



Political Violence and the Nascent Peace Process in Colombia





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Foreword

DPI aims to foster an environment in which different parties share information, ideas, knowledge and concerns connected to the development of democratic solutions and outcomes. Our work supports the development of a pluralistic political arena capable of generating consensus and ownership over work on key issues surrounding democratic solutions at political and local levels.

We focus on providing expertise and practical frameworks to encourage stronger public debates and involvement in promoting peace and democracy building internationally. Within this context DPI aims to contribute to the establishment of a structured public dialogue on peace and democratic advancement, as well as to create new and widen existing platforms for discussions on peace and democracy building. In order to achieve this we seek to encourage an environment of inclusive, frank, structured discussions whereby different parties are in the position to openly share knowledge, concerns and suggestions for democracy building and strengthening across multiple levels.

DPI's objective throughout this process is to identify common priorities and develop innovative approaches to participate in and influence the process of finding democratic solutions. DPI also aims to support and strengthen collaboration between academics, civil society and policy-makers through its projects and output. Comparative studies of relevant situations are seen as an effective tool for ensuring that the mistakes of others are not repeated or

perpetuated. Therefore we see comparative analysis of models of peace and democracy building to be central to the achievement of our aims and objectives.

A number of key issues need to be tackled in Colombia if the country's nascent peace process is to be fruitful. This paper examines the factors that need to be addressed effectively, if the prospects of lasting conflict resolution are to be enhanced. With thanks to Dr Edel Hughes,¹ the editor of this paper, and Roman Drypen for assisting with the research of this paper.

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Introduction

In December 2012 a Gallup poll confirmed that support amongst Colombians for the current peace talks is pervasive.² The 71 per cent of Colombians backing the process give President Santos a clear mandate; yet only 43 per cent believed that an agreement would actually be reached, whereas 54 per cent stated they were pessimistic and given the long history of political violence in Colombia, there is good reason for such sentiments. Another cause for concern is the fact that the current attempt to negotiate a solution occurs whilst the conflict is still on-going. Although transitional justice models vary, they are generally seen to occur after the cessation of a conflict or the fall of an authoritarian regime. While this is not to say that the beginnings of peace cannot spring out of continuing violence, the Colombian process exhibits a ‘terrible logic’ where parties involved in the process believe that an increase in armed action strengthens their position in current and future negotiations.³

Nonetheless, the high level of support for the current process reveals a slight sense of optimism that a negotiated solution to a conflict spanning more than 40 years can in fact be found. This paper aims to provide the reader with the necessary background information to develop a basic understanding of the historical dimensions and

2 “Popularidad presidente de Colombia baja, se mantiene apoyo a negociación paz.” Reuters, 19 December 2012. <http://lta.reuters.com/article/domesticNews/idLTAS-IE91P00D20130226>

3 VERGARA, Juan Carlos Garzón. “Colombia’s peace process: déjà vu in a polarized country.” Project Syndicate. 2 February 2013. <http://www.project-syndicate.org/blog/colombia-s-peace-process--deja-vu-in-a-polarized-country-by-juan-carlos-garz-n-vergara>

current state of affairs by outlining Colombia's political structures and discussing the key actors in the current conflict.

When considering the prospects of the current peace process, it is worth bearing in mind the four factors identified by Heinz in 1989, which continue to be of relevance to this day. First, he noted that although Colombia is considered an open society and its media is not threatened by censorship, the quantity of information available does not provide an entirely accurate overview of events. Information can often be confusing, contradictory, and manipulated for political reasons, and it is risky for journalists to report on issues such as guerrillas, crime, and drugs. Second, the political elite in Colombia, which is made up of politicians, leading businessmen, the Catholic Church, and the military, is 'extremely closed to the outside world.' Third, despite the fact that Colombia is officially a democracy, the armed forces and their leadership play an extraordinary and sometimes dominant role in security-related questions and the continued presence of guerrilla warfare has affected civilian-military relations. Thus, the fiction of a purely civilian government, 'which is civilian only in formal terms, clouds important issues' when dealing with the peace process. Some actors who employ violence for political or other reasons are closely related, which includes combinations involving the civilian government, the armed forces, right-wing paramilitary groups, guerrilla organisations, criminal gangs, and drug-related armed bands. Consequently, it is often difficult to identify which groups are responsible for which assaults, abductions, and assassinations.⁴

4 HEINZ, Wolfgang S. (1989) 'Guerrillas, Political Violence, and the Peace Process in

Yet, it is widely considered common knowledge that the current government shows a greater commitment to human rights than previous administrations, such as the Álvaro Uribe led government immediately preceding the current one, which ‘was racked by scandals over extrajudicial killings by the army, a highly questionable paramilitary demobilization process, and abuses by the national intelligence service’.⁵ The more conciliatory approach adopted by Santos is evidenced by measures such as the passage in 2011 of the Victims and Land Restitution Law, which aims to return millions of acres of land to displaced persons in addition to providing financial compensation to the victims of human rights abuses and of violations of international humanitarian law. It also includes the dissolution of the National Intelligence Service (DAS), which under Uribe’s presidency was found to have illegally spied on the Supreme Court, trade unionists, human rights defenders, journalists, and opposition politicians.⁶ Since the writing of this paper earlier this year, it would appear that peace negotiations are continuing in the absence of a ceasefire. The unilateral ceasefire, which had been declared by FARC rebels when peace talks began in November 2012, ended ostensibly due to the failure of the government to also commit to a truce. The continuation of the two-month ceasefire announced in November 2012 had, according to FARC leadership, been contingent on the government also calling a truce; a possibility ruled out by the government on the basis that

Colombia’ in: Vol. 24/3 Latin American Research Review 249-258, 250.

5 “World Report 2012: Colombia” Human Rights Watch. Available at <http://www.hrw.org/world-report-2012/colombia>, accessed 4 March 2013.

6 “World Report 2012: Colombia” Human Rights Watch. Available at <http://www.hrw.org/world-report-2012/colombia>, accessed 4 March 2013.

a bilateral truce would present the rebels with the opportunity to re-arm.⁷ The intervening period has been punctuated by reported series of kidnappings across Colombia, as well as attacks by guerrillas against the oil and mining sectors, and most notably the bombing by FARC rebels of the Cano Limon-Coveñas oil pipeline in the Norte de Santander province in February.⁸ Even though it may seem paradoxical to some, negotiating peace settlements in the midst of continuing violence is not unusual in the context of conflict resolution. As Darby notes, “a peace process is rarely a predictable sequence from violence to settlement.”⁹

In the Colombian context the decision to continue negotiations despite the ending of the FARC ceasefire received public backing on April 9th 2013, when tens of thousands of people marched in support of the peace talks. President Santos hailed the rally in Bogotá as the nation “expressing its rejection of violence; violence that has caused so many wounds and so much pain”.¹⁰ Rallies in support of the peace talks also took place in several other cities, including Cali and Santander, and were led by the ‘Patriotic March’; a grassroots social movement that campaigns for peace and social justice, joined by organisations representing rural peasants, indigenous populations and organised labour, as well as the mayor of Bogotá and the leader of the Colombian

7 “Colombia FARC rebels end unilateral ceasefire.” *BBC News*. 20 January 2013. <http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/world-latin-america-21111854>. Accessed 22 April 2013.

8 “No military or verbal truce for FARC rebels, Colombia says.” *Reuters*. 23 February 2013. <http://www.reuters.com/article/2013/02/23/colombia-rebels-idUSL1N0B-N1MR20130223>. Accessed 22 April 2013.

9 DARBY, John. *The Effects of Violence on Peace Processes*. Washington D.C.:United States Institute of Peace, 2001: 5.

10 BOLTON, Peter and Jonathan Watts. “Colombia Peace Marches Draw Thousands.” *The Guardian*, 10 April 2013.

House of Representatives.¹¹ It would thus appear that support for the negotiations amongst the Colombian public remains high, despite what has been described by Santos as attempts to thwart the process. In a thinly veiled reference to former President Uribe, who has been scathing in his opposition to the process, Santos has appealed to prudence: “To the enemies of peace I say: in place of poisoning the process, in place of spreading lies - like saying there would be peace with impunity when we haven't even discussed the issue - be prudent.”¹² Despite obstacles such as the ending of the FARC ceasefire, negotiations continue and reports emerged in April suggesting that an agreement in the contentious area of land reform was close, with Ivan Marquez, the head of FARC's negotiating team reportedly having stated that the peace process is “irreversible”.¹³

The renewed commitment to negotiations comes at a time when the peace process has also come under scrutiny at the United Nations, as Colombia came before the Human Rights Council on 23 April 2013 in the second cycle of the Universal Periodic Review process. The Council's preparatory report stressed the importance of “taking account of international human rights and humanitarian law standards, and ensuring the participation of civil society in the process”.¹⁴

11 BOLTON, Peter and Jonathan Watts. “Colombia Peace Marches Draw Thousands.” *The Guardian*, 10 April 2013.

12 MURPHY, Helen. “Colombia's president says enemies poisoning peace process.” 8 April 2013.

13 “Colombian rebels, government, restart peace talks in Cuba aimed at ending decades of conflict.” *Fox News*. 23 April 2013. <http://www.foxnews.com/world/2013/04/23/colombian-rebels-government-restart-peace-talks-in-cuba-aimed-at-ending-decades/>

14 High Commissioner for Human Rights. “Colombia.” 2013. *Human Rights Council*:

Current Government and Political History

The system of government in Colombia is based on the framework of a presidential representative democratic republic, comprising a multi-party system, in which the President of Colombia is both head of state and head of government. Colombia is a Republic with an executive branch that dominates government structure, which since 7 August 2010 has been led by President Juan Manuel Santos Calderon.

The Cabinet is appointed by the President, who in turn is elected by popular vote every four years, with the next election due to be held in May 2014. The Legislative branch comprises the Bicameral Congress (Congreso), which consists of the Senate (Senado) with 102 seats and whose members are elected by popular vote to four-year terms, and the Chamber of Representatives (Camara de Representantes) with 166 seats whose members are elected by popular vote to four-year terms as well.

The Judicial branch consists of four roughly equal supreme judicial organs; the Supreme Court of Justice, Council of State, Constitutional Court, and the Superior Judicial Council. Colombia has seven major political parties, and numerous smaller movements.

1886 Colombian Constitution

Depending on the view adopted, Colombia has had between six and ten constitutions. As Cordeiro notes, there were ‘several constitutions for different parts of the country’ between 1810 and 1830.¹⁵ The constitution of 1886, however, was undoubtedly a ‘landmark document’ that, despite eight major reforms, was valid for more than a century and remained in place until 1991.¹⁶

The 1886 Constitution was the result of an ideological split, which originated in 1810 and grew in significance with the establishment of the Liberal Party Partido Liberal, (PL) and the Conservative Party Partido Conservador, (PC). These two parties have not only continued to shape the political framework of Colombia but are also recognised as having contributed to the root causes of the conflict that has arisen.

The Constitution of 1886¹⁷ established not only the Catholic religion and the Spanish language as the axes of the Colombian nation, but restored order by unifying the country which had been weakened by war. The Constitution laid the foundation for an economically emerging, politically centralised but administratively decentralised state that provided the President with strong executive powers. Although the Constitution recognised the rights

15 CORDEIRO, Jose Luis. “Constitutions Around The World: A View From Latin America.” Institute of Developing Economics Discussion Paper No. 164 (2008): 12.

16 CORDEIRO, Jose Luis. “Constitutions Around The World: A View From Latin America.” Institute of Developing Economics Discussion Paper No. 164 (2008): 12.

17 “Constitutional History of Colombia.” Constitution Net. <http://www.constitution-net.org/country/constitutional-history-colombia> Accessed 31 October 2012.

and freedoms of the individual, in practice they were limited and marginalised.¹⁸

In fact, the electorate had no role in the constitutional process, not even indirectly through representation in the local legislatures,¹⁹ as the municipal councils represented the President's will.²⁰

Political Division around the Constitution

The Liberal Party was anti-colonial in its ideology, wanting to transform Colombia into a modern nation.²¹ It gathered support from merchants, manufacturers, small landowners and the farming class. Together they sought to modernise Colombia through the introduction of free trade and a liberalisation of the state monopolies on crops. Throughout its history, the Liberal Party's underlying aims have been to dilute executive powers; separate the church and state; ensure the freedom of the press, education, religion, and business; and eliminate the death penalty.²²

18 BONILLA, D. "Liberalism and Property in Colombia: Property as a Right and Property as a Social Function," *Fordham Law Review* (2011): 1138

19 BANKS, W.C. and Alvarez, E. "The New Colombian Constitution: Democratic Victory or Popular Surrender?" *The University of Miami Inter-American Law Review* (Fall 1991): 39-92

20 RESTREPO, Carlos E. *Orientación Republicana* 110 (1972), quoted in 1 Diego Uribe, *Constituciones de Colombia* 182 (1977)

21 "Colombia-Consolidation of Political Divisions." *Monga Bay*. December 1998. http://www.mongabay.com/history/colombia/colombia-consolidation_of_political_divisions.html Accessed 30 October 2012.

22 *Colombia-Consolidation of Political Divisions.* *Monga Bay*. December 1998. http://www.mongabay.com/history/colombia/colombia-consolidation_of_political_divisions.html Accessed 30 October 2012.

In stark contrast, the Conservative Party aimed to maintain the old Spanish colonial ways and the powerful influence and status of the Roman Catholic Church by means of a totalitarian and authoritarian leadership. They stressed the importance and benefits derived from the colonial institutions and continued to support a system of slavery. Evidently, the two parties were diametrically opposed and constantly challenged one another. By expressing fundamentally opposing political and social ideologies, both drew their support from a widely divergent political spectrum.²³

Features of the Constitutional Reforms – The Frente Nacional (National Front)

From 1958 onwards, the two political parties alternated every four years. This period of dividing, or sharing, power became known as the Frente Nacional (National Front) and brought an end to the long running conflict between factions of the ruling elite – particularly the period of civil war prior between 1946/1948 and the late 1950s/early 1960s, known as ‘La Violencia’, in which an estimated 200,000 people lost their lives. However, the new government still had to contend with the armed agricultural workers²⁴ and indeed it has been suggested that political violence, and specifically guerrilla, warfare are enduring features in Colombian history.²⁵

23 “History of Colombia.” Area Handbook of the US Library of Congress. <http://motherearthtravel.com/history/colombia/history-5.htm> Accessed 31 October 2012

24 LEECH, Garry. “Fifty Years of Violence.” Colombia Journal. May 1999.

25 ESQUIROL, Jorge L. “Can International Law Help: An Analysis of the Colombian Peace Process.” Connecticut Journal of International Law (2000-2001): 23-93, 26.

The National Front was the first attempt, by the two political parties, to resolve their differences and to try to work together to create peace and strong governance. The time of the National Front between 1958 and 1974 was a productive period, witnessing less conflict and distrust between the parties and their different factions, which had previously contributed to both, the violence and the collapse of the democratic system. Nevertheless, the need to secure two-party support for any policy or action was not without its difficulties, most notably resulting in a stalemate or inaction in governmental processes, voter apathy, and the exacerbation of factionalism within the two parties. Finding consensus remained difficult on a range of issues during the National Front administrations.²⁶

The constitutional reforms introduced in December 1968 were initially perceived to dramatically increase the effectiveness of the government. They abolished the required two-third majority for Congress to pass major bills and gave greater authority to the executive with regards to economic decision making. However, the 1974 presidential election brought an end to the National Front alliance as Liberal and Conservative candidates once again ran against each other. Although sixteen years of National Front rule had reduced the amount of killings, it had ultimately failed to adequately address the agrarian issue and a dramatic increase in poverty rates.²⁷ It was in fact anticipated, by some commentators at least, that political violence would increase upon the expiration of the National Front arrangement: ‘Given the experience of Colombia’s

26 “History of Colombia.” Area Handbook of the US Library of Congress. <http://motherearthtravel.com/history/colombia/history-5.htm> Accessed 31 October 2012

27 LEECH, Garry. “Fifty Years of Violence.” *Colombia Journal*. May 1999.

competitive clientelist, two-party system, the re-emergence of violence appears possible. What is impossible to anticipate is whether the violence will be perceived as being 'traditional' - pitting Liberals and Conservatives against each other - or 'revolutionary' - pitting the working class against the landowners and industrialists. If the radical Marxists manage to reshape the profile of Colombia's violence, revolutionary insurgency may become a reality.²⁸

Opposition to the National Front

While La Violencia was dying out in the mid-1960s, guerrilla activity was on the rise. Spurred on by the Cuban Revolution, disenchanted students formed the National Liberation Army Ejército de Liberación Nacional (ELN) in 1964. In the same year, the Revolutionary Armed Forces of Colombia Fuerzas Armadas Revolucionarias de Colombia, (FARC) was established as the military wing of the Colombian Communist Party (PCC).²⁹

1967 furthermore saw the formation of a new guerrilla group, the Popular Liberation Army Ejército Popular de Liberación, (EPL), formed as an offshoot of the Communist Party of Colombia (Marxist-Leninist) Partido Comunista de Colombia – Marxista Leninista, (PCC, ML). In response to sporadic violent incidents by these groups the government repeatedly called on their emergency powers to maintain control.³⁰

28 SCHMIDT, Steffen W. "La Violencia Revisited: The Clientelist Bases of Political Violence in Colombia." *Journal of Latin American Studies* (1974): 97-111, 110.

29 "Opposition to the National Front." *Country Studies*. <http://www.country-studies.com/colombia/opposition-to-the-national-front.html> Accessed 7 November 2012

30 "Opposition to the National Front." *Country Studies*. <http://www.country-studies.com/colombia/opposition-to-the-national-front.html>

1991 Constitution and Colombian Governance

After a long period of debate and political unrest, a new Constitution was adopted on July 4th, 1991.³¹ As the table below highlights, the President maintained the majority of his powers, even though the possibility of bypassing congressional discussion through the use of special powers was severely curtailed. At the same time Congress became increasingly involved in policy discussion and enhanced its profile in the policy-making process by suggesting and introducing changes as it saw fit.

Table: Constitutional Presidential Powers in Colombia³²

	National Front and transition (1958-1980s)	After the 1991 Constitution (1991-2004)
Proactive powers	High decree powers, urgency petition, ex-post judicial review, areas of exclusive introduction of legislation (from 1968), declaration of unrestricted state of siege and state of economic emergency.	Restricted decree powers with ex-ante judicial review, call for joint permanent committees along with urgency petition. Declaration of state of siege for periods of 90 days, for a maximum of 180 days, subject to approval by the Constitutional Court.

com/colombia/opposition-to-the-national-front.html Accessed 7 November 2012

31 CARDENAS, M., Junguito, R., and Pachón, M. "Political Institutions and Policy Outcomes in Colombia: The Effects of the 1991 Constitution." Inter-American Development Bank (2006): 11.

32 Registraduría Nacional del Estado Civil. (Year?). 'Revista Semana'. Congreso Visible. Accessible at: www.senado.gov.co. Accessed 23 May 2013.

Integrative powers	Appointment powers in the governorships, various autonomous agencies, cabinet (highly centralized).	Appointment of the cabinet, autonomous agencies (highly decentralized).
Reactive powers	Required supermajority to override in economic bills (2/3 of the members of each House).	Required majority to override: ½ of the members of the House.
Partisan powers	Relatively low due to consociational arrangement and electoral rules (quasi-SNTV). Majority of 2/3 required in Congress (until 1974).	Extremely low: No nomination power, electoral rules. Non-concurrent elections: congressional elections first, majority run-off system.

The Conflict

In response to the political and social structure within Colombia marred with often violent oppression and repression throughout the 19th and 20th century, many agricultural workers moved into increasingly more remote areas to work the land in the 1960s. Spurred on by the new political ideology spread through the successful revolutions in Russia, China, and Cuba, a minority of Colombians sought to overthrow the government and bring about social and political change in Colombia from their bases in rural, and often very remote locations within Colombia's hinterland. These areas began to be recognised as 'independent republics', where the workers were trying to free themselves from a national

government they distrusted due to ‘personal experience with social and economic partisanship and their discovery of the double value system upheld by the ruling classes.’³³ ‘In defining these republics as gangs of communist bandits, the government had an excuse to launch military attacks against them, condemn them politically, and blockade them economically [...] The only possible outcome was war. One by one the republics fell to the army, and once they were under government control the land became concentrated in the hands of the large landowners.’³⁴ Many fled into the deep Amazon jungle, creating self-defence groups or units in various regions of the country. Their aim was to fight the army on several fronts simultaneously under a central command structure; in taking direct action they sought to challenge the government and regain their individual rights and freedoms.

Armed Conflict

For the past nearly 60 years there has been an ongoing asymmetric low-intensity armed conflict in Colombia fought between the Colombian government and peasant guerrillas; groups such as the Revolutionary Armed Forces of Colombia (FARC) or the National Liberation Army (ELN).

33 MOLANO, Alfredo. “Violence and Land Colonization,” in *Violence in Colombia: The Contemporary Crisis in Historical Perspective*, Eds. Charles Bergquist, Ricardo Penaranda and Gonzalo Sanchez: 199. Wilmington: Scholarly Resources, 1992.

34 PIZZARO, Eduardo. “Revolutionary Guerrilla Groups in Colombia,” *Violence in Colombia: The Contemporary Crisis in Historical Perspective*, Eds. Charles Bergquist, Ricardo Penaranda and Gonzalo Sanchez: 206-207. Wilmington: Scholarly Resources, 1992.

The FARC and other armed movements claim to be fighting for the rights of the poor in Colombia, protecting them from government violence with the aim of providing social justice through socialism.³⁵ The Colombian government claims to be fighting for order and stability, by seeking to protect the rights and interests of its citizens. The paramilitary groups, such as the United Self-Defence Forces of Colombia (AUC), claim to be reacting to perceived threats by guerrilla movements.³⁶ Both guerrilla and paramilitary groups have been accused of engaging in drug trafficking and terrorism. All of the parties engaged in the conflict have been criticised for numerous human rights violations, which has witnessed over 250,000³⁷ victims and the additional displacement of millions. Human Rights Watch noted in 2012 that the FARC and the ELN continue to commit serious abuses against civilians, including killings, threats, forced displacement and the recruitment and use of child soldiers. Abuses by the military on the other hand include violence against trade union activists, human rights defenders and sexual violence, all of which continue to be perpetrated with impunity.³⁸

35 "FARC-EP confirma muerte de Marulanda a través de un comunicado." *Rebelion.org*. 26 May 2008.

36 "War on Drugs and Human Rights in Colombia." *Colombia War*. <http://www.icdc.com/~paulwolf/colombia/counterinsurgency.htm>.

37 SEQUERA, Vivian. "No easy road to peace in Colombia." *Bloomberg Business Week*. 26 July 2012.

38 "World Report 2012: Colombia" *Human Rights Watch*. Available at <http://www.hrw.org/world-report-2012/colombia>, accessed 4 March 2013.

Stakeholders in the Conflict

The table below highlights the figures central to the current conflict.

<p>Social Party of National Unity, <i>Uribism</i></p>	<p>Liberal conservative. Attempts to unite various parliamentary supporters of Álvaro Uribe, the <i>Uribistas</i>, in one political party. Currently Colombia's largest political party.</p>
<p>Colombian Conservative Party</p>	<p>Traditional political party. Formally established in 1849 by Mariano Ospina Rodríguez and José Eusebio Caro.</p>
<p>Colombian Liberal Party, Social democracy</p>	<p>Centre-left party in Colombia that adheres to social democracy and social liberalism.</p>
<p>ELN</p>	<p>ELN, which operates mainly in north-eastern Colombia, is a revolutionary guerrilla army which is estimated to have between 2,200 and 3,000 members, which mark a significant reduction in military capability since the late 1990s. Competition with the FARC, and more aggressive government security forces all contribute to the ELN's weakening. The FARC and ELN cooperate in some parts of the country, but armed clashes have occurred between the two groups in other areas.</p>
<p>FARC</p>	<p>The FARC has its original ties with agricultural workers and the Colombian Communist Party.¹ See Appendix 1 for further details on its history and activities.</p>

<p>International Community²</p>	<p>The Colombian conflict is seen as a problem regionally and globally. However Colombia has been reluctant to accept the ‘international community’ as an actor in the solution to the armed conflict; first proposed by the National Conciliation Commission (CCN) in 1995. Only recently has there been greater recognition of the growing interdependence of nations and an acceptance that, in addition to serious internal efforts, active collaboration with international organisations, friendly governments and NGOs is required in order to achieve peace.</p>
<p>International Commission of the Red Cross (ICRC)</p>	<p>In the 1990s the ICRC played an important role in promoting international humanitarian standards at this time. With the government’s approval, the CCN and the ICRC initiatives led to the first application of International Humanitarian Law (IHL) in Colombia, resulting in the release of 72 soldiers and Navy personnel held by the FARC.</p>
<p>Group of Friends</p>	<p>The Group of Friends was created following an agreement between the government and the FARC. It comprised 26 friendly nations and the Special Delegates of the UN Secretary General and the European Commission. It set up a commission, as a neutral observer, but at key moments it could function as a facilitator and even mediator, such as in discussions leading to the two last extensions of the demilitarised zone.</p>

<p>USA</p>	<p>'Plan Colombia' refers to US legislation passed with the aim of tackling the drug problem and guerrilla warfare in Colombia. It started in 1999 with a six-year plan, with support from both sides. However, to some degree the objectives of Colombia and the United States differ, although there is a significant overlap of goals. The official U.S. objective³ is to prevent the flow of illegal drugs into the United States, as well as to help Colombia promote peace and economic development in order to contribute to regional security in the Andes. On the other hand Colombia promote peace, encourage economic development, increase security, and end drug trafficking. Yet, such attempts have been severely undermined by additional US foreign policy initiatives, such as the signing of a FTA agreement with Mexico, which effectively opened up the border to a large degree, thus facilitating and decreasing the risk for cross-border drug trafficking.⁴</p>
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Colombia's Peace Processes

Key Historical Peace Processes: A Timeline

- August 1, 1982 - ELN Begin talks with the Betancur Administration
- March 28, 1984 - The FARC agree on ceasefire, forming a political party
- June 3, 1991 - Gaviria administration, FARC begin peace talks
- March 13, 1992 - Peace talks between Gaviria and the FARC fail

- November 8, 1995 - ELN begins talks with German mediator
- January 7, 1999 - Pastrana and the FARC begin peace talks
- February 10, 1999 - Colombian government, ELN meet in Venezuela
- February 20, 2002 - Pastrana says peace talks have failed
- November 26, 2002 - Uribe government holds 1st meeting with ELN
- November 15, 2007 - ELN, Chavez, Uribe aide meets in Caracas
- January 5, 2010 - Uribe preparing peace talks

Detailed history of the Peace Talks ³⁹

1984: Betancur's Ceasefire

President Belisario Betancur (1982-1986) was the first to propose a political as opposed to a military solution to the guerrilla problem. In 1984, his government signed a truce agreement with the two largest guerrilla groups at the time (FARC and M19). However, these efforts failed, and the conflict escalated. In fact, the Palace of Justice was occupied in 1985 by the M19, resulting in the death of the majority of the justices of the Supreme Court. In spite of the failure of the peace talks, the left wing created a new political party, Unión Patriótica, with strong links to the FARC, though with very limited electoral success. The experiment ended abruptly because many of its members were killed by paramilitary groups.

³⁹ VEILLETTE, Connie. "Peace and Justice at the Negotiating Table: Colombia Talks Peace with FARC." Congressional Research Service. June 2005. <http://www.fas.org/sgp/crs/row/RL32774.pdf> Accessed 15th November 2012

In 1989, during the Barco Administration, the M19 (and other smaller insurgent groups) finally lay down their arms and entered the political process, with some success.⁴⁰

1991: The Caracas and Tlaxcala Peace Talks

The peace talks resumed in 1991, with meetings in Mexico and Venezuela between the government and the Simón Bolívar Guerrilla Coordinating Group, which at that time consisted of the FARC-EP, the National Liberation Army (ELN) and the Popular Liberation Army (EPL). These lasted one year, but broke down due to the failure to reach agreements and the death of Argelino Durán, a former minister of state who had been kidnapped by the EPL.

1998: The Caguán Peace Talks

During the 1997 presidential election, 10 million Colombians went to the polls and added their own demand for ‘peace, life and liberty.’ The massive vote for peace created an obligation for the presidential candidates of the time. The President-elect, Andrés Pastrana, opened peace talks with the FARC, which were held in the Caguán region of Colombia. To do this, he created a zone of détente covering five municipalities, from which the state withdrew its institutions and security forces. The meetings between the government and members of the FARC’s leadership

40 CARDENAS, M., Junguito, R., and Pachón, M. “Political Institutions and Policy Outcomes in Colombia: The Effects of the 1991 Constitution.” Inter-American Development Bank (2006): 11.

took place there, accompanied by widespread participation from civil society and the international community. The government's negotiating team included representatives from the private sector, the church, and different political parties who focused their efforts on creating a National Table for Dialogue and Negotiation. The negotiators signed a first substantive agreement, which became the first concrete agenda for negotiation.

2002 - Present

After the Caguán talks broke down in 2002, many Colombians lost confidence in a negotiated settlement to the conflict, and for the next 10 years, the state focused increasingly on defeating the FARC militarily, while isolating them politically. President Álvaro Uribe denied the existence of an armed conflict and denounced the guerrillas as terrorists. Likewise, the European Union and the United States government included the FARC on the list of proscribed terrorist organisations in 2001. Meanwhile, state security forces were strengthened, and, since 2002, have reduced the FARC's area of action by dealing it some powerful blows, such as the deaths of various FARC commanders including their leader Alfonso Cano in 2011.

Driving towards peace: ⁴¹

Civil society has used multiple methods to express its rejection of violence and to contribute to peace building. It can be argued that

⁴¹ "Alternatives to war: Colombia's peace processes." Conciliation Resources. 2004. <http://www.c-r.org/accord/colombia> Accessed 15th November 2012.

the principal motivation for social mobilisation in Colombia in the 1990s was the rejection of violence and support for the search for peace. Peace mobilisations have involved the participation of at least 30 million people since 1990.

Public mobilisation for peace has been dependent on the political circumstances and opportunities that have presented themselves, regarding both the growth and degradation of the violence, as well as the peace processes with armed actors. Examples include the large number of massacres and political assassinations carried out by the paramilitaries since 1986/87 resulting in a growing reaction and mobilisation against violence; the weariness of violence which preceded the Citizens' Mandate for Peace; and the phenomenon of kidnapping, particularly 'opportunistic kidnappings', which triggered the mobilisations of 1999.

The events taking place between 1986 and 1992 were notably marked by the processes of negotiation and demobilisation of the 19 April Movement (M19), the Workers' Revolutionary Party, the Popular Liberation Army, and Quintín Lame Armed Movement, and the constitutional reform of 1991, which opened up and encouraged democratic participation in Colombia.

FARC and Government⁴²

There have been three attempts at negotiations between the government and the Revolutionary Armed Forces of Colombia (FARC). The failure of these negotiations, however, has revealed the clash between the radical demands of the FARC and the inflexibility of the sectors controlling the country's economic and political power.

Concerning more recent peace talks between the government and FARC, it is still not quite clear whether the Colombian peace process will be implemented in an effective and productive way. If public opinion is to be taken into account, then the peace talks are unlikely to be concluded swiftly. The government will face the arduous task of simultaneously balancing the interests of civil society, including conflict victims, and their political agenda. An agreement to end the conflict may not be enough, particularly considering that 68 per cent of Colombians are against any kind of official pardon for FARC leaders and members,⁴³ whereas 72 per cent of the population does not want to see former FARC members as potential candidates in any future election.⁴⁴ Furthermore, 78 per cent of the population would like to see the FARC leaders go to jail, even if peace negotiations are affected or suspended.⁴⁵

42 "Alternatives to war: Colombia's peace processes." Conciliation Resources. 2004. <http://www.c-r.org/accord/colombia> Accessed 15th November 2012.

43 "¿Qué piensan los colombianos después de siete años de justicia y paz ?" Centro de Memoria Histórica. September 2012. <http://www.centrodememoriahistorica.gov.co/descargas/informes2012/encuesta.pdf> Accessed 18 October 2012.

44 "QAP Colombia Opina 2012-3 La Gran Encuesta - Medición 5 Especial Proceso de Paz." IPSOS Public Affairs. 10 September 2012. http://m.semana.com/documents/Doc-2331_2012911.pdf Accessed 14th November.

45 "QAP Colombia Opina 2012-3 La Gran Encuesta - Medición 5 Especial Proceso

Several political factions also enter the picture as the compounding variable; Álvaro Uribe is the leader of one such group and a bitter critic of President Santos' government. Uribe does not favour the negotiations, arguing that it is impossible to negotiate with guerrilla groups that have not shown any signs of ending their ongoing war against the Colombian state. It is an argument reinforced by recent terrorist attacks against the civil infrastructure. Uribe is determined to criticise and de-legitimise the atmosphere that Norwegians, as peace brokers, are trying to establish, by suggesting that 23 per cent of the population is against the talks with the FARC, which has the potential to turn into an insurmountable obstacle to achieving peace in the country.⁴⁶

FARC members may find it difficult to reintegrate into civil society, and this is one of the final issues that must be considered. Members may face death threats from the public, as the memories of the violence and atrocities committed against the authorities remain in the public's minds. In order to avoid more violence by upholding the integrity of the peace process, the government will have the responsibility of providing security to former FARC members.⁴⁷

de Paz." IPSOS Public Affairs. 10 September 2012. http://m.semana.com/documents/Doc-2331_2012911.pdf Accessed 14th November.

46 AMAYA, S., and Carrillo, D. "Decades of Bloodshed on the Line as Colombia Opens Peace Talks with FARC (Again)." October 2012. <http://www.coha.org/decades-of-bloodshed-on-the-line-as-colombia-opens-peace-talks-with-FARC-again/> Accessed 15 November 2012.

47 AMAYA, S., and Carrillo, D. "Decades of Bloodshed on the Line as Colombia Opens Peace Talks with FARC (Again)." October 2012. <http://www.coha.org/decades-of-bloodshed-on-the-line-as-colombia-opens-peace-talks-with-FARC-again/> Accessed 15 November 2012.

The success of the peace process is unlikely and certainly not guaranteed if these issues are not handled in the appropriate manner. It is also difficult to reform Colombia's political institutions and their framework without taking into account the complicated social stance. The challenge for the government is to listen to the various demands from both sides. One possibility is that the seemingly well-intentioned goals of the FARC will at last be fulfilled, while Colombians wait for the group to decisively relinquish weapons and to start the process of justice and reconciliation to finally bring peace.⁴⁸ The timeline below highlights the significant milestones in the current efforts at a negotiated peace.

Peace Process Timeline 2012-2013:

January 2012 - Colombian Government and FARC meet. Director of the Colombian government's demobilisation programme and another official of the Colombian Presidency's Social Prosperity office reportedly meet with FARC leaders. Shortly afterward, a second meeting takes place.⁴⁹

February 23 2012 - Representatives of the Colombian government and the FARC secretly begin informal talks, dubbed 'Exploratory Encounters,' in Havana, Cuba.

48 AMAYA, S., and Carrillo, D. "Decades of Bloodshed on the Line as Colombia Opens Peace Talks with FARC (Again)." October 2012. <http://www.coha.org/decades-of-bloodshed-on-the-line-as-colombia-opens-peace-talks-with-FARC-again/> Accessed 15 November 2012.

49 "Así se llegó al acercamiento con las FARC." El Tiempo. September 2012. http://www.eltiempo.com/politica/ARTICULO-WEB-NEW_NOTA_INTERIOR-12186341.html Accessed 15th November 2012.

February 26 2012 - The FARC's leadership announces that it will stop the practice of kidnapping citizens for ransom.

April 2 2012 - The FARC frees 10 soldiers and police whom it had been holding for many years. President Santos says the gesture is 'not enough' and that the guerrillas must also liberate civilians whom they kidnapped for ransom.

June 20 2012 - Colombia's Congress approves a constitutional reform [page 30 of this document] that would facilitate the demobilisation of armed-group members in a future peace process. The 'Peace Framework Law' is controversial because it could result in amnesty for all but those 'maximally responsible' for crimes against humanity.

August 19 2012 - In a speech in Sincelejo, Colombia, former President Álvaro Uribe, a critic of negotiations, accuses President Santos of secretly holding talks with the FARC in Cuba.⁵⁰

August 26 2012 - Meeting in Havana, Colombian government and FARC representatives, along with facilitators from Norway and Cuba, sign a General Agreement for the Termination of the Conflict and Building of a Stable and Long-Lasting Peace.

August 27 2012 - After news of the Havana meetings leaks to the press, President Santos issues a brief statement acknowledging them and promising more information 'in the coming days.'

⁵⁰ "Colombian Congress approves landmark peace talks law." BBC News. June 2012. <http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/world-latin-america-18454007> Accessed 15 November 2012.

Colombia's second-biggest guerrilla group says it is willing to hold unconditional peace talks to end five decades of war, but refuses to commit to ending its kidnapping, bomb attacks and extortion of foreign oil and mining companies before negotiations start.⁵¹

August 28 - 30 2012 - Statement of support from U.S. State Department spokesperson Victoria Nuland.

Statement of support from UN Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon.

Statement of opposition from ex-President Uribe.

September 4 2012 - President Santos announces the start of formal peace talks with the FARC.

September 5 2012 - President Santos introduces his negotiating team: former Vice President Humberto de la Calle; business sector leader Luis Carlos Villegas; former National Police Chief Gen. Óscar Naranjo; former Armed Forces Chief Gen. Jorge Mora; National Security Advisor and newly named Peace Commissioner Sergio Jaramillo; and former Environment Minister Frank Pearl.

FARC representatives say that their negotiating team will be led by Secretariat member Iván Márquez and José Santrich, Márquez's deputy in the FARC's Caribbean Bloc. They also declare their intention to ask for a bilateral cease-fire when talks begin in Oslo on October 8.

51 "Exclusive: Colombia's ELN rebels offer peace talks, refuse ceasefire first." Reuters. August 2012. <http://www.reuters.com/article/2012/08/27/us-colombia-rebels-eln-idUSBRE87Q0VZ20120827> Accessed 15 November 2012.

September 9, 2012 - Former President Uribe expresses his 'concern' that retired Generals Mora and Naranjo, members of the government negotiating team, are 'in a negotiation with terrorism,' and compares negotiation with the FARC to negotiation with Al Qaeda.

In response to the question posed by IPSOS Public Affairs, 'Did you personally approve or disapprove of the President's decision to advance negotiations with the guerrilla movement to seek peace?' 77 per cent of those asked approved.⁵²

September 26, 2012 - President Santos makes the FARC talks a central theme of his speech before the annual UN General Assembly meetings. 'We begin these conversations with moderate optimism,' Santos says, 'but with the absolute conviction that it is an opportunity we cannot pass up to reach a peace.'⁵³

October 4, 2012 - Norwegian Foreign Ministry press release announcing a Colombian government-FARC press conference scheduled for October 17 in Oslo.

October 11, 2012 - At a national gathering of the National Indigenous Organization of Colombia (ONIC) in Bogotá, over 5,000 indigenous people lament the lack of indigenous participation in the FARC talks and issue a peace proposal.

52 "QAP Colombia Opina 2012-3 La Gran Encuesta - Medición 5 Especial Proceso de Paz." IPSOS Public Affairs. 10 September 2012. http://m.semana.com/documents/Doc-2331_2012911.pdf Accessed 14th November.

53 "Statement by Mr. Juan Manuel Santos Calderón, President." General Assembly of the UN. September 2012. <http://gadebate.un.org/67/colombia> Accessed 15th November 2012.

October 15, 2012 - The arrival of government and FARC negotiators to inaugurate their 'Conversations Table' in Oslo, Norway, expected for today, is postponed until the 17th for logistical reasons. These reportedly include a last-minute FARC decision to include a Dutch citizen who joined the guerrillas, Tanja Nijmeijer,⁵⁴ among its negotiating team.⁵⁵

October 18, 2012 - The Colombian government and the FARC hold a joint press conference in Hurdal, Norway.

October 22, 2012 - A statement by European Union High Representative Catherine Ashton following the visit to Brussels of Colombian High Commissioner for Peace Sergio Jaramillo: 'The European Union has consistently affirmed its full support to the Colombian Government'.⁵⁶

November 5, 2012 - Indication of support from the Brazilian government.

November 6, 2012 - Colombian government and FARC members meet in Havana under conditions of tight secrecy.

54 Tanja Nijmeijer is a Dutch citizen and former English teacher who became a member of the FARC in 2002. She has been one of the group's leading public figures and part of the negotiating team involved in the on-going peace talks.

55 "Colombia, FARC delay arrival for peace talks in Norway." Reuters. October 2012. <http://www.reuters.com/article/2012/10/15/us-colombia-FARC-talks-idUSBRE89E0ED20121015> Accessed 15 November 2012.

56 "EU-UN Statement by the spokesperson of the EU HR Ashton following the visit to Brussels of Colombian High Commissioner for Peace Jaramillo." 22 October 2012. http://www.eu-un.europa.eu/articles/en/article_12745_en.htm Accessed 14 November 2012.

January 20, 2013 – The FARC’s unilateral ceasefire ends.

February 13, 2013 - FARC rebels kill seven soldiers and injure five and an unidentified number of rebels are killed in what is reported as ‘the worst blow against security forces since peace talks began’.⁵⁷

Social Involvement in the Peace Talks⁵⁸

Inclusive public participation led by Colombian society will be vital in the implementation of any peace deals resulting from the current Colombian peace talks. Both parties involved in the peace talks have acknowledged the importance of the participation of society in the peace process. The peace talks focus on putting an end to armed conflict, while the issues of structural change aimed to address the multiple layers of conflict need a broader and more participatory process running parallel to the negotiations.

Women’s organisations have successfully documented the gendered dimension of the conflict and violence against women. They are strongly advocating for their role in any future decision-making process. Their analysis suggests a different approach to the overall goal of eliminating all forms of violence.

Indigenous groups have been disproportionately affected by the armed conflict and have long been protesting against the violence by all involved. Indigenous groups like the Association of Indigenous

57 “FARC rebels kill seven Colombian soldiers in blow to peace process.” The Guardian. 14 February 2013.

58 “Alternatives to war: Colombia’s peace processes.” Conciliation Resources. 2004. <http://www.c-r.org/accord/colombia> Accessed 15th November 2012.

Cabildos of Northern Cauca (ACIN), have a strong organized community that has maintained peaceful mass mobilisations throughout the years.

Rural communities have established ‘peace zones’ to prevent armed groups from conducting war in their territories. They are often part of innovative municipal assemblies that challenge traditional politics and become a reference for stronger and more responsible democratic institutions.

Comparative analysis would suggest a resolution to an intractable conflict such as Colombia’s will only be found through the political process. The relative strength of the government, however, fuelled by the booming economy, can be contrasted with the rather weak position of the FARC. Both the Colombian government and the FARC have expressed optimism that these might be a different form of peace talks. As has been noted, in the Colombian context the crucial question may centre on the nature of the process rather than the nature of the solution.⁵⁹ Colombian President Juan Manuel Santos Calderón wants an agreement within nine months, but the two parties will confront a number of contentious issues in their five-point agenda. It will begin with rural development, then move on to include such topics as the political and legal future of the rebels, a definitive end to the conflict, the problem of drug trafficking and compensation for war victims.⁶⁰

59 CARDENAS, Maria Cristina. “Colombia’s Peace Process: The Continuous Search for Peace” *Florida Journal of International Law* (2002-2003): 274-297.

60 FRANKS, Jeff. “Colombia, FARC rebels seek to end long conflict.” Reuters. 19 November 2012. <http://uk.reuters.com/article/2012/11/19/uk-colombia-rebels-talks-idUKBRE8AI07020121119> Accessed 22nd November 2012

The government wants to end the conflict as a first step to advancing the construction of a stable peace which may encompass the FARC's evolution into a legal political party. FARC rebels announced a unilateral Christmas ceasefire, on the first day of peace talks in Cuba,⁶¹ which ended on 20 January 2013 and by March reports already suggested that the process was being affected by continuing violence.⁶²

61 "Colombian Farc rebels announce Christmas ceasefire." BBC News. 19 November 2012. <http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/world-latin-america-20388418> Accessed 22 November 2012.

62 ARAUJO, Rodrigo Sandoval. "Colombia: Peace Process Hampered by Ongoing Violence." Ground Report, 13 march 2013. <http://www.groundreport.com/Politics/Colombia-Peace-Process-Hampered-by-Ongoing-Violenc/2951907> Accessed 13 March 2013.

Appendix - Fuerzas Armadas Revolucionarias de Colombia (Revolutionary Armed Forces of Colombia – FARC)

FARC

The FARC has its original ties with agricultural workers and is the only one of the Colombian guerrilla movements to do so. It was founded prior to the establishment of the National Front and the Cuban Revolution. The ELN, the EPL and the M19 were all movements led by urban intellectuals and typical of the many Latin American guerrilla groups that evolved in the 1960s, i.e. Cuban-inspired armed reactions to the domestic political, social and economic situation.⁶³

General Overview of the FARC

The FARC was created in 1964 in response to the conflict of the 1950s between liberal and conservative militias. It took on the Colombian Communist Party ideology in order to preserve the Communist-controlled rural areas. In terms of popularity, the FARC is Latin America's oldest, largest, most capable, and best-equipped Marxist insurgency. It is governed by a general secretariat led by long-time leader Manuel Marulanda with six more leaders including senior military commander Jorge Briceno. The FARC is controlled by military means and consists of a number of units that operate in key urban areas such as Bogota.

63 LEECH, Garry. "Fifty Years of Violence." Colombia Journal. May 1999.

In terms of its composition and strength the FARC has approximately 9,000 to 12,000 armed combatants and several thousand more supporters, mostly in rural areas. It also has external support. Cuba, for example, provides some medical care and political consultation to the FARC. A trial is currently underway in Bogota to determine whether three members of the Irish Republican Army, arrested in Colombia in 2001 upon exiting the FARC-controlled demilitarised zone, provided advanced explosives training to the FARC. The FARC and the Colombian National Liberation Army (ELN) often use the border area for cross border incursions and Venezuelan territory near the border as a safe haven.⁶⁴

Ideology

The FARC grew out of the Colombian Communist Party of the 1960s and was founded as a Communist organisation. The FARC leaned towards the Marxist strain of Communism and received a limited amount of funding from the Soviet Union during the Cold War. The FARC's stated goal has been to overthrow the current democratic government of Colombia and replace it with a Communist government.⁶⁵

64 PIKE, J., (2008) Revolutionary Armed Forces of Colombia Fuerzas Armadas Revolucionarias de Colombia - FARC Accessed 9th November 2012 <http://www.fas.org/irp/world/para/FARC.htm>

65 "Terrorist Organization Profile: Revolutionary Armed Forces of Colombia (FARC)." National Consortium for the Study of Terrorism and Responses to Terrorism. http://www.start.umd.edu/start/data_collections/tops/terrorist_organization_profile.asp?id=96 Accessed 7 November 2012.

While the FARC is undoubtedly the largest and oldest of the Communist insurgent groups of Colombia, it is not necessarily the most dogmatic in its devotion to the Marxist ideology. In fact, the FARC's alleged growing hand in cocaine trafficking, and even production, coupled with its sporadic peace talks with the Colombian government, indicate that the ideological underpinning of the FARC is at best, ill-defined. However, a significant portion of the FARC's leadership, including the FARC chief Manuel Marulanda, have been part of the organisation since its foundation and are presumably still dedicated to its Marxist ideology. The FARC continues to wage a war of words devoted to Marxist principles, despite the fact that many of its battles are allegedly fought with the less idealistic motive of controlling the illegal drug industry.⁶⁶

Current Goals

Today, the FARC's primary goal is territorial control within Colombia and it has several sources for the money it needs to pursue this goal. The majority of its funding comes from the cocaine trade, but the FARC also pursues kidnapping, extortion, and hijacking. In addition to these operations, the FARC also attacks Colombian political and military installations. Its activities frequently disrupt economic activity in Colombia, particularly

66 "Terrorist Organization Profile: Revolutionary Armed Forces of Colombia (FARC)." National Consortium for the Study of Terrorism and Responses to Terrorism. http://www.start.umd.edu/start/data_collections/tops/terrorist_organization_profile.asp?id=96 Accessed 7 November 2012.

when conflicts with Colombia's rightist paramilitary groups break out. Ordinary Colombian citizens are often caught in the middle of this violent and bloody struggle.

For four decades the FARC has struggled to overthrow the Colombian government. However, their success seems highly improbable unless the FARC dramatically shifts its approach and increases its strength. This is a key point in the current Peace Process of October 2012. Furthermore, the FARC's recent participation in peace talks demonstrates a certain willingness to negotiate with its ideological enemies. The FARC's ideological commitment may be in doubt, but its immediate goals are not. The FARC aims to maintain its significant financial and territorial power.⁶⁷

Strength and Extent of Operations

According to the Colombian government, the group had roughly 16000 members in 2001. The head of the U.S. Southern Command testified in March 2008 that the FARC has now been reduced to about 9000 fighters (PDF). It operates in roughly one-third of the country, mostly in the jungles of the south and east. In 1999, during peace negotiations with the group, then-President Andres Pastrana ceded control of a 42,000-square-mile area (roughly the size of Switzerland) to the FARC. After three years of fruitless negotiations and a series of high-profile terrorist acts, Pastrana

⁶⁷ "Terrorist Organization Profile: Revolutionary Armed Forces of Colombia (FARC)." National Consortium for the Study of Terrorism and Responses to Terrorism. http://www.start.umd.edu/start/data_collections/tops/terrorist_organization_profile.asp?id=96 Accessed 7 November 2012.

ended peace talks in February 2002 and ordered Colombian forces to start retaking the FARC-controlled zone. When Uribe took office in 2002, he launched an aggressive security campaign against the FARC and ELN, bolstered by U.S. funding from Plan Colombia, a multibillion dollar counter-narcotics aid package. In 2007, members of the FARC's leadership were killed and several of the group's hostages were murdered in suspicious circumstances. In 2008, the chief spokesman in the FARC's secretariat, Raul Reyes, was killed during a Colombian incursion into Ecuador. There seems to be some degree of emergency with regards to the rebellion, according to Adam Isacson on his blog for the Centre for International Policy. The FARC can no longer depend on local populations for support, as many have turned against the group due to its violent methods.⁶⁸

68 HANSON, Stephanie. "FARC, ELN: Colombia's Left-Wing Guerrillas." Council on Foreign Relations. 2009. <http://www.cfr.org/colombia/FARC-eln-colombias-left-wing-guerrillas/p9272> Accessed 14 November 2012.

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Kerim Yildiz is Director of DPI. He is an expert in international human rights law and minority rights, and is the recipient of a number of awards, including from the Lawyers Committee for Human Rights for his services to protect human rights and promote the rule of law in 1996, the Sigrid Rausing Trust's Human Rights award for Leadership in Indigenous and Minority Rights in 2005, and the Gruber Prize for Justice in 2011. Kerim has written extensively on human rights and international law, and his work has been published internationally.

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