



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.

Colombia removes FARC from national terrorist list. At the “hemispheric” anti-terrorism conference held on 20 January 2020 in Bogotá, President Iván Duque declared that the FARC had been removed from the national terrorist list. The decision was made during the latest National Security Council that took place on 17 January, on the basis that the former FARC had transformed into a political party. In parallel, the Duque administration also decided to adopt the European Union’s and the United States’ terrorist organization watch lists consistently with the United Nations’ Global Strategy Against Terrorism, and as a commitment to contribute to the fight against international terrorism. The GoC intends to strengthen judicial cooperation and information exchange in order to investigate and combat terrorist financing and activities.¹

Several former combatants were assassinated by FARC dissidences. The Attorney General’s Office revealed that 36 of the 90 ex-FARC combatants assassinated in 2019 had been killed by FARC dissidences. It attributed 12 of the remaining assassinations to the ELN, 8 to the Clan del Golfo, and one, the case of Dímar Torres killed inside a Territorial Space for Training and Reincorporation (ETCR), to the Colombian Security forces. This year, two former combatants have already been killed. Observers of the peace process argue that past conflicts, score-settlings and the refusal to return to arms are the main motives for these crimes. In addition, conflict for the control of illegal economics and bad leadership have created competition between criminal organizations for the re-recruitment of ex-FARC members, resulting in retaliation in case of refusal. Finally, internal divisions and competition for the leadership of the FARC dating back to the elimination of Alfonso Cano in 2011 have exacerbated and become more visible since the demobilization and transition to politics.²

Two years since the launch of the JEP: challenges and progress. Despite the obstacles it faced since its launch, the Special Jurisdiction for Peace has managed to solve most of the conflicts of competences with other State entities and to improve its public image. In its two years of existence, it has opened seven cases on serious violations of Human Rights, committed both by the former guerrilla and State security forces, in the context of the armed conflict. The Special Jurisdiction also improved its internal decision-making processes, making them faster and more efficient. Whereas it took a year to expel “el Paísá” from the JEP, the decision was made in only four months with respect to the rearming former combatants, “Iván Márquez”, “Jesús Santrich” and Romaña (among others). Finally, the JEP is making significant progress toward repairing victims and revealing the truth about what occurred during the armed conflict.³

Government reiterates call on Cuba to extradite ELN top leader. The High Commissioner for Peace, Miguel Ceballos, reiterated his call for the extradition of Nicolás Rodríguez Bautista, alias “Gabino”, ELN’s (National Liberation Army) top leader. “Gabino” is being accused of aggravated abduction by a Judge in Antioquia who has requested his appearance before the Court. The leadership of the ELN remains in Cuba following the rupture of the Peace talks, one year ago, after the ELN was found responsible for the planning and execution of a terrorist attack against the Police Academy in Bogotá on 17 January 2019.⁴ During the III Hemispheric Ministerial Conference on the Fight Against Terrorism, participant countries, including the United States, Canada and Argentina, signed a common statement which warns that the ELN is “a threat to the stability of the region, as well as for international peace and security”. They expressed their concern about “[Venezuela’s] institutional weakness [...], which permits the ELN to perpetrate terrorist and illegal activities in the region”.⁵

Phone-tapping: a never-ending practice. Despite numerous denunciations, resignations, dismissals, investigations and legal reforms, phone-tapping and surveillance of journalists, judges and opposition members remain common practices in Colombia. As a result, the freedom of expression is being violated in the name of national security. The new espionage scandal revealed by the Semana newspaper on 11 January 2020, the gravest in a decade, involves rogue officers in the military who have allegedly been working with conservative President Ivan Duque’s party to spy on several civilian targets. The Special Rapporteur’s Office for Freedom of Expression of the Inter-American Commission on Human Rights expressed its concern and severely condemned these acts.⁶