



October 23-29

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.

“Ivan Márquez,” “El Paisa,” “Romaña,” and other members of the FARC leadership sent an open letter to Special Jurisdiction for Peace (JEP) magistrates on 28 October, confirming their commitment to the peace process.¹ They also criticized the Attorney General for supposed sabotage of transitional justice and peace.² The JEP had already opened an investigation into “El Paisa’s” commitments, and the letter, although not a formal piece of evidence, does show he has not completely withdrawn from the process.³

The JEP’s Truth Recognition court began hearings with victims of the armed conflict (case 001) on 28 October. Among those called to give “oral reports” were high-ranking politicians, police officers, and military forces kidnapped by the FARC for the negotiation of hostage exchanges. Several victims, in separate hearings, coincided in their demands for truth in four areas: the lack of security measures available to them when they were kidnapped; the possibility that non-combatant third parties participated in the planning of kidnappings of political leaders; the location of people who were kidnapped and disappeared; and the fact that President Pastrana and Uribe would never negotiate a humanitarian exchange for their release.⁴

The Attorney General’s Office has delivered evidence in the Jesús Santrich case to the JEP, involving several audios corresponding to the case against Marlon Marín for suspected corruption involving post-conflict resources, and which supposedly implicate the former FARC leader in the transport and sale of cocaine. The JEP also requested the delivery of evidence held in the United States.⁵ The case has generated considerable debate over the reach of transitional justice,⁶ uncertainty which was fueled this week when the Ministers of Defense and of the Interior lent their support to reforms proposed by the Centro Democrático, which would create special courts for military forces to be judged by different magistrates to those processing FARC cases in the JEP.⁷

The Integrated National Illegal Crop Substitution Plan (PNIS) agreed in the Peace Accord will continue to be implemented under Duque’s administration. The High Commissioner for Stabilization (formerly Post-Conflict) has confirmed that agreements will be upheld, as long as families fulfil their commitments to crop substitution. As of September 2018, almost 25,000 ha of coca had been manually eradicated, and the level of fulfilment by families participating in the PNIS was 90%.⁸

Violence in Norte de Santander, particularly in the Catatumbo region, has become increasingly intense due to confrontations between the ELN and the EPL guerrilla groups over the past year. The GOC has responded with a **rapid response force with 5,000 additional troops**, who will join the 12,000 soldiers already in the region.⁹ Human Rights defenders and civilian authorities have recognized the State’s efforts to reinstate security in the region, but also highlight the need for non-military responses to the social and humanitarian situation.¹⁰