

Colombian Peace Process: IOM Weekly Report

June, 2015

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June 03, 2015.

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 May 27th – June 2nd

GOC and FARC extend current round of talks

The GOC and FARC negotiating teams announced on Saturday that the current round of peace talks – the 37th thus far – will end on Thursday, June 4th, instead of Sunday, May 31th. The reason for the extension was so that specific issues regarding the issue of victims could be resolved. The FARC stated that both parties are looking to establish “minimums” on the issue.¹

Identification of areas to de-mine begins in Antioquia

As part of the implementation of the de-mining pilot program, work began in the village of El Orejón, in Briceño, Antioquia to identify the parts of the village to be de-mined. Unarmed FARC fighters, members of the Armed Forces and the community worked together to point out four high-risk areas in terms of landmines. The work to remove them will start on June 10th.²

FARC have not rejected idea of “special reclusion zones”

In an interview with Colombian newspaper *El Tiempo*, FARC negotiating team member, alias Pastor Alape, stated that the FARC would not reject the idea of “special reclusion zones” if various actors responsible for the war went to them, and if it was recommended by a Truth Commission.

¹ <http://www.noticiasrcn.com/nacional-pais/gobierno-y-farc-aplazan-fin-del-actual-ciclo-dialogos-habana>

² <http://www.elcolombiano.com/desminado-con-farc-inicia-el-10-de-junio-en-briceno-ME2024970>

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Alape also stated that it is important for the FARC to tell the whole truth about their “errors” – the word he used when the journalist referred to FARC “crimes” – so that there be no problems with the International Criminal Court in the future.³

FARC negotiator killed in military attacks: FARC

The FARC announced on May 27th that one of its members who had previously gone to Havana to negotiate peace had been killed in a military attack. Alias ‘Jairo Martínez’ died in the military attack in Guapi, Cauca that killed 27 guerrilla fighters, and led the FARC to call its unilateral ceasefire to an end. According to the guerrilla group, Martínez was discussing the advances of the peace process with the 29th Front when the attack took place.⁴

3. International

International guarantor countries ask for continued efforts in peace talks

Representatives from Cuba and Norway – the guarantor countries for the GOC-FARC dialogues – publically asked both parties to continue in their efforts to find peace, including negotiating and defining a definitive bilateral cease-fire agreement. They also showed their concern due to the recent worsening of the armed conflict in Colombia.⁵

4. Other Voices

Santos should meet with ‘Timochenko’: Senator

Liberal Party Senator Guillermo García Realpe stated Tuesday that President Santos should meet with FARC-leader ‘Timochenko’ as a way to speed up peace talks, and at the same time, show that despite the current crisis in the dialogues, they will continue and are going well.⁶

FARC have violated IHL after end of ceasefire: Human Rights Ombudsman’s Office

The Office of the Human Rights Ombudsman announced on Tuesday that the FARC had violated International Humanitarian Law (IHL) in various ways since the end of their ceasefire. This included

³ <http://www.eltiempo.com/politica/proceso-de-paz/entrevista-con-alias-pastor-alape-negociador-de-las-farc/15860135>

⁴ <http://www.semana.com/nacion/articulo/jairo-martinez-negociador-de-las-farc-en-la-habana-cayo-en-bombardeo/429185-3>

⁵ <http://www.eltiempo.com/politica/proceso-de-paz/paises-garantes-piden-esfuerzos-para-salvar-proceso-de-paz/15840899>

⁶ <http://www.elespectador.com/noticias/politica/proponen-encuentro-de-santos-y-timochenko-destrabar-pro-articulo-564113>



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an attack in Buenaventura that left the city without electricity and the forced recruitment of two children in Jambaló, Cauca, amongst other examples.⁷

Roughly 840 social organizations demand bilateral ceasefire

Various national-level organizations that claim to conglomerate a total of 870 local grass-roots organizations released a communiqué on Friday demanding an immediate bilateral ceasefire. The organizations ask both the FARC and GOC to continue working to find peace and Colombian civil society to pressure the parts to stop the fighting.⁸

5. Emerging Challenges and Responses

In Colombia, people need to be convinced of peace process benefits: Caballero

Antonio Caballero, journalist and columnist for *Semana* magazine, stated that it is important for President Santos to look for support for the peace process from other countries. Nonetheless, the most urgent issue to tackle is gaining support from the Colombian people, who see the peace process in an increasingly negative light.⁹

Five challenges for the peace process need to be resolved: Francisco Barbosa

Highly recognized lawyer and professor Francisco Barbosa wrote that the peace process currently faces five challenges, which, if resolved, would push the process quickly towards the signing of a peace agreement. These challenges are: (1) signing a bilateral ceasefire; (2) coming to an agreement on victims; (3) implementing the de-mining agreement; (4) adopting a forward-looking vision on transitional justice; (5) defining a mechanism for the Colombian people to approve the agreements. Barbosa proposes a National Constituent Assembly.¹⁰

⁷ <http://www.semana.com/nacion/articulo/defensoria-advierte-sobre-infracciones-de-las-farc-al-dih/429947-3>

⁸ <http://www.contagioradio.com/cerca-de-900-organizaciones-sociales-y-de-ddhh-llaman-a-pactar-un-cese-bilateral-articulo-9447/>

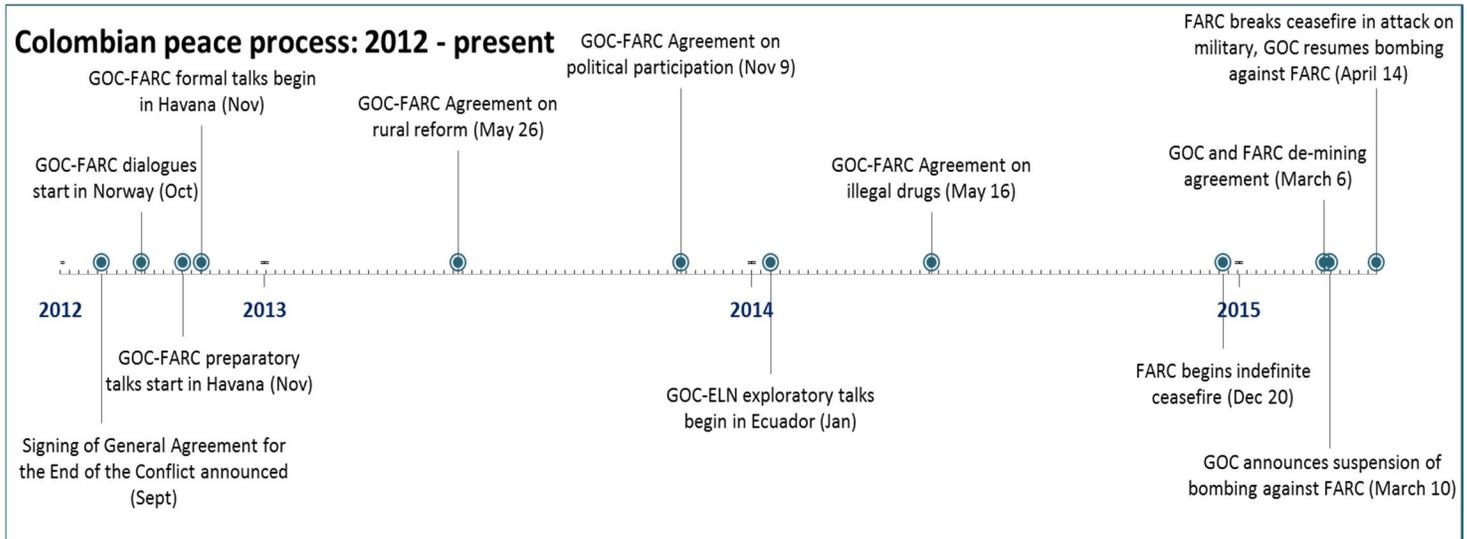
⁹ <http://www.semana.com/opinion/articulo/antonio-caballero-en-perfecto-ingles/429546-3>

¹⁰ <http://www.eltiempo.com/politica/proceso-de-paz/proceso-de-paz-los-cinco-desafios/15866735>

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7. Further Reading

Peace talks have led to an increase in violence: Democratic Center Party

During the peace talks between the GOC and FARC, there has been a correlational increase in violence as seen in numerous indicators, according to the Democratic Center Party. The FARC have carried out more attacks than before the peace talks, and have attacked in at least 25 departments. Thus, the FARC need to be pressured to carry out their unilateral ceasefire again, and be concentrated in some part of the country as well to verify the ceasefire.¹¹

Military and political strategies must be aligned for peace: Retired Colonel

Retired Colonel Carlos Alfonso Velásquez argues that the peace process is not in crisis right now, but that the military and political strategies to put an end to the conflict need to be in line. He argues that both military and political events affect the talks; thus military actions against the FARC must be considered for their political effects on the negotiating table.¹²

¹¹ <http://www.semana.com/nacion/articulo/los-mil-dias-del-proceso-de-paz-segun-el-uribismo/429869-3>

¹² <http://www.razonpublica.com/index.php/conflicto-drogas-y-paz-temas-30/8491-%C2%BFestrategias-militar-y-pol%C3%ADtica-divergentes-para-el-fin-del-conflicto.html>

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2. GOC – FARC Key Developments from June 3rd – June 9th

Truth Commission Announced

The GOC and FARC negotiating teams announced on Thursday that they had arrived to an agreement on a “Truth Clarification, Coexistence and Non-Repetition Commission.” The commission will begin its work once a final peace agreement is signed, and will have three years to file its report.¹³

37th round of negotiations finishes

On Thursday, the 37th round of negotiations concluded, with the announcement of the truth commission. Originally, it had been scheduled to finish on Sunday May 31st, but was extended.¹⁴ The 38th round of dialogue is scheduled to begin on June 17th.¹⁵

Demining begins in Antioquia

A current explosives-oriented combatant from the 36th Front of the FARC and a Sargent from the Army's Demining Battalion began the process of physically removing landmines in the village of el

¹³ <http://www.centrodehistoriahistorica.gov.co/descargas/acuerdoProcesoPaz-comisionVerdad/04-06-2015-INFORME-AVANCES-COMISION-VF.pdf>

¹⁴ <http://www.elespectador.com/noticias/paz/verdad-busca-mesa-de-negociaciones-de-paz-articulo-564450>

¹⁵ <http://www.elnuevoherald.com/noticias/mundo/america-latina/colombia-es/article23232462.html>



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Orejón, in Briceño, Antioquia. The two former enemies were accompanied by representatives from Popular Action from Norway and the International Red Cross.¹⁶

3. Other Voices

UN calls truth commission a “significant advancement”

The UN Office in Colombia stated that the announcement of the truth commission was a “significant advancement on the issue of victims” and that it satisfies one of the “most urgent demands” on the dialogues in Havana.¹⁷

4. Emerging Challenges and Responses

If FARC continue attacks, negotiations should be suspended: Senator

Senator Mauricio Aguilar, from the Citizen’s Option Party, stated that if the GOC and FARC dialogue teams in Havana do not come to some sort of agreement for the FARC to stop attacking “civilians and infrastructure,” the peace talks should be suspended.¹⁸

Commissioners key to Truth Commission legitimacy: Experts

In interviews for newspapers *El Espectador* and *El Colombiano*, various experts argued that having commissioners seen as un-biased will be fundamental for the truth commission. If the investigators are seen as biased, the legitimacy of the final report will be doubtful, which may lessen the chances of reconciliation and peace.¹⁹

¹⁶ <http://www.eltiempo.com/colombia/medellin/desminado-en-colombia-asi-fue-el-primer-desminado-entre-las-farc-y-el-ejercito/15907281>

¹⁷ <http://www.elheraldo.co/nacional/onu-ve-comision-de-la-verdad-como-un-avance-significativo-en-proceso-de-paz-197965>

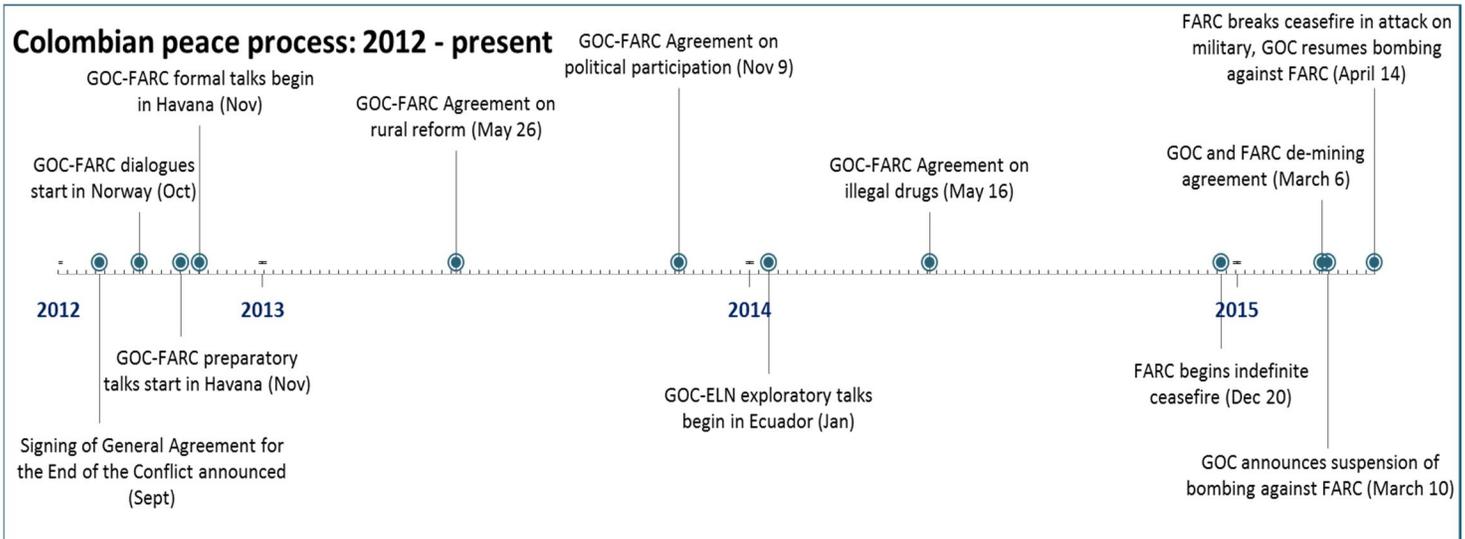
¹⁸ <http://elfrente.com.co/main/blog/si-las-farc-continuan-atacando-a-la-poblacion-civil-se-debe-suspender-el-proceso/>

¹⁹ <http://www.elcolombiano.com/revelar-lo-que-esconde-la-guerra-tiene-retos-DM2079959>;
<http://www.elspectador.com/noticias/paz/los-retos-de-comision-de-verdad-articulo-564868>

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Truth Commission important extrajudicial measure: Professor

Philosophy professor from the National University, William Duica, highlighted the importance of the truth commission as an extrajudicial measure for truth and reconciliation in Colombia. He also argues that the commission shows that the two parties in Havana are not looking to establish blame for the cause of the conflict, but instead are saying that the conflict was caused and fuelled by specific social conditions.²⁰

Conflict has intensified after FARC suspends cease-fire: NGO

Colombian Ideas for Peace Foundation has stated that since the FARC called the end to their unilateral ceasefire, the guerrilla group has carried out 34 military actions, while the Armed Forces have carried out five against the FARC. Most of the guerrilla attacks have used medium and low amounts of military effort. A total of 6 soldiers and 20 guerrillas have lost their lives since May 22nd.²¹

²⁰ <http://www.razonpublica.com/index.php/conflicto-drogas-y-paz-temas-30/8511-la-comisi%C3%B3n-de-la-verdad-y-el-posconflicto.html>

²¹ <http://www.ideaspaz.org/publications/posts/1181>

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2. GOC – FARC Key Developments from June 10th – June 16th

FARC will release children under 15 in its ranks

FARC negotiating-team leader, Iván Márquez, announced on Monday that the goal of the 38th round of negotiations, set to begin on June 17th, is an agreement for the FARC to release all children under 15 years old from the group's ranks. President Santos responded by saying the releasing of the children can be celebrated once it actually happens.²²

Final peace agreement is not a given: President Santos

President Santos stated Tuesday in Oslo, that the signing of a final peace agreement between the GOC and FARC is not a forgone conclusion, noting that "time is, unfortunately, running out..." He added that not signing a peace agreement would mean another 20 years of war.²³

FARC may break confidentiality agreement: Guerrilla Leader

First commander of the FARC, alias Timochenko, announced that he had ordered his troops to break the confidentiality agreement that surrounds the peace talks in Havana. The decision was made because the guerrilla leader believes there is a "media offensive" against the FARC. He ordered his negotiating team to write a report on "what really is happening" in Havana.²⁴

²² <http://www.semana.com/nacion/articulo/farc-liberarian-menores-de-15-anos/431464-3>

²³ <http://www.eltiempo.com/politica/gobierno/palabras-del-presidente-juan-manuel-santos-durante-foro-en-oslo/15955677>

²⁴ <http://www.semana.com/nacion/articulo/farc-revelara-secretos-proceso-de-paz/358878-3>



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3. GOC – FARC Key Developments from June 10th – June 16th

Peace process without ELN is incomplete: High Commissioner for Peace

High Commissioner for Peace, Sergio Jaramillo, called on the ELN to join the peace process, stating that peace without the guerrilla group would be “incomplete.” In an event in the city of Arauca, the High Commissioner told the ELN that the goal is to build peace without weapons, with all of the guarantees needed for the group to do so.²⁵

4. International Voices

“I am ready to play any role necessary”: Pope Francisco

In a meeting with President Santos, Pope Francisco stated that he was ready to play any role necessary to help the peace process. President Santos said the possibility was discussed, but if the Pope were to intervene, it would have to be agreed between both negotiating parties.²⁶

5. Emerging Challenges and Responses

FARC are playing with fire in peace process: News magazine

Newsmagazine *Semana* argued on Sunday that with the increased attacks by the guerrilla group, the FARC are “playing with fire” when it comes to the peace process. The magazine proposed three reasons for the wave of guerrilla attacks, concluding that the FARC have not won the political legitimacy necessary for peace, and recent attacks are making it less likely.²⁷

No reason to fear the truth: High Commissioner for Peace

Colombian High Commissioner for Peace, Sergio Jaramillo, in an op-ed in Spain’s *El País* newspaper outlined the goals and objectives of the recently-announced truth commission, and rebutted various criticisms made by Inspector General Alejandro Ordoñez. He also added that all parties will have to respond for their actions, including the FARC for their recent attacks.²⁸

²⁵ <http://www.altocomisionadoparalapaz.gov.co/herramientas/prensa/Pages/2015/junio/no-vamos-a-construir-la-paz-con-un-eln-armado-sergio-jaramillo.aspx?ano=2015>

²⁶ http://internacional.elpais.com/internacional/2015/06/15/actualidad/1434396571_992337.html

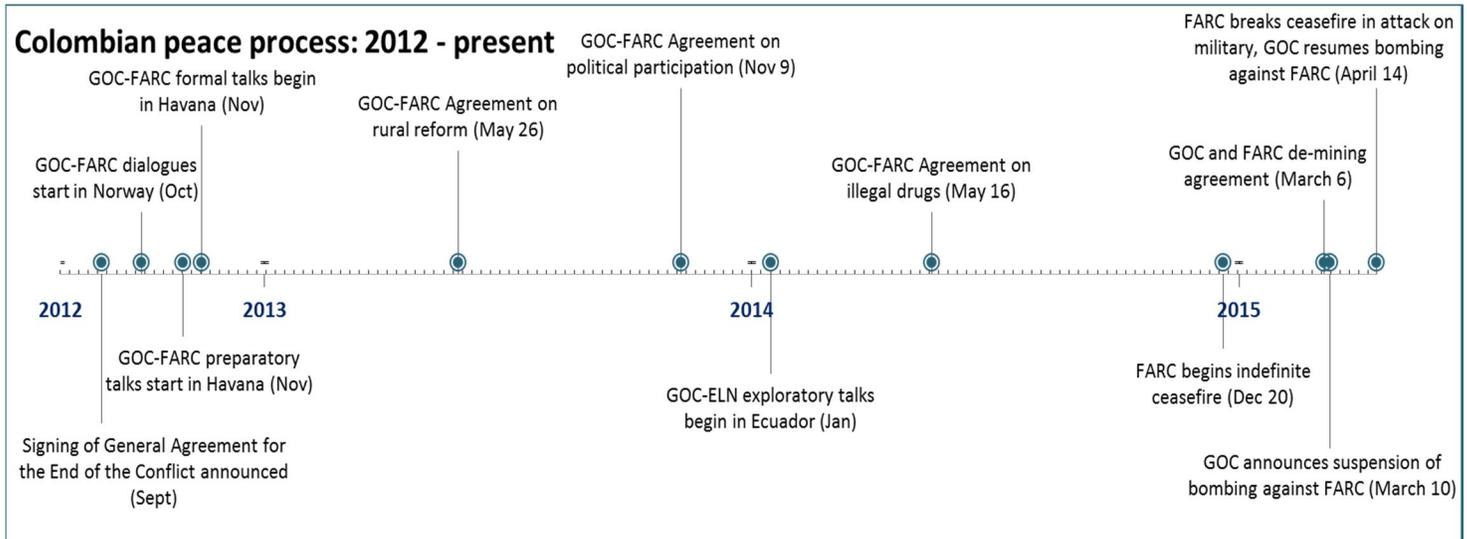
²⁷ <http://www.semana.com/nacion/articulo/las-farc-estan-jugando-con-fuego/431153-3>

²⁸ http://internacional.elpais.com/internacional/2015/06/14/actualidad/1434241655_403137.html

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Time running out for peace process: Analyst

Political analyst and former FARC member, Yesid Arteta, argued that without new, clear advances in the peace process, it will fall apart shortly. He states that the FARC politically in the rural periphery could last for a long time, but the use of weapons is already obsolete, meaning the group needs to take chance of this opportunity for peace. At the rate things are going, though, the peace process could be in its last throws.²⁹

Peace Process has more support in conflict-affected areas: Report

According to a report by the Barometer of the Americas, in which two universities and USAID participated, in areas where the GOC is carrying out its consolidation policy – in areas hardest hit by the conflict – support for the peace process is higher than the rest of Colombia. Not only do citizens in these areas believe more in the peace process, they also tend to support more the ideas of reconciliation and forgiveness than in the rest of the country.³⁰

Bi-lateral ceasefire necessary now: News-site Editor

Adriaan Alsema, founder and editor of the news website Colombia Reports, argued on Monday that the military confrontation, increased by both the Armed Forces and the FARC despite early steps to deescalate the conflict, is undermining the peace process. He argues that a military

²⁹ <http://www.semana.com/opinion/articulo/vezid-arteta-davila-tic-tac-tic-tac-se-acaba-el-tiempo-en-la-habana/431041-3>

³⁰ <http://www.olapolitica.com/content/en-zonas-de-consolidaci%C3%B3n-se-apoya-la-paz>



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strategy to pressure or even defeat the FARC has not been as successful as previously thought in the past, and trying to do so now will hurt the peace process, have limited success and only create more victims of the conflict.³¹

³¹ <http://colombiareports.com/why-everybody-opposing-a-bilateral-ceasefire-in-colombia-is-wrong/>

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2. GOC – FARC Key Developments from June 17th – June 23rd

38th round of talks begin

On Wednesday June 17th, the 38th round of talks between the GOC and FARC began. The negotiations are still focused on the issue of victims, although they could focus this round on the protocol for the FARC to release their child combatants under the age of 15, per the announcement by Iván Márquez last week.³²

FARC call for bilateral ceasefire, Minister of the Interior responds

At the beginning of the 38th round of talks, the FARC called for a bilateral ceasefire, while also criticizing the “distorted” and “biased” views of President Santos. The Minister of the Interior, Juan Fernando Cristo, stated that a bilateral ceasefire at this moment in time is “neither convenient nor opportune in order to reach peace in Colombia.”³³ The FARC have made a call for a ceasefire more than once in the last week.³⁴

³² <http://www.semana.com/nacion/articulo/farc-llaman-cese-el-fuego-bilateral-en-inicio-de-ciclo/431630-3>

³³ <http://www.elespectador.com/noticias/politica/no-habra-cese-bilateral-al-fuego-gobierno-farc-articulo-567992>

³⁴ <http://www.eltiempo.com/politica/proceso-de-paz/farc-proponen-silenciar-armas-/15991944>



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3. International

“An imperfect agreement is better than no agreement”: New York Times Editor

Ernesto Londoño, a Colombian who works on the editorial board of the New York Times, stated in an interview this week that despite the recent setbacks in the peace process, he still believes that an imperfect peace agreement is preferable to “giving in to perpetual war.” He also stated that it would be “naïve” to think that every person responsible for the violence in the conflict will be given a harsh judicial sentence.³⁵

4. Other Voices

FARC should be concentrated in specific areas for rest of negotiations: Uribe

Ex-president Álvaro Uribe proposed the concentration of FARC fighters while the negotiations continue. He stated that these areas could not be close to borders or important regions for economic production, and would be in areas with no civilians. He added that the FARC could remain armed, and that the time spent in these concentration sites would count as a reduction towards any judicial sentence handed down to FARC leaders as a result of the peace process.³⁶

5. Emerging Challenges and Responses

Peace process running out of time, should have limit: Green Party

Green Party leaders Claudia López and Antonio Navarro stated last week that the peace process is running out of time, and as things are currently going, will lose support and fall apart. Therefore, the two Senators proposed a “seventh ballot issue” through which on October 25th, when the vote for local politicians and Congress-people takes place, Colombians could opine about putting a time limit on the peace process of April 9, 2016. The FARC have rejected the proposal.³⁷

³⁵ <http://www.eltiempo.com/politica/proceso-de-paz/entrevista-con-ernesto-londono-miembro-del-equipo-editorial-de-the-new-york-times/15995909>

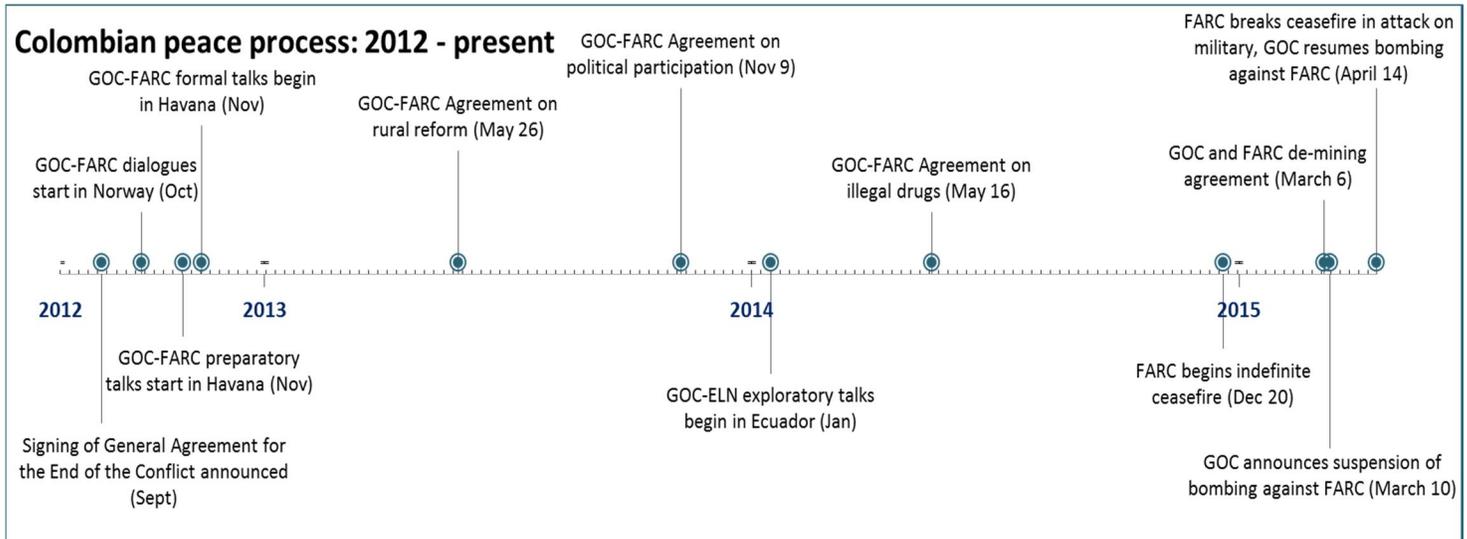
³⁶ <http://www.semana.com/nacion/articulo/dialogos-la-propuesta-de-uribe/431937-3>

³⁷ <http://www.semana.com/nacion/articulo/claudia-lopez-alianza-verde-proponen-papeleta-para-poner-fecha-limite-al-proceso-de-paz/431791-3>

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Current Crisis in the Peace Process has Numerous Causes: University Professor

Carlo Nasi, professor and analyst at the University of the Andes, stated this week that the current crisis in the peace process has six causes: the increase in FARC attacks; the lack of any new agreements; inefficient gestures for peace by the FARC; a lack of leadership; political polarization; and little public interest in what has been achieved until now. He concludes that many of the proposals to suspend the dialogues or change their course do not respond to this full analysis of the situation, and could do more harm than good.³⁸

Peace process in crisis like never before: Columnist

Columnist for newsmagazine *Semana*, María Jimena Duzán, stated that it is clear that the peace process is in its worst crisis for two reasons. Firstly, the negotiating table has become as polarized as the rest of the country. Secondly, the lack of trust and confidence between the negotiating parties has now gained more prominence than the trust they do have. For Durán, if the GOC and FARC do not get “politically imaginative” to move the dialogues forward, the whole process will simply fall apart.³⁹

³⁸ <http://www.razonpublica.com/index.php/conflicto-drogas-y-paz-temas-30/8545-la-mala-hora-del-proceso-de-paz-anatom%C3%ADa-de-la-crisis.html>

³⁹ <http://www.semana.com/opinion/articulo/maria-jimena-duzan-cronica-de-un-proceso-en-crisis/431925-3>



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Peace process crisis has become a “duel between cowards”: Columnist

Journalist and columnist for newsmagazine *Semana*, Daniel Coronell, argued that the peace process has turned into somewhat of a “duel between cowards.” He argues that both sides, inside of getting back on track to agreeing to measures that lower conflict intensity, have instead decided to pander to their “internal critics.” He criticized the FARC for their attacks and Santos for not seeing the positives of the FARC ceasefire until it was too late.⁴⁰

⁴⁰ <http://www.semana.com/opinion/articulo/daniel-coronell-duelo-de-cobardes/431927-3>