

December 11-17

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 (GOC) and the FARC in Colombia.

Lifting the suspension of arrest warrants against former FARC combatants was approved as part of the Public Order Law on 11 December, contradicting the Peace Accord and sparking debate.¹ In response, the UN Secretary General called for legal guarantees for former combatants, denouncing the uncertainty surrounding their reincorporation. He also highlighted the Special Jurisdiction for Peace's (JEP) responsibility for investigating crimes committed during the armed conflict, and for deciding when such warrants should be implemented.²

On 13 December, **34 productive projects which will benefit 279 former combatants were approved**. The High Commissioner for Post-Conflict announced US\$ 870,000 for these initiatives, and payments for 15 others is also foreseen. Prior to this week, only two projects had been financed.³ On 17 December, he also announced that Territorial Training and Reincorporation Spaces (ETCR) will be extended to August 2019, and issued a document on the GOC's approach to peacebuilding, which prioritizes national security over rural development.⁴

In an open letter on 11 December, **Rodrigo Londoño, leader of the FARC political party, wrote to Hernán Dario Velásquez** (alias "El Paisa"), inviting him to participate in the party's leadership summit. He also warned of the consequences of not complying with JEP requirements for Case 001. "El Paisa" left the Miravalle (Caquetá) ETCR citing concerns over his physical and legal security, and the JEP has called on state agencies to report on his whereabouts.⁵ The FARC also announced that Benedicto de Jesús González Montenegro will occupy Jesús Santrich's congressional seat while the latter's legal situation is resolved.⁶

On 11 December, the **Inspector General delivered a report to the JEP detailing 1,588 disciplinary cases concerning State agents' actions** during the armed conflict. The report documents 650 "false positives" cases and 27 attacks, as well as 220 sentences, 633 investigation archives, and 290 public officials sentenced between 2006 and 2018. It aims to contribute to the truth and consider Colombian institutions' responsibility in prolonging the 50-year conflict. A second part covering 1990 to 2005 will be delivered in January.⁷

Social organizations have found that deaths associated with armed conflict have decreased since the signing of the Peace Accord, but that **attacks against social leaders and human rights defenders has increased and is repetitive, methodical, and systematic**. The majority of the 257 people assassinated were men (215), but attacks against women include corporal brutality and sexual violence. Members of Community Action Boards (JAC), Indigenous, rural, and Afro-Colombian leaders are the most vulnerable, and a significant proportion of victims defended land/territorial rights, or denounced corruption, the presence of armed groups, forced recruitment, and micro-trafficking; others worked against economic megaprojects, in the defense of sexual and reproductive rights, or in crop substitution or Peace Accord programs. There is a high level of impunity, with only 41.24% of cases having an identified perpetrator, and only 8.6% of cases ending in conviction. Paramilitary groups are largely responsible (44 cases), followed by FARC deserters/dissidents (19), and the Public Forces (14).⁸ In related news, the Army confirmed the death of six people in Mapiripán, Meta, on 11 December,⁹ and an ONIC report found that 37 Indigenous leaders have been assassinated since August, suggesting a need for a differential approach to security.¹⁰ President Duque has signed the Pact for the Life and Protection of Leaders and Human Rights Defenders, and created the Timely Action Plan Commission (PAO) to coordinate state responses.¹¹

On 17 December, the **ELN announced a 12-day Christmas truce** to begin on 23 December, and called on the GOC to resume the peace talks begun in February 2017, during which a 101-day bilateral ceasefire was successfully implemented from 1 October 2017 to 9 January 2018. However, the talks were suspended when Iván Duque took office on 7 August this year, and the GOC has repeatedly called on the guerrilla group to cease its criminal activities and release hostages before they can resume.¹²