

PEACE MAIL

July 10-July 16

WEEKLY UPDATE: Implementing the Peace Accords

This callout box includes a weekly update on releases and work specifically related implementing the Final Peace Accord between the Government (GOC) and the FARC in Colombia.

Thirty-two members of the former guerilla group FARC appeared in the first hearing of the Special Jurisdiction for Peace (JEP) on 13 July.¹ Among the members present were the former leaders Rodrigo Lodoño “Timochenko,” Carlos Antonio Lozada, and Pablo Catatumbo, one of the leading spokesmen for the FARC in the Havana negotiations. The case will address reports of 2,500 to 8,500 kidnapping and extortion cases that occurred between 1993 and 2012. The session commenced with the President of the Chamber reading the 312 sentences, which involved 68 members of the FARC, and the delivering of a copy of the reports to the defense. The Attorney General, Mónica Cifuentes, responded to the defense lawyers’ doubts about the validity of the reports, stating that there would be sufficient time to assess each case. She then turned to the audience and reaffirmed the historic moment as an opportunity for truth and reconciliation, particularly for the victims. The hearing closed with remarks from the director of the Unit for the Search of Disappeared Persons citing the immense number of requests to clarify disappearances committed during the armed conflict.

Just days before the newly-elected National Congress will be installed, the FARC political party has faced a crisis: three out of its 10 members will not take their seats.² Iván Márquez, has declined his seat, stating that he does not enjoy legal guarantees and that the Peace Accord has been violated with regard to the case of Jesús Santrich, the disfigurement of the JEP in relation to its original mandate determined by the Peace Accord, and the lack of progress on the issue of land rights.³ Jesús Santrich will not occupy his seat as he remains confined while awaiting a decision on his extradition case to the United States for drug trafficking. Bayron Yepes will not occupy his seat due to health issues.

An increase in attacks against social leaders led President Santos to declare a meeting of the Security Guarantees Committee on 10 July. A key result of this meeting was the decision to create a single on-going registry for assassinated social leaders.⁴ Eighty leaders including those of Community Action Boards (JAC), unions, crop substitution and land restitution programs, and supporters of Gustavo Petro’s presidential campaign have been assassinated since the beginning of the year.

On 11 July, three investigators for the Attorney General’s Office were killed on the road between Tumaco and Pasto.⁵ Authorities believe the attack was carried out by “Guacho,” a FARC dissident who is responsible for other attacks in the region. There has been an upsurge of violence in Nariño in recent months since almost 10,000 members of the armed forces have been deployed to 10 municipalities as part of a plan to combat criminal organizations operating in an area with over 40,000 hectares of coca cultivation.