



Wilton Park



Image: Juan Cristobal Zulueta

Report

## **Turbulence in peace processes: what next for Colombia?**

Wednesday 29 – Friday 31 March 2017 | WP1533

In association with:





## Report

# Turbulence in peace processes: what next for Colombia?

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### Executive summary

Colombia is facing what is currently the most significant transition from war to peace in the world. Despite internal political controversy and difficulties in getting the government bureaucracy wheels turning, a solid design of the peace process and strong political commitment from the government as well as the Armed Revolutionary Forces of Colombia (FARC) have so far allowed the implementation process to meet its targets.

Challenges in sustaining implementation of the agreement are technical as well as political. The former requires continued venues for broad discussions to ensure that all available national and international expertise is tapped to inform decisions. It is also important to manage expectations and be clear about what can realistically be achieved in different time-frames.

With low levels of public trust in the government and the FARC, and looming presidential elections in May 2018, political consensus will be harder to reach. The main options available to ensure that the peace process is irreversible are to:

- Sustain mutual trust between the government and the FARC and increase societal support to the implementation process by continued delivery of milestones in the agreement's roadmap.
- Acknowledge the issues that cannot be addressed with political will only, as their complexity may exceed existing institutional capacities. Issues such as continued violence, curbing drug production, and promoting more participatory decision-making processes require transparent dialogue across social and political divides along with national and international alliances and support.
- Develop a more creative and less politicised communications strategy to manage public expectations for change by identifying and explaining realistic targets and shared responsibilities in the short, medium and long term.

### Introduction

Wilton Park and the Norwegian Centre for Conflict Resolution (NOREF) organised a three-day conference with the goals of learning from the process that resulted in a peace agreement in Colombia; of examining the challenges and priorities of peace implementation; and of assessing the role of international actors in supporting Colombia's post-agreement scenario. Some 45 Colombian and international experts participated in the discussions including representatives of the Colombian government, FARC, civil society, and international experts and diplomats. Four delegates from the Philippines (government, army, and communist insurgency) also took part.

The first section of this report is written mainly for an international audience. It captures the main characteristics and innovations of the Colombian peace process, which may contain lessons for other international peace initiatives. The second section is written for an audience concerned with implementation of the peace agreement in Colombia, and identifies the core challenges ahead as well as recommendations on how to address them.

## **The Government – FARC Peace Negotiations, 2010 – 2016**

1. Over the past five decades all Colombian governments have led efforts to address the internal armed conflict through military means as well as through dialogue. This led to peace agreements in the 1990s with several guerrilla movements, and to an agreement on the disarmament and demobilisation of the main right wing paramilitary groups in the early 2000s. Despite these initial attempts, government and FARC were not able to engage in meaningful and sustained conversations until 2010, when Juan Manuel Santos became President. By then the FARC also had new leadership that held a more modern view of Colombia. With an implicit recognition by the government of the root causes of the armed conflict, both sides agreed on the need to address long delayed political and land reforms.
2. Peace negotiations were further favoured by developments at the international level, with leftist electoral success in several countries in Latin America. Cuba and Venezuela played a fundamental role persuading the FARC to negotiate, and expressing to the Colombian government their willingness to help. At the same time the Obama Administration in the US understood the importance of talking to the FARC and expressed its full support to peace negotiations. Overall, there was unanimous international support, with no government opposing the peace talks.
3. The government – FARC peace negotiations took place in three phases:
  - Exploratory talks, which began with an historic meeting of 2 commanders and 2 government delegates in 2010, and culminated in August 2012 with an agreement on the agenda and process.
  - Formal talks, which took place in Havana (Cuba) until the initial comprehensive peace agreement signed on 26 September 2016. Cuba and Norway acted as “guarantor countries”, while Venezuela and Chile acted as “accompanying countries”.
  - Agreement implementation. Following a plebiscite in October that rejected the agreement, subsequent renegotiations led to the final agreement on 24 November. The parties agreed on a time frame of 15 years for the full implementation of the agreement.
4. Despite some delays in the very ambitious roadmap for implementation of the agreement, as of April 2017 the process remained on a steady track. Major developments during the first months of implementation included:
  - Enactment of a fast-track procedure to approve legislation and constitutional change. Several key laws, including the Special Jurisdiction for Peace (SJP), amnesty, and rights of the opposition, were passed.
  - Deployment of a UN mission to monitor the ceasefire and the decommissioning of weapons.
  - All 7,000 FARC combatants moved to 26 assembly areas, and the process of laying down weapons began.
  - Only one serious ceasefire incident has occurred since August 2016.

### **Distinctive traits of the negotiations**

- Direct negotiations took place without mediation. However, the facilitating countries, Cuba and Norway, had observers listening throughout the

negotiations, and they played a crucial role by engaging very actively at times of crisis.

- Peace negotiations encompassed the two root causes of the conflict: land reform and political reform. They also addressed the issue of drug production, which was the main financial fuel of the conflict, and the conditions for conflict termination and implementation of a peace agreement. The rights of the victims informed all other agenda items of the negotiations. Transitional justice thus became a central component of the peace accord.
- The peace talks occurred in the absence of a ceasefire. However, the parties undertook unilateral de-escalation measures, including unilateral ceasefire declarations by the FARC.
- The International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) managed extremely complex logistical operations flying out FARC commanders from the jungle. The government's ability to deliver its promise to allow back-and-forth travel of FARC delegates became an important confidence-building measure.
- The government delegation included the military and police. This security force participation eliminated rumours and speculation in Colombia on what was being negotiated. Their participation was also fundamental to the discussions on the agenda item of conflict termination. The security sector undertook an important effort in capacity building to enhance their contribution to the talks. The FARC was very open to their participation. The agreement on conflict termination was the only one of the six point agenda that was not challenged by the political opposition and was thus not renegotiated after the plebiscite. Military ownership has proven fundamental to addressing the post-plebiscite crisis.
- The parties did an important job of learning lessons from the successes and failures of previous Colombian and international peace negotiations.
- The international community played (and continues to play) a crucial role in supporting the process. While it can never replace the Colombian authorities, it is important that Colombians feel its presence and support to increase trust in the process. This international involvement has also helped to share the Colombian experience more widely.
- During his electoral campaign in 2014 President Santos committed to a referendum to allow the people of Colombia to have the final word on the peace agreement. The FARC opposed the idea of the referendum but eventually yielded. The narrow victory of the no vote in the plebiscite was something of a paradox, resulting to a large extent from a successful government communications strategy that for many years had portrayed the FARC as narco-terrorists. Public opinion thus became reluctant to accept provisions that were largely perceived as concessions to very unsavoury actors.

### **Innovations: victims and justice**

5. The most significant innovation in the Colombian peace process has been the effort to ensure the rights of the more than 8 million victims to truth, justice, reparations and guarantees of non-recurrence. The agreement on transitional justice was achieved through the following measures.
  - An early political decision by both sides to commit to national and international standards on human rights. This sent a signal to the International Criminal Court (ICC) that Colombia was willing and capable of investigating, prosecuting and sentencing.
  - Agreements at the negotiating table responded to the unwavering efforts of human rights defenders, and were aligned with previous institutional efforts to prosecute human rights violations by members of the insurgency, paramilitary

groups and the security sector; to identify and register victims; and to document the extent and diversity of human rights violations (such as the “Enough!” report, 2013, by the National Centre for Historic Memory).

- A decision to amend the Constitution two years ahead of the agreement. This triggered a broad discussion in Colombia on how far transitional justice could go and how best to proceed, which became fundamental for the agreement.
- Victims were invited to Havana to share their testimony with peace negotiators. Five batches of 12 victims from different perpetrators met face-to-face with 18 peace negotiators. These encounters had a profound impact on the peace negotiators and led to a turning point in the negotiations; 90% of the victims encouraged the completion of the peace process.
- A group of 12 experts were asked to produce a report on the causes of the armed conflict. The diversity of participants offered a broad perspective that, to a certain extent, addressed the FARC’s concern to avoid being blamed for having started the war.
- Mixing judicial and extra-judicial mechanisms for victim’s rights. The future Truth Commission cannot be used for prosecution, which is an incentive for perpetrators to come forward.
- This is the first ever peace agreement where both sides have agreed to submit themselves to investigation and the decisions of a tribunal. Parties thus agreed to a Special Tribunal outside of the ordinary criminal justice system. The tribunal will focus on the worst international crimes, but it will also clarify the legal situation for everyone else. There will be a special judicial treatment for those who acknowledge responsibility.
- A focus on restorative justice. The most high-level offenders will face restraints on personal freedom but no sanctions involving jail.

## **Innovations: process design**

### **6. Beyond transitional justice, the peace negotiations led to additional procedural innovations.**

- The conceptual differentiation of peace negotiations (phase two in the process) and the peace process (phase three) allowed for revisiting and expanding the number of actors, dialogue mechanisms, negotiation venues and time-frame for building peace in Colombia. The purpose of the Havana talks was to put an end to armed conflict, but building peace is explicitly a challenge and a responsibility of Colombian society at large.
- The government and the FARC prepared for implementation far in advance of the signing of the peace agreement. Congress started approving enabling laws as early as 2011, under the close watch of the judiciary. The FARC stopped all military training as of October 2015 and shifted its focus to the transition to a political movement.
- Following significant pressure from civil society, the parties agreed to create a Gender Sub Commission tasked with reviewing all documents to ensure they contained gender-sensitive language and provisions. As a result, the peace agreement ensures women’s access to rural property; guarantees for economic, social and cultural rights; participation in decision-making; protection from violence; access to truth and justice; public acknowledgement as political agents; and institutional support to participation. The agreement also foresees disaggregated data in the monitoring of implementation as well as gender mainstreaming in the security sector and government agencies. Gender-based violence is considered to be a ceasefire violation (so far only one case has been

documented).

- Integration of FARC combatants will be collective and will take place in rural areas. This is a departure from previous Colombian experience, which had been essentially individual and focused on urban areas. The FARC is co-responsible for the reintegration strategy and its implementation.
- The UN Monitoring Mission is a political, unarmed tripartite mission, with UN personnel, Colombian soldiers and police, and the FARC working together. The UN is not leading but coordinating.
- The peace negotiations allowed Latin American countries to commit and contribute to termination of the last armed conflict on the continent. The end of armed conflict in Colombia turns Latin America into the first regional peace zone in the world. This gives Latin America a new status and becomes an incentive for other regional integration processes.

### **Challenges and recommendations for implementation of the agreement**

7. All peace agreements in the world struggle with implementation. This observation applies to more recent agreements such as Mindanao (2014), Nepal (2006), South Sudan (2005) and Aceh (2005). It also applies to conflicts that were settled two decades ago, notably in Central America. Yet measuring success can be contentious. Not every failure in implementation is a failure of the peace process. Two decades after their peace agreements, Northern Ireland and South Africa are not yet fully at peace. But no one would argue that these peace processes were a failure.
8. The challenges in the post agreement phase are directly linked to the expectations for change. One of the many paradoxes in the Colombian peace process is that during negotiations large sectors of society did not believe the peace talks would deliver any significant change; yet in the current phase they criticise the negotiators for not delivering fast enough.
9. Despite a limited agenda, the peace agreement is the most detailed peace accord ever produced. Given its comprehensive character, many provisions are interlinked and the success in one thematic area is contingent on positive developments in others. This makes understanding and implementing the agreement rather complex.
10. The overarching challenges in the post-agreement phase can be categorised into three main areas.

#### **Political**

11. Implementation is like a new negotiation but with more players. The government and the FARC have not been able to create strong enough political momentum behind the achievements of the peace negotiations and prevent continued polarisation. While the political opposition has not articulated a clear alternative narrative and proposal, its political message is riding on the defeat of the initial peace agreement in the plebiscite. With low levels of societal support, and nearing the end of the current presidential term, the government is struggling to maintain internal cohesion with its allies in Congress.
12. The enactment of legislation to implement the peace agreement is creating a space for a certain renegotiation of its provisions. Making peace irreversible will thus inevitably require continued efforts for broadened dialogue with all political actors to protect the key elements of the agreement. While this may sound difficult, political circumstances can change. The Reverend Ian Paisley was arguably a fiercer opponent of the Good Friday Agreement in Northern Ireland than Álvaro Uribe is to the Havana agreement. Yet Paisley ended up working closely with his former enemies. Northern Ireland is thus a reference point for optimism.

## **Technical**

13. To maintain and increase mutual and public confidence in the peace process, the government and the FARC need to deliver early peace dividends. Turning words into deeds is the best way for strengthening the legitimacy of the peace agreement, thereby protecting it from the political uncertainty that comes with the presidential elections in May 2018. Political will is fundamental but not enough. The capacity of the State (but also of the FARC) to live up to its commitments is already being tested and questioned by many. In this sense, it is also important to manage expectations and be clear about what can realistically be achieved in the short term (before the 2018 elections) and in the medium term (during the next administration), as well as the transformations that will require more time (the agreement foresees an implementation time span of 15 years).

## **Institutional and cultural**

14. The goal of increased societal participation needs further structuring. The purpose is to integrate a very fragmented country. Beyond a technocratic interpretation of implementation of the agreement, its provisions indicate the need for a new political culture. The agreement indeed challenges traditional, centralised top-down institutional analysis and responses to regional problems, and points to the need to develop new bottom-up social and institutional processes. While this idea is spearheaded by the Office of the High Commissioner for Peace, not everyone in the government shares this view. At the same time decades of armed conflict have left a shattered society, with deep wounds and with confusion around ethically acceptable and unacceptable behaviours. There is a need for an ethical revolution as well as for social and political reconciliation, or at a minimum for the more humble idea of “convivencia” or “living together”.

## **Thematic challenges and recommendations**

### **Reintegration**

15. Unlike other provisions in the peace agreement, the ones related to reintegration of combatants are rather open ended, leaving much of the detail to the implementation stage.
16. Colombia has a wealth of experience in reintegrating members of illegal armed groups. However this is linked to urban experiences, which made government oversight easier. The FARC wants to retain a certain control of the reintegration process and has suggested a number of social development initiatives under the concept of ECOMUN cooperatives. The main idea is to promote rural development and contribute to Colombia’s food sovereignty. However; the financial sustainability of FARC cooperatives is not clear.
17. Experience from previous national and international reintegration initiatives indicates the need for a specific plan for mid-level commanders. The government is still discussing the pros and cons of some sort of “institutional reintegration”, by which former combatants could contribute to strengthening the presence of the state in rural areas.
18. The main reintegration efforts will take place in the assembly areas for FARC combatants. This may lead to political controversy, as it will entail an extension of the presence of FARC members beyond completion of the process of laying down weapons. There are ongoing discussions for a renewed UN mission that would be mandated to oversee the reintegration process.

### **Recommendations**

- The FARC needs quick results to ensure the cohesion of its members.
- Reintegration must avoid generating competition for scarce resources with local communities and be part of the process of reconciliation.

- Explore the possibility of having FARC members work on infrastructure projects in rural areas, such as building roads and schools. This work could be part of the FARC's reparations to victims and a contribution to rural reform.
- Support collective productive projects not only in agriculture but also ecotourism and other fields. These projects can be catalysers for investment in rural areas.
- Involve universities and private actors in these initiatives.
- The international community can contribute with technical and professional cooperation.
- Link reintegration to rural reform and both to Colombian development.

### **Rural development**

19. Rural development has been acknowledged by government as being one of the root causes of armed conflict. However, addressing this issue requires structural changes that will take years. It is therefore difficult to produce early peace dividends.
20. At the same time, rural development is a highly sensitive issue as it touches on vested interests of land owners. Millions of people were displaced from the lands they were tilling due to ambitions to take control of land. The killing of social leaders claiming land rights is a continuous reality.
21. Expectations for addressing these injustices are therefore high. Government failure to implement rural development could become the main political agenda of the new political party that will be created by the FARC.
22. Access to and formalisation of land tenure is particularly complex:
  - There is a lack of information about the land situation in remote areas, including over ownership, surface, and usage. Poor land registries deprive municipalities of critical tax income, reduce capacity for investment in public infrastructure and social services, and create disincentives to productive investment in the land.
  - Land disputes generate conflicts between and among peasant, indigenous and afro-Colombian organisations, and between these organisations and commercial farming interests.
  - The informal process of land occupation has led to excessive concentration of ownership.
23. These problems in turn create incentives for illicit economies in mining and coca cultivation:
  - Unclear land ownership and the lack of formal land titles facilitate the emergence of illicit economies as they enable informal appropriation and occupation of land and discourage lawful productive investment in the land.
  - Informal land tenure, combined with a lack of infrastructure and poor access to markets, makes illicit economic usage of land the best alternative for subsistence.

### **Recommendations**

24. Develop an understanding of competing interests and a conflict resolution approach.
  - Understand conflicting interests and expectations.
  - Try to harmonise the interests of peasant communities and agribusiness development.
  - Incorporate lessons learned, especially those from implementing laws on land reform and victims.
  - Look for balance between extractive resources, logging and other economic

projects.

25. Develop a legal architecture that builds confidence.

- Establish a registry on land rights.
- Guarantee the collective territories of afro-Colombians and indigenous peoples.
- Clarify the status of “reservas campesinas”.
- Examine the feasibility of a land fund.
- Develop a legal framework that addresses security related to competing land claims.

26. Building capacities of regional and local actors.

- Ensure participation through gender and youth equity.
- Link the process of capacity building to existing local development plans, prior regional experience and “planes de vida”.
- Strengthen local government and institutions.
- Help to provide services to these areas.
- Improve coordination between regional and national agencies.
- Develop markets, linking local and national production with global free trade agreements.
- Build sustainability and food sovereignty.
- Establish efficient transparency mechanisms to counter corruption.

27. Design a comprehensive political strategy to implement the 12 pillars on rural reform contained in the peace agreement.

- Ensure that communities and local authorities understand the reforms.
- Make society understand that the reforms are not just for the FARC but for the benefit of all.
- Link all of the rural reform measures of the peace agreement with the FARC to the process of negotiation with the National Liberation Army (ELN).
- National and international corporations need to visit rural areas in Colombia to gain an understanding of what reform is all about.
- Guarantee the right to free and prior consent for ethnic communities.
- Define a system of compensations for those who lose lands.
- Keep the issue high on the political agenda.

28. Long term vision: incentives for next generations to stay in rural areas.

- Improve education (including universities) and health services.
- Strengthen rural/campesino identity.
- Promote access to credit.
- Promote environmental sustainability; close the agricultural frontier.
- Promote ecotourism.
- Invest in infrastructure and transportation.
- Reverse the damage of illegal mining.

## **Drug production**

29. The peace agreement suggests a radical departure in the analysis of drug production. The main emphasis is to treat drug consumption as a public health concern and to decriminalise farmers growing illicit crops, focusing attention instead on drug producers and traffickers. At the same time the agreement suggests the need for a shift in international drugs policy.
30. However, the agreement still refers to drugs as a “problem”, while the main challenge for coca growers has been their marginalisation. Public policy to address the issue is still flawed by top-down approaches that do not take into consideration the perspectives and proposals of farmers, thus alienating a sector that is fundamental for the success of the new approach. While the agreement provides incentives for substitution programmes, these incentives are conditional on unrealistic short-term eradication goals. Some coca growers may even feel betrayed by the FARC, who used them for its war economy and now want to force them to undertake quick changes.
31. A large population also participates in illicit economies that does not own land and is therefore not necessarily subject to crop substitution efforts. In many rural areas working as a “raspachin” (coca collector) is one of the only or at least most lucrative economic opportunities for youth and adolescents. In general, this creates related problems, such as dropping out of school. Specific action is needed to deal with this population to avoid recycling into illicit economies.
32. Over the past years there have been significant changes in the drug business. Planting crops and producing drugs is more fragmented than before and the big business of international transportation and distribution is no longer controlled by Colombians.
33. The government is aware of the need to produce a credible approach to prove that it is able to deal with the problem. This includes addressing a national as well as an international audience.
34. Short term recommendations include:
  - Acknowledge the failure of past counternarcotic and iron fist policies.
  - Acknowledge as well that the current sequencing scheme is wrong. Rural development should come before crop substitution.
  - Pause eradication and evaluate the experience so far. Consider the resentment of communities that have been forced to sign voluntary agreements. Substitution must be gradual, concerted and voluntary.
  - Map out the drug networks and their level of penetration in state institutions.
  - Convene an international conference on this issue to explore alternative policy options.
35. There has been some acceptance of the reality of a persistent drug economy. With this in mind, long term recommendations are to:
  - Deprioritise short term reduction.
  - Decriminalise subsistence farming.
  - Legalise coca and cannabis markets.

## **Transitional justice**

36. The most difficult thematic agreement to reach was the one on the rights of victims to truth, justice, reparations and guarantees of non-recurrence. This is the first agreement ever where the parties to the negotiation have committed to being investigated and judged for human rights violations.
37. However its implementation remains highly controversial, especially the fact that FARC commanders who might be found guilty of committing heinous crimes may still be

allowed to actively participate in politics. On the other hand, the agreement was modified following the plebiscite to accommodate concerns of the opposition about exposing the role of military commanders and private armed groups in committing atrocities. These modifications may not meet international standards, creating legal uncertainty.

38. Other concerns include:

- It might take a long time before the SJP is up and running.
- Funding for the SJP.
- Potential swamping of the SJP.
- Selection of the members of the SJP. The three international members have already been criticised for being leftist and anti-military.
- Much more attention is being placed on the SJP than on the Truth Commission and the unit to search for disappeared people.
- How is restorative justice going to work in practice? It needs to be credible.
- Involvement of victims in Colombia and in the diaspora in designing and taking part in the processes for implementation of transitional justice measures.

39. More technical challenges include:

- The relationship between the SJP and the ordinary criminal justice system; people in the ordinary system feel they have been deprived of power.
- The sequencing of SJP and Truth Commission is unclear. It needs political consensus before the details of their tasks will be agreed.
- Use of information generated in the Truth Commission for prosecutions.
- Legitimacy; the Truth Commission and the unit to search for disappeared people have been established through presidential decrees instead of legislation.
- The ability of the Executive Secretary of the SJP to seize archives.

**Recommendations**

40. Develop two parallel tracks to show accountability:

- A small group of FARC leaders start serving sentences that effectively restrict their liberty through partial house arrest within the FARC assembly zones, while members of the military start serving sentences under similar conditions within military facilities, all under serious monitoring and surveillance of the UN and without participating in politics.
- A number of FARC leaders are immediately allowed to participate in politics, but the time spent in the assembly zones will not count towards any future sentences.

41. Incentivise recognition of responsibility for acts contributing to reparations.

42. Preparation within the Office of the Attorney General of the information that will be sent to the SJP.

43. Avoid registering people to subject themselves to the SJP before the Chamber of Acknowledgement decides which cases will be taken to the Tribunal.

44. The Chamber of Acknowledgement should prioritise the cases of those responsible for the most serious and representative crimes committed by all parties to the armed conflict.

45. The SJP should be able to take into account the objective of political reintegration in deciding when people should start serving their sentences.

46. Clarify different roles. The SJP should be dedicated to prosecuting and sanctioning, and the Truth Commission to unveiling truth and historical memory.
47. Conditionality should be strengthened through rulings of the Constitutional Court and/or the decisions of the SJP so that there are real incentives to contribute to truth and reparations.
48. Ensure psychosocial assistance as part of the functioning of all the transitional justice mechanisms.
49. Ensure that transitional justice mechanisms are approved through Congress so that they have political legitimacy, but also that they remain in accordance with the peace agreement.

### **Security**

50. The reduction in overall levels of violence (often described as “negative peace”) is one of the main short-term dividends of a peace process. However, overall figures can mask the reality affecting specific sectors.
51. The main area of concern now in Colombia is the continued threats against and assassination of social leaders and human rights defenders. This has led to significant controversy concerning the state bodies in charge of preventing such crimes. Government officials have argued that the absence of any specific pattern would suggest that these killings are related to common crime rather than being politically motivated.
52. Security concerns also relate to FARC members as they re-enter into communities. While there has not yet been any major act of violence against FARC members<sup>1</sup> this is still a major risk that could have severe political consequences.
53. A third area of attention related to security is the adjustment of a war-oriented security sector.

### **Recommendations**

- The geographic space left by the FARC, primarily in regions where other armed actors are present, needs to be filled by the state and public forces rapidly to stem these new dynamics of violence from taking hold.
- A strong and clear official response against threats and assassination of its leaders would have a huge effect on the confidence of the FARC in the disarmament process, as well as for the ELN in its peace talks with the government.
- Prevent political polarisation around threats and killing of social leaders. The National Commission on Security Guarantees needs to increase transparency and accuracy in the investigations to promote trust and a shared understanding by all stakeholders. It is also important to invite the ELN to join the Commission.
- Strengthen incentives to dismantle criminal gangs (BACRIM).
- Open up discussions on security challenges and security sector reform to a more inclusive social and political debate.

### **International community and international repercussions**

54. The peace agreement allocates responsibilities to the international community. While it will never replace Colombian authorities, it still plays a crucial role in the implementation of the agreement. The UN has deployed hundreds of unarmed observers, initially to monitor the ceasefire and the laying down of weapons. The peace agreement has also given specific mandates related to implementation to several

<sup>1</sup> Shortly after the Conference two FARC members were killed within a period of a few days in separate incidents.

international eminent persons, governments, multilateral organisations, NGOs and academic institutes. Internationals need to be present when problems arise, to provide ballast, support, encouragement and resources (even if limited). Through its presence the international community also increases trust among Colombians in the peace process.

55. The international context is now more adverse to a successful peace process than in previous years. The situation in Venezuela is worrying and uncertain; in the US the Trump Administration may pursue new, securitised anti-drug approaches.
56. However, the international community largely remains committed to a successful peace process, for Colombia, for the region and because it has been the good news story in the world in 2016. The world needs this process to succeed.
57. At the same time Colombia will soon stop being on the receiving end of assistance and will instead be providers of support to peace processes elsewhere.

#### **Recommendations**

- There is a need for the international community to stay the course and learn the lessons of the damaging effects of early withdrawals in other post-agreement scenarios.
- There is a very clear need for internationals to coordinate their work better, including with local and international NGOs.

#### **Kristian Herbolzheimer**

Wilton Park | May 2017

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