

PEACE MAIL

July 17-23

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 Special Jurisdiction for Peace (JEP) opened the investigation and procedural stage in case 003: Deaths unlawfully presented as combat casualties by State agents. The Attorney General's Report identifies a total of 2,248 victims, known as "false positives", between 1988 and 2014, of which 48% were young men between the ages of 18 and 30. The International Criminal Court identified the involvement of 10 brigades from four divisions of the National Army.¹ Case 002 of the JEP, which will investigate about 1000 cases of forced displacement, confinement, anti-personnel mines, as well as other Human Rights violations and breaches of International Humanitarian Law, carried out in three municipalities of Nariño between 1990 and 2016, was opened last week. These incidents occurred primarily against the Awá indigenous population and members of community councils (Chagüí River, Alto Mira and Frontera).²

On 20 July, the new Congress was inaugurated in a historic moment that granted ten seats to members of the FARC. Neither Iván Márquez nor Jesús Santrich of the FARC assumed their seats, just two days after the JEP declared lack of competence to hear the request of Santrich for permission to become a representative of the Chamber.³ President Juan Manuel Santos give his last speech before Congress at the inauguration, urging the new government to defend the emergence of the peace in the country. He recalled that the Peace Accord was not his, but of the State, which approved the Accord through legislative acts and laws.⁴ Since last week, various alternative and leftist political forces, made up of around 50 parliamentarians who called themselves the "bench for peace, life and democracy", have officially opposed the incoming government.⁵

President Santos announced on Saturday that 36 new municipalities in the country were declared free of anti-personnel mines, bringing the total to 264. These municipalities represent about 40% of the 673 municipalities that had been reported with suspected anti-personnel mines. According to figures from Descontamina Colombia, since 2010, more than 6 million square meters have been cleared in the country, benefiting nearly 2.4 million people.⁶

The Norwegian Refugee Council reported that close to 45,000 students from 80 educational institutions in Catatumbo were affected by the suspension of classes during the first semester of this year due to conflict between armed groups in the region. The Organization denounced the detection of 26 land mines and explosive remnants near school grounds, which cancelled the classes of more than 3,400 students during the same period. In addition, the NRC highlighted the increased risk of forced recruitment and other abuses for children who do not attend school in conflict areas.⁷