



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.

The **Rural Peace Investment Fund for companies operating in areas affected by the armed conflict was launched this week**, with five million euros directed for the agricultural sector in Nariño and Putumayo. The aim of the Fund is to integrate the country's most remote economies into national and international markets, contributing to the first point of the Peace Accord (Integrated Rural Reform), which lags significantly in its implementation. Twelve companies are expected to benefit between 50,000 and 250,000 euros each during the second year, as well as receiving additional business development support.<sup>1</sup>

One year after his arrest, **former FARC leader Jesús Santrich insists he has never had any connection with drug trafficking or cartels**. Santrich was detained for extradition purposes at the request of the U.S. government for allegedly sending cocaine to the U.S.<sup>2</sup> Last month the U.S. Department of Justice confirmed that it will not hand over any evidence on his case to the Special Jurisdiction for Peace (JEP), which must determine whether the alleged crime was committed before the signing of the Peace Accord and thus falls within its jurisdiction. Otherwise, he may face extradition.<sup>3</sup>

In an effort to calm uncertainty about the future of the Territorial Training and Reincorporation Spaces (ETCR), President Iván Duque, visited Icononzo. He reassured former combatants that while the ETCRs are scheduled to end in August, as stipulated by the Peace Accord, they will continue as productive communities to ensure transition to a life of coexistence, income, and opportunities.<sup>4</sup>

After almost four weeks of protest, **Indigenous communities decided to unblock the Pan-American Highway following the GOC's decision to dialogue and open political debate**. President Duque is expected to arrive at the heart of the Minga in Cauca on 9 April to meet with delegates of the protest.<sup>5</sup> As of 5 April, there were almost 25,000 *mingueros*, including indigenous peoples, trade unions, *campesinos*, Afro-descendants, and human rights defenders from 11 departments.<sup>6</sup> The Minga has resulted in regional losses estimated at 70 billion pesos and 12 deaths. As of now, **the GOC has pledged 17 percent of the requested 800 billion pesos**, reactivated the Table with Afro-Colombians from northern Cauca, and included a chapter for *campesinos* in the National Development Plan. Other issues, such as the implementation of Peace Accord, protection social leaders, crop substitution and the recognition of *campesinos* as subjects of rights will be discussed in the meeting with Duque. The Minga will remain in permanent assembly at each of the concentration points, awaiting negotiations. Indigenous leaders of Cauca denounced threats received this week from the Águilas Negras criminal group, which circulated menacing pamphlets in several towns.<sup>7</sup> Likewise, indigenous leaders condemned reactions to the Minga from the Centro Democrático, which they consider promote hatred and racism.<sup>8</sup>

El Espectador newspaper reported this week that **3,200 children and adolescents are active in criminal gangs in Medellín**. While the phenomenon has existed since the 1950s, reports find that recruitment is taking place at an earlier age with children as young as 11 years carrying out murders and acts of torture. In the first three months of 2019, 582 children and adolescents were captured for crimes, including homicide (2), transporting and trafficking drugs (260), receiving/cover-up (116), carry of weapons (26), theft (62), domestic violence (54), among others. According to the Peace and Democracy Corporation, there are 350 criminal gangs in Medellín with nearly 8,000 members, 40% of whom are minors.<sup>9</sup>