



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.

Thousands marched in support of the JEP on 18 March in Bogotá and cities nationwide in response to President Duque's **vetoing of six of the 159 articles included in the JEP's Statutory Law** last week. Organized by the same youth who mobilized in support of the Peace Accord during the plebiscite in 2016, the objective of the march was to call on Congress to commit to the implementation and construction of peace "as a State policy." The international community also backed the JEP this week, as representatives from the German, Swedish, UK, Swiss, Norway, Belgian, and French Embassies, as well as the United Nations, met with Patricia Linares, President of the JEP, to reiterate their support for the Statutory Law on 14 March.¹ A House committee, made up of representatives from diverse political perspectives, has been selected to study the objections and propose the measure to be adopted in the plenary. The Senate committee has yet to be selected, although it is suspected that it will largely support the Centro Democrático position.² If the Congress approves changes to the Law, they will have to be reviewed by the Constitutional Court; meanwhile, continued delays have generated uncertainty for the reincorporation of the FARC. Duque continued to defend his position this week, pointing out that there will be an opportunity to build consensus to "improve transitional justice" during ordinary sessions of Congress beginning this week.³

Hernán Velásquez Saldarriaga, alias "El Paisa," **failed to comply with his JEP commitments when he did not appear before the transitional justice mechanism on 18 March.** The former commander is also the only leader not to have submitted a report in Case 001, in which the JEP has called on 31 former FARC leaders to give evidence on illegal retentions, with a schedule running until 27 May. Earlier this year, the JEP ordered an investigation into the whereabouts of El Paisa, who left the Miravalle Territorial Training and Reincorporation Space (ETCR) in July 2018, the findings of which will be reported on 21 March. If the JEP determines non-compliance, his case will be submitted to the Attorney General's Office for processing through the ordinary justice system.⁴

Magistrates and prosecutors of the JEP have visited a military facility, the historic Tolemaida base, to receive training on how the **FARC guerilla group used anti-personnel mines and improvised explosive devices during the armed conflict.** The specialized visit was requested by the JEP's Investigation and Accusation Unit in order to better interpret evidence in the crimes that they will be investigating.⁵ A 75-page report entitled "Illicit methods and means of war used by the FARC as an international crime" and compiled by the Armed Forces and the *Mil Víctimas* non-governmental organization was presented to the delegation. The report includes data on the effects of these actions, a record of the devices used, and an analysis of Colombian and international legislation on the use of means and methods prohibited by International Humanitarian Law.⁶

The need for a preventative approach in protecting the lives of social leaders was a key highlight of a report presented by the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights in Colombia this week, which details the assassinations of 110 social leaders and human rights defenders and 85 demobilized combatants over 2018, and raises concerns regarding the increase in massacres over the year (29 compared to 11 the previous year). Roughly half of the nation's municipalities saw an increase in the homicide rate. The report also offers an assessment of the implementation of the Peace Accord and makes recommendations for the GOC with regards defending human rights and reaching the territories most affected by the armed conflict. The High Commissioner urged the GOC to accelerate the pace of implementation of points one (Integrated Rural Reform), three (Illicit drugs), and four (Victims) of the Peace Accord.⁷