

PEACE MAIL

January 9-15

WEEKLY UPDATE: Implementing the Peace Accords

This callout box includes a weekly update on releases and work specifically related implementing the Final Peace Accord between the Government and the FARC in Colombia.

Secretary General of the United Nations, Antonio Guterres, travelled to Bogotá to visit Colombia on Saturday, January 13th, to support the peace process. In his press conference closing his visit the following Monday, Guterres expressed his concern for the uptick in violent ELN actions and precarious peace dialogues with the guerrilla group, calling for a renewed push for ending armed actions, resuming constructive dialogues, and resolving conflict through political means.¹

On Monday, January 15th, **President Juan Manuel Santos swore in the magistrates that will occupy their seats in the Special Jurisdiction for Peace (JEP) transitional justice mechanism.** Among their first tasks is to apply the Amnesty Law, which regular judges are currently processing, but which falls within the domain of the JEP. Santos reiterated the fact that there will be no amnesty for crimes against humanity, war crimes, genocide, and serious breaches of International Humanitarian Law.² The JEP has a life span of 10 years and a mandate that guarantees its independence, autonomy, impartiality, and transparency, among other things.

GoC-ELN peace talks see tumultuous week, face uncertain future

On January 10th, the morning that the fifth round of negotiations between the GoC and the ELN was scheduled to commence, President Juan Manuel Santos issued a statement condemning the ELN resumption of attacks against civilians, the armed forces, and infrastructure. In his statement, Santos also asked for the return of GoC delegation head Gustavo Bell from Quito in order to determine the possibilities for future dialogues with the guerrilla group, effectively suspending the talks.³ Despite the increase in attacks after the conclusion of the ceasefire, ELN representatives responded by publicly asking for dialogues to continue in Quito.⁴ Among the infractions, were reported ELN attacks on petroleum infrastructures in the departments of Arauca and Boyacá. On January 12th, the Colombian Army also prevented an ELN bomb attack on a key electric tower located in the department of Antioquia that connects the center of the country with the Atlantic coast.⁵ The following day, in Saravena, Arauca, ELN members reportedly kidnapped an Ecopetrol contractor from his office as well.⁶ On January 15th, Minister of Defense, Luis Carlos Villegas, stated that, despite all of this, should the ELN be willing to discuss the possibilities for another ceasefire, the GoC would do the same. This assertion came on the heels of his announcement that the armed forces had captured 22 ELN members, some of them high-ranking leaders.⁷