

WEEKLY UPDATE: May 14 - 20

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-EP.

The **Special Jurisdiction for Peace (JEP)** requested the release of **Jesús Santrich** on 15 May after more than a year in jail and hence **granted him the guarantee of no extradition**. The decision was made by the Review Section of the JEP, which claimed that there was insufficient evidence that he committed the crime of narcotrafficking after the signing of the Peace Accord. As a consequence, the **Attorney General, Néstor Humberto Martínez, presented his resignation letter** in rejection of the decision, **accusing the JEP of being in favor of the FARC-EP** and of impunity; a draft appeal followed. The GOC has decided to launch a new prosecution process through the ordinary justice system. ¹ On 17 May, as Santrich exited the jail, the Technical Investigation Corps of the **Attorney General's Office (AGO)** announced **a new arrest warrant** for crimes of conspiracy in drug trafficking and he was subsequently relocated to the AGO's jail. The Forensic Doctors confirmed he was at critical state of health, as he had conducted self-injury, and he was transferred to a hospital.² A prosecutor legalized his capture from the hospital, but the inspector general in charge appealed the decision.³ The court of the Paloquemao Judicial Services Center ruled on May 20 that **the case would be sent to the Supreme Court of Justice** to determine whether his trial can continue with the AGO and ordinary judges, or whether the Supreme Court should continue with the proceedings⁴. The United Nations Verification Mission in Colombia and the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights expressed their hope that the due process of Santrich and his right to defense will be respected as part of guaranteeing the legal security of former members of the FARC-EP.⁵

In an article published on 18 May by the New York Times, it was reported that the head of the **Colombian Armed Forces**, General Nicacio Martinez, had ordered his troops **to double the number of criminals and guerrillas killed or captured** and accept an increase in civilian deaths if it would contribute to the objective.⁶ The news has raised alarms as it resembles the tactic of increasing "body counts" used by the Colombian Armed Forces from 2002 - 2008 period, known as "false positives", for which at least 1,600 soldiers have been convicted.⁷ Human rights organizations requested this week the Second Commission of the Senate to not approve the rise in rank of Nicacio Martinez due to his alleged responsibility in extrajudicial executions committed under his jurisdiction when he served as second commander in the X Armored Brigade between October 2004 and January 2006.⁸ While the Ministry of Defense confirmed that the directive mentioned in the article did occur, at the same time, they assured that the Colombian Armed Forces are fully committed to respect the International Humanitarian Law⁹ and wrote an official letter to the New York Times signed by the Defense Minister and the Minister of Foreign Affairs questioning the way the information was handled.¹⁰ After several Tweet attacks by Colombian politicians, the journalist had to leave the country for security reasons.¹¹

The JEP confirmed on 15 May the arrest warrant against former FARC chief Hernán Darío Velásquez Saldarriaga, alias '**El Paisa**', issued two weeks earlier with the reason of failing to fulfill his commitments to the peace process. If captured, his case would still be processed by the JEP, but without the special treatment the former guerilla members are subject to meaning he could only obtain an ordinary sentence of 5 to 20 years in prison. The arrest warrant is still pending a decision on an appeal filed by the defense of the ex-guerrilla fighter.¹²

The Agency for Reincorporation and Normalization in conjunction with the Alliance for Peace announced **the launch of a project** on "**Resilience and prevention of victimization and stigmatization** of communities and **populations in the process of reincorporation** (PREVER)", in La Guajira, Tolima and Caquetá, benefitting 416 people participants of Territorial Spaces for Training and Reincorporation.¹³

Lieutenant **Colonel Jorge Armando Pérez Amézquita** will be investigated on the murder of the former FARC-EP combatant **Dimar Torres**. The Attorney General in charge, Fabio Espitia, confirmed that the Colonel was formally charged with the crime of enhancing the cover-up.¹⁴

ELN has denied that it has troops in Venezuela or that it maintained alliances with the government of Nicolás Maduro. This statement comes as a contradiction to the Armed Forces' claim that at least 1,100 of ELN's troops are in the neighboring country.¹⁵