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PEACE MAIL

June 19-25

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 (GOC) and the FARC in Colombia.

The Constitutional Court this week announced that **work on the JEP's procedural laws can continue in Congress.**¹ Agreements have been reached on 24 points raised by the Centro Democrático, but the party has insisted that the military should appear before the JEP through a special courtroom, a change which the GOC claims would require constitutional reforms and an alteration to the Peace Accord's judicial protections.² The Constitutional Court also approved a decree to establish the Disappeared Persons Search Unit (UBPD), one of the three transitional justice mechanisms created by the Peace Accord, along with the JEP and the Truth Commission.³

The country's agricultural frontier was defined for the first time this week, through a decree which identified 35 percent of the national territory as apt for agricultural activities. This decree responds to a key point of the Peace Accord which outlines the structural transformation of rural Colombia and the protection of environmental areas.⁴

The chief negotiator for the ELN, Pablo Beltrán, called on President-elect Iván Duque to continue with peace negotiations on 19 June. However, Duque has already expressed his intention to alter the Accord signed with the FARC in 2016, and to impose prison sentences on ELN members.⁵ The ELN and the GOC began the sixth round of talks on 25 June, following an agenda which prioritizes agreements on a ceasefire and on society participation.

Armed confrontations on the Venezuela border region and the Pacific coast continued this week, with two community leaders confirmed dead in Catatumbo on 23 June, one of whom had been kidnapped with his wife by the ELN the day before.⁶ Members of the EPL also burned a private vehicle on the Ocaña-Cúcuta road on 21 June, implementing their prohibition on the transport of beer.⁷ On the Pacific coast, over 1,500 people from six Embera indigenous communities were trapped in Nuquí, Chocó department, due to violent confrontations between former paramilitary groups, drug traffickers, the ELN, and FARC dissidents. OCHA warned of threats, unexploded munitions, and the risk of youth recruitment into armed groups.⁸

Coca cultivation in Colombia has increased by 11% to reach a record 209,000 ha, according to a report by the United States' Office of National Drug Control Policy (ONDCP), which also highlighted a 19% increase in the capacity for cocaine production over 2017. The report spurred further pressure on Colombia to increase its efforts to forcibly eradicate illicit crops, with calls for the resumption of glyphosate aerial fumigation. The GOC is currently implementing an Integrated National Illicit Crop Substitution Plan (PNIS) based on voluntary substitution and alternative rural development.⁹