

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

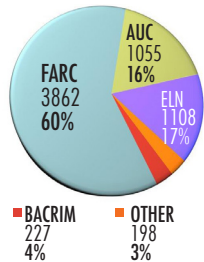
Disengaged Children & Adolescents

TOTAL 6,450

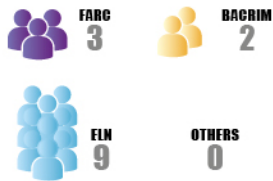
FISCAL YEAR TO DATE: 56

NEW THIS MONTH: 14

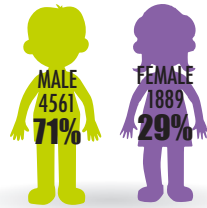
1. Armed Group



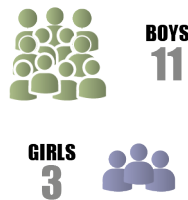
THIS MONTH: MARCH, 2018



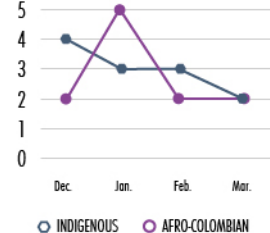
2. Gender



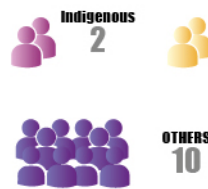
THIS MONTH: MARCH, 2018



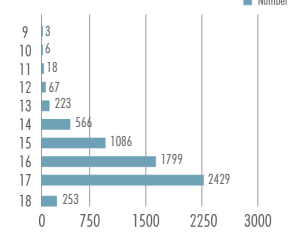
3. Ethnicity



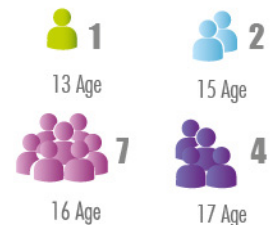
THIS MONTH: MARCH, 2018



4. Age



THIS MONTH: MARCH, 2018



5: Victims of Forced Recruitment

Total 7,431**

**Number of cases of child recruitment reported to the Victims Unit. NB. This total has shrunk this month without confirmation from Victims Unit website.

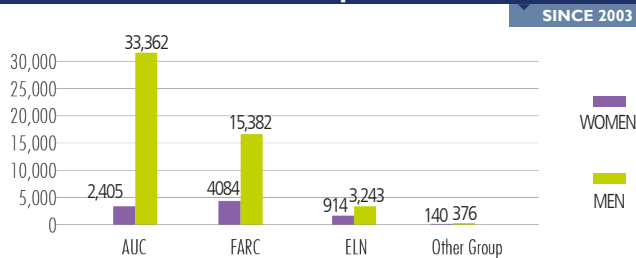
Demobilized Adults

FISCAL YEAR TO DATE: 344

TOTAL 59,906

NEW THIS MONTH: 110

5. Armed Group & Gender



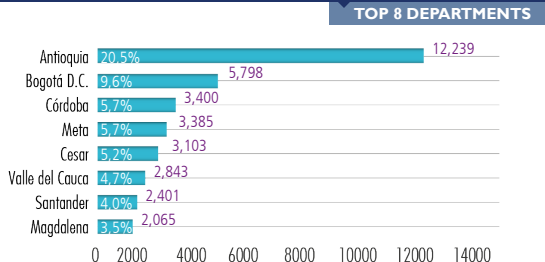
6. Ethnicity



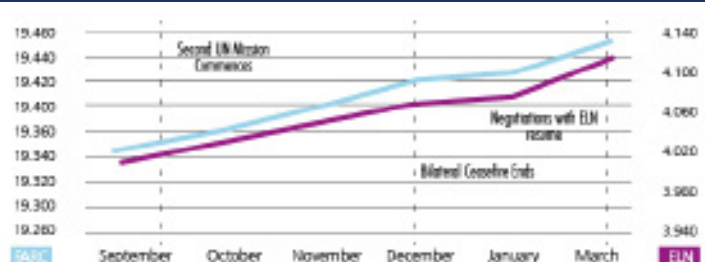
7. ARN Participants



8. Area of Relocation



9. Accumulated Demobilization



Data up to March 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 (RUJ)

Figure 5: Total 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 ARN Reintegration Information System (SIR)

Figure 9: Accumulated Demobilization

KEY DEVELOPMENTS

Threats and attacks against presidential candidates intensify

Gustavo Petro's convoy was attacked in Cúcuta, Norte de Santander, at the beginning of March, while former president Uribe and candidate Ivan Duque also confronted violent protests as they campaigned in Popayán, Cauca.¹ The trend of intimidation against presidential candidates had already been denounced by Rodrigo Londoño Echeverry, the FARC candidate before he withdrew from the presidential campaign on March 8, citing health concerns and the lack of security guarantees.²

Legislative elections a blow to the FARC, Centro Democrático remain strong

The FARC only obtained 0.34 percent of the vote in the legislative elections, but will nevertheless begin its political life with the 10 seats in Congress agreed in the Peace Accord.³ The Centro Democrático continues to be the primary political force in the country, with 19 seats in the Senate, and 32 in the House of Representatives. The strength of this party and its allies on the right will continue to make the implementation of the Peace Accords difficult.⁴

Efforts to protect social leaders in Colombia recognized, while assassinations continue

The director of the organization this month applauded Colombia for the serious efforts and rigorous investigations into the assassinations of social leaders and human rights defenders in the country. The Government in turn announced it is working on a new policy for community protection, which will support the transition from individual to collective protection.⁵ However, three social leaders were killed in Bajo Cauca over the last week of March.⁶

Confrontations between armed groups continue in border regions

The Pacific port city of Tumaco was blacked out after an attack on an electricity pylon on March 26, and although responsibility has not yet been attributed to any group, confrontations between FARC dissidents, the ELN, and paramilitary groups seeking to control this strategic corridor to the Pacific have been frequent.⁷ Three journalists from the El Comercio newspaper were also kidnapped across the border in Ecuador the same day, supposedly by the dissident FARC group led by alias "Guacho."⁸

IMPLEMENTATION OF THE PEACE ACCORD

FARC-EP

Constitutional Court confirms constitutionality of Amnesty Law

The Court voted 7 to 0 that the controversial Amnesty Law (1820 of 2016) is constitutional but clarified that sexual violence, recruitment of minors, and human rights violations do not come within its remit, and that these cases should go through the JEP.⁹ The Minister of the Interior, Guillermo Rivera Flórez, assured Colombians that the Court's conditions guaranteed victims' rights, and reasserted that the Amnesty Law is a key factor in the political reincorporation of the FARC.¹⁰

Special Jurisdiction for Peace (JEP) officially opens its doors

The JEP delivered its first report to its 38 magistrates, including the commitment acts of 7,916 members of the FARC, Armed Forces, and civil State agents seeking access to this type of justice, and the identification of 8,883 victims of the FARC and 2,926 of the Armed Forces.¹¹ The JEP is tasked with judging when human rights violations and infractions to International Humanitarian Law were committed during the conflict, in order to guarantee victims' rights to justice and truth.¹²

¹ <http://www.semana.com/nacion/articulo/fiscalia-abre-investigacion-a-saboteos-contr-petro-y-uribe/559008>

² <http://pacifista.co/rodrigo-londono-declina-oficialmente-su-aspiracion-presidencial/>

³ <http://www.semana.com/nacion/articulo/resultados-elecciones-congreso-como-les-fue-a-la-farc/560000>

⁴ <http://pacifista.co/esto-es-lo-que-podemos-esperar-del-nuevo-congreso-frente-a-la-paz/>

⁵ <https://www.elespectador.com/noticias/paz/human-rights-watch-aplaude-esfuerzos-de-colombia-en-proteccion-de-lideres-sociales-articulo-744438>

⁶ <http://colombiapace.org/>

⁷ <http://pacifista.co/atentado-contr-torre-energia-deja-sin-luz-tumaco/>

⁸ <http://colombiapace.org/>

⁹ <http://pacifista.co/beneficios-de-la-ley-de-ampnistia-atados-a-los-derechos-de-las-victimas/>

¹⁰ <http://www.mininterior.gov.co/sala-de-prensa/noticias/ley-de-ampnistia-es-elemento-central-para-los-derechos-de-las-victimas-y-la-reincorporacion-de-las-farc-mininterior>

¹¹ <https://colombia2020.elespectador.com/justicia/la-jep-la-espera-de-nuevos-informes-para-avanzar>

¹² <http://www.eltiempo.com/justicia/jep-colombia/empieza-la-justicia-especial-para-la-paz-en-colombia-194386>

PEACE PROCESS-ELN

ELN-GOC peace negotiations resume in Quito

The ELN fulfilled its commitment to a ceasefire over the election period, making the resumption of peace talks in Quito possible.¹³ This 5th Round of talks will comprise nine weeks of sessions before ending on 18 May, one week before the first round of the presidential elections.¹⁴ The central issue will be a de-escalation of the conflict, particularly in areas where there have been confrontations between the ELN and other armed groups.¹⁵ The outlook is as follows: 23 March, a sub-committee will begin work on the mechanism and schedule for society participation in the peace process; 2 April, an evaluation of the ceasefire which ended on 9 January will begin; 5 April, negotiations will focus on how to reach a humanitarian agreement for the Chocó.¹⁶

Confrontations continue between the ELN and other armed groups

Civilians continue to be caught in the crossfire between the ELN and other armed groups, with three injured following violent confrontations with the EPL in Norte de Santander which left six guerrilla fighters dead.¹⁷ Rebels from the group have also been accused of kidnapping a public services manager in Arauca,¹⁸ an ELN attack was foiled in Chocó,¹⁵ and a soldier from the Army's Vulcano Task Force was killed in confrontations with the EPL in Norte de Santander this month.

INTERNATIONAL SUPPORT

European Union to fund humanitarian responses and political participation projects

The European Union announced investments of EUR 31 million for the prevention of disasters in Latin America and the Caribbean, EUR 6 million of which will be directed towards addressing the humanitarian situation in post-conflict Colombia, and a further EUR 2 million for people affected by the Venezuelan crisis.¹⁸ In addition, the EU will channel EUR 1.7 million through the Dutch Institute for Multiparty Democracy (NIMD) to implement the "Democratic Action for Peace" project to strengthen political participation in Colombia over the coming 18 months. The NIMD aims to strengthen a culture of reconciliation and appropriation of the political system, strengthening the technical and critical capacities of parties, citizens, farmers, minority groups, and social leaders.¹⁹ These funds complement other EU contributions to Colombia, such as the Fiduciary Fund, through which the international community can contribute to the implementation of the Peace Accord with the FARC.

INSTITUTIONAL PROGRESS

Guaviare becomes the first department to make clear progress in voluntary crop substitution

The Department of Guaviare, with an area of 54,000km², this month became the first department where families who signed agreements for crop substitution with the GOC fulfilled their commitment to eradicate their coca crops, in accordance with Point 4 of the Peace Accord. According to the Integrated Illicit Crop Monitoring System (SIMCI), there were 6,838 ha of coca in the department in 2017, and the families participating in the National Program for Voluntary Crop Substitution (PNIS) account for 6,096 ha (90%) of this. The UN Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC) has so far confirmed the eradication of 3,868 ha of coca. As a result, a total of 5,344 families have now received funds for the implementation of the program's second phase, and 642 families have begun to receive integrated technical assistance for the design of productive and food security projects which will both guarantee short-term incomes and long-term sustainability.²¹

Colombia makes progress in Integrated Action against Landmines

With 37 further municipalities being freed from landmines this month, the GOC has now cleared 225 of the 673 registered contaminated municipalities (33%). The Humanitarian Demining Brigade, the Marine Infantry Explosives and Demining Group, and 10 civil organizations have cleared over 6 million of the 52 million m² suspected of being contaminated, and continue to work in 232 municipalities, with 216 still to be addressed. President Santos highlighted that this progress has been achieved thanks to the Peace Accord, which created the security conditions which have allowed these organizations to reach conflict areas to carry out their work. The President also noted the reduction in victims, with only 22 having been registered so far in 2018.²²

¹³ <http://www.semana.com/nacion/articulo/eln-negociaciones-con-la-guerrilla-del-eln/560077>

¹⁴ <http://www.eltiempo.com/politica/proceso-de-paz/la-tarea-es-construir-un-cese-del-fuego-mas-estable-para-avanzar-bell-194528>

¹⁵ <http://www.semana.com/nacion/articulo/el-cronograma-del-gobierno-y-el-eln-para-reactivar-la-negociacion/561121>

¹⁶ <http://www.semana.com/nacion/articulo/el-cronograma-del-gobierno-y-el-eln-para-reactivar-la-negociacion/561121>

¹⁷ <http://www.elcolombiano.com/colombia/en-catatumbo-la-guerra-ahora-es-entre-guerrillas-MJ8391068>

¹⁸ <https://colombia2020.elespectador.com/pais/union-europea-entregara-6-millones-de-euros-colombia-para-ayuda-humanitaria>

¹⁹ <https://colombia2020.elespectador.com/politica/apoyo-europeo-para-una-democracia-estable>

²⁰ <http://www.posconflicto.gov.co/sala-prensa/noticias/2018/Paginas/20180305-japon-entrega-recursos-para-proyectos-en-municipios-pdet-del-sur-de-bolivar.aspx>

²¹ <http://www.posconflicto.gov.co/sala-prensa/noticias/2018/Paginas/20180308-guaviare-primer-departamento-exitoso-en-sustitucion-campesinos-y-gobierno-cumplieron-los-acuerdos.aspx>

²² <http://www.posconflicto.gov.co/sala-prensa/noticias/2018/Paginas/20180405-Colombia-ya-libero-el-33-porciento-de-los-municipios-contaminados-con-minas-antipersonal-Gobierno.aspx>

DIVERSITY ISSUES

Decree for the prevention of discrimination based on sexual orientation signed

The President signed this Decree to promote environments free from discrimination on the grounds of sexual orientation or gender identity on 2 March. This decree is the result of a digital movement acting through the Ministry of the Interior's #CausasCiudadanas initiative, which collected more than 62,000 digital signatures; the new decree will use the AquíEntranTodos hashtag (Everyone Welcome Here). During the signing, the President indicated that the Ministry of the Interior would be developing technical assistance programs for the implementation of the Decree.²¹

First Integrated Public Policy for Religious and Cult Freedom defined

Decree 437 was passed on 6 March to include an Integrated Public Policy for Religious and Cult Freedom in the Interior Administrative Sector's Regulations. The Decree reiterates these religious freedoms, and, among other things, aims to identify and direct the contributions of religious organizations as peace promoters (promoting the common good, conflict resolution, peaceful coexistence, social cohesion, and the transformation of community contexts); and to promote tolerance, non-discrimination, and non-stigmatization on religious grounds.²³ Pedagogy on this public policy was carried out in the departments of Bolívar and Casanare on 23 March, where 350 interreligious leaders took part in a workshop offered by the Ministry of the Interior's Religious Affairs Coordinator.²⁴

GOC shares information on the differential ethnic approach across its entities

The Ministry of the Interior, through the Internal Articulation Group for Victims of the Armed Conflict Policy (GAPV), conducted the first workday for the transfer of the differential ethnic approach methodology this month. The event included the participation of the Indigenous Office, Rom and Minorities, and the Office for Black, Afro-Colombian, Raizal, and Palenquera Communities, as well as the Victims' Unit's Ethnic Affairs Office (DAE), the Ministry of Culture, the Colombian Anthropology and History Institute, and the IOM, and managed to strengthen capacities and address issues regarding the differential ethnic approach, and Decree Laws 4633 and 4635 of 2011 in territorial technical assistance processes.²⁵

FURTHER READING

“What to do about criminal recidivism? Its problems and possible solutions”

While the country becomes more concerned about a deterioration in security and a rise in criminal activity, the Fundación Ideas para la Paz (FIP) this month published their analysis of criminal recidivism, its impact, and possible solutions. The report's nine principal conclusions are as follows: 1) the lack of consensus on what recidivism is, and therefore in the information available, makes it difficult to design and implement appropriate public policy; 2) recidivism figures are not as high as in other countries, but this could reveal the limitations of the institutional response and knowledge in the country; 3) recidivism is more common in cases of theft, and production and carrying of a weapon; 4) cases with multiple captures are not the best indicator, the total number of people captured and the type of crime also need to be analyzed; 5) prison is not necessarily the best option, and can be counterproductive; 6) measures to reduce recidivism should not be limited to prison time or re-socialization within the prison system, but should focus on the reduction of risk factors, the strengthening of protection, and economic and social inclusion; 7) bottlenecks in the judicial system need to be identified and solved; 8) innovative solutions include work with at-risk youth, data-driven risk assessment, the use of community tools, and conditional monetary subsidies; and 9) local authorities need to play an active role.²⁶

Towards the end of conflict: Experiences in disarmament, demobilization and reintegration

In this newly published report, the National Center for Historical Memory (CNMH) examines the history of disarmament, demobilization, and reintegration (DDR) processes in Colombia, highlighting their impact on the current post-conflict context, and the potential accord with the ELN. The authors explore why the State never recovered control of territories controlled by insurgent groups such as the M-19, EPL, and other minor regional groups in the 90s, despite reaching peace agreements which offered them amnesty/pardon, political participation guarantees, and social benefits, as well as motivating investment in social projects, peace promotion, human rights, and citizen participation in areas impacted by the conflict. Similarly, the demobilization of the AUC between 2003 and 2006 was only partially successful, with programs becoming marginalized, recidivism, and failed reintegration in areas affected by violence, armed conflict, and illegality. What are the lessons learned, and how can the GOC ensure that the current peace process is more successful?²⁷

²³ <http://es.presidencia.gov.co/normativa/normativa/DECRETO%20437%20DEL%2006%20MARZO%20DE%202018.pdf>

²⁴ <http://www.mininterior.gov.co/sala-de-prensa/noticias/bolivar-y-casanare-primeros-departamentos-capacitados-sobre-la-primera-politica-publica-integral-de-libertad-religiosa-y-de-cultos>

²⁵ <http://www.mininterior.gov.co/sala-de-prensa/noticias/primera-jornada-pedagogica-sobre-enfoque-diferencial-y-etnico>

²⁶ <http://cdn.ideaspaz.org/media/website/document/5ac25e0ae1394.pdf>

²⁷ <http://www.centrodehistoriahistorica.gov.co/de/informes/informes-2018/hacia-el-fin-del-conflicto>