

 PEACE MAIL

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GOC-FARC negotiators release new peace accord

On Saturday, November 12th, President Juan Manuel Santos and leaders of the GOC and FARC negotiating teams announced that a new peace accord had been reached in Havana. Negotiators had returned to Havana after the original accord – a document developed over four years of negotiations between the two sides – had been defeated by a small margin by the NO campaign in the October 2nd plebiscite. The text of the new accord was published early Monday morning.¹ President Santos emphasized that the new accord includes significant content from the NO representatives, and Chief GOC negotiator, Humberto de la Calle, asserted that the revised document was indeed better than the original version. Meanwhile, Chief FARC negotiator Iván Márquez estimated that, overall, 65% of the NO recommendations were integrated into the new version, with 65% included in the justice mechanism, 90% of suggested revisions made on the themes of gender, and 100 changes total between rural development, anti-drug policies, victims, and the end of the conflict.² While ample changes were made, several core aspects of the accord remained fixed – i.e., those elements that comprise the essence of what the peace accord sets out to accomplish: the transition of the FARC from an armed guerrilla group to political organization.

ELN talks continue to falter

After claiming last week that they were planning to release remaining high profile hostage Ódin Sánchez, the ELN still retains him in their custody. They also announced last Tuesday that the release of Sánchez is conditional upon the pardon of two currently incarcerated ELN members, whom the ELN wishes to participate in the peace dialogues.³ The GOC has made it clear that the public phase of the peace talks with the guerrilla group cannot commence until Sánchez is freed. Furthermore, Chief GOC negotiator for the ELN peace talks, Juan Camilo Restrepo, made public on Sunday his concerns regarding the will of the ELN to truly negotiate peace after they were reported by the Colombian Army to have bombed an oil installation in the department of Nariño.⁴

FARC dissident group threats in Vaupés

The Office of the Ombudsman announced concerns last week related to actions of FARC dissidents operating in the department of Vaupés, including the First Front “Armando Ríos” and the “Urías Cuellar” company. They have identified risks of forced displacement, threats, extortion, recruitment and use of minors, targeted homicides, and the installation of antipersonnel mines. The zones in which the illegal activity is located suffer from high levels of poverty and school desertion by children, poor transportation, health care services, and human resources.⁵