

DDR AND CHILD SOLDIER ISSUES

This monthly review, produced by IOM, provides a summary of news related to the implementation of the peace accord in Colombia, including disarmament, demobilization, and reintegration (DDR) processes. Also included are statics on people in the process of reintegration and former child soldiers, the former of which are sourced from the Agency for Reincorporation and Normalization (ARN), and the latter from the Colombian Family Welfare Institute (ICBF).



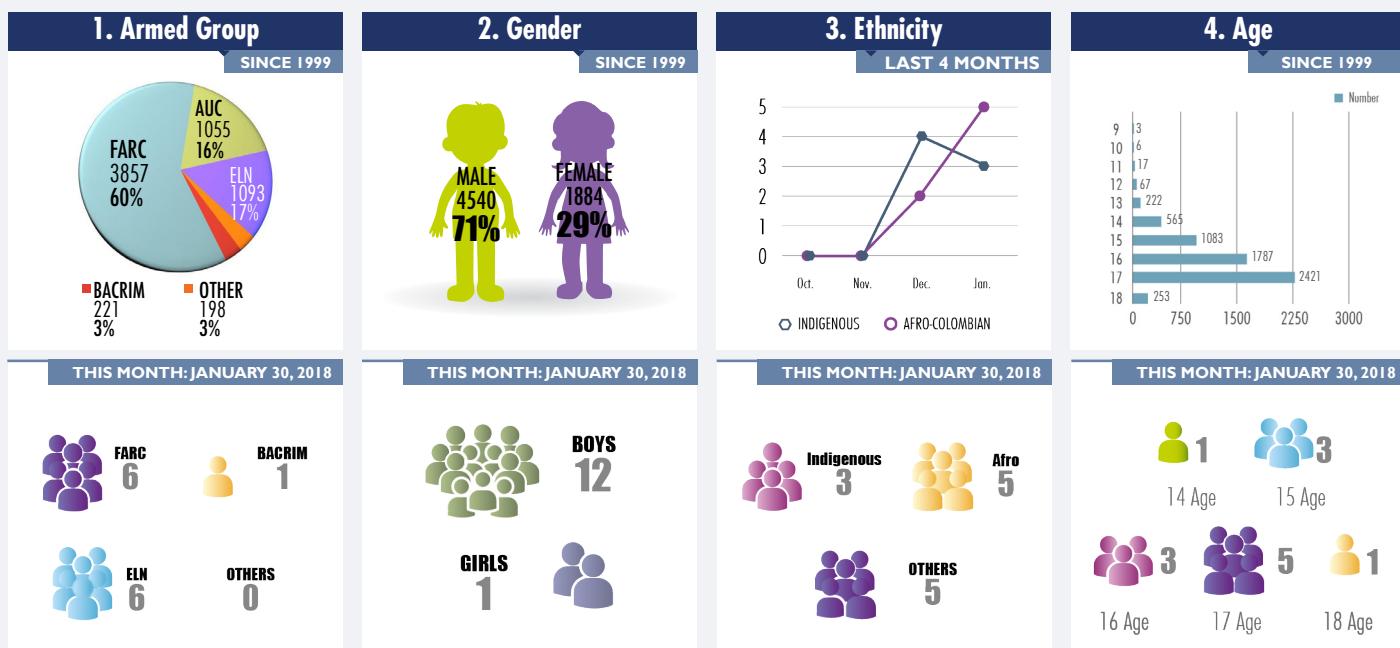
FIGURES & TRENDS

Disengaged Children & Adolescents

TOTAL 6,424

FISCAL YEAR TO DATE: 47

NEW THIS MONTH: 13



5: Victims of Forced Recruitment ► Total 8,551** / Month to month 63**

** Number of cases of child recruitment reported to the Victims Unit.

Demobilized Adults
FISCAL YEAR TO DATE: 234
TOTAL 59,796
NEW THIS MONTH: 35

Data up to January 31, 2018

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 (RUI).

Figure 5: Total of number of male and female adults who demobilized from each IAG.

Figure 6: The eight departments to which the highest numbers of ex-combatants

Figure 7: Demobilized Adults

Figure 8: Total number of demobilized adults by ethnicity. Sources for figures 5-7: ICBF Database and ACR Reintegration Information System (SIR)

Figure 9: Accumulated Demobilization

KEY DEVELOPMENTS

Magistrates for the JEP sworn in

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.¹ The JEP has a life span of 10 years and a mandate that guarantees its independence, autonomy, impartiality, and transparency, among other things. The magistrates will also need to devise the JEP's internal set of regulations in order to ensure impartiality for those who are called before the transitional justice mechanism. An estimated 3,500 guerrillas and 1,750 members of the Public Forces have been thus far named to come before the JEP.²

First review of second verification mission published

U.N. Secretary General, Antonio Guterres, offered his first quarterly report on the implementation of Points 3.2 and 3.4 of the Final Accord, covering the period between September 26 and December 26, 2017. Guterres noted the positive changes that the implementation process has generated, namely the transition of the FARC from illegal to legal political life. At the same time, he expressed concern regarding the precipitous rise in assassination of social leaders, while acknowledging some of the more recent efforts on the part of the GoC to stave off this increase. Guterres further reinforced the importance of ensuring the security of communities and individuals threatened by ongoing illegal actions, and of a comprehensive and complete socioeconomic and political reintegration of former FARC.³

IMPLEMENTATION OF THE PEACE ACCORD

FARC-EP

New Territorial Space created for FARC

On January 3rd, the GoC created a new ETCR for the transitioning FARC in the department of Cauca, after the Policarpa, Nariño ETCR had been abandoned by the FARC. The abandonment occurred, according to the former guerrillas, due to a lack of infrastructure, faulty communications, and poor sanitation conditions. The ARN is charged with administering the new site.⁴

FARC face ongoing security challenges on road to political reintegration

Members in various regions of the country have suffered attacks, resulting in direct requests by the FARC to the GoC and the UN to comply with the protection guarantees included in the Final Accord.⁵ Following, on Wednesday, January 31, the Nariño chapter of the political party issued a statement calling for international and national support against threats and assassinations of party members.⁶ In addition to other institutions, the communiqué called on the National Ombudsman's Office to protect the human rights of the party members. Since December 2016, 40 excombatants of the organization have been killed.⁷

Secretary General of the United Nations visits 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 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.⁸

PEACE PROCESS-ELN

Episcopal conference issues statement on GoC-ELN ceasefire

GoC-ELN peace talks face uncertain future

As one of the parties responsible for the monitoring and verification process of the temporary bilateral ceasefire between the GoC and the remaining Colombian guerrilla group, the ELN, the Episcopal Conference issued a statement on January 8th calling for the maintenance of the gains achieved in the three month temporary ceasefire, which ends in the second week of January. They also called for a more robust ceasefire agreement moving forward that worked to engender greater trust between the parties and Colombian society.⁹

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. Despite the increase in attacks after the conclusion of the ceasefire, ELN representatives responded by publicly asking for dialogues to continue in Quito.¹⁰

President Santos suspends peace talks with the ELN

On Monday, January 29th, President Juan Manuel Santos announced the formal suspension of peace talks with the ELN, until present taking place in Quito, Ecuador. The President cited the lack of internal coherence between the guerrilla's commitments at the negotiating table and the ongoing attacks taking place throughout the country. In particular, multiple attacks over the weekend in the Coastal city of Barranquilla, claimed on social media by the ELN, left five police officers dead and another five individuals wounded (of whom four were also police officers). For its part, the ELN published on its website that in the absence of a ceasefire, it would continue armed actions.¹¹

INTERNATIONAL SUPPORT

European Union begins support for reintegration processes

The European Union's Colombia Peace Fund provides 300,000 euros for three peace projects to benefit civilian populations in prioritized areas for peacebuilding, involving former FARC guerrillas in the process. An additional 9 million euros will be made available for projects at a later date through the European Trust Fund for Colombia. The first of the three projects is sponsored by Spain, and promotes cooperative entrepreneurial ventures for excombatants and surrounding communities. The second project will be executed by the FAO, and will finance food commercialization initiatives. The third project will be carried out by the FARC-led demining group, Humanicémonos, and will create 180 jobs for former guerrillas to work on humanitarian demining throughout the country.¹²

International leaders support private sector contributions to human rights in Colombia

At the end of January, business leaders met for the first time in an inter-institutional working group dedicated to putting into action the National Action plan for Human Rights and Business, in order to share best practices at an institutional level, connect new actors to the process, and define long-term challenges. German Ambassador Michael Bock emphasized the role of the private sector in peacebuilding due to its capacity for generating value and benefitting communities. Also on the agenda were issues of policy development and sustainability.¹³

INSTITUTIONAL PROGRESS

Income guarantees for illicit crop substitution plans commence

The Program for Illicit Crop Substitution has formally initiated banking processes with 21,000 of the 29,000 individuals who signed crop substitution arrangements with the government through the peace process. The financial support program for crop substitution begins in 11 hamlets, and, in addition to the income guarantees for the substituting farmers, also creates greater connectivity between the targeted populations and the Colombian government. The program also includes support for developing productive projects, collective benefits for the communities, and other family supports. To date, 28,660 families that signed voluntary replacement agreements have already received a first disbursement.¹⁴

¹ <http://es.presidencia.gov.co/noticia/180115-Presidente-Santos-posesiona-a-magistrados-de-la-JEP>

² <http://www.eltiempo.com/politica/proceso-de-paz/los-tareas-que-tendran-que-cumplir-los-magistrados-de-la-jep-171448>

³ <https://colombia.unmissions.org/comunicado-de-prensa-sobre-el-informe-trimestral-del-secretario-general-al-consejo-de-seguridad>

⁴ <http://www.elcolombiano.com/colombia/paz-y-derechos-humanos/gobierno-crea-nueva-zona-veredal-para-las-farc-en-cauca-AD7959301>

⁵ <http://www.eltiempo.com/politica/proceso-de-paz/denuncian-ataque-a-la-sede-politica-de-la-farc-en-quibdo-174942>

⁶ <http://www.arcoiris.com.co/2018/01/farc-exige-a-entes-nacionales-e-internacionales-defender-y-vigilar-los-ddhh-en-colombia/>

⁷ <http://pacifista.co/el-numero-de-excombatientes-de-las-farc-asesinados-ya-es-alarmante/>

⁸ <http://nacionesunidas.org.co/blog/2018/01/15/declaracion-del-secretario-general-de-naciones-unidas-antonio-guterres-en-rueda-de-prensa-al-finalizar-su-visita-oficial-a-colombia/>

⁹ <http://nacionesunidas.org.co/blog/2018/01/08/comunicado-conjunto-de-la-conferencia-episcopal-de-colombia-y-la-mision-de-verificacion-de-la-onu-en-colombia/>

¹⁰ 10

¹¹ <https://www.elperiodico.com/noticias/politica/santos-suspende-inicio-del-quinto-ciclo-de-conversaciones-con-el-eln-articulo-736016>

¹² <http://www.posconflicto.gov.co/sala-prensa/noticias/2018/Paginas/20180126-Union-Europea-y-Alta-Consejeria-para-el-Po>

¹³ <http://www.derechoshumanos.gov.co/Prensa/2018/Paginas/empresarios-actores-clave-construcion-paz-derechos-humanos.aspx>

¹⁴ <http://www.posconflicto.gov.co/sala-prensa/noticias/2018/Paginas/20180124-se-inicia-la-bancarizacion-de-21-mil-campesinos-que-estan-arrancando-las-matas-de-coca-en-el-pais.aspx>

Territorial Peace Councils begin to launch

Territorial Peace Councils launched for the first time officially in the department of Chocó at the end of January. They are responsible for identifying and promoting initiatives for peaceful coexistence and conflict resolution, for implementing the peace accord in the territories, and for connecting with the parent National Council for Peace, Reconciliation, and Coexistence. In Quibdó, in particular, leaders look to effectively connect ethnic authorities and international cooperation in the territory in order to better strengthen territorial autonomy.¹⁵

DIVERSITY ISSUES

At-risk indigenous communities look to reclaim their territories

“Mi Futuro es Hoy: Creating Peace Environments for Children”

Since 2009, the Constitutional Court has warned that the Kogui, Ina, and Sinoa communities are at risk of disappearing due to the effects of the armed conflict in Colombia. These three communities currently have claims pending with judges specializing in land restitution in order to reclaim their territories, which have been decimated by armed conflict, logging, and oil exploitation. The current urgent demand is directed towards putting a stop to deforestation and illegal mining practices in their territories. To date, land restitution judges have ruled in favor of indigenous and Afro-Colombian communities in seven cases, adding 125,000 hectares to the restored lands throughout the country. If the cases are ruled in their favor, these communities would collectively represent another 5,832 hectares.¹⁶

At the end of January, the “Mi Futuro es Hoy” project launched in Bogotá, a project which aims to prevent the recruitment and use of children by illegal armed groups, and which is planned to extend to 500 hamlets within the 166 municipalities prioritized for the postconflict period. The program ultimately looks to develop the capabilities of 27,000 children between 12-18 years of age through the creation of protective environments, along with those of their families, schools, other institutions, and communities. The project showcases the proactive role of minors in peacebuilding by supporting the development and launch of peace initiatives in their territories, and is backed by several organizations, including IOM, the High Council for Human Rights, and UNICEF.¹⁷

FURTHER READING

Study finds Afro-Colombian communities at risk

Communities find themselves in “political limbo”

A study led by Javeriana University’s Observatory for Ethnic and Rural Territories found that 271 Afro-Colombian communities lack collective titles (a constitutional right for these communities, allowing them to exercise their rights over their territories), creating an additional risk factor for dispossession of their territories among already historically vulnerable populations. The study found that 29% of these 271 communities have no information about the status of their claims, 39% have had their claim stopped due to lack of documentation, and only 13% have received any kind of visit from land management agencies. Currently, 17 community councils are attempting actions to speed up the protective processes, though in 2016 and 2017, there were no advances in their claims, the report concludes.¹⁸

After the exit of the FARC, and before the arrival of formal governing mechanisms, some communities, such as Bebará, Chocó have found themselves in a sort of political limbo. Although the miners have worked for generations in this community, and have built hospitals, managed waste, and recently initiated reforestation projects, they find themselves under strain as the government makes plans for addressing the issue of illegal mining – a modifier Bebará residents do not necessarily agree with. Since the demobilization of the FARC, they have lost guerrilla backing and organizational structures; as a result, community leaders have struggled to manage the people. Yet, the mining formalization plan of the Ministry of Environment and Sustainable Development for this area has not yet begun either. Residents live facing many tensions in such an environment, including threats for other armed actors.¹⁹

¹⁵ <http://www.altocomisionadoparalapaz.gov.co/Prensa/Paginas/2018/Desde-regiones-reactivan-Consejos-Territoriales-Paz.aspx>

¹⁶ <http://www.verdadabierta.com/restitucion-de-bienes/6860-los-pueblos-indigenas-buscan-freno-a-la-explotacion-de-su-territorio>

¹⁷ <http://nacionesunidas.org.co/blog/2018/01/24/27-000-ninos-ninas-y-adolescentes-aprenderan-sobre-derechos-humanos-en-mi-futuro-es-hoy/>

¹⁸ <http://www.verdadabierta.com/victimas-seccion/los-resistentes/6861-en-diversas-regiones-del-pais-comunidades-negras-estan-en riesgo>

¹⁹ <https://www.las2orillas.co/un-pueblo-en-el-choco-donde-la-mineria-salva-vidas/>