

## Colombia Newsletter May 2019

### The Peace Agreement

- Around 2.000 social leaders and human rights defenders from different regions of the country have installed a humanitarian shelter in Bogotá due to the lack of security from the Government. The defenders came to an agreement on a strategy, an addition to the protection of the Government, that is build on a concept of self-protection and self-care. It's a strategy that already has references and has proven to be effective.<sup>1</sup>
- The European Union launched a campaign to demand the protection of social leader in Colombia. With the hashtag #DefendamosLaVida the ambassador of the agency in Colombia, Patricia Llombart, announced that the hashtag would be used to emphasize with the social leaders and recognize the work of the defenders of the life, the environment and the territory. *"The first words are to express our solidarity from the European Union with France Márquez and all the Afro-descendant leaders of the North of Cauca that last Saturday were gathered in that region and were objects of a brutal attack. Express our firm and resounding rejection of any attack and threat against social leaders and human rights defenders who here in Colombia are building democracy"*, said the ambassador of the European Union in Colombia.<sup>2</sup>
- In less than 48 hours two signatories of the Peace Agreement have been killed. The last event occurred in Tuluá (Valle del Cauca) where Wilson Saavedra, the former commander of the 21st front and Víctor Saavedra Ramos, column of the ex-guerrilla group that operated in the Central Cordillera, was shot. Wilson Saavedra was the first ex-commander of the FARC who got killed after the signing of the Peace Agreement.<sup>3</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> <https://www.elespectador.com/colombia2020/pais/autoproteccion-la-alternativa-de-los-lideres-sociales-en-los-territorios-articulo-857942>

<sup>2</sup> <https://www.elespectador.com/colombia2020/pais/union-europea-lanza-campana-para-exigir-la-proteccion-de-lideres-sociales-articulo-857946>

<sup>3</sup> <https://www.elespectador.com/colombia2020/pais/primer-excomandante-de-las-farc-asesinado-despues-del-proceso-de-paz-articulo-860681>

- The FARC party leader, Rodrigo Londoño, the former paramilitary commander, Luis Eduardo Cifuentes, peace commissioner, Miguel Ceballos, victims, leaders and businessmen met up for a talk about the armed conflict for the first time.<sup>4</sup>

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## **Mental Health**

- 2017 was the year with the highest number of suicides in Colombia. In 2017 there was an increase of 10% compared to 2016. In 2018 2.571 Colombians took their own lives, according to the latest report from the National Institute of Legal Medicine (INML), which was less than in 2017. For every 100 thousand inhabitants of the country five take their lives, according to the report.<sup>5</sup>
- In Colombia anorexia is the most frequent mental illness in consultation. According to epidemiological studies, the prevalence of eating disorders in the country is between 0.2 and 1.5 percent. That is between one or two persons per hundred inhabitants that suffer from an eating disorder such as anorexia and bulimia.<sup>6</sup>
- Juan Pablo Uribe, Minister of Health, announced that personal and violence in the family, suicides and the consumption of psychoactive substances are the main focuses of the National Policy on Mental Health. Uribe installed the National Policy on Mental Health and the Comprehensive Policy for the Prevention and Attention to the Consumption of Psychoactive Substances. He added that the goal is to increase the access of mental health services by 5%; that the beginning in the use of psychoactive substances be delayed 2 years; that the social perception for people with mental disorders grows 30%; that the programs of collective

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<sup>4</sup> <https://www.elespectador.com/colombia2020/justicia/verdad/una-conversacion-inedita-entre-farc-auc-y-gobierno-articulo-862971>

<sup>5</sup> <https://www.eltiempo.com/datos/reclaman-politica-publica-por-aumento-de-suicidios-en-2017-en-colombia-229622>

<sup>6</sup> <https://www.eltiempo.com/vida/salud/la-anorexia-tambien-es-un-tema-que-aqueja-a-los-mayores-de-18-anos-359114>

interventions are implemented in a timely manner and that suicide rates in adolescents and older adults will be reduced.<sup>7</sup>

- The Global Drug Survey published that Colombia is one of the four countries where cocaine is consumed the most. 59.4% answered that they can ask for cocaine and receive it the same day and 29.6% can receive it in less than half an hour at home. Colombia is the country where cocaine arrives the fastest at home, less than 30 minutes, faster than a pizza in almost 30% of the cases. 56.2% of cocaine users in Colombia want to consume less cocaine next year but only 16.2% would seek help to achieve it.<sup>8</sup>

## **Cauca**

- The risk for social leaders persists in Cauca. 47 social leaders from the communities have been assassinated since 2016 in the 17 municipalities that are part of Alto Patía and Norte del Cauca.<sup>9</sup>
- The Agency for Reincorporation and Normalization (ARN) and the SENA signed an agreement to realize training programs for 4.135 ex-combatants of the FARC in order to stabilize their socioeconomic situation. The agreement, which has a validity of five years, allows the ex-combatants to be linked to one of the five educational components: Training for work, employability, strengthening of productive units, certification by evaluation of labor competencies and strengthening institutional.<sup>10</sup>

## **Meta**

- Two soldiers and five civilians were injured due to an explosion of a garbage basket in a sport center in the urban area of La Uribe. The mayor of the municipality, Jaime Pacheco, reported

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<sup>7</sup> <https://www.elespectador.com/noticias/salud/esto-hara-el-ministerio-de-salud-para-mejorar-la-salud-mental-en-colombia-articulo-860970>

<sup>8</sup> <https://www.elespectador.com/noticias/salud/colombia-es-uno-de-los-4-paises-donde-mas-se-consume-cocaina-por-sesion-articulo-861096>

<sup>9</sup> <http://elnuevoliberal.com/en-el-cauca-persiste-el-riesgo-para-lideres-sociales/>

<sup>10</sup> <http://elnuevoliberal.com/gobierno-busca-vincular-4-135-excombatientes-a-programas-de-formacion-del-sena/>

that the explosive device was possibly activated with a cell phone when the soldiers passed by. The dissidents of the FARC are suspected for the attack.<sup>11</sup>

- The inhabitants of La Uribe protested because of a terrorist act. Two soldiers and the five civilians were injured due to the explosion. The Departmental Government and the Mayor of Uribe offered a reward up to 30 million pesos for those who give information to help capture those responsible for the attack.<sup>12</sup>
- The CTI (El Cuerpo Técnico e Investigación) and the Prosecutor's office investigate the homicide of the ex-combatant of the FARC, Gioavany Murillas, which occurred in the municipality of Puerto Rico, in the south of Meta.<sup>13</sup>
- The ELN is responsible for the murder of the social leader in Casanare.<sup>14</sup>
- Two dissidents of the FARC were murdered in San Jose de Guaviare and two were captured. 'Jeison Orejas', who was murdered, has threatened the Governor of Meta, Guaviare and Caquetá.<sup>15</sup>

## **Tolima**

- Spokesmen of the indigenous Minga, peasant and transporters came to an agreement with the departmental government on the health, sports and culture issues.<sup>16</sup>

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<sup>11</sup> <https://www.eltiempo.com/colombia/otras-ciudades/soldados-y-civiles-heridos-por-explosion-en-la-uribe-meta-356360>

<sup>12</sup> <https://www.eltiempo.com/colombia/otras-ciudades/atentado-terrorista-en-uribe-meta-356738>

<sup>13</sup> <https://www.eltiempo.com/colombia/otras-ciudades/homicidio-excombatiente-de-las-farc-en-meta-360852>

<sup>14</sup> <https://www.eltiempo.com/colombia/otras-ciudades/asesinato-de-concepcion-corredor-lider-social-en-nunchia-casanare-367478>

<sup>15</sup> <https://www.eltiempo.com/colombia/otras-ciudades/muerte-de-disidente-de-las-farc-orejas-368494>

<sup>16</sup> <http://www.elnuevodia.com.co/nuevodia/tolima/regional/432490-organizaciones-en-minga-concretaron-agenda-de-dialogos-con-el-gobierno-depart>

- The Mayor's office of Icononzo and the Territorial Unit of Victims of Tolima made a symbolic act to remember and honor the victims of the armed conflict and their families in the area.<sup>17</sup>
- In the municipality, Roncesvalles, death threat against leaders (for example; leaders of Human Rights, journalists and the President of the Council of the municipality) will be analyzed by authorities who began a Security Council.<sup>18</sup>

## **Bolívar**

- The assassination of a social leader and a driver occurred in the municipality of Morales in the South of Bolívar. In order to restore security and support the community, it was determined in a security council that the departmental Government, including the Assembly, will get together and sought out an intervention plan. This initiative, proposed by the commander of the Caribbean Naval Force, Vice Admiral Andrés Vásquez, seeks to review security issues, but also the different problems affecting the region in terms of health, education, infrastructure, social and economic development.<sup>19</sup>
- The Ombudsman's Office warned about the possible recruitment of eight minors by the ELN in the villages of La Fortuna and Santa Rosa. The Ombudsman's Office during 2018 and so far this year, has issued 105 early alerts. The places with the greatest number of municipalities that present a high risk of recruitment or violation of minors are Antioquia, Nariño, Chocó, Meta, Bolívar, Tolima, Córdoba, Cundinamarca, Valle del Cauca, Córdoba, Casanare and Putumayo.<sup>20</sup>

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<sup>17</sup> <http://www.elnuevodia.com.co/nuevodia/tolima/regional/433056-homenaje-a-victimas-del-conflicto-en-icononzo>

<sup>18</sup> <http://www.elnuevodia.com.co/nuevodia/tolima/regional/433155-en-roncesvalles-analizan-las-amenazas-de-muerte-a-lideres>

<sup>19</sup> <https://www.eluniversal.com.co/regional/bolivar/gobernacion-y-autoridades-intervendran-el-sur-de-bolivar-FJ1139896>

<sup>20</sup> <https://www.eluniversal.com.co/regional/defensoria-alerto-sobre-reclutamiento-de-menores-por-parte-del-eln-en-el-sur-del-bolivar-DN1168995>

## **Putumayo**

- Intercepted communications and information from human sources indicate that the ELN and the dissidences of ex-FARC seek to dominate councils and assemblies in the departments of Caquetá, Guaviare and Putumayo in order to influence the October regional elections. It was revealed that the ELN and the ex-FARC have held three summits to seal an alliance and has begun to strike politically and militarily.<sup>21</sup>

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<sup>21</sup> <https://www.eltiempo.com/justicia/investigacion/la-alianza-del-eln-y-disidencias-de-farc-para-influir-en-los-comicios-de-octubre-357298>