



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.

Debate over congressional seats for victims of the armed conflict. The Constitutional reform that would create 16 Congressional seats for victims of the armed conflict (as planned by the Peace Agreement of November 2016) was a subject of debate this week. On Saturday 14 December, President Iván Duque assured that the government would present an initiative that would allow victims to be represented in Congress.¹ He also insisted on the need to implement this provision without generating additional expenses. Already blocked twice by Congress, the Constitutional Court may order the executive to make a decision on the matter.²

Three indigenous communities recover their land in Vichada. In the eastern plains of Colombia, in the department of Vichada, three indigenous communities recovered their ancestral land. On 6 December, the Unit for Land Restitution officially handed over the indigenous reserve of Kanalitojo, at the border of Venezuela, to the Sikuni, Sálibas and Amoruas communities. Displaced by the activities of paramilitary groups (Autodefensas Unidas de Colombia) at the end of the 20th and beginning of the 21st century, the indigenous communities had been asking Incoder to create an indigenous reserve ever since. Thanks to the Unit for Land Restitution, 224 families now have property titles over this collective land of 1,300 ha.³

Former FARC combatant killed near the Reincorporation Space of Ituango. On 12 December, former combatants from the Santa Lucía (Antioquia) Territorial Space for Training and Reincorporation (ETCR) celebrated the handover of a land on which they were planning to develop their cattle farming project. On the following day, Manuel Antonio González Buelvas, one of the former combatants who had invested the money received as part of the Peace Accord in the development of this cattle productive project was shot walking from the village to the ETCR.⁴ Another seven former combatants were also killed in the same area, in which the Autodefensas Gaitanistas and the dissidence of the 18th Front of the FARC are competing for territorial control. The coordinator of the ETCR confirms: “We need to work with all the institutions, the police, the army, the mayor's office, so that makes us a target for those who don't share, who are suddenly on the other side, who aren't helping, who don't approve of what we are doing”.⁵

The Special Jurisdiction for Peace investigates a new “false positives” case in Dabeiba. The Special Jurisdiction for Peace (JEP) announced that it would start looking for a mass grave in the cemetery of Dabeiba. It is believed that the grave contains the remains of 50 victims of “false positives” killed by the army. The Ministry of Defense declared it was “willing to cooperate with the JEP in the search for truth, justice, reparation and non-repetition”. Dabeiba has experienced some of the darkest moments of the 40 year-long war, which has resulted in high numbers of victims of all parties, armed forces, guerrilla groups, paramilitaries, and in particular civilians.⁶

Unit for the Search of Disappeared Persons wins the Extremadura Global Award. According to the Spanish Development Cooperation Agency, the Colombian Unit for the Search of Disappeared Persons (UBPD) is an “inspiring model for the rest of the world” and contributes to equality, coexistence, and the promotion of human rights. The Award was presented to the Director of the UBPD, Luz Marina Monzón on Thursday 12 December, in Spain. The committee recognized the UBPD's work toward discovering the Truth about the Colombian armed conflict and in the search of the more than 80,000 disappeared persons across the country. “The search for disappeared persons is a pillar of the construction of peace” said Luz Marina Monzón.⁷