

PEACE MAIL

July 3-9

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.

In the first case involving FARC leadership, 32 members of the former guerrilla group have been called before the Special Jurisdiction for Peace (JEP) to begin an assessment of kidnappings carried out during the armed conflict.¹ The hearing on 13 July will respond to reports by the Attorney General, Fundación País Libre, and the National Center for Historical Memory, which include 2,500 to 8,500 kidnapping and extortion cases. The FARC must collaborate and contribute to victims' reparations in order to access the benefits outlined in the Peace Accord. It is hoped that they will give information on the location of disappeared people.²

Former FARC guerrillas Iván Márquez and 'El Paisa,' denounced military operations in Caquetá in a letter to the UN Chief of Mission in Colombia on 9 July. They decried military flights over the Miravalle Territorial Training and Reincorporation Space (ETCR), and expressed their concern over the peace process, with particular reference to the Jesús Santrich case and the changes made to the JEP.³ Jesús Santrich remains in custody awaiting a decision on his extradition to the United States for drug trafficking. It is still unclear whether he will be able to take up his seat in Congress on 20 July.⁴

A peak in attacks against social leaders since the presidential elections includes the deaths of four supporters of Gustavo Petro's presidential campaign, and leaders of Community Action Boards (JAC), unions, and crop substitution and land restitution programs. In response to the total of 80 assassinations so far this year,⁵ President Santos called a meeting of the Security Guarantees Committee for 10 July.⁶ Social and victims' organizations also delivered their first "Defend Life" report to the Truth Commission on 5 July, in which they detail ten cases of violence against human rights defenders, drawing attention to sociopolitical violence as well as the armed conflict. The report outlines five common patterns (of State or State-sanctioned violence) and make recommendations for non-repetition guarantees.⁷

President Santos announced that the Clan del Golfo, one of the most powerful illegal armed groups in the country, will now be able to collectively enter the Colombian justice system, following his approval of a new law on 9 June. Other armed groups will also be able to access the same mechanism, and will benefit from a 50 percent reduction in their sentences (30 percent for crimes against humanity),⁸ and the opportunity to retain five percent of their illegal assets. These benefits depend on them declaring assets, providing information on, and handing over, child recruits, and identifying victims so that they can receive reparations. These groups will not, however, be assigned political status, and will therefore be subject to the normal justice system. The government hopes that some 7,000 people will lay down their weapons, thus consolidating the peace process agreed with the FARC.⁹