



This callout box includes a weekly update on news and work specifically related to implementing the Peace Accord between the Government of Colombia (GOC) and the FARC.

President Duque vetoed six of the 159 articles included in the Special Jurisdiction for Peace's (JEP) Statutory Law on 10 March, raising concerns over legal security for the 11,675 people (including 9,687 former FARC combatants and 1,938 members of the Armed Forces) who have submitted to this transitional justice mechanism.¹ The veto covers perpetrators' reparation of victims; the High Commissioner for Peace's role in verifying those covered by the Peace Accord; ordinary justice powers to investigate those covered by the JEP; the investigation and punishment of crimes against humanity; the Peace Tribunal's power to request proofs, particularly in extradition cases; and third parties receiving JEP benefits. Duque also plans to change Legislative Act 001, which created the Integrated Truth, Justice, Reparation, and Non-Repetition System in 2017.² The decision appears to vindicate FARC leaders and mid-rank commanders who have abandoned their Territorial Training and Reincorporation Spaces (ETCR) citing the lack of legal guarantees and delays in the peace process.³ Hours before the announcement, Jesús Santrich shared concerns for his safety and suggested his case is being manipulated to discredit the JEP.⁴

The **JEP opened Case 007 on the recruitment and use of minors during the armed conflict** on 6 March, through which it will also investigate cases of sexual abuse and forced abortions. Reports show that 6,230 children were recruited by regular and irregular armed groups from 1971 to 2016. The JEP will gather evidence from the Armed Forces, civilian third parties, and the FARC. The latter was responsible for 60 percent of cases, and 40 percent of their recruitment was through proselytism in schools and promises of better educational and life conditions. The Attorney General's Office (AGO) has opened 4,219 investigations, but only 10 convictions have been made.⁵

On 6 March, the **JEP requested the services of international experts in the search for missing persons** in Medellín and Hidroituango, and gave State entities 10 days to provide information gathered from 16 key sites in Antioquia, Caldas, Cesar, Santander, and Sucre.⁶ The Mayor's Office of Medellín reports that 900 unidentified bodies entered the Universal cemetery in *Comuna 13* from 2000 to 2007, but the AGO has only reported on exhumations in seven of the 16 sites identified when the case was opened in September 2018. The JEP has also requested a technical committee of the Missing Person's Search Unit (UBPD) to discuss the sites and their protection.⁷

On 7 March, **human rights organizations delivered a report to the JEP in which they detail 23 extrajudicial killings**, or "false positives," in Cesar from 2007 to 2009. The report accuses the "La Popa" Battalion of simulating combats and producing false documents; and indicates that the military justice system covered up such actions. The colonel responsible for the Battalion at the time was promoted to general by the Duque administration, and these organizations have requested that he be suspended and called to give evidence.⁸

On 8 March, the **GOC, UN, and FARC presented a joint integrated reincorporation initiative**, which will be implemented to the benefit of 2,500 people in 15 Territorial Training and Reincorporation Spaces (ETCR). The project, which has a budget of US\$3 million, will strengthen economic and social initiatives with territorial, gender, and ethnic approaches. A selection of the 120 existing productive initiatives will receive additional funding for value chain inclusion and commercialization, and five ETCR will receive support for services for 509 pregnant and lactating women, children, and adolescents.⁹

The **Constitutional Court (CC) called a public hearing to discuss anti-drugs policy and glyphosate** use on 7 March. While President Duque called for increased eradication and a loosening of the CC suspension of aerial fumigation in the name of public order and basic rights, former president Santos highlighted the success of voluntary eradication and failures of the war on drugs amid continued consumption and prohibition.¹⁰ The National Integrated Illicit Crop Substitution Program (PNIS), created by the Peace Accord, reports 90 percent fulfilment by the 98,967 families involved, with 30,265 ha of coca being voluntarily eradicated.¹¹ The Minister of Defense announced the contracting of 2,100 civilians to intensify forced eradications, despite 126 people losing their lives to such activities since 2009.¹²