

DDR AND CHILD SOLDIER ISSUES

A MONTHLY REVIEW
OCTOBER 2016

USAID supports the International Organization for Migration (IOM) in Colombia through the **Recruitment Prevention and Reintegration (RPR) Program**. The RPR Program provides institutional strengthening for the Government of Colombia (GOC) to support legal, social and economic reintegration services to demobilized adults and disengaged children, as well as to prevent new recruitment.

The GOC supports demobilized adults through its **Colombian Reintegration Agency (ACR)**. The DDR initiatives of the ACR aim to fulfill the following objectives: 1) Create conditions for demobilized ex-combatants to become independent citizens, 2) Strengthen socio-economic conditions in receptor communities, and 3) Promote reconciliation.

Children and adolescents who disengage from illegal armed groups, recognized as victims, receive special attention through programs and policies led by the **Colombian Family Welfare Institute (ICBF)** through its Specialized Assistance Program, which aims to reestablish and guarantee rights with special emphasis on protection, education and health.

This monthly review, produced by IOM, provides a summary of news related to disarmament, demobilization and reintegration (DDR) in Colombia, along with statistics on ex-combatant adults and disengaged children.

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KEY DEVELOPMENTS

Colombia Votes NO in October 2nd Plebiscite

On Sunday, October 2nd, Colombian voters gathered at their respective polling stations to vote YES or NO on the following ballot question: "Do you support the final accord for ending the conflict and building a stable and durable peace?" Despite the YES outcome predicted by all major polling outlets in the days leading up to the vote, by the end of the day, NO votes would win out by a mere 53,894 ballots nationwide. Of 12.8 million valid votes, just fewer than 6.4 million voted for YES, while just over 6.4 million voted for NO.¹ GOC and FARC negotiators in Havana had previously selected the plebiscite as the mechanism for democratic participation and popular referendum of the accords. While the YES votes did meet the previously set minimum threshold (roughly 4.5 million), the NO votes won out and rejected the final set of proposed accords.

Colombian President Juan Manuel Santos wins Nobel Peace Prize 2016

On October 7th, Colombian President Juan Manuel Santos was announced as the winner of the 2016 Nobel Peace Prize. Santos dedicated the award to the victims of the armed conflict, and called the recognition a "mandate to continue working towards peace."² Analysts suggested that the announcement may lift morale among supporters of the accords and the GOC at a time when it is much needed.³

GOC-FARC bilateral ceasefire extended through the end of the year

Following the narrow popular rejection of the peace accords in the October 2nd plebiscite, Colombian President Juan Manuel Santos announced later in the month that the bilateral ceasefire between the GOC and the FARC would remain in effect until December 31st of this year. He noted that the date was "neither an ultimatum nor a deadline" but instead expressed his hope that a revised set of accords would be completed long before this date.⁴ Meanwhile, the GOC, the FARC, UN representatives, and the ICRC have developed a set of protocols for maintaining the ceasefire in the interim. A separation of forces will occur, and the FARC will move to Transitional Pre-Grouping Points (PTT), which have been agreed upon between the FARC, the GOC, and the Monitoring and Verification Mission. The FARC may not organize events, and may only exit their zones unarmed and dressed in civilian clothes. The GOC will support the FARC movement to these zones and agrees to not plan offensive actions against the guerrillas. The FARC will additionally have to continue with its commitment to not conduct any illegal activities to finance the organization, increase its military capacity, or commit destructive or damaging acts.⁵

¹ http://www.registraduria.gov.co/?page=plebiscito_2016

² <http://www.elespectador.com/noticias/paz/nobel-un-mandato-seguir-trabajando-paz-santos-articulo-659072>

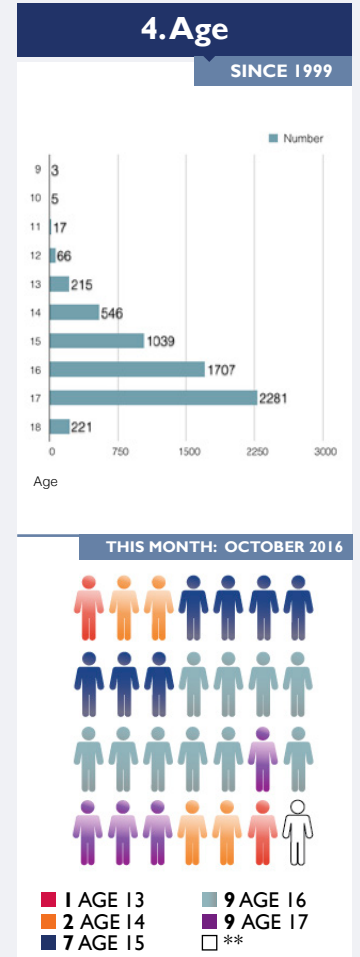
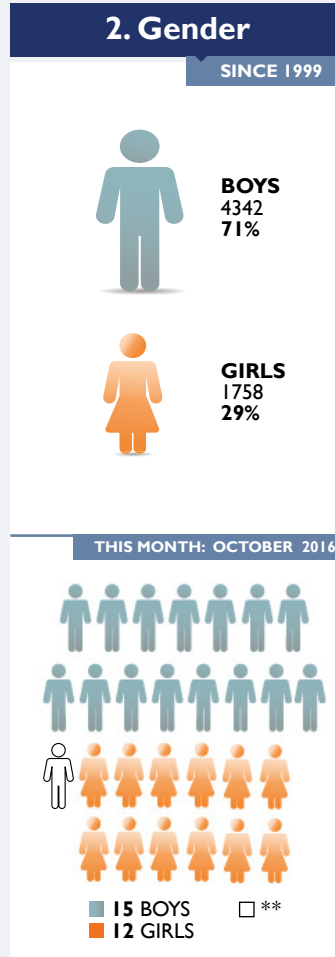
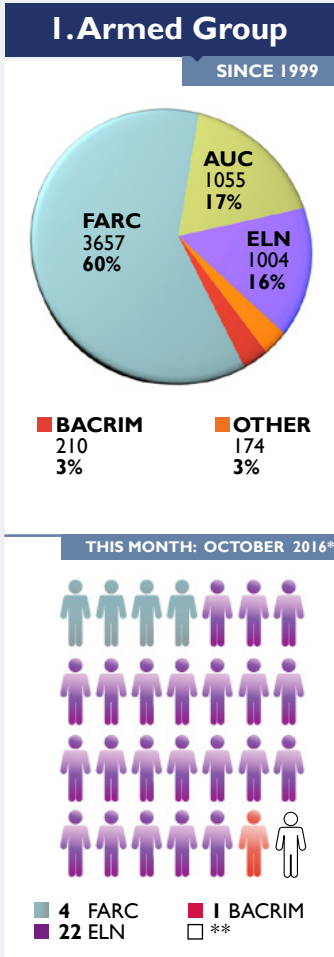
³ http://www.nytimes.com/2016/10/08/world/americas/nobel-peace-prize-juan-manuel-santos-colombia.html?_r=0

⁴ <http://www.elespectador.com/noticias/paz/santos-prorroga-cese-bilateral-al-fuego-farc-hasta-el-3-articulo-660330>

⁵ http://www.elespectador.com/files/pdf_files/3744b6f40b6928b86e185eeca5fe1332.pdf

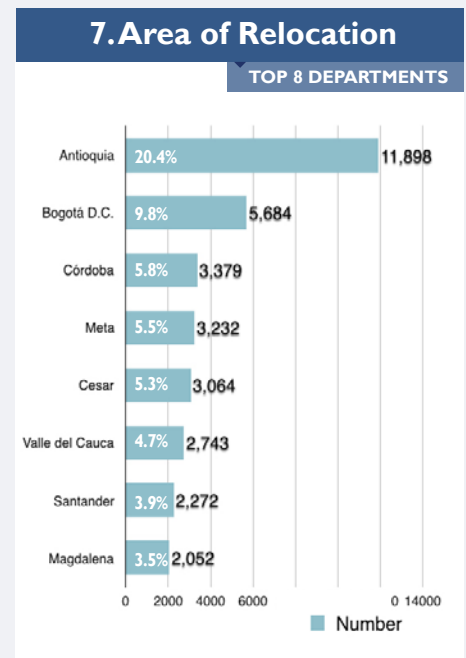
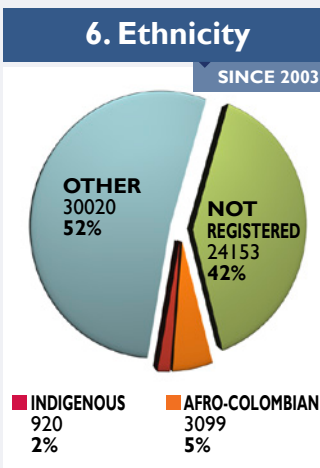
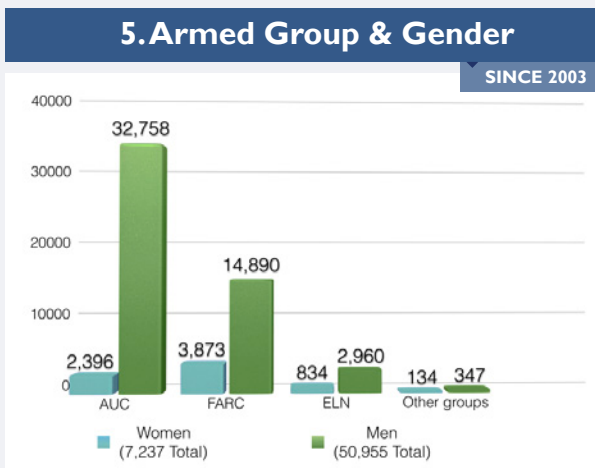
FIGURES & TRENDS

Disengaged Children & Adolescents TOTAL 6,100



* These data are estimates based on the information available
 ** This figure represents one member of the population removed from demographic totals this month

Demobilized Adults TOTAL 58,192



Data up to October 31, 2016
Figure 1: Total number of disengaged minors grouped by gender. Boys have historically been more frequently recruited than girls.
Figure 2: Numbers of minors who disengaged from each IAG. Most disengaged children were recruited by the FARC.
Figure 3: Total number of disengaged minors by ethnicity. Indigenous groups are disproportionately affected by recruitment.
Figure 4: Numbers of disengaged minors in each age group. The average age of recruitment is between 15 and 18 years old.

Sources for figures 1-4: ICBF Database, Unified Beneficiary Registry (RUJ)
Figure 5: Total number of male and female adults who demobilized from each IAG. The AUC had the lowest proportion of women.
Figure 6: The eight departments to which the highest numbers of ex-combatants relocate for their reintegration process.
Figure 7: Total number of demobilized adults by ethnicity.
 Sources for figures 5-7: ICBF Database and ACR Reintegration Information System (SIR)

PEACE PROCESSES

GOC and FARC representatives return to the negotiating table with proposed revisions to the peace accord

After an initial two weeks of uncertainty following the October 2nd plebiscite vote, members of the GOC negotiating team returned to Havana over the weekend of the 22nd to begin negotiations with the FARC over a revised accord. In the near term, GOC and FARC representatives will develop a matrix of all of the proposals and review both those that are viable and those that pose significant challenges.⁶ The GOC received and catalogued 455 proposals for modifying the peace accords.⁷

Conversations with opposition leaders on the GOC-FARC peace accord advance

Opposition leaders and President Santos and his negotiating team began to make headway in developing a revised set of accords. Communications towards the end of the month from both GOC and FARC representatives as well as opposition leaders asserted that conversations in Havana for revising the original peace accord are advancing productively. The 3rd Joint Communiqué released by the GOC and the FARC on October 28th reiterates both parties' faith in the content of the accords, notes that they have reviewed all of the proposals for revisions – already incorporating some content into the new versions – and extends ongoing conversations with opposition leaders until Thursday November 3rd.⁸ On Saturday, October 29th, negotiators met for seven hours to discuss two points of the accords: rural reform and political participation of ex-guerrillas. Representatives of both sides described the conversations as constructive.⁹ Following, a marathon eight hour meeting on Monday the 31st addressed the point on transitional justice, which has received the highest volume of critiques and recommendations from the opposition. Though no concrete solutions emerged, comments from opposition leader, Senator Álvaro Uribe, and others involved in the conversation, suggest that the tone of the conversations has improved over the last week.¹⁰ For his part, President Juan Manuel Santos is hopeful that a new accord will emerge by the end of November.¹¹

FARC Transitional Pre-Grouping Points (PTT) under similar regulations as transitional zones

The FARC have gathered in 26 undisclosed PTTs, which operate under similar guidelines as the formerly proposed transitional zones. These PTTs were developed as a stop-gap solution for the extended ceasefire period through December 31st and are coordinated by the public forces and under the supervision of the tripartite UN-GOC-FARC Monitoring and Verification Mission. Most notably, they are located away from civilian populations and roads, offensive military actions are prohibited in these zones, and there is a 5,000 ft. military no fly zone over the camps.¹²

PEACE PROCESSES

GOC and ELN peace negotiations receive new life, falter

On Monday, October 10th, the GOC and the National Liberation Army (ELN) announced from Caracas, Venezuela, that the peace talks would begin between the two parties in Quito, Ecuador on the 27th of this month.¹³ The ELN is the second oldest guerrilla group in Colombia and is currently thought to have roughly 1,500 members, 1,400 supporters, and five fronts across eight departments in Colombia.¹⁴ The two sides had been at an impasse largely over the subject of kidnappings. On one hand, the ELN viewed their hostages as topics for the peace negotiations, while on the other, the GOC asserted that their release was a prerequisite for beginning the talks. The ELN showed evidence of concessions on this theme early in the month, releasing several hostages to representatives from the ICRC, the Office of the Ombudsman, and the Catholic Church. The initial conversations are set to include discussions on civil society participation in peacebuilding (point one), and humanitarian actions and dynamics (sub-point 5f). Despite these advances, the start date of the talks was eventually pushed back because the ELN had still not released remaining hostage Odín Sánchez by the 27th. Sánchez is an ex-representative of the U Party who fell into the hands of the ELN six months ago when he exchanged himself for his brother, who had fallen gravely ill after three years as a hostage of the guerrilla group. Immediate next steps are uncertain, though most likely remain contingent on the release of Sánchez.

⁶ <http://www.elespectador.com/noticias/paz/sabado-se-reunen-gobierno-y-farc-cuba-articulo-661591>

⁷ <http://www.elcolombiano.com/colombia/acuerdos-de-gobierno-y-farc/gobierno-analiza-propuestas-de-cambios-al-acuerdo-de-paz-CF5227765>

⁸ https://www.mesadeconversaciones.com.co/sites/default/files/comunicado-conjunto-no-1477928940_-3-la-habana-28-de-octubre-de-2016-1477928940.pdf

⁹ <http://www.semana.com/nacion/articulo/uribismo-y-gobierno-logran-sus-primeras-coincidencias/502702>

¹⁰ <http://www.semana.com/nacion/articulo/alvaro-uribe-velez-no-peleara-con-juan-manuel-santos-sobre-acuerdo-de-paz/503848>

¹¹ <http://www.semana.com/nacion/articulo/juan-manuel-santos-dice-que-nuevo-acuerdo-de-paz-debe-estar-en-noviembre/502373>

¹² <http://www.elcolombiano.com/colombia/acuerdos-de-gobierno-y-farc/farc-se-agrupan-en-26-puntos-JG5228964>

¹³ <http://equipopazgobierno.presidencia.gov.co/prensa/noticias/Paginas/instalacion-negociaciones-gobierno-eln.aspx>

¹⁴ <http://www.semana.com/nacion/multimedia/proceso-de-paz-asi-es-la-guerrilla-del-eln/498593>

PEACE PROCESSES

President Santos names Juan Camilo Restrepo as chief GOC negotiator for the ELN peace talks

President Santos announced ex-Minister Juan Camilo Restrepo as the chief government negotiator for the public phase of the peace talks with the ELN guerrillas. Restrepo has served the Santos administration as the Agricultural Minister, and was one of the architects of the Comprehensive Rural Reform component of the peace accords developed with the FARC in Havana. He was the Mining Minister in the Gaviria administration, and Finance Minister in the Pastrana Administration.¹⁵

INTERNATIONAL SUPPORT

Widespread international backing for continuing, concluding peace dialogs

In the days following the surprise plebiscite upset, Colombia received an outpouring of international support for continuing the peace talks and arriving at a final accord. Leaders from Chile, Ecuador, Spain, Russia, France, and the United States, among other countries, international organizations, and the United Nations, all issued statements of support for not returning to war.¹⁶

Security Council approves United Nations continued monitoring of bilateral ceasefire

In the interest of continuity and promoting conditions that support the development of an acceptable set of peace accords, the Security Council agreed to continue UN monitoring of the government's ceasefire with the FARC. Jean Arnault, the UN Chief of Mission in Colombia, initiated the request and representatives from the Security Council's 15 countries, along with several ambassadors contributed their support.¹⁷ Part of this support emerged in a collaboration between the Colombian Office of the Ombudsman and the United Nations as they advanced in their monitoring of the FARC pre-concentration zones.¹⁸

European Union suspends post-conflict aid package

Two weeks after the surprise plebiscite outcome, the European Union announced that it would suspend the planned ratification of a post-conflict aid package to Colombia until at least November 11th, when the foreign ministers next meet. The fund would capture all European contributions for implementing the peace accords, but cannot be released since the accords were rejected by a narrow margin by the Colombian people.¹⁹

Japan donates over \$500,000 to Colombia demining

The Japanese embassy in Colombia signed over a donation of just over \$500,000 in mid-October in support of NPA's humanitarian demining pilot project in El Orejón, Antioquia. The donation will be put towards the costs of demining vehicles, demining equipment, and associated operational costs.²⁰

INSTITUTIONAL PROGRESS

Inter-institutional outreach to LGBTI community conflict victims

The Presidential Council for Human Rights led an inter-institutional encounter to facilitate access to justice for victims of the armed conflict who are members of the LGBTI community. Representatives from the Ministry of Justice, the Office of the Ombudsman, the Attorney General's Office, and the Victims Unit met with victims in the department of Meta in the first week of October to explain the types of rights violations that members of the LGBTI community may have suffered in the armed conflict with the intended goal of preparing victims for reporting these acts and improving their access to related justice mechanisms.²¹

¹⁵ <http://www.semana.com/nacion/articulo/juan-camilo-restrepo-jefe-negociador-con-el-eln/500009>

¹⁶ <http://www.eltiempo.com/politica/procesodepaz/apoyodecomunidadinternacionalenprocesodepaz/16717175>

¹⁷ <http://www.dw.com/en/security-council-continues-un-colombia-monitoring/a-36084510>

¹⁸ <http://www.elespectador.com/noticias/politica/onu-y-defensoria-del-pueblo-trabajaran-unidos-zonas-de-articulo-662084>

¹⁹ <https://www.civilrightsdefenders.org/news/rejected-peace-agreement-what-is-happening-in-colombia-now/>

²¹ http://www.npaid.org/News/News_archive/2016/Japanese-embassy-funds-vital-humanitarian-demining-in-Colombia

DIVERSITY ISSUES

Evangelical leaders submit their concerns about the “gender ideology” contained within the accords

“Gender ideology” had become one of several core points of dissent leading up to the plebiscite vote, and the Christian community mobilized against the accords on these and other grounds, arguing that the content attacked traditional family values, in part because of its recognition and acknowledgment of the differential suffering of the LGBTI community within the armed conflict. To address this faction, the FARC delegation, Senator Viviane Morales and religious leader Carlos Alonso Lucio met October 23-24 in Havana. The document that they released following the meeting addressed five areas of concern for the Christian community: 1) assurances that the “tailored gender approach” refer solely to the rights of women; 2) that the concept of the family included in the accords align with Article 42 of the Colombian constitution (married man and woman)²²; 3) a respect for religious freedom; 4) recognition of Christians who were victimized for their religious beliefs; and 5) inclusion of Christian churches as key players in the peacebuilding process.²³

LGBTI community seeks to protect targeted content of the peace accords

On Thursday, October 13th, the campaign #LGBTIPorLaPaz, which comprises 147 LGBTI community organizations, handed in three sets of recommendations for the revised accords. First, they agreed that the final accord should contain recognition for those who have suffered persecution due to their religious beliefs during the armed conflict. Second, they asked for the Gender Subcommission to be re-launched during the present period of deliberations. Third, they asked that the existing LGBTI component not be removed from the final version.²⁴

Indigenous populations displaced by ELN

More than 200 indigenous persons on the Gitó Dokabú reservation – nearly half of them minors – were displaced in the third week of October for threats attributed to the ELN. Among the displaced, five children and two pregnant women were reported as in “delicate health,” and requiring humanitarian assistance. Authorities suggested that the ELN presence was part of a larger strategy to occupy territories that were previously FARC strongholds.²⁵

FURTHER READING

Moving forward on the peace accords

On October 6th, the International Crisis Group published an analysis of what would be required to keep the peace accords afloat. In the plebiscite, 37% of the Colombian electorate voted, rejecting the deal with the FARC 50.2% to 49.8%. The ICG analysis frames next steps in terms of the three interdependent sets of negotiations now occurring in the Colombian political and social spheres: those between Santos and the opposition, those between the Santos-opposition talks and the FARC, and those between the FARC leadership and their membership base. Across all of these, confidence-building measures, inclusive conversations, and achieving peace should be given the priority, argues the ICG.²⁶

Former M-19 guerrillas offer support to the peace process after plebiscite upset

In an open letter, former M-19 guerrilla members who had demobilized and formed a political party in the late 1980s offered their words of support and advice for the stalled peace process. They reaffirmed the peaceful political approach as the better option, supported the existing accord and offered their support for achieving a solution to opposition concerns in the near term, condemned threats against FARC members who wish to shift to politics, and called on the Colombian people to contribute to achieving peace before the end of the year.²⁷

²² https://www.constituteproject.org/constitution/Colombia_2005.pdf

²³ <http://www.semana.com/nacion/articulo/farc-y-cristianos-llegan-a-un-acuerdo-sobre-enfoque-de-genero/502697>

²⁴ <http://www.elespectador.com/noticias/paz/lideres-lgbti-piden-acuerdo-de-paz-incluya-discriminaci-articulo-660355>

²⁵ <http://www.elespectador.com/noticias/politica/mas-de-200-indigenas-desplazados-amenazas-del-eln-risar-articulo-661624>

²⁶ <https://www.crisisgroup.org/latin-america-caribbean/andes/colombia/reassembling-colombia-s-rejected-peace-deal>

²⁷ <http://www.las2orillas.co/apoyo-con-advertencia-de-los-exguerrilleros-del-m-19/>