



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 leader of the FARC party, **Rodrigo Londoño, appeared before the Special Jurisdiction for Peace (JEP) on 14 February to give evidence in Case 001 (illegal retentions)**, and was followed by Jorge Torres Victoria (“Pablo Catatumbo”) on 18 February. The remaining 29 FARC leaders are expected to provide evidence before 27 May.¹ These leaders’ appearance is obligatory, but the information they provide is voluntary and intended to contribute to the truth concerning 6,162 kidnappings, murders, and forced disappearances during the armed conflict. The evidence will have individual and collective dimensions,² which will then be reviewed in tandem with reports from the Attorney General’s Office, ordinary justice system, and civil society organizations. Although the sessions are currently being held in private, victims will later be invited to provide observations and evidence, and the JEP will be able to test evidence and call on further witnesses before assigning responsibility. As part of their commitment to peace, the FARC leadership is also required to ask for victims’ forgiveness, and to work on reparation.³

President Duque has yet to sign the JEP’s Statutory Law and is facing pressure from his Centro Democrático party and the Attorney General not to do so before the 11 March deadline.⁴ The delay has prolonged the JEP’s legal uncertainty and further challenged its legitimacy, despite the Law already being approved by the Constitutional Court,⁵ and petitions being made by 227 victims’ associations.⁶

The Truth Commission (TC) has begun preparatory work in the Orinoco and Amazon macro-region, where 35% of the population are victims. The TC will focus on massacres and exemplary punishments, facing the challenge of building trust with communities despite increasing FARC splinter group presence. The TC will open three “Truth Houses” in the region, but will have to reduce its staff to respond to the 40% budget cut laid out by the National Development Plan (NDP).⁷

Eighteen social organizations participated an Inter-American Commission on Human Rights (IACHR) hearing on 15 February, **denouncing forced disappearances and shortcomings in the Colombian State’s response** to a phenomenon which has produced over 82,000 victims. The organizations confronted the State delegation, which did not include representatives from the Peace Accord’s Missing Persons’ Search Unit (UBPD), focusing on shortcomings in the country’s search policy; the need to protect cemeteries and irregular burial sites; the effective participation of victims; and the challenges facing the UBPD. Concern over the lack of a preventive policy was also raised, as over 5,000 people disappeared over 2018. The GOC has assessed 481 cemeteries across 31 departments, finding 27,083 unidentified bodies, and returning 4,809 to their families.⁸

The future of the **National Integrated Illicit Crop Substitution Program (PNIS), created through the Peace Accord, is again uncertain following President Duque’s visit to the United States**. The NDP also reduced funding for the 97,000 families signed up to the PNIS by 35%, and removed the possibility of signing new agreements to bring the originally proposed 130,000 families within its remit. The GOC has set a forced eradication target of 280,000 ha, including a potential return to aerial fumigations, despite a constitutional court ruling outlawing the practice in 2015. In contrast, the United Nations has visited 87,000 PNIS families, encountering high levels of fulfillment, with 27,555 ha already having been voluntarily removed.⁹ The change towards forced eradication has raised concerns over increasing violence in coca-growing regions.¹⁰

The ELN has intensified attacks and recruitment efforts since President Duque ended peace talks in January. However, ELN leader Pablo Beltrán reaffirmed the guerrilla group’s commitment to a negotiated end to the conflict, whilst also citing concerns over the GOC’s fulfillment of agreements and protocols, and the implementation of the FARC Peace Accord.¹¹ Meanwhile, President Duque announced a third condition for the resumption of talks in addition to the release of hostages and ceasing of criminal activities: the handing over of those responsible for the 17-January Bogotá police academy attack, which claimed the lives of 22 cadets.¹²