

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.

JEP recognizes 120,000 victims in largest case in history. This week, the Special Jurisdiction for Peace (JEP) recognized the Indigenous Regional Council of Cauca (CRIC) and the Association of Indigenous Councils of Northern Cauca (ACIN) as collective victims of the armed conflict as part of Case 005. This is one of the most emblematic decisions taken by the JEP in support of afro and indigenous communities of 17 municipalities of Cauca and Valle del Cauca, which have been disproportionately affected by the armed conflict. As of now, more than 100,000 people across 31 indigenous reserves will have the opportunity to participate and present observations, proofs and other documents to the JEP. The JEP is investigating mass violations of human rights and grave violations of International Humanitarian Law committed between 1st January 1993 and 1st December 2016 in the region.¹

Heated debate over victims' representation in Congress. The debate over the creation of 16 Congressional seats for the victims of the armed conflict resumed. This week, the President of the Senate, Arturo García Turbay, announced he would revoke the administrative act which, two years ago, had blocked victims' entrance into Congress.² The High Commissioner for Peace, Miguel Ceballos, declared this initiative was unlawful. He argued that a court judgment could not retroactively apply to a situation that occurred in 2017. He assured that the Government was preparing a legislative act by which political parties would have the opportunity to present candidates for the representation of the circumscriptions most affected by the armed conflict.³ The Peace Accord had guaranteed victims a representation in Congress for the two legislative periods following its signature.

Special measures for the protection of social leaders and ex-FARC members. Following a request for protection presented by 10 social leaders before the Tribunal of Bogotá, the judges ordered special protection measures for leaders in Putumayo, Valle del Cauca, Antioquia, and Cauca, among others.⁴ In parallel, six measures for the protection of FARC ex-combatants were announced by the Government on 27 January. These include a risk analysis in zones most affected by violence, facilitating the process of reporting threats, and impulsing the elaboration and execution of the reintegration route by the Agency for Reincorporation and Normalization (ARN).⁵ On 29 January, the 185th former FARC combatant since the signature of the Peace Agreement, and the fifth in 2020 only, was assassinated close to the Reincorporation Space of Ituango.⁶ Following this latest assassination (12 in total), the 120 former combatants and families living in the ETCR of Ituango announced their relocation.⁷ The Attorney General added that 41 family members of ex-FARC members were killed since 2017.⁸

FARC party is losing support from its base. Fractures within the Common Alternative Revolutionary Force (FARC) party are becoming increasingly visible. Last week, Tanja Nijmeijer made public her decision to leave the party, declaring "the party has mutated into something that I can still not assimilate, that I may never understand". From the dissidents who refused to commit to the Peace Accord, to the distancing of some 2,000 former combatants led by Andrés Paris, passing by the rearming of former chief negotiator Iván Márquez along with El Paisa, Santrich and Romaña, the leadership of Rodrigo Londoño is evidently being questioned.⁹ Dissenting voices are increasingly vocal about the absence of space for debate, opposition and diverging views inside the party. They also deplore the delays in the implementation of the Accord and the pressure exercised by the lack of security guarantees.¹⁰

Armed groups replace the police in Arauca and Apure. A recent Human Rights Watch (HRW) report denounced the state of lawlessness that prevails in the borderland regions of Arauca and Apure (Venezuela). It claims that armed groups pertaining to the FARC dissidences and the ELN are replacing the police and controlling the lives of the communities. They allegedly impose curfews, resort to forced recruitment make laws, enforce them, and even pronounce death sentences. The report is based on 100 interviews with community leaders, victims, human rights defenders, journalists and even police officials, who declared that they could only operate in a limited number of neighborhoods in which there were sufficient levels of security for them. According to HRW, FARC dissidences and the ELN have formed a sort of alliance in the region, as opposed to other part of the country where they compete for the control of drug-trafficking routes.¹¹ The ELN responded by saying that these illegitimate accusations were an excuse "in order to justify brutal aggressions against the peoples of the continent and the world".¹²