



This callout box includes a weekly update on news and work specifically related to implementing the Peace Accord between the Government of Colombia (GOC) and the FARC.

The Special Jurisdiction for Peace's (JEP) Recognition Court confirmed it will be implementing **22 checks on Hernán Darío Velásquez Saldarriaga's ("El Paisa") fulfilment of commitments to the peace process** on 25 January. Evidence will include intelligence on the possible regrouping and arming of FARC structures that operated under El Paisa, his whereabouts, and his activities in the Miravalle Territorial Training and Reincorporation Space (ETCR) in Caquetá, where he was leading the reincorporation of almost 250 former combatants until April 2018. The JEP opened proceedings when El Paisa failed to appear or provide a report for Case 001 (illegal retentions); he is due to offer evidence (in person) on the kidnappings, murders, and disappearances attributed to him on 18 March. The verification proceedings will take 30 days, after which the JEP will have 10 days to decide whether El Paisa has fulfilled his peace commitments or not.<sup>1</sup>

**Eleven members of the FARC will appear before the JEP to give evidence in Case 002** on violations of human rights and International Humanitarian Law in Nariño between 1990 and 2016. The hearings, which are obligatory, will be held in Cali, Pasto, and Bogotá between 14 February and 8 March. Case 002 was opened last year, after the JEP identified 1,000 victimizing acts, primarily against Awá Indigenous communities and members of Community Councils. This next step follows its Recognition Court's review of 20 reports by public entities and victims' and human rights organizations; victims will also be invited to comment on the hearings. The JEP has already heard evidence in Case 001 on illegal retentions by the FARC, and Case 003 on extrajudicial killings by State agents.<sup>2</sup>

With the expiry of the 40-day period set for the United States to provide the JEP with its evidence on 28 January, **transitional justice magistrates confirmed they will study the extradition case against former FARC leader Seuxis Paucias Hernández, alias "Jesús Santrich,"** who was captured for drug trafficking following the issuing of an INTERPOL Red Notice against him last April. All parties will now have five days to make their pleas, after which the JEP's Sentence Review Section will decide whether the non-extradition guarantee, outlined in the Peace Accord for former FARC combatants in the process of reincorporation, will be applied or not. The decision should be announced in mid-February, and if positive would mean the Santrich case would be investigated in Colombia. This case has prevented Santrich from taking up his seat in Congress, which is one of the 10 guaranteed places for the FARC political party through the Peace Accord.<sup>3</sup>

Since the ELN claimed responsibility for the 17-January attack on a Bogotá police academy, which left 21 cadets dead and almost 70 injured, the Attorney General's Office has issued arrest warrants for their Central Command (COCE),<sup>4</sup> and **President Duque has repeated calls for Cuba to hand their negotiating team over to the Colombian authorities.**<sup>5</sup> In this, the GOC has ignored protocols for the safe return of ELN negotiators, claiming that this was a Santos governmental rather than a State commitment. Guarantor countries were divided on their support for this decision, with Norway and Cuba insisting that prior commitments be fulfilled, and Chile and Ecuador rallying behind Duque, claiming that those who carried out the "act of terrorism" should be brought to justice.<sup>6</sup> The UN Security Council, which was convened to evaluate the implementation of the FARC Peace Accord, denounced the attack and did not comment on the fulfilment of protocols, but did call on the GOC to continue seeking a negotiated solution to the armed conflict with the ELN.<sup>7</sup> The ELN expanded into 19 new municipalities over 2017-18, with the greatest effects being felt in Vichada, Chocó, Cesar, Cauca, and Valle del Cauca, in addition to their traditional territories in Arauca and Norte de Santander.<sup>8</sup> Despite this expansion, the ELN is still a relatively small-scale guerrilla organization, with just over 3,000 combatants implementing 400 actions per year; it is also competing for territorial control with other illegal armed groups which have greater financial resources and powers of intimidation.<sup>9</sup> However, the collapse of peace talks would seriously affect the inhabitants of these already marginalized regions, as confrontations continue and the ELN carries out extortions, kidnappings, and attacks on petroleum infrastructure.<sup>10</sup>