



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 United Nations says the number of children and teenagers being forcibly recruited by armed groups in Colombia has risen since 2016** when the government signed a peace deal with the largest of Colombia's rebel group, the Revolutionary Armed Forces of Colombia (FARC). The UN special representative for children and armed conflict, Virginia Gamba, warned that these numbers were only "the tip of the iceberg". Once inside the armed group, children and teenagers are put to work in a number of roles, from carrying out basic errands to cooking, working in drugs labs run by the armed groups, collecting extortion fees, cleaning weapons and in some cases, working as sex slaves.<sup>1</sup>

**Former colombian guerrilla fighters are becoming "citizen scientists", trained to protect Colombia's biodiversity.** Since the 2016 peace agreement 21 scientific bio-expeditions have been carried out, most in areas that were previously conflict zones. This flowering of research offers a new opportunity to the thousands of ex-combatants now looking for productive and peaceful work. Around 40% of these ex-guerrillas have experience in environmental conservation, and 70% have agricultural skills. There is also increasing interest in ecotourism in the 26 Territorial Training and Reincorporation Spaces (ETCRs) where the ex-combatants are currently based, nearly 20 tourism initiatives provide a unique opportunity to promote biodiversity as part of the peace process.<sup>2</sup>

According to Héctor Fabio Henao, President of the National Council for Peace, Reconciliation and Coexistence, nine pre-candidates were assassinated in the country by different armed groups. Faced with this and other types of aggressions, the CNPRC, together with the High Commissioner for Peace, Miguel Ceballos, called for a **Pact that seeks respect for plurality, solidarity and equity in the campaigns for the territorial elections of October 27.** "We must expel violence from political campaigns. That is also making peace, forming a political culture in which party relations are guarded by mutual respect", said the High Commissioner.<sup>3</sup>

Throughout the country, most **indigenous reservations have suffered threats, forced displacement, confinement or murder, sexual abuse or torture of some of their members.** According to figures from the National Indigenous Organization (ONIC), from November 2016 to August 10, 2019, 158 indigenous leaders have been assassinated. Not to mention that during the last two and a half years there have been 37,533 victimizing acts against these communities. This phenomenon has to do with the dispute that the irregular armed groups have undertaken to occupy the territories dominated by the former guerrilla. Mostly strategic places for illegal activities.<sup>4</sup>

In recent weeks, the department of **Cauca has been in the eye of the hurricane because communities have been caught in the middle of clashes between the army and illegal armed groups** operating in the area. In addition, they have assassinated their social leaders and as a result, several displacements and a dramatic social situation have arisen. In fact, on Saturday there were battles in the municipality of Suarez, also in recent weeks have been killed four members of indigenous communities, finally, in the municipality of Algeria selective homicides continue.<sup>5</sup>