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## PEACE MAIL

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### **ELN Claims Responsibility for Recent Bomb Attacks Putting at Risk Peace Talks**

ELN recently claimed responsibility for the bombing attack that took place February 19, 2017 in La Macarena district of Bogota near the city's bull fighting ring killing a police officer and injuring 29 others. A Twitter message posted by the group on February 26 stated that that an urban faction deliberately attacked a police patrol by detonating the bomb in Bogota. ELN also claimed responsibility for a bomb attack on February 14 that injured four Colombian soldiers in the department of Meta on the main highway between Bogota and Villavicencio. GOC Minister of the Interior, Juan Fernando Cristo, said that these attacks by the ELN have put at serious risk the peace talk negotiations currently ongoing in Quito, Ecuador between the illegal armed group and the GOC.<sup>1,2</sup>

### **FARC on Schedule to Lay Down Arms March 1**

Despite setbacks in the logistical provisioning of the 26 transition zones and the arrival of storage containers, the 7,000 members of the FARC are on schedule to begin laying down their armaments on March 1, 2017 to be stored and overseen by the UN International Monitoring and Verification unit as previously agreed upon in the signed peace accords between the FARC and the GOC. In keeping with the 180-day transition period outlined in the peace accord, the FARC is to lay day 30% of their arms beginning on March 1, another 30% on May 1, and the remaining 40% on June 1, 2017. After which time, the UN Verification team will remove the containers storing the armaments. In addition to laying down their arms in the transition zones, the FARC also committed to release the locations of secret armament storage facilities containing mines and bombs to also be withdrawn and stored by the UN team. The UN Monitoring and Verification Mechanism is made up of hundreds of international observers drawn primarily from other Latin American nations, GOC officials, and representatives from the FARC.<sup>1,2,3</sup>

### **Farmers and Indigenous Warn of the Presence of Paramilitaries Occupying Areas Formally Controlled by the FARC**

On February 9, 2017, farmers from the community of La Garraba in the region of Catatumbo, Department of Norte de Santander, noted the presence of "several men, dressed in black shirts and camouflage pants, armed with rifles and pistols." The men stated that they were members of a paramilitary group who had "come to take possession of the zone." In addition, members of the *Bari* indigenous tribe also reported an increase in the appearance of supposed paramilitaries in their territories. The threat presented by the presence of the armed group has created fear once again in a region that has been heavily affected by the internal conflict. Local inhabitants are asking the government to address this phenomenon to prevent a return to violence of the past.<sup>1</sup>