

PEACE MAIL

May 8-14

WEEKLY UPDATE: Implementing the Peace Accords

This callout box includes a weekly update on releases and work specifically related implementing the Final Peace Accord between the Government and the FARC in Colombia.

Jesús Santrich has now maintained a hunger strike for 30 days, in protest at his capture for suspected drugs trafficking to the United States on 9 April. He was transferred from El Tunal Hospital to the *Caminos de Libertad* religious foundation on Thursday, for “humanitarian reasons.” Iván Márquez, the FARC second in command, warned during a meeting in Caquetá on 12 May that his death would also accelerate the end of the Peace Accord between the former guerrilla group and the GOC.¹ The FARC also denounced the murder of former combatant Vicente Carvajal Isidro near a Territorial Training and Reincorporation Space (ETCR) in Arauca on 7 May. Nineteen former combatants have now been killed since the signing of the Peace Accord.²

The eleven members of the Truth Commission took up their positions in an official event with President Santos on 8 May. During the ceremony, the President stated that the Commission did not expect to seek an “official truth” but rather to help clarify what really happened during more than 50 years of conflict with the FARC. The Truth Commission will collect information and deliver six-monthly reports for a period of three years, at the end of which it will present a final report on its findings. The Commission is one third of the Integrated System for Truth, Justice, Reparation, and Non-Repetition created by the Peace Accord, along with the Missing Persons Search Unit, and the Special Jurisdiction for Peace (JEP).³

Former congressmen David Char Navas and Álvaro Ashton Giraldo, who are under investigation for para-politics, were refused access to the JEP this week. The JEP stated that although para-politics refers to the relationship between high-level government officials and illegal groups, this did not necessarily have an impact on the armed conflict, as they could also be in service of particular political interests. This ruling will frustrate the almost 30 people being investigated for para-politics and hoping to gain access to the JEP.⁴

The United Nations Committee for Human Rights carried out their Universal Periodic Review of Colombia on 10 May, with the 95 participating countries making 211 recommendations⁵ principally concerned with the protection of social leaders, human rights defenders, and land claimants, the elimination of recruitment of children, the protection of girls’ and women’s rights, high levels of impunity, and the need to sign the Convention against Torture. The Minister of the Interior, Guillermo Rivera, began the talks by highlighting that the 2017 homicide rate was the lowest in 42 years, and that more than 6,000 families had signed up to the illicit crop substitution program over the past year. He also reiterated the government’s commitment to implementing the Peace Accord.⁶

Four days after the peace negotiations between the ELN and the GOC recommenced in Havana, Cuba, on 10 May, the guerrilla group’s Central Command announced a unilateral ceasefire to be implemented over the electoral period from 25 to 29 May. The groups stated their support for Colombians who wish to vote in the presidential elections, and expressed their hope that this conciliatory act would promote similar behavior from other political-military forces in the country. The two sides continue to negotiate the terms of a definitive bilateral ceasefire, as well as social participation.⁷