

 PEACE MAIL

December 27, 2016-January 2, 2017

**WEEKLY UPDATE: Implementing the Peace Accords**

The final peace accord contains a three-pronged approach to ensuring fulfillment of commitments included in the text: the *Commission for Monitoring, Promotion, and Verification of the Implementation of the Peace Accord* (CSIVI), the *National Reincorporation Council* (CNR) and the GOC-FARC-UN tripartite *Monitoring and Verification Mechanism* (MM&V). This callout box includes a weekly update on releases and work related to these supports for implementing the peace accords in Colombia.

The MM&V confirmed that a member of the FARC-EP's 24<sup>th</sup> Front left his pre-grouping zone in Antioquia unarmed but nonetheless without previous authorization, additionally engaging in a "hostile verbal discussion" with a young person from the region. The unauthorized exit is a violation of the protocols in place for the management of the zone, and the MM&V subsequently recommended that the FARC-EP exercise greater control over its structures according to the established guidelines. The MM&V additionally responded to the governor's previous accusations of "constant movement" of minors in and out of this zone and of prostitution of these minors, noting that no evidence of such movements had been found over the course of their investigations.<sup>1</sup>

On January 1<sup>st</sup>, a video emerged of United Nations MM&V Monitors dancing with individuals in the FARC-EP temporary pre-grouping zones on New Year's Eve. The incident occurred with members of the 59<sup>th</sup> Front of the FARC-EP in the township of Fonseca in the department of La Guajira. Among others, members of opposition party *Centro Democrático* voiced their concerns over the video, saying that it was an "international embarrassment" and that the actions cast doubt over the guarantees of verification of the Mission. Senator Nohora Tovar, from the same party, criticized the ability of MM&V members to work impartially under such circumstances.<sup>2</sup> For his part, FARC-EP leader and chief negotiator Rodrigo Londoño downplayed the incident, arguing that they were simply celebrating the arrival of the New Year.<sup>3</sup> The United Nations responded in an official release that the actions were "inappropriate and do not reflect the values of professionalism and impartiality of the Mission," and that the Agency would investigate the incident. The statement then went on to assure the Colombian people of the UN's commitment to objectivity and rigor in monitoring the bilateral ceasefire between the GOC and FARC-EP.<sup>4</sup>

**Amnesty Law Passes**

On Wednesday, December 28<sup>th</sup>, Colombian Congress overwhelmingly passed the Amnesty & Pardon Law. The event marked the inaugural use of the Legislative Act for Peace *Fast Track* process, which was designed to accelerate legislative processes pertaining to the implementation of the peace accord. It was also the first step in implementing the peace accord between the FARC-EP and the GOC, signed on November 24<sup>th</sup> and passed through Congress on November 30<sup>th</sup>. The passing of the Law alleviates the difficult to maintain tensions between FARC-EP members

and the GOC and public forces that have persisted since the accords unexpectedly lost in the October 2<sup>nd</sup> plebiscite. It grants the FARC-EP the juridical security that they need to continue movement to the official transitional zones – an important advance in maintaining the momentum of peace accord implementation.<sup>5</sup> President Juan Manuel Santos signed the newly minted Law 1280 on December 30<sup>th</sup>.<sup>6</sup>

#### **ELN attacks, confrontations continue – New proof of life for Odín Sanchez released**

On December 28<sup>th</sup>, an attack attributed to urban militias from the ELN occurred in the northern area of Bogotá, and resulted in one police officer killed and seven others injured by shrapnel.<sup>7</sup> For their part, the GOC armed forces announced on January 2<sup>nd</sup> that they conducted an operation in the department of Bolívar in which they recovered 8 minors from the guerrilla group's ranks, along with 12 guerrillas, a weapons cache, and materials useful for military intelligence.<sup>8</sup> And while a new proof of life video was released on December 31<sup>st</sup>, chief GOC negotiator for the ELN peace talks, Juan Camilo Restrepo, asserted that, while the proof of life was a positive gesture, continued attacks by the ELN create unfavorable conditions for a bilateral ceasefire, and that the opportunity for these dialogues will not endure indefinitely.<sup>9</sup> Currently, the already delayed start date for the talks falls on January 10<sup>th</sup>.