



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.

At UN, Iván Duque vowed to stand behind the peace process and to stamp out narco-terrorists. As President of a country composed of over 40 per cent tropical rainforests, Mr. Duque said Colombia is one of the most exposed nations to the climate change effects. It is clear, he said, that deforestation in the Amazon is “directly linked” to illegal armed groups seeking territories to engage in illicit activities, which in turn are financed by drug trafficking. Turning to peacebuilding in Colombia, Mr. Duque highlighted the efforts to establish a “culture of legality” in the country. However, Mr. Duque warned against those who “persist in the path of crime.” He told the Assembly that a few weeks ago, a “group of narco-terrorists” had tried to intimidate Colombia “under false ideological pretexts.” The Colombian Government had not and would not yield to the threats of this “group.”¹

Two years after it was created, **the Truth Commission has already collected 4,000 testimonies, from the 16,000 it expects, about what happened in Colombia** in more than 50 years of armed conflict. It is a titanic task for which there is very little time, just three years. Francisco de Roux, president of the Commission, made a balance of the work that the entity has done and expressed his concern on the persistence of violence in the country: “Time is short, resources are scarce. The challenges are enormous because the conflict continues and there are many people who are afraid to come forward to tell the truth”. Today they are present in 29 territories of the country, taking on the task of summoning them all the significant groups: the army, the police, ex-FARC combatants, Afro-Colombian groups, indigenous groups, the National Navy, LGBTI groups, women's organizations.²

In the south of the country, a **new reinsertion proposal** is now under construction by a group of ex-guerrillas, many of them middle commanders, who claim to represent more than two **thousand ex-combatants in order to reincorporate them outside the FARC political party**. They are so determined that the group, which does not feel represented by the leadership of Rodrigo Londoño, formerly Timochenko, met a week ago with the High Counselor for Stabilization, Emilio Archila, to make it a reality. This initiative is another proof of how difficult it is to maintain a collective and organized life by leaving behind rifles, as has already happened in the military with dissidents (especially Gentil Duarte) and in the political with the announcement of Iván Márquez's gang.³

In the Turbo cemetery in Antioquia's Urabá, there is an unusual number of young people who were buried before they turned 20. According to the residents of this municipality, boys have lost their lives in the midst of a confrontation between gangs that has been claiming victims in the peripheral neighborhood's month after month. In consequence of the violence generated by the control of drug trafficking by the AGCs, the gang's violence has been consuming the youngest. In all of Antioquia's Urabá there is no municipality with higher rates of violence than Turbo, which in 2018 defeated its neighbors Apartadó, Carepa or Chigorodó in homicides, reaching 104 cases. Nor were so many minors murdered in any of those cases, 13 last year.⁴

The National Protection Unit (UNP) is embroiled in a whirlwind of accusations. The controversy is growing after the Colombian Army's conflicting versions of an event, in which uniformed men were implicated in Norte de Santander, and which claimed the life of Ezequiel Méndez Rivero, escort of the (UNP) and left political leader Yolanda González García, of the ASI party, wounded. In addition to the arrival of an audio that contradicts the official version, the concern of an alleged leakage and theft of database information muddy the landscape and, boost the uncertainty surrounding protection of social leaders in the regions, while at the same time violence does not cease in the country.⁵