



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 (JEP) summons former Army Commander General Mario Montoya. The former Commander of the Colombian National Army, Mario Montoya, was summoned to appear before the JEP on 12 February 2020 at 8 a.m. for preliminary hearings. He will present his version of events related to Case 003 on “Deaths illegitimately presented as casualties at the hands of State agents”, more commonly known as “false positives”. Six territories have been prioritized by the JEP: Cesar, Antioquia, Catatumbo (Norte de Santander), Casanare, Meta and Huila. Accredited victims will have the right to attend the hearing; to date, 360 victims have been accredited. Three other Generals of the Colombian Army testified before the JEP in relation to Case 003; General Paulino Coronado (retired), General Miguel David Bastidas (retired), and General Henry Torres Escalante (retired). As part of the same case, the Chamber for the Acknowledgment of Truth and Responsibility of the JEP summoned three other Generals; Mauricio Zabala Cardona, Adolfo Hernandez Martinez, and General Carlos Saavedra (retired).¹

The Development Plans with a Territorial Focus (PDET) bring water and electricity to indigenous reserve in Catatumbo. The indigenous reserve of Motilón Bari, home to the ichirinda-cayra community, can finally enjoy running water and electricity. Located at the heart of Catatumbo (Norte de Santander), the region has been particularly affected by increasing violence and conflict between the National Liberation Army (ELN) and the Popular Liberation Army (EPL).² The infrastructure works to build a water supply and distribution system and to provide photovoltaic electricity to this indigenous reserve were part of the Development Plans established by the Peace Accord and aiming to bring development to conflict-affected territories. The new systems were handed over to the community by the High Presidential Commissioner for Stabilization and Consolidation, Emilio Archila, on the weekend before Christmas.³

Government prepares new resolution on former FARC combatants’ future. A new roadmap for the reintegration of former FARC combatants into civilian life will soon be presented by the Government. The document contains seven milestones that each individual combatant will need to meet in order to complete his/her reintegration process. These include education, economic sustainability, housing, health, integral psycho-social well-being, as well as family and community well-being. This roadmap was elaborated in collaboration with representatives of the FARC and is consistent with the Peace Accord’s timeframe which established an eight-year period for the completion of the reintegration process of the FARC.⁴

Key measures to avoid a resumption of war in Buenaventura. Avoiding a new wave of violence in Buenaventura is the main challenge faced by the new mayor, Victor Vidal. The district is currently experiencing an increase in violent acts due to the reconfiguration and reorganization of armed groups competing for the control of the territory and of the region’s illegal economies. FARC dissidences, the ELN, and the AGC/Clan del Golfo are the main competitors for the control of Buenaventura and are undergoing a process of recruitment which particularly affects children and youth. Youth leaders call on the government to effectively implement laws 1622 and 1885 for the protection of young people who receive insufficient assistance to date. Analysts argue that the creation of an independent Secretariat for youth and of a Secretariat for the post-conflict is fundamental. Also, mechanisms for citizen participation need to be reinforced.⁵

ELN releases three abducted children. On 23 December 2019, in the region of Arauca, the Eastern War Front of the ELN released three children held captive by the group. Two girls and one boy from Casanare, aged between 14 and 15, were handed over to the humanitarian mission led by the bishop of Arauca, Jaime Abril, and the Ombudsman’s Office. According to the ELN, the children had been “trained by the Colombian army to infiltrate the ELN”. While the government has repeatedly demanded that hostages be released, should the release of the children be seen as an indication that the group may be ready to resume dialogue?⁶