente acuerdo entre el gobierno de Colombia y las FARC-EP.” United Nations. 28 June 2016. <http://nacionesunidas.org.co/blog/2016/06/28/observadores-de-las-naciones-unidas-llegan-a-bogota-luego-del-reciente-acuerdo-entre-el-gobierno-de-colombia-y-las-farc-ep/>

# FIGURES & TRENDS

## Disengaged Children & Adolescents TOTAL 6,027



## Demobilized Adults TOTAL 57,996



Data up to June 30, 2016

**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.

Sources for figures 1-4: ICBF Database, Unified Beneficiary Registry (RUJ)

**Figure 5:** Total 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 for figures 5-7: ICBF Database and ACR Reintegration Information System (SIR)

## INSTITUTIONAL PROGRESS

### Legislative Act for Peace approved by Congress

The Legislative Act for Peace was approved by Congress on June 14, following a series of debates and bitter arguments among political parties. This provides a ‘judicial shield’ to ensure that the peace deal signed by the parties cannot be subsequently changed. The act will “allow for the implementation of the agreements that are signed in Havana and serves to solidify these agreements legally and politically,” according to Colombia’s Minister of the Interior Juan Fernando Cristo.<sup>14</sup> The legislative act will now be submitted to the Constitutional Court for final approval, and will only enter into force following a popular referendum on the peace agreement.<sup>15</sup>

### Planning for release of FARC child soldiers continues

Following the May 15 announcement by the parties in Havana on a framework for the release of children under 15 years of age from FARC camps, a Technical Committee was established to develop protocols for their release and proposals for a comprehensive assistance program. The Committee is led by Colombian institutions (the National Ombudsman’s Office, the President’s Advisory Office on Human Rights), with support from the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC), UNICEF, and the International Organization for Migration (IOM). In June, the Committee presented a proposed protocol to the parties for their consideration, and completed a second round of conversations. The Committee scheduled July 2nd for their next meeting, with the targeted objective of finalizing the details of the exit strategy and putting the plan in motion.<sup>16</sup>

## DIVERSITY ISSUES

### Call for differential treatment of sexual violence

The Five Keys Platform, comprising several NGOs and with the support of the United Nations Development Program (UNDP), released a report on the state of affairs and recommendations for tailored approaches to address sexual violence against women committed in the context of the armed conflict.<sup>17</sup> They identified five points of intervention in the peace process to this end: (1) explicit inclusion of women in ceasefire agreements, (2) dedicated investigations in the official truth commission, (3) differential treatment of sex crimes in the justice process, (4) reparations that factor in the specific damages to individuals caused by sexual violence in the context of war, including subsequent social stigma, and (5) concrete measures towards a gender-inclusive society with the aim of securing non-recurrence. The report offers detailed, concrete assessments and recommendations for achieving each of these objectives.

## FURTHER READING

### Former EPL guerrillas support bilateral ceasefire

Twenty five years after their own peace accord, ex-guerrillas of the old Popular Liberation Army (EPL) released a statement congratulating the FARC-EP in their ceasefire agreement with the GOC, anticipating the eventual formation of a “new legal political project.” The ex-guerrillas also took the opportunity to encourage ELN members to overcome their difficulties with the GOC and continue peace dialogs.<sup>18</sup>

### Report by the OAS on potential for new forms of violence in the post-conflict

Despite significant progress made in peace talks with the FARC, Colombia will face significant challenges following a final agreement, including the threat of new forms of violence and potential re-victimization, according to a report by Organization of American States (OAS) on its Mission to Support the Peace Process (MAPP) in Colombia. The report asserts that extortions by the FARC increased during February to August 2015, and that this is one of the largest sources of distrust of the peace process among local communities, who are pessimistic about the real impact of de-escalation measures given the continuing insecurity that they face.<sup>19</sup>

<sup>14</sup> “Colombia Votes to Incorporate Peace Deal Into Constitution.” TeleSur. 15 June 2016. <http://www.telesur.tv/english/news/Colombia-Votes-to-Incorporate-Peace-Deal-Into-Constitution-20160615-0009.html>

<sup>15</sup> “Lista conciliación del acto legislativo para la paz.” Semana. 14 June 2016. <http://www.semana.com/nacion/articulo/proceso-de-paz-camino-para-aprobacion-del-acto-legislativo-para-la-paz/477757>

<sup>16</sup> Joint Communiqué #77. Mesa de Conversaciones. 25 June 2016. <https://www.mesadeconversaciones.com.co/comunicados/comunicado-conjunto-77-la-habana-cuba-25-de-junio-de-2016>

<sup>17</sup> “5 claves para un tratamiento diferenciado de la violencia sexual en los acuerdos sobre los derechos de las víctimas en el proceso de paz.” The Five Keys Platform. May 2016. <http://www.sismamujer.org/wp-content/uploads/2016/06/Cinco-claves-para-un-tratamiento-diferenciado-de-la-violencia-sexual-en-los-acuerdos-sobre-los-derechos-de-las-v%C3%ADctimas-en-el-proceso-de-paz.pdf>

<sup>18</sup> “Milicianos del antiguo EPL saludan acuerdo de cese al fuego.” Arco Iris. 27 June 2016. <http://www.arcoiris.com.co/2016/06/milicianos-del-antiguo-epl-saludan-acuerdo-de-cese-al-fuego/>

<sup>19</sup> “Misión de la OEA alerta por ‘reacomodo’ de ilegales en regiones.” El Tiempo. 7 June 2016. <http://www.eltiempo.com/politica/justicia/farc-mantienen-extorsion-en-el-pais/16613256>