

## Colombia Newsletter March 2019

### The Peace Agreement

- Five soldiers were wounded, one kidnapped soldier was murdered, and a police station was attacked in an assault committed by the ELN in Arauca, just a few hours after President Duque arrived in the town. On the violent actions, the Mayor of Arauca said, "*que es posible que sea un rechazo de las Farc a la visita del presidente*".<sup>1</sup>
- President Duque has stated that he wants to reform six of the 159 articles of the JEP. He highlighted three of these that he deems the most pressing. First, he wants to exclude the article regarding sexual crimes against children and adolescents from transitional justice, because there is no ideology that justifies the aggressions against children. Second, he wants to clarify that those that repeat criminal activities after the end of the conflict will lose all benefits. His third point, linked to the second, is that all criminal behaviors that begun before December 1<sup>st</sup>, 2016 and continued to run after that date, will be the jurisdiction of ordinary courts to ensure justice and prevent recidivism.<sup>2</sup>
- Duque visited one of the FARC reintegration camps where he explained his objections to the JEP to a group of ex-guerilla combatants.<sup>3</sup>
- The peace negotiators of the government of former President Juan Manuel Santos and those of the FARC, dozens of academics, civil society groups, and others have asked Congress not

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<sup>1</sup> <https://www.eltiempo.com/politica/gobierno/ataques-del-eln-en-arauca-a-pocas-horas-de-llegada-de-duque-335376>

<sup>2</sup> <https://www.eltiempo.com/politica/proceso-de-paz/los-tres-aspectos-de-la-jep-que-el-gobierno-de-duque-quiere-modificar-336162>

<sup>3</sup> <https://www.eltiempo.com/politica/proceso-de-paz/duque-visitara-a-exfarc-para-explicarles-sus-objeciones-a-ley-de-la-jep-336476>

to process the objections to JEP.<sup>4</sup>

- Protesters gathered for a large demonstration in support of the JEP in Bogotá and in six other cities across the country.<sup>5</sup>
- Being politically active in Colombia remains a high-risk activity. From October 27<sup>th</sup>, 2018 to February 25<sup>th</sup>, 2019, 207 political, social and/or community leaders reported targeted acts of violence in the country.<sup>6</sup>
- The Consultancy for Human Rights and Displacement (Codhes) studied the patterns of violence suffered by women who exercise leadership in Colombia. The report shows that violence against female leaders is worse than against male leaders. The report also demonstrated that there are differences in the aims of violence between men and women. Against men, the objective is their assassination, whereas for women the objective is to punish them in other ways before murdering them. They found that in 66% of murders of female leaders, other abuses, such as sexual violence and torture, take place. Another way that leaders are targeted is through the murders of their relatives. 10% of the violence against leaders in 2018 consisted of attacking their relatives. Codhes is most concerned about the departments of North Cauca, Bajo Cauca Antioquia, Catatumbo (Norte de Santander) and the municipalities of Buenaventura, Cartagena and Santa Marta.<sup>7</sup>
- Individuals from the military struggle to be recognized as victims of the armed conflict.<sup>8</sup>

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<sup>4</sup> <https://www.eltiempo.com/politica/proceso-de-paz/negociadores-de-paz-piden-al-congreso-no-tramitar-las-objeciones-a-jep-338430>

<sup>5</sup> <https://www.eltiempo.com/politica/proceso-de-paz/este-lunes-habran-movilizaciones-en-el-pais-en-respaldo-a-la-jep-338612>

<sup>6</sup> <https://colombia2020.elespectador.com/pais/hacer-politica-en-colombia-sigue-siendo-una-actividad-de-alto-riesgo>

<sup>7</sup> <https://colombia2020.elespectador.com/pais/las-violencias-contra-las-lideresas-son-mas-cruelles-que-contra-los-lideres-codhes>

<sup>8</sup> <https://colombia2020.elespectador.com/verdad/la-lucha-de-los-militares-para-ser-reconocidos-como-victimas>

## Mental Health

- Colombia has the fifth highest rate of disability due to depression in the Americas, according to a report made by the Pan American Health Organization (PAHO). The research indicates that the percentage of disability due to depression is 8.2 percent in Colombia. In the case of disability due to anxiety disorders, Colombia has a figure of 5.3 percent. As for the burden of suicide and self-harm, the country has a percentage of 1.4 percent. Due to schizophrenia, Colombia registers a disability percentage of 1.8 percent. For bipolar disorder, 1.7 percent; alcohol consumption, 1 percent; substance use, 0.9 percent; for disorders of habitual onset in childhood and adolescence, 2.7 percent; dementia, 0.9 percent and epilepsy, 1.3 percent.<sup>9</sup>
- The National Health Superintendent, Fabio Aristizábal Ángel, explained in a meeting that, from his point of view, the resources that the Government spent on health are sufficient. Moreover, they end up being wasted as a result of corruption in the health sector.<sup>10</sup>

## Cauca

- About 20 ex-combatants of the FARC and 20 people from the municipality of Guapi, are generating their own income through the 'Productive Farm' initiative that is being carried out with the purpose of reincorporation of the ex-combatants of the FARC-EP.<sup>11</sup>
- *"Los compromisos que me lleve con el Cauca, los voy a cumplir todos"* said Fabio Aristizábal Ángel, the National Health Superintendent in the presence of municipal Mayors, the municipal health secretaries, hospital managers and managers of the EPS.<sup>12</sup>

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<sup>9</sup> <https://www.eltiempo.com/vida/salud/la-salud-mental-y-su-incidencia-en-la-discapacidad-335318>

<sup>10</sup> <https://www.elespectador.com/noticias/salud/mafias-de-la-salud-arrancan-en-el-primer-nivel-de-atencion-y-terminan-en-el-cuarto-supersalud-articulo-844358>

<sup>11</sup> <http://elnuevoliberal.com/ex-combatientes-de-las-farc-trabajan-proyecto-productivo-en-guapi/>

<sup>12</sup> <http://elnuevoliberal.com/los-compromisos-que-me-lleve-con-el-cauca-los-voy-a-cumplir-todos-superintendente-nacional-de-salud/>

- The governor of Cauca, Óscar Ridrigo Campo Hurtado, asked the President Duque to start a dialogue with the mobilized organizations in Cauca through a letter. *“Actualmente afrontamos el diálogo con organizaciones sociales, campesinas, urbanas y trabajadores de la educación, a través de la «Mesa por la Defensa de los Derechos Humanos, la Vida y el Territorio» y estamos expuestos a otra movilización que dará inicio a partir del próximo 10 de marzo, convocada por las comunidades indígenas a través del Consejo Regional Indígena del Cauca –CRIC-, circunstancia que ha encendido todas las alarmas frente a los traumatismos generados en las protestas anteriores, las cuales, han terminado en vías de hecho, lamentablemente, con graves consecuencias en la dinámica social y económica de toda la región”*, wrote Campo Hurtado to the President.<sup>13</sup>
- Indigenous people in Cauca blocked the Pan-American highway in protest. The protesters demanded that the state complies with an agreement signed in 2014, in which a pledge was made to double funding for projects benefitting the indigenous communities. The government of Iván Duque stated that they do not have the budget to fulfill these commitments.<sup>14</sup>
- The Unit for the Search of Disappeared Persons (UBPD) will start the search of some 126,000 people who disappeared during the conflict or never returned after being kidnapped.<sup>15</sup>

## Meta

- A plane crashed in Meta and left 12 victims.<sup>16</sup>
- More than one ton of explosives were destroyed in the south of Meta. The army said that the explosives belonged to Gentil Duarte, Head of the Dissidents of the FARC.<sup>17</sup>

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<sup>13</sup> <http://elnuevoliberal.com/gobernador-solicita-al-presidente-duque-iniciar-proceso-de-dialogo-con-las-organizaciones-movilizadas-en-el-cauca/>

<sup>14</sup> <https://colombia2020.elespectador.com/pais/las-causas-de-la-inestabilidad-en-el-cauca>

<sup>15</sup> <https://colombiareports.com/colombia-begins-search-for-126000-missing-persons-with-15-million-deficit/>

<sup>16</sup> <https://www.elespectador.com/noticias/nacional/se-estrello-avion-en-el-meta-confirman-por-lo-menos-12-victimas-video-844084>

<sup>17</sup> <https://www.eltiempo.com/colombia/otras-ciudades/destruyen-explosivos-de-disidencias-de-las-farc-332868>

- A school teacher accused of having sexually abused 17 girls from the ages of 11 to 14 years was captured.<sup>18</sup>
- The attorney, Fernando Carrillo, criticizes the Supersalud of Villavicencio for the innumerable irregularities that occurred in the Departmental Hospital of Villavicencio. They are investigating cases of corruption.<sup>19</sup>
- On the 3 of April, victims, ex-combatants, leaders, businessmen and the commissioner of Truth, Alfredo Molano, will talk about the challenges of revealing the truth about the conflict in Meta. According to the Unified Registry of Victims, almost one million incidents have occurred in the departments of Meta, Caquetá, Guaviare, Casanare, Vichada, Vaupés, Guainía and Amazonas in the context of the armed conflict. This means that around 35% of the population are victims of the conflict.<sup>20</sup>

## **Tolima**

- According to Jorge Duque, the suicide rate has increased by 12% per year in Tolima. To tackle the problem of suicide, and the numerous recent cases that have been reported in the first three months of 2019, particularly in Ibagué, the departmental Assembly has called a debate.<sup>21</sup>

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<sup>18</sup> <https://www.eltiempo.com/colombia/otras-ciudades/captura-de-docente-por-actos-abusivos-sexuales-con-ninas-333862>

<sup>19</sup> <https://www.eltiempo.com/colombia/otras-ciudades/investigan-casos-de-corrupcion-en-hospital-de-villavicencio-334750>

<sup>20</sup> <https://colombia2020.elespectador.com/verdad/encuentro-hablemos-de-verdad-en-villavicencio>

<sup>21</sup> <http://www.elnuevodia.com.co/nuevodia/tolima/regional/430197-a-debate-en-la-asamblea-tema-del-suicidio-en-el-tolima>

- The development plan of Tolima has many uncompleted goals. There are 431 goals in total. 280 of these have a compliance higher than 80%, about 114 have a compliance close to 70%, and 37 goals have a compliance below than 40%.<sup>22</sup>
- It was reported that EPS is not tracking patients with suicidal behavior. It was mentioned that an inhabitant of 12 years had tried to take her own life and so far, she has not received psychiatric or pediatric help.<sup>23</sup>
- Teachers of Tolima joined a national protest because of their disagreement with several notional government policies, including the PND, which has consequences for health, education and basic sanitation.<sup>24</sup>
- Indigenous people of Tolima joined the protest that started in Cauca in order to show their discontent with the unfulfilled agreements. One issue that mobilizes the indigenous communities is the disagreement with Duque's objection to the JEP and the deaths of social leaders. "*Eso es algo que nos preocupa mucho a los pueblos indígenas*".<sup>25</sup>

## **Bolívar**

- Social leaders of La Alta Montaña claimed threats on their lives. The *Ejercito* and the police are carrying out investigation and providing security measures.<sup>26</sup>

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<sup>22</sup> <http://www.elnuevodia.com.co/nuevodia/tolima/regional/430297-el-plan-de-desarrollo-del-tolima-queria-con-varias-metas-incumplidas>

<sup>23</sup> <http://www.elnuevodia.com.co/nuevodia/tolima/regional/430519-eps-no-estarian-haciendo-seguimiento-a-pacientes-con-conductas-suicidas>

<sup>24</sup> <http://www.elnuevodia.com.co/nuevodia/tolima/regional/430670-profes-del-tolima-se-unieron-a-protesta-nacional>

<sup>25</sup> <http://www.elnuevodia.com.co/nuevodia/tolima/regional/430950-indigenas-del-tolima-se-unen-a-minga-nacional-de-reclamacion>

<sup>26</sup> <https://www.eluniversal.com.co/regional/bolivar/lideres-de-la-alta-montana-denuncian-amenazas-DI831948>

- In the municipalities of El Carmen de Bolívar, San Jacinto and in the district of Cartagena, ex-combatants of the FARC were given animals and other products as investments in development projects within the framework of the reincorporation process.<sup>27</sup>

## **Putumayo**

- Pedro Oberman Goyes Cortés (AKA *Sinaloa*), a 44-year-old FARC dissident, was murdered. ‘*Sinaloa*’ was an expert of explosives and for almost two years he commanded a gang of 80 men. Consequently, a reward of 500 million pesos was offered by the government for anyone who captured him. He was supposedly killed by his own men.<sup>28</sup>

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<sup>27</sup> <https://www.eluniversal.com.co/regional/bolivar/excombatientes-de-las-farc-en-bolivar-reciben-insumos-para-proyectos-productivos-FF896654>

<sup>28</sup> <https://www.eltiempo.com/justicia/conflicto-y-narcotrafico/en-medio-de-vendetta-fue-asesinado-por-sus-proprios-hombres-alias-sinaloa-340122>