1. BACKGROUND

On June 10, 2011, President Juan Manuel Santos signed into effect the Victims and Land Restitution Law (Law 1448). Over the next ten years, the Law will provide five reparation measures to victims of the internal conflict: (1) land restitution, (2) financial reparation, (3) rehabilitation, (4) satisfaction, and (5) guarantees of non-repetition. Three public institutions were created by the Law: (1) the Victims Unit, to provide services and reparations and coordinate the National Victims Assistance and Reparation System (SNARIV), (2) the National Center for Historical Memory (CNMH), to collect and develop historical memory of the conflict, and (3) the Land Restitution Unit, to implement the restitution component. As of December 2016, 8,320,874 victims were registered with the government of Colombia (GOC), primarily victims of internal displacement (79.9%).(1)

2. KEY DEVELOPMENTS

ADDRESSING PROTRACTED DISPLACEMENT, HUMANITARIAN CHALLENGES KEY IN 2017

Already this year some communities have faced limitations on mobility, which according to OCHA increased 78% between 2015 and 2016.(2) One recent example is the confinement of the Palestina Afro-Colombian community in Chocó in January because of possible IEDs planted in the area. (3) Threats and attacks against social leaders, which OCHA says increased 31% between 2015 and 2016, have also continued into the new year. While Verdad Abierta recognizes that threats and attacks against social leaders have taken place consistently for the last decade (558 social leaders were killed between 2002 and 2016 including eight since the beginning of the accords’ implementation),(4) this issue has been on national and international organizations’ radar as they begin to implement peace accords and efforts for paz territorial. This month GOC Minister of the Interior Juan Fernando Cristo said that the majority of these attacks are the result of drug-trafficking and illegal mining, which must be addressed head-on in the post-conflict.(5)

HUMANITARIAN DEMINING IN MESETA, META COMPLETED

Following the completion of demining in Orejón, Antioquia last month, this month the process in Santa Helena, Meseta in the department of Meta was completed and the district was declared free of mines. The lessons learned in the two demining pilots will now be extended to the rest of the country. A total 20,874 square meters were cleared and 20 explosive devices were removed. In Meta, much work remains to be done: 25 of the department’s 29 municipalities have mines. So far, FARC has played an important role identifying and locating mines for removal. Moving forward, members of the group will also certify themselves and participate directly in the mines’ removal. Pastor Alape, a member of the FARC Secretariat, said that “we [the FARC] have millions of energies to dedicate to this effort.”(7)

By the end of 2016, about 56 million people (over 85% of all displaced people globally) were in protracted displacement, which creates additional humanitarian concerns. IOM(6) and other UN bodies have agreed to come together to reduce protracted displacement 50% by 2030.

It was recently announced that FARC will form a 1,200 person demining team in transitional zones around the country called “Humanicémonos”. The GOC goal is to completely demine Colombia by 2021.(8)
3. PEACEBUILDING
THE LAST MARCH: FARC CONCENTRATION IN FULL MOTION
While the initial deadline for an estimated 6,000 to 7,000 FARC combatants to reach transitional zones was December 31, the logistics of setting up electricity, water, housing, and other services in remote set the process back. This month, GOC agencies responsible for setting up the zones hurried to pick up the pace to meet the new January 31 deadline. Yet despite rushed efforts, by the end of the month Fundación Paz y Reconciliación said that 23 of 26 camps were not 100% ready. Still, on January 28 combatants across the country began moving from the 45 points where they had been pre-grouped to the 26 transitional zones to disarm with UN supervision and verification (see Progress Report) under. When all FARC members are in transitional zones, disarming will formally begin.(6)

CONGRESS ADVANCES LEGISLATIVE AGENDA FOR THE PEACE ACCORDS
Following Congressional ratification of accords in December, legislators got to work to pass the bills needed to get implementation off the ground. No fewer than 40 laws must be passed through a fast-track legislative process by June.(8) While the amnesty law passed in December protects ex-combatants from prosecution, the law can only take effect once another has been passed: Special Jurisdiction for Peace legislation. Congress is currently debating the transitional justice legislation, including commanders’ responsibility, and appears to have agreed not to change the points agreed upon in Havana. Meanwhile, steps are being taken to prepare to select special judges. Three of the five-member committee to select judges have been named.(9)

ELN RELEASES KEY HOSTAGE, PEACE TALKS REAPPEAR ON THE HORIZON
Following months of GOC demands that it do so, on February 2, the National Liberation Army (ELN) released kidnapped ex-congressperson Odín Sánchez (held since April 2016) to the Red Cross. The GOC agreed to simultaneously free two ELN guerrillas arrested on charges of rebellion who will participate in peace talks in Ecuador. These moves open the door for negotiations to finally begin.(10)

POST-CONFLICT FUNDS RECEIVE NEW CONTRIBUTIONS
In January the United Nations Fond for the Post-Conflict announced a new contribution worth USD 16.8 million from the U.K., Sweden, Germany, and Norway to finance projects to protect minors from recruitment and for crop substitution.(13) Colombia will also receive a credit from the World Bank worth US 100 million under the Sustainable Colombia Fund. The GOC’s goal is to receive US 500 million in five years.(14)

4. A VIEW FROM THE FIELD
ILLEGAL CROP SUBSTITUTION PROGRAM DEFINED
The GOC and FARC launched the National Comprehensive Program for Illicit Crop Substitution, which will be headed up by the High Counselor for the Post-Conflict, Human Rights and Security with the participation of the FARC. In 2017 the program will provide farmers with a series of stipends to encourage crop substitution (including US 300 monthly for substitution and one-time payments of US 600 and US 3,000 for subsistence projects and fishery and poultry farms, respectively). Additional investments are planned for 2018.(16)

The goal is to substitute 50,000 hectares during the first year. According the UN Comprehensive Monitoring System, in 2015 there were 96,000 hectares of illicit crops.(17)

7. Ibid.
12. Ibid.
17. Ibid.
5. PROGRESS REPORT*

8,320,874
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WHAT DO WE KNOW ABOUT THE TRANSITIONAL ZONES?

19 TRANSITIONAL HAMLET ZONES FOR NORMALIZATION
7 TRANSITIONAL NORMALIZATION POINTS

GOC Unit for Risk Management is responsible for setting them up; Monitoring & Verification System (with GOC, FARC & UN) will manage them, and the government will pay (total cost unknown)

Preparations started late because of logistical problems; through the end of January, 23 of 26 CAMPS WERE NOT 100% READY.*

OBSеств

APPROXIMATELY 6,300 GUERRILLAS HAVE ARRIVED TO TRANSITIONAL ZONES
For combatants to arrive
360 KM OF HIGHWAYS HAD TO BE BUILT
And transportation required: 600+ Trucks, 200+ TVs, 60+buses, 80+ boats, 35+ mules, 10+ tractors

WHAT WILL HAPPEN HERE?

Census
Receive Id:
Included in National Health System
Trained
Disarm

NO ONE CAN ENTER EXPECT WITH SPECIAL PERMISSION
AS STATED BY THE ACCORD, ONLY 10 FARC MEMBERS ARE ALLOWED TO LEAVE THE ZONE

MUNICIPALITY

How are the zones structured?

PUBLIC FORCES

COMMUNITY

1 KM SECURITY BUFFER

ARMED FORCES HEADQUARTERS

FARC LIMITED ZONE
NO GUNS OR UNIFORMS ALLOWED

NO POLITICS ARE ALLOWED INSIDE THE TRANSITIONAL ZONES

FARC CAMP

THREE STEPS TO DISARM:
30% BY MARCH 1, ANOTHER 30% BY APRIL 1, AND THEFINAL 40% BY MAY 1

UN, POLICE AND SOLDIERS WITHOUT WEAPONS WATCH THE ZONES AT A DISTANCE OF 1 KM

6. INCLUSIVE APPROACHES
MORE MINORS WILL SOON LEAVE FARC’S RANKS
The National Reincorporation Council announced that FARC will begin turning over information on children and adolescents in its ranks in the framework of its move to transitional zones to prepare for their disengagement. Initially the children and adolescents will be turned over to the Red Cross, which will bring them to shelters organized by UNICEF and the Presidential Counselor for Human Rights with support from the International Organization for Migration. An undetermined number of children are expected to disengage in the coming days, starting in Antioquia and Norte de Santander.⑮

7. IN THE SPOTLIGHT
2018 PRESIDENTIAL AND SENATE ELECTIONS EDGE CLOSER
Colombia is already preparing for next year’s presidential and senate elections as current President Juan Manuel Santos completes his second and final term. Questions remain about how the next administration will approach peacebuilding and the implementation of the peace accords. Current members of the government who will run for office, including Vice President Germán Vargas Lleras, must resign in coming months to begin campaigning. In 2018, the political party that will be formed by demobilized members of the FARC will have 10 guaranteed seats in Congress.⑯ Timochenko, the leader of the group, has said that the group will not launch a presidential candidate for 2018.⑰

8. INSTITUTIONAL ADVANCES
WORLD SUMMIT OF NOBEL PEACE PRIZE LAUREATES HELD IN BOGOTÁ
From February 2 to 5, 20 Nobel Peace Prize laureates came together in Bogotá at the summit, the first of its kind in Latin America. Participants discussed experiences and ideas for peacebuilding and reconciliation in Colombia. Victus, theatre for reconciliation led by theatrical company Casa Ensamble with former soldiers, demobilized paramilitaries, demobilized guerrilla members, and victims, which was first supported by USAID and IOM last year, was presented as part of the event’s inauguration.

Embassy of Sweden and El Tiempo
STORYTELLING FOR PEACEBUILDING WORKSHOPS AROUND THE COUNTRY
The Embassy of Sweden and El Tiempo, with support from IOM, are hosting storytelling workshops around the country to teach regional journalists about reporting on peace and post-conflict narratives. The workshops are replicating skills and knowledge learned by a group of Colombian journalists who travelled to Sweden last year.

National Center for Historical Memory
“VOICES FROM EXILE” DIGITAL SPECIAL LAUNCHED
The CNMH launched videos systematizing different memory projects supported in La Guajira, Nariño, and the Urabá region of Antioquia. Videos of systematized historical memory processes can be accessed on the CNMH website by clicking on this link: http://bit.ly/2hzB5jP.

9. ADDITIONAL RESOURCES
NEW CRISIS GROUP REPORT
“In the Shadow of “No”: Peace after Colombia’s Plebiscite,” available to download by clicking here: http://bit.ly/2kvj2xY, explores the current process to implement peace accords in Colombia following the revision and ratification of the original peace accord rejected by voters in October 2016.

SEXUAL VIOLENCE IN THE ARMED CONFLICT
Elisabeth Wood’s academic article “Conflict-Related Sexual Violence and the Policy Implications” reviews existing literature and theories on how sexual violence is deployed in conflict, offering suggestions to direct policies. The article is available in Spanish by clicking here: http://www.scielo.org.co/pdf/esju/v18n2/v18n2a01.pdf.