

Colombian Peace Process: IOM Weekly Report

July, 2014

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2014

1. Background

On September 4, 2012, President Santos announced the signing of a General Agreement for the Termination of the Conflict between the Government of Colombia and the FARC, initiating the fourth official peace talks with this group. The agenda includes: 1) integrated rural reform; 2) guarantees for political opposition and civic participation; 3) the end of the conflict (laying down arms and reintegration into civilian life); 4) illegal drugs; and 5) victims' rights. Preparatory talks started in Oslo on October 17, 2012 and substantive dialogues in Havana, on November 19, 2012. Three agreements have been reached: one on the first agenda point, integrated rural reform, on May 26, 2013; the second on the next point, political participation, on November 6, 2013; and another on the fourth agenda point, illegal drugs, on May 16, 2014.

On June 10, 2014, the GOC announced that exploratory talks with the ELN had been taking place to define an agenda for peace talks. These exploratory meetings have been taking place since January 2014, and the issues of victims and societal participation are the first two points on the agenda. The GOC and ELN will release information on the progress of the exploratory talks as they continue.

2. GOC – FARC Key Developments from June 25th to July 1st

Armed Forces will participate in Disarmament and Demobilization Implementation

President Juan Manuel Santos stated on Saturday that active members of the Armed Forces will play an implementing role in the DDR of the FARC, but will not negotiate the issue in Havana. They will aid in the logistical and operational design of the disarmament process, according to Santos.¹

Victims Negotiating Team Decided

The National Human Rights Ombudsman (i.e), Esiquio Manuel Sánchez Herrera, announced on Friday that the team of victims to travel to Havana to negotiate the 5th point has been decided. The National Victims Roundtable held a meeting in which they voted for the delegates was held last week, and the final list has been sent to the High Commissioner for Peace's Office.²

FARC Ceasefire ends, no violations by the FARC: Cerac

The NGO CERAC, which analyzes the armed conflict in Colombia, stated that the FARC did not violate the ceasefire in any instance between June 9th and June 30th. There were reports of an

¹ <http://www.eltiempo.com/politica/gobierno/militares-negociaran-desarme-y-desmovilizacion-de-guerrillas-santos/14178836>

² <http://www.caracol.com.co/noticias/actualidad/confirman-eleccion-de-primeros-delegados-de-victimas-que-estaran-en-cuba/20140626/nota/2294521.aspx>

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attack in Caquetá as well as a kidnapping in Cauca, both originally attributed to the FARC, but CERAC reports that information about the authors of both actions is unclear.³

Impunity is a Political Issue, not a Judicial one: FARC

In an interview with *Voz* magazine, the FARC stated that there will be in “exchange of impunity” because it is a political, not judicial issue. The group also stated that a group of possibly 12 experts will hand in a report on the causes and context of the armed conflict. Finally, the FARC highlighted the importance of protecting the already signed pre-agreements.⁴

3. GOC – ELN Key Developments from June 25th to July 1st

ELN Military Activity Increases, Government Reponds

The ELN bombed oil infrastructure in Norte de Santander⁵ and an Ecopetrol camp where mass was being held in Arauca.⁶ The group also claimed responsibility for a small bomb attack in Chapinero, in Bogotá last week.⁷ The government has called the attack against Ecopetrol a violation of human rights⁸ and offered \$5,000,000 COP (\$2,500 USD) for information on ELN urban militia fighters in Arauca.⁹ The ELN also announced on Tuesday an armed blockade in the eastern plains for three days, to commemorate the group’s 50th anniversary on July 4th.¹⁰

4. Other Voices

Reconciliation and Victim Recognition Key for Peace: Expert

Expert in conflict resolution, Camilo Azcárate, stated in an interview that the keys for Colombia to find lasting peace are to recognize the victims and reconcile. The main effects of 50 years of war, according to Azcárate, are psychological and without reconciliation, solving conflicts through violence will continue to occur in Colombia.¹¹

³ http://blog.cerac.org.co/cumplimiento-completo-de-la-tregua-de-las-farc-durante-la-segunda-vuelta-presidencial?utm_source=rss&utm_medium=rss&utm_campaign=cumplimiento-completo-de-la-tregua-de-las-farc-durante-la-segunda-vuelta-presidencial

⁴ <http://www.pazfarc-ep.org/index.php/articulos/tras-la-noticia/1956-entrevista-carlos-lozano-farc.html>

⁵ <http://www.eltiempo.com/economia/empresas/ataques-al-oleoducto-cano-limon-covenas/14185516>

⁶ <http://www.elespectador.com/noticias/politica/trece-heridos-deja-atentado-arauca-articulo-501527>

⁷ <http://www.eln-voces.com/index.php/es/voces-del-eln/frentes-de-guerra/941-combates-en-varias-regiones-de-colombia-entre-la-guerra-y-la-paz>

⁸ <http://www.semana.com/nacion/articulo/defensoria-le-exige-al-eln-que-aclare-si-es-autor-del-atentado-en-arauca/393925-3>

⁹ <http://www.elespectador.com/noticias/politica/5-millones-miliciano-pinzon-articulo-501526>

¹⁰ <http://www.semana.com/nacion/articulo/eln-impondra-paro-armado-en-el-oriente-del-pais/393954-3>

¹¹ <http://www.eltiempo.com/politica/proceso-de-paz/analisis-del-conflicto-armado-colombiano-y-las-victimas-por-camilo-azcarate/14175493>

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Recidivism of Ex-combatants study released, recommendations for FARC made

The NGO Fundación Ideas para la Paz presented a study on the recidivism – and lack thereof – of ex-combatants, finding that 24% have gone back to criminal activity in some way. Based on the conclusions of the study, the organization highlighted independent permanence in the reintegration program, breaking ties with illegal groups and other ex-combatants, and lowering levels of insecurity for ex-combatants as keys to prevent recidivism in the future.¹²

5. International

Peace will give Colombia a better future: Ex-president Clinton

US Ex-president Bill Clinton was in Cartagena last week and stated that the armed conflict is a cause of poverty in Colombia, that peace will bring a better economic future for Colombia, and that he hopes the benefits of Colombia's growing economy make it to the countryside.¹³

Colombia Faces Challenges in the Post-Conflict: Experts

A panel discussion held in Washington D.C. with various experts on conflict resolution and Colombia noted that one of the biggest challenges for Colombia in its post-conflict will be paying for and implementing DDR and transitional justice programs. They also noted that neglecting mid-level commanders could lead to their return to criminal activities.¹⁴

¹² <http://www.verdadabierta.com/bloques-de-la-auc/5367-reintegracion-de-excombatientes-ilegales-entre-exitos-y-carencias>

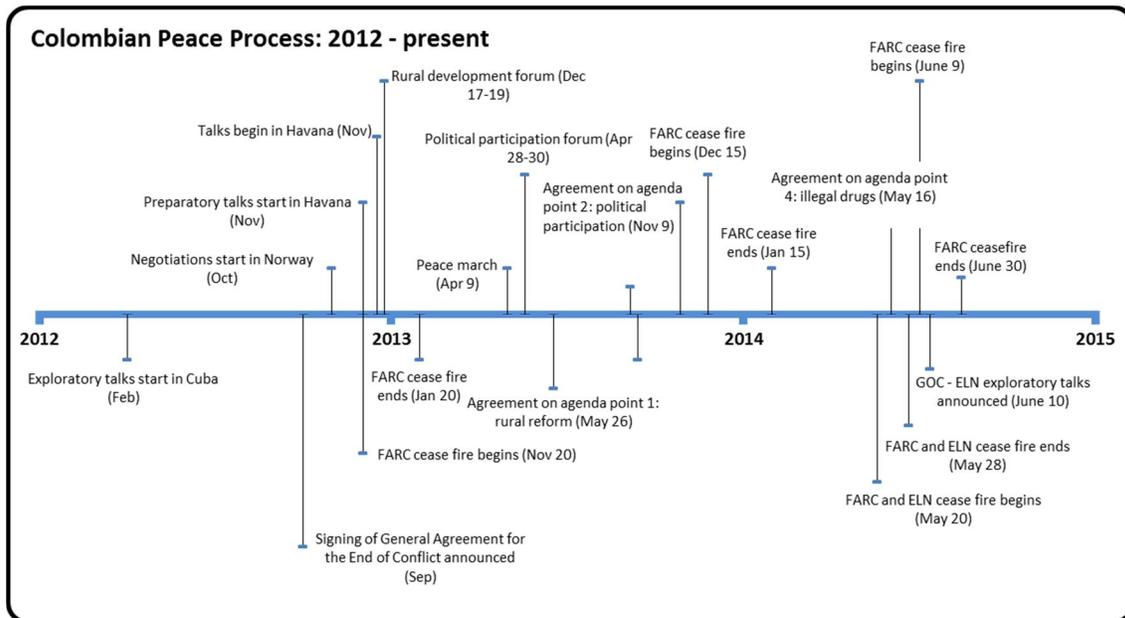
¹³ <http://www.elpais.com.co/elpais/colombia/noticias/paz-traeria-mejor-futuro-para-colombia-bill-clinton>

¹⁴ <http://colombiareports.co/colombia-capacity-finance-post-conflict-needs/>

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6. Timeline



7. Further Reading

Coca crops dynamics in 2013 show positives, challenges for peace: Analysts

Julián Wilches and Juan Carlos Garzón analyzed the dynamics of coca crop growth in 2013 and came to various conclusions regarding these dynamics and what they mean for the post-conflict. Principally, they argued the fact that all forms of eradication decreased, while coca did not increase, is telling, and that other illegal economies could replace coca in the post-conflict.¹⁵

¹⁵ <http://www.razonpublica.com/index.php/conflicto-drogas-y-paz-temas-30/7721-coca-coca%C3%ADna-y-paz-cinco-claves-para-el-futuro.html>

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2. GOC – FARC Key Developments from July 2nd to July 8th

Forums start to compile victims' perspectives

The Universidad Nacional and the UN have organized a series of forums at the request of the dialogue teams, who asked that the spaces be used to hear and compile victims' perspectives. The first forum was held this week in Villavicencio where approximately 400 people attended, the majority of whom were victims. The next forums are: Barrancabermeja on the 10th and 11th of July; Barranquilla on the 17th and 18th; and Cali on the 3rd, 4th, and 5th of August.¹⁶

Victims begin to define direct participation in the talks

Despite efforts to involve victims in the talks, relevant organizations are criticizing a lack of direct representation in Havana and a sense that they are ignored by the peace talks.¹⁷ Victims' Unit Director, Paula Gaviria, said that victims' representatives who will participate in the dialogues in Cuba have not been chosen, and details of their travel have yet to be defined.¹⁸

The National Victims' Roundtable suggested 15 possible representatives, and have begun to define the requests they will make of the FARC: that they hand over all assets, and rebuild the housing and infrastructure destroyed in the conflict. A point of disagreement between victims'

¹⁶ <http://www.eltiempo.com/politica/proceso-de-paz/lo-que-las-victimas-esperan-de-las-farc/14210376>

¹⁷ <http://www.eltiempo.com/politica/proceso-de-paz/victimas-de-las-farc-exigen-verdad-y-participacion-directa-en-dialogos/14204075>

¹⁸ <http://www.elespectador.com/noticias/paz/victimas-del-conflicto-armado-no-estan-apartados-de-pro-articulo-502137>

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organizations is the punishment the FARC should receive, with suggestions ranging from life sentences to no jail time at all. This lack of consensus prevented the victims from contributing to debates on whether those convicted of crimes against humanity should be allowed to participate in politics (see “Emerging Challenges & Responses” for more on this debate).¹⁹

3. GOC – ELN Key Developments from July 2nd to July 8th

Calls made for ELN to commit to peace amid increased attacks

The ELN increased the intensity of their attacks last week, provoking the GOC to accuse the group of breaking International Humanitarian Law.²⁰ Ombudsman, Esiquio Manuel Sánchez, and others made calls for the group to show its commitment to negotiated peace.²¹ Jorge Restrepo, Director of the Resource Center for Conflict Analysis (CERAC), said the ELN is trying to pressure the GOC into establishing official dialogues instead of remaining in current exploratory stages.²²

Experts identify ELN agenda topics

El Espectador interviewed expert Carlos Medina and ex-ELN member Leon Valencia, who is now the Director of Fundación Paz y Reconciliación, about the GOC-ELN dialogue agenda. Medina stressed the importance of ELN talks being simultaneous to FARC talks so the same referendum mechanisms can be used for both. He identified points crucial to ELN talks: civil society participation; assistance for victims; recognition of peasant movements; natural resources; democracy; drugs trafficking; and regional integration. Valencia said the GOC must define a similar host and support country structure and include the same number of agenda points in ELN talks as it did with the FARC, to maintain a balance between the two processes.²³

The same media source also published an analysis of the ELN talks by Carlos José Herrera, who formed part of previous GOC peace talk delegations. In the article, he discusses the conditions necessary for the ELN peace process, and how such talks differ from the GOC-FARC dialogues.²⁴

¹⁹ <http://www.eltiempo.com/politica/proceso-de-paz/lo-que-las-victimas-esperan-de-las-farc/14210376>

²⁰ <http://www.elespectador.com/noticias/politica/gobierno-denuncio-al-eln-violar-derecho-internacional-h-articulo-502281>

²¹ <http://www.eltiempo.com/politica/justicia/que-eln-muestre-voluntad-de-paz-defensoria/14214071>

²² <http://www.eltiempo.com/politica/gobierno/eln-insiste-en-dialogo-pero-arrecia-terrorismo-/14208397>

²³ <http://www.elespectador.com/noticias/paz/los-temas-no-pueden-quedar-fuera-de-negociacion-el-eln-articulo-502307>

²⁴ <http://www.elespectador.com/noticias/paz/negociacion-el-eln-esta-vez-si-articulo-502303>

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4. Other Voices

Catholic priests express hopes and concerns over peace talks

El Tiempo talked with representatives of the Catholic Church about their perspectives, hopes, and concerns regarding the peace talks. Monsignor Luis Augusto Castro discussed the Church's role in supporting efforts to construct and sustain peace, and society's concerns over impunity for ex-combatants.²⁵ Other representatives emphasized the Church's contributions to social justice and the need to prepare society to receive ex-combatants after their demobilization.²⁶

5. International

Raul Castro praises progress towards peace

Cuban President, Raul Castro, highlighted Colombia's progress towards peace and praised the agreements made between the GOC and the FARC, and the exploratory talks with the ELN. He reiterated Cuba's support for the GOC-FARC process, for which Cuba is host country.²⁷

Northern Ireland's David Trimble speaks about Colombian peace process

David Trimble, who was First Minister of Northern Ireland after the Good Friday Agreement in 1998, spoke at the Colombian Scientific Convention. He warned that signing the peace agreement in Northern Ireland was much easier than implementing it, and recalled that sceptics criticized the peace agreement there when it was signed, but changed opinion after seeing its successful conversion to political reform and decreased violence. Finally, he said that throughout the peace process it was clear that there would not be total amnesty – but rather reduced sentences - for the IRA, as amnesty would have reduced the process' legitimacy.²⁸

Henrique Cardoso praises peace process

El Tiempo interviewed former President of Brazil, Henrique Cardoso, about the peace process. Cardoso discussed the challenge of demonstrating to the victims that the process does not compromise their rights, and addressed regional drug policy in the framework of the talks.²⁹

²⁵ <http://www.eltiempo.com/estilo-de-vida/gente/iglesia-advierte-de-riesgo-de-correr-con-proceso-de-paz/14213960>

²⁶ <http://www.elnuevosiglo.com.co/articulos/7-2014-iglesia-posconflicto-y-retos.html>

²⁷ <http://www.elespectador.com/noticias/paz/raul-castro-destaca-los-avances-colombia-alcanzar-paz-articulo-502719>

²⁸ <http://www.elespectador.com/noticias/paz/implementar-el-acuerdo-de-paz-fue-mas-difcil-firmarlo-articulo-502352> and

<http://www.eltiempo.com/estilo-de-vida/gente/paz-debe-incluir-a-partidarios-y-escepticos-trimble-nobel-de-paz/14203518>

²⁹ <http://www.eltiempo.com/politica/gobierno/nunca-se-estuvo-tan-cerca-de-terminar-el-conflicto-henrique-cardoso/14210225>

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6. Emerging Challenges & Responses

Details of political participation continue to cause debate

The Constitutional Court continues to discuss whether ex-combatants responsible for crimes against humanity can participate in politics. The proposal in debate, presented by Magistrate Alberto Rojas, suggests that all actors - including ex-army, ex-guerrilla, and ex-paramilitaries - convicted of crimes against humanity be allowed to participate in politics after completing assigned transitional justice obligations (e.g. contributing to truth, laying down arms). This contradicts the Legal Framework for Peace, which allows only those convicted of political crime, i.e. ex-guerrillas not responsible for crimes against humanity, to participate in politics.³⁰

7. Further Reading

El Tiempo interviews Victims' Unit Director

El Tiempo interviewed Victims' Unit Director Paula Gaviria on reparations programs, victims' representation in the peace process, and reparation of victims who live outside Colombia.³¹

Semana interviews kidnapping victim

Luis Mendieta was a police officer when he was kidnapped and held by the FARC for 12 years. He is now a victims' leader. Mendieta explained to Semana why victims feel they have been ignored by the peace talks, why they criticize the forums organized by the Universidad Nacional and UN, and what the victims would ask of the FARC if they saw them face to face.³²

Analysis of the ELN

ELN expert, Luis Celis, published an analysis of the current conditions of the ELN and their motivation to find a negotiated end to the conflict.³³

UN report states that children should be taken into account in peace talks

The UN Secretary General's annual report praises the progress made in the GOC-FARC peace talks until now, and stresses that current discussions of victims present opportunities to address issues related to children affected by the conflict.³⁴

³⁰ <http://www.eltiempo.com/politica/proceso-de-paz/autores-de-delitos-graves-podrian-participar-en-politica-ponencia/14204343>

³¹ <http://www.eltiempo.com/politica/justicia/entrevista-con-paula-gaviria/14213778>

³² <http://www.semana.com/nacion/articulo/si-las-farc-no-dicen-toda-la-verdad-iremos-la-justicia-internacional/394722-3>

³³ <http://www.elespectador.com/noticias/paz/origen-auge-y-declive-de-segunda-guerrilla-del-pais-articulo-502305>

³⁴ http://www.un.org/ga/search/view_doc.asp?symbol=a/68/878

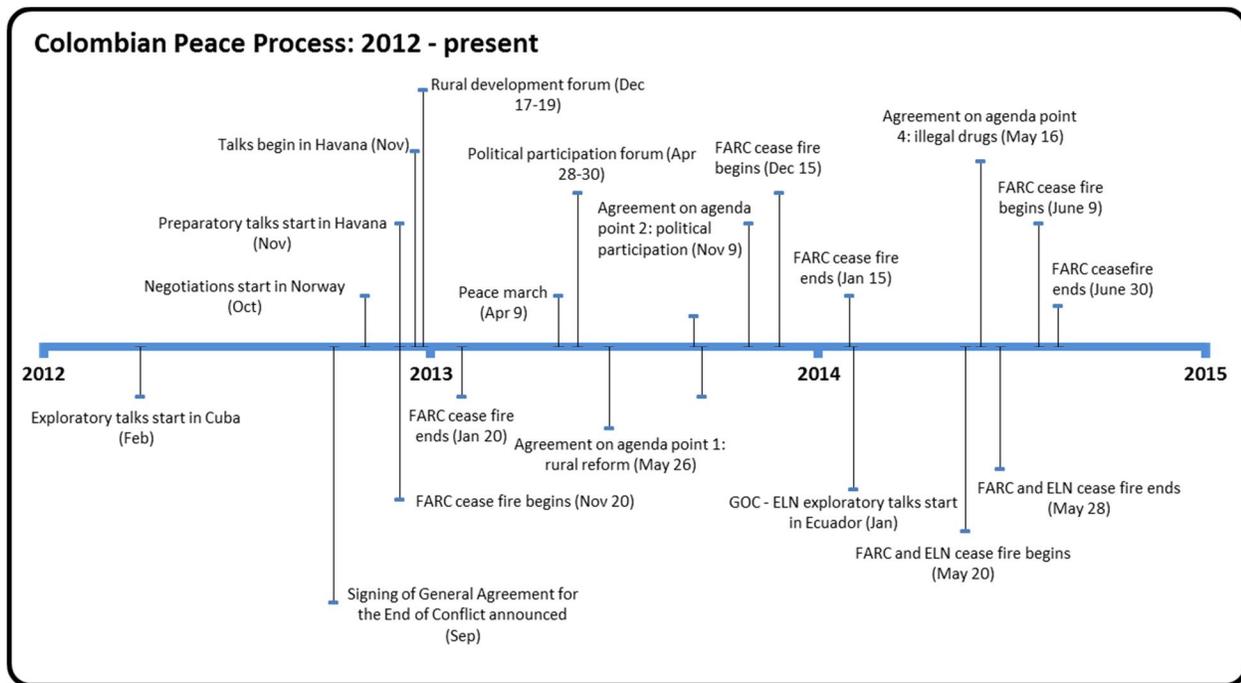
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El Espectador compiles victims' narratives

The “Peace” page of newspaper El Espectador has compiled a range of articles that highlight victims’ experiences of the conflict, including stories of the ELN’s attack on Simacota, in 1965; the massacre in Machuca, in 1998; attempted dialogues with the ELN in Mainz, Germany, in 1998; and the hostages taken in a Cali church in May 1999. Most of these articles are taken from El Espectador’s archives and were written at the time of the events in question.³⁵

8. Timeline



³⁵ <http://www.elespectador.com/noticias/paz>

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2. GOC – FARC Key Developments from July 9th to July 15th

Dialogue teams return, experts believe they will accelerate the pace

The GOC-FARC dialogues resumed on Tuesday after a month of recess. The discussion topic is the victims, and initial conversations aim to decide how they will participate at the dialogue table. Experts believe that this stage of the talks will be marked by President Santos' desire to accelerate the pace so that the talks conclude and can be sent to public referendum in March, 2015, before local elections, that will take place in October 2015.³⁶ Victims' groups and representatives have sent letters from the victims to the FARC at the dialogue table, aiming to feed the discussion on this agenda point.³⁷

Victims disagree on priorities of participation

Although they share some common interests, victims of different armed groups disagree on their priorities in the GOC–FARC dialogues. At the victims' forum organized by the UN and the Universidad Nacional, in Barrancabermeja, FARC victims expressed a desire to know the truth about kidnapping victims, while victims of the State were insistent about a bilateral ceasefire and

³⁶ <http://www.eltiempo.com/politica/proceso-de-paz/mesa-en-la-habana-aborda-reparacion-a-las-victimas-/14245960>

³⁷ <http://www.elespectador.com/noticias/paz/nuevo-ciclo-de-conversaciones-victimas-de-farc-envian-s-articulo-504334>

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said they were not given sufficient places at the event.³⁸ Others asked for land restitution processes to be streamlined.³⁹ FARC victims also claimed that the forums organized by the Congressional Commissions, which took place last year, were biased towards paramilitary victims.⁴⁰

Stephane Jaquemet, who represented the UN High Commissioner for Refugees at the forum, said the victims' voices must be unified for them to have real impact at the dialogue table.⁴¹

Debate on political participation continues

The Constitutional Court continues to discuss whether ex-combatants responsible for crimes against humanity can participate in politics. Magistrate Alberto Rojas presented a case against the Legal Framework for Peace, which says that only those convicted of political crimes (i.e. guerrilla groups) should be able to participate in politics. Rojas' proposal is that all actors be allowed to participate in politics after completing transitional justice obligations.⁴²

3. Other Voices

Indigenous communities will contribute to peacebuilding

High Commissioner for Peace, Sergio Jaramillo, wrote in a statement that indigenous communities will be invited to contribute to peacebuilding strategies, especially in terms of their reconciliation practices and the reintegration of demobilized community members.⁴³

Church leader discusses reconciliation and peace

Monsignor Luis Augusto Castro was re-elected as President of the Episcopal Conference of Colombia last week. In interview with El Tiempo, Castro discussed the need for reconciliation initiatives in order to avoid social tensions and divisions in the post-conflict stage. He also stressed the need for efforts to prevent the continuation of violence in post-conflict.⁴⁴

³⁸ <http://www.elespectador.com/noticias/paz/victimas-de-farc-y-del-estado-divididas-proceso-de-paz-articulo-503805>

³⁹ <http://www.elespectador.com/noticias/paz/victimas-del-conflicto-presentaron-sus-propuestas-de-pa-articulo-503759>

⁴⁰ <http://www.elespectador.com/noticias/politica/buscando-una-silla-habana-articulo-504036>

⁴¹ <http://www.elespectador.com/noticias/paz/victimas-de-farc-y-del-estado-divididas-proceso-de-paz-articulo-503805>

⁴² <http://www.semana.com/nacion/articulo/se-acaba-el-delito-politico/395321-3>

⁴³ <http://www.elespectador.com/noticias/paz/comunidades-indigenas-incidiran-implementacion-de-paz-articulo-503799>

⁴⁴ <http://www.eltiempo.com/politica/proceso-de-paz/la-reconciliacion-requiere-pasos-de-la-guerrilla-y-de-la-sociedad/14241917>

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Victims leader speaks about reconciliation and forgiveness

Soraya Bayuelo is a victim of both the FARC and the paramilitaries, and a National Peace Prize recipient. In interview with *Semana*, Bayuelo discusses the participation of victims at the dialogue table in Havana, the types of victimization she suffered, the separation of FARC victims from other victims in the peace process, and the need for the FARC and other armed groups to ask for forgiveness from their victims.⁴⁵

COALICO: child recruitment should be addressed in dialogues

The Coalition against child recruitment in Colombia (COALICO) drew attention to the UN global report on child soldiers released two weeks ago. COALICO called for children recruited by the BACRIM to be treated the same as those recruited by other illegal armed group officially involved in the conflict. The Coalition also recommended the streamlining of the process of reporting sexual violence against children, and that special attention should be paid to children living in border areas where illegal armed groups are especially active.⁴⁶

Governor of Cauca recommends investment, training for peace

The Governor of Cauca, Temístocles Ortega, made a speech at the launch of the book “Decentralization for Peace” in Popayán. He stated that peacebuilding must be implemented at the regional level, and will require training, investment, and institutional strengthening in order to be effective.⁴⁷

4. International

El Salvador offers support for dialogues

The Chancellor of El Salvador, Hugo Martínez, offered Colombia his country’s support in the dialogues and the post-conflict stage. He highlighted that El Salvador’s experience in peacebuilding and DDR could be useful to Colombia both now and in the future.⁴⁸

Vladimir Putin supports peace talks

President Santos met with his Russian counterpart, Vladimir Putin, in Brazil, where Putin expressed his support for the peace talks.⁴⁹

⁴⁵ <http://www.semana.com/nacion/articulo/soraya-bayuelo-la-reconciliacion-el-perdon-no-se-pueden-hacer-por-decreto/395370-3>

⁴⁶ http://www.elcolombiano.com/BancoConocimiento/R/reclutamiento_de_menores_debe_hacer_parte_de_dialogos/reclutamiento_de_menores_debe_hacer_parte_de_dialogos.asp

⁴⁷ <http://www.elnuevosiglo.com.co/articulos/7-2014-%E2%80%9Cpaz-desde-las-regiones-para-posconflicto%E2%80%9D.html>

⁴⁸ <http://www.elespectador.com/noticias/paz/el-salvador-ofrece-apoyo-dialogo-de-paz-colombia-articulo-503859>

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5. Emerging Challenges & Responses

GOC calls for private sector support for reintegrating ex-combatants

Alejandro Eder, Director of the Colombian Reintegration Agency, called for private businesses to support peacebuilding and reconciliation by opening jobs for demobilized people and thereby facilitating their entry to the formal employment sector, as many of them are currently employed in informal jobs.⁵⁰

6. Further Reading

Experts weigh in on differences between FARC and ELN

Experts Carlos Medina and Alejo Vargas discussed the main differences between the FARC and the ELN, especially those that could lead to differences in the peace processes with the two groups. These differences included historic composition, the origin of their founding members, their conceptualizations of power, their ideological influences, their position on drugs trafficking, and the number of members.⁵¹

General (r) Oscar Naranjo discusses peace and football

Retired police General, Oscar Naranjo, wrote an article for El Tiempo in which he discussed Colombia's exciting rise to glory in the World Cup, the unifying effect this had on the country, and his hopes that this unification and belief in overcoming obstacles together will extend to the post-conflict stage.⁵²

President Santos' commitment to peace in his second term

As President Santos moves towards the beginning of his second term on August 7th, analysts examine the two principal challenges they believe he will face: peace and governability.⁵³ Santos will soon present his budget plans to the GOC. These are expected to include a focus on social programs, employment, security, peace, and equity.⁵⁴

⁴⁹ <http://www.elespectador.com/noticias/politica/santos-dice-vladimir-putin-respalda-el-proceso-de-paz-articulo-504520>

⁵⁰ <http://www.elespectador.com/noticias/politica/sos-del-gobierno-empresas-den-trabajo-formal-desmoviliz-articulo-504260>

⁵¹ <http://www.elespectador.com/noticias/paz/tan-cerca-y-tan-lejos-diferencias-entre-farc-y-eln-articulo-503526>

⁵² <http://www.eltiempo.com/opinion/columnistas/el-partido-por-la-paz/14241876>

⁵³ <http://www.eltiempo.com/politica/gobierno/los-retos-de-juan-manuel-santos-para-su-segundo-mandato/14242155>

⁵⁴ <http://www.caracol.com.co/noticias/actualidad/presentamos-un-presupuesto-para-la-paz-y-la-prosperidad-social-santos/20140710/nota/2315716.aspx>

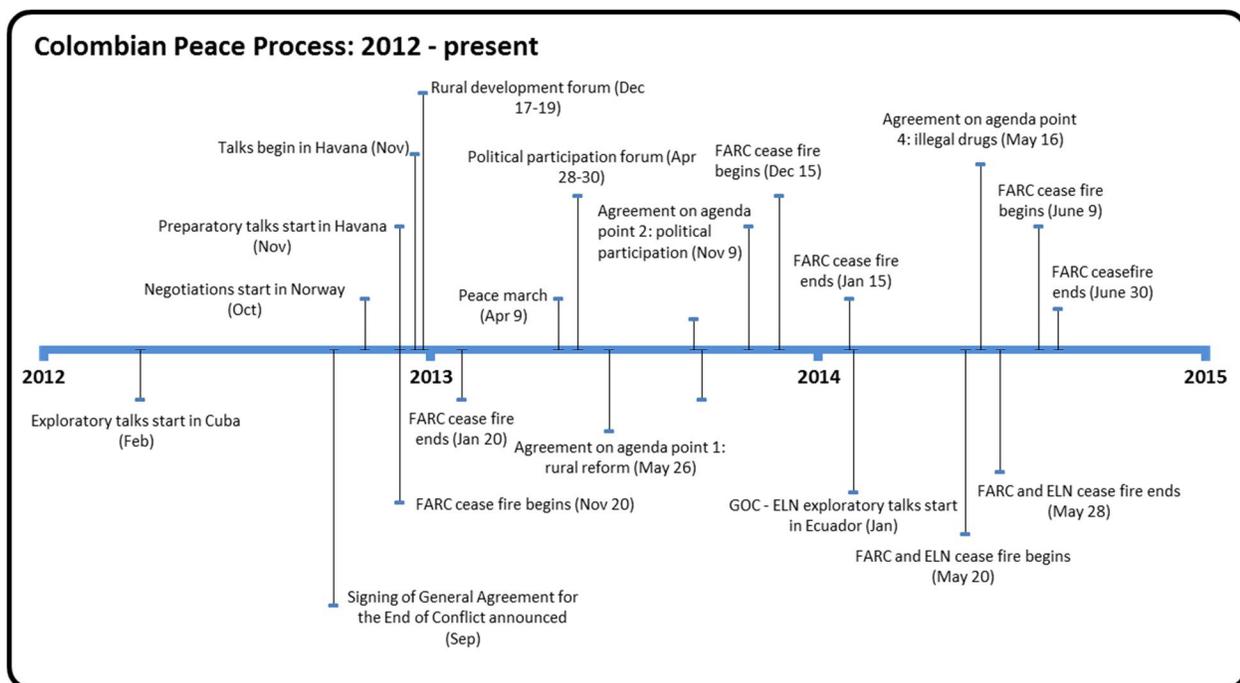
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Profile of neighborhood where victims and demobilized people live side by side

Pulzo.com published a profile of a neighborhood in Bogotá where victims and demobilized people live side by side. The profile includes interviews with a demobilized person and a victim, both of whom moved to San Cristobal, Bogotá, in hopes of reestablishing their lives after their very different experiences in the conflict.⁵⁵

7. Timeline



⁵⁵ <http://www.pulzo.com/nacion/173491-este-es-santa-rosa-un-barrio-bogotano-de-victimas-y-victimarios-del-conflicto>

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1. Background

On September 4, 2012, President Santos announced the signing of a General Agreement for the Termination of the Conflict between the Government of Colombia and the FARC, initiating the fourth official peace talks with this group. The agenda includes: 1) integrated rural reform; 2) guarantees for political opposition and civic participation; 3) the end of the conflict (laying down arms and reintegration into civilian life); 4) illegal drugs; and 5) victims' rights. Preparatory talks started in Oslo on October 17, 2012 and substantive dialogues in Havana, on November 19, 2012. Three agreements have been reached: one on the first agenda point, integrated rural reform, on May 26, 2013; the second on the next point, political participation, on November 6, 2013; and another on the fourth agenda point, illegal drugs, on May 16, 2014.

On June 10, 2014, the GOC announced that exploratory talks with the ELN were taking place to define an agenda for peace talks. These initial meetings have been held since January 2014, and the issues of victims and societal participation are the first two agenda points. The GOC and ELN will release information on the progress of the exploratory talks as they continue.

2. GOC – FARC Key Developments from July 16th to July 22nd

Victims remain center of discussion in peace talks and elsewhere

The third UN and Universidad Nacional forum to facilitate participation in the peace talks by victims was held in Barranquilla last week. The first was held in Villavicencio, and the second in Barrancabermeja, both in early July.⁵⁶

These forums will provide input that will help the two organizing entities to decide which 12 victims' representatives will form the first group to go to Havana on August 16th and meet with the GOC and FARC dialogue teams. Approximately five such groups will go to Havana in upcoming rounds of talks, one after the other, to represent a range of victims' organizations.⁵⁷

New Congress takes charge of peace and post-conflict

Fabio Amin, the new president of the Chamber of Representatives, and President Santos, who spoke at the installation of the new Congress on Sunday, both made references to the responsibility that its newly elected members have in supporting peace and implementing peace agreements. Both called this the "Congress of Peace" and emphasized the crucial post-conflict role

⁵⁶ <http://www.caracol.com.co/noticias/actualidad/inicia-hoy-nuevo-foro-de-victimas-en-barranquilla/20140717/nota/2325245.aspx>

⁵⁷ <http://www.elespectador.com/noticias/paz/victimas-se-encontraran-primera-vez-farc-el-proximo-16-articulo-504965> and <http://www.eltiempo.com/politica/proceso-de-paz/sesenta-victimas-representaran-a-6-millones-en-la-habana/14265185>



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it will have. Santos expressed his hope that those who opposed the peace process in the past will be able to work with its supporters to benefit the Colombian population.⁵⁸

3. GOC – ELN Key Developments from July 16th to July 22nd

ELN and FARC encourage new Congress to work for peace

The ELN and the FARC released a joint statement asking the newly installed Congress to work for peace in Colombia. They also encouraged the new Congress members to eradicate corruption and focus on health, education, social security, housing, and other investments. The two guerrilla groups criticized neoliberal policies that they said had negatively impacted Colombia's poor, and asked the new Congress to move away from such influences.⁵⁹

4. Other Voices

New president of the Chamber discusses peace and post-conflict

Fabio Amín, the new president of the Chamber of Representatives, was interviewed by Semana magazine. In the interview, Amín discusses his priority projects, the peace process, opposition guarantees, and guerrilla members entering Congress.⁶⁰

Ex-president Samper discusses his new role in UNASUR

Ex-president Ernesto Samper will soon become the second Colombian in history in the role of General Secretary of UNASUR. In interview with El Colombiano, Samper discusses his role in gaining UNASUR's support of the dialogues with both the FARC and the ELN, and the victims' visit to Cuba to meet with the GOC and FARC dialogue teams.⁶¹

⁵⁸ <http://www.elespectador.com/noticias/politica/puede-ser-el-congreso-de-paz-fabio-amin-articulo-505612> and <http://www.elespectador.com/noticias/politica/legislar-el-posconflicto-articulo-505602>

⁵⁹ <http://www.eltiempo.com/politica/proceso-de-paz/farc-y-eln-piden-al-nuevo-congreso-colombiano-legislar-para-la-paz-/14272957>

⁶⁰ <http://www.semana.com/nacion/articulo/seo-el-presidente-se-la-camara-fabio-amin-hablo-de-la-llegada-de-guerrilleros-al-congreso/396452-3>

⁶¹ http://www.elcolombiano.com/BancoConocimiento/T/trabajare_para_que_unasur_acompane_el_proceso_de_paz_samper/trabajare_para_que_unasur_acompane_el_proceso_de_paz_samper.asp

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5. International

Russia's support for peace process

Putin's declaration of his country's support for the peace process with the FARC was highlighted by the media last week. It is considered important because Russia is an emerging power that holds great military sway in the international arena. It is also important because the FARC have historically held Russia close to their heart, even though the country left communism aside many years ago.⁶²

CELAC countries offer to host ELN talks

At a meeting of the Community of Latin American and Caribbean States, many of the thirty-three member states offered to host GOC-ELN talks in a gesture of support for the dialogues. Meetings were held with Cuba, Uruguay, Venezuela, Brazil, and Chile, who expressed their support for the GOC – FARC and ELN talks.⁶³

6. Emerging Challenges & Responses

"Social Districts for Peace" may receive additional funds

Liberal senator Mario Fernandez announced that he will try to pass a law stating that municipalities that have received large numbers of displaced people should receive additional funds for social services such as education and health. These funds would support them as they struggle to meet the needs of many more people than are registered as living there.⁶⁴

Forced displacement would not decrease in the short term post-conflict

An agreement between the GOC and FARC would not necessarily lead to a decrease in forced displacement, said Martin Gottwald, head of the UNHCR in Colombia. He warned that in the short term, new armed groups could be formed and cause an increase in violence and therefore in forced displacement even after an agreement was signed.⁶⁵

⁶² <http://www.eltiempo.com/politica/gobierno/el-peso-que-tiene-el-respaldo-de-rusia-al-proceso-de-paz-en-colombia/14260358>

⁶³ <http://www.elpais.com.co/elpais/judicial/noticias/paises-celac-ofrecieron-para-llevar-cabo-proceso-paz-con-eln>

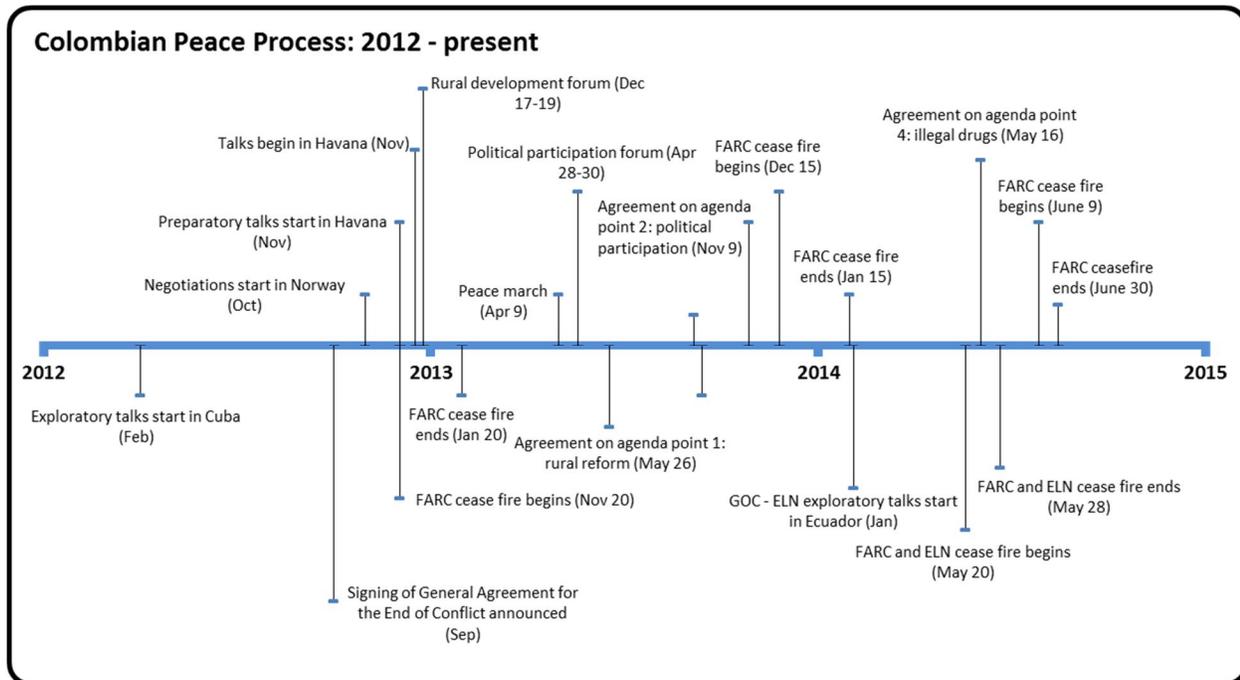
⁶⁴ <http://www.eltiempo.com/politica/proceso-de-paz/liberales-impulsaran-distritos-sociales-de-paz/14285116>

⁶⁵ <http://www.elespectador.com/noticias/proceso-de-paz/acnur-paz-no-reducira-corto-plazo-el-desplazamiento-for-articulo-505016>

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7. Timeline



8. Further Reading

Tanja Nijmeijer writes piece on FARC's political aspirations

Controversial Dutch FARC member, Tanja Nijmeijer, wrote an article about the FARC as a political organization for English-language website Colombia reports. She discusses the peace process, historic and current criticism of the FARC's supposed political aspirations and other topics relevant to the group's self-classification as a political organization.⁶⁶

GOC has spent \$8 million on peace process with FARC

In interview on CNN en Español, President Santos stated that \$8 million has so far been spent on the GOC-FARC peace process. These funds, he stressed, came from GOC peace budgets already designated for initiatives that support peace.⁶⁷

⁶⁶ <http://colombiareports.co/farc-always-political-organization/>

⁶⁷ <http://www.elespectador.com/noticias/paz/cerca-de-8-millones-de-dolares-se-han-gastado-proceso-d-articulo-505098>

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2. GOC – FARC Key Developments from July 23rd to July 29th

Controversy surrounds selection of victims to participate in talks

The next round of talks, beginning on August 11th, will include participation by twelve victims who will travel to Cuba on August 16th.⁶⁸ The group will be the first of approximately five to be selected by the UN and the Universidad Nacional to participate in the talks. Inspector General Alejandro Ordóñez asked that the UN explain the process used to select the victims' representatives to go to Cuba, as he considered this transparency crucial.⁶⁹ He met with victims' organizations in Bogotá to gain input on the selection process and the talks more broadly.⁷⁰

Ordóñez' request comes amid debates originating with General Luis Mendieta, who was held captive by the FARC for twelve years, and said that he did not feel represented by the selected victims' delegation. This caused widespread doubts about the representativeness of the selection, to which the GOC responded with its first communiqué since the dialogues began, stating that

⁶⁸ <http://www.eltiempo.com/politica/proceso-de-paz/colombianos-esperan-verdaderos-gestos-de-las-farc-de-la-calle/14301156>

⁶⁹ <http://www.elespectador.com/noticias/paz/solicitan-onu-explicacion-sobre-victimas-iran-habana-articulo-506643>

⁷⁰ <http://www.eltiempo.com/politica/justicia/procurador-recibira-a-comision-de-organizaciones-de-victimas-de-farc/14311796>



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members of the military who are FARC victims will be considered equal to other victims, and that the delegations aim to be balanced and representative of a range of victims.⁷¹

Senate President asks for time limit on dialogues

Senate President José David Name requested that the GOC put a time limit on dialogues with the FARC. He stated that Colombia is ready for a peace agreement and for the FARC to accept responsibility for their crimes, so the timeframe of the talks should be limited to facilitate this.⁷²

3. GOC – ELN Key Developments from July 23rd to July 29th

Ecuador possible location of ELN dialogues

The Chancellor of Ecuador, Ricardo Patiño, reiterated his country's offer to host official dialogues with the ELN, when the GOC and the guerrillas are ready for such talks to begin. Exploratory talks between the two parties continue in Ecuador amid recent ELN criticism of the GOC, who the guerrilla group accused of altering the agreed exploratory agenda.⁷³

4. Other Voices

Artists encourage Santos to facilitate a culture of peace

Poets, writers, artists, and other intellectuals wrote an open letter to President Santos proposing that journalist Hollman Morris be made leader of initiatives that aim to facilitate a culture of peace in Colombia. The group of approximately seventy intellectuals highlighted the need for culture to support political reform, and emphasized that Morris' experience as a journalist and human rights activist qualifies him as a leader to motivate a culture of peace.⁷⁴

Catholic Church will formally engage with FARC talks

GOC dialogue team leader Humberto de la Calle confirmed that the Catholic Church will provide direct support to the UN and the Universidad Nacional as they organize the teams of victims' representatives who will travel to Havana and participate in the talks in mid-August.⁷⁵

⁷¹ <http://www.semana.com/nacion/articulo/arde-la-polemica-por-victimas-que-iran-la-habana/397335-3> and <http://www.elespectador.com/noticias/paz/delegacion-de-victimas-sera-equilibrada-gobierno-articulo-507405>

⁷² <http://www.elespectador.com/noticias/politica/piden-ponerle-limites-tiempo-los-dialogos-de-gobierno-y-articulo-507222>

⁷³ <http://www.elespectador.com/noticias/paz/ecuador-sede-de-dialogos-el-eln-articulo-506231>

⁷⁴ <http://www.elespectador.com/noticias/paz/intelectuales-proponen-santos-cultura-de-paz-articulo-506421>

⁷⁵ <http://www.elespectador.com/noticias/paz/iglesia-catolica-se-vinculara-negociaciones-de-paz-de-c-articulo-506629>

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FARC leaders should be prepared to go to jail: Luis Moreno Ocampo

In interview with El Espectador, ex-ICC Prosecutor Luis Moreno Ocampo discussed transitional justice in Colombia, society's need for reconciliation, and his opinion that FARC leaders should be prepared to go to jail as part of their acceptance of responsibility for crimes in the conflict.⁷⁶

5. International

German military reform strategy: a model for Colombia?

El Tiempo interviewed German defense expert Rainer Arnold about what Colombia could learn from Germany's post-war military reform strategy. Arnold described how Germany reduced its armed forces after the Cold War, how it modified its military service requisites, and what Colombia could gain from adapting the German model to its own complicated context.⁷⁷

Victims ask US and Cuba to declassify conflict documents

Victims' groups and representatives asked the US and Cuban governments to declassify documents that shed light on the Colombian State's responsibility for crimes in the conflict. This, they say, will contribute to the clarification of truth and consolidation of peace.⁷⁸

6. Emerging Challenges & Responses

Municipalities will lead post-conflict efforts: Santos

President Santos announced plans to strengthen local financial capacity so that municipalities can lead the implementation of post-conflict policy and programs. Mayors will have greater autonomy to design and implement security and peace policy in the post-conflict phase. Santos stated that this is necessary because peace must be consolidated at the local level.⁷⁹

Public opinion is against FARC political participation

The Americas Barometer annual poll results demonstrated that 53.7% of those surveyed would be against the FARC entering politics in 2015 local elections, while 35.1% would accept. In conflict-affected areas, the proportion that rejected the FARC's entry to politics in 2015 was 45.5%, and

⁷⁶ <http://www.elespectador.com/noticias/paz/jefes-de-farc-deben-estar-dispuestos-ir-presos-articulo-506481>

⁷⁷ <http://www.eltiempo.com/politica/proceso-de-paz/cambios-en-ff-aa-de-alemania-en-posguerra-referente-para-colombia/14305960>

⁷⁸ <http://www.elespectador.com/noticias/paz/victimas-piden-eeuu-y-cuba-desclasificar-archivos-de-co-articulo-507351>

⁷⁹ <http://www.elespectador.com/noticias/paz/municipios-seran-los-protagonistas-del-posconflicto-san-articulo-507224>

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the proportion that would accept was 35.1%. In the same areas, 60% supported the idea of negotiating with the FARC, while 53% supported this idea at the national level.⁸⁰

Ex-paramilitary leader warns against giving FARC more leniency than AUC

Alias 'Macaco', ex-leader of the United Self-Defense Forces of Colombia (AUC), weighed in on current debates about the judicial benefits that should be given to the FARC in the case of a peace agreement. Macaco warned that if the guerrilla group receives more benefits or judicial leniency than the AUC, tensions between ex-combatants from the two sides could increase to the point that they could re-arm and continue the violence.⁸¹

Uribe supporters in the Senate engage in debates about the peace process

Just one week after taking office in the Senate, ex-President Álvaro Uribe and his supporters have criticized the peace process for allowing large organizations to overpower the victims who will travel to Cuba to participate in the talks, thereby quashing their voice. This criticism generated a broader debate about the peace process in the Chamber of Representatives.⁸²

In addition, Attorney General Eduardo Montealegre proposed that members of the military charged with crimes against humanity be included in transitional justice mechanisms that provide benefits for such charges.⁸³ Uribe and his supporters said this proposal implies that these members of the military are on the same level as the guerrillas, for whom transitional justice measures are designed because they are criminals. He therefore proposed a military tribunal to handle cases in which members of the military are charged with serious crimes.⁸⁴

7. Timeline

⁸⁰ <http://www.elespectador.com/noticias/nacional/colombia-desaprueba-presencia-politica-de-farc-segun-ba-articulo-507395>

⁸¹ <http://www.elespectador.com/noticias/judicial/controversial-carta-de-macaco-los-negociadores-de-paz-c-articulo-506709>

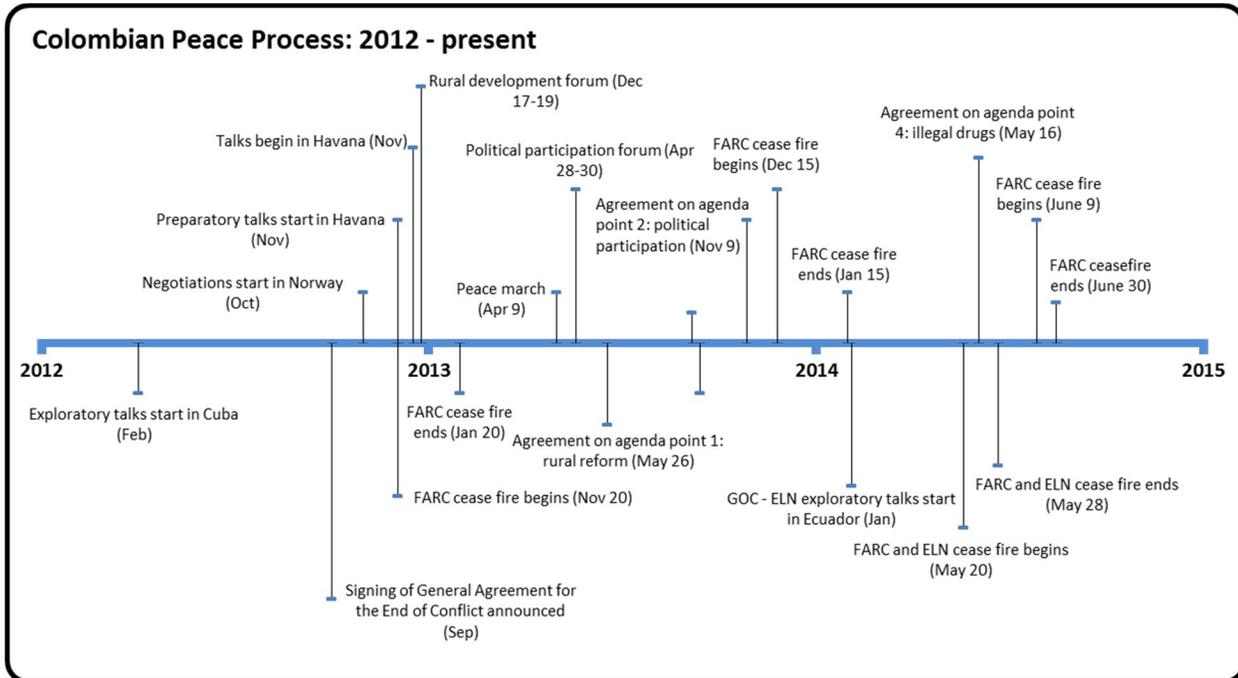
⁸² <http://www.eltiempo.com/politica/congreso/uribistas-generan-polemica-en-la-camara-por-dialogos-de-paz/14290775>

⁸³ www.caracol.com.co/noticias/judiciales/militares-procesados-deben-incluirse-en-la-justicia-transicional-fiscal/20140724/nota/2337697.aspx

⁸⁴ <http://www.caracol.com.co/noticias/judiciales/militares-no-pueden-ser-nivelados-con-el-terrorismo-uribe/20140724/nota/2338114.aspx>

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8. Further Reading

Ex-ELN member discusses peace, forgiveness

Carlos Velandia, who was a member of the ELN for thirty years until being captured by the army in 1994, going to jail for ten years, and spending seven years in exile, was interviewed by El Tiempo. In the interview, Velandia discusses the ELN hierarchy, his efforts to promote peace in Colombia, the difficulties he has experienced in finding work, the ELN's political aspirations (or lack thereof), and the need to find a way for Colombian society to reconcile and forgive the wrongs caused by the armed groups.⁸⁵

Santos calls on private sector to recognize its role in the conflict

In a forum called "Culture of Peace and Transitional Justice", President Santos called on political parties and the private sector to recognize their responsibility in the conflict. He stated for peace and reconciliation to be achieved, it is necessary for all parts, not just the illegal armed groups, to recognize their role as facilitators or indirect contributors to the conflict.⁸⁶

⁸⁵ <http://www.eltiempo.com/politica/justicia/se-necesita-coraje-para-pedir-perdon-exguerrillero-del-eln-/14310400>

⁸⁶ <http://www.eltiempo.com/politica/proceso-de-paz/partidos-y-empresarios-a-reconocer-su-parte-en-el-conflicto/14293659>