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## HIGHLIGHTS

- Recent report analyzes the prospects for the international humanitarian community in a post-agreement scenario.
- The Committee on the Rights of the Child manifests concern about PDAGs' high level of child recruitment.
- Threats and drought main causes of access constraints.
- UN and WB observe the dramatic situation of Buenaventura.
- Cartagena+30: the need to adapt to new contexts.



Organización Indígena de Antioquia

## Preparing for the day after

By Francisco Rey, Codirector of the Instituto de Estudios sobre Conflictos y Acción Humanitaria (IECAH)

After more than two years of dialogue between the Government and FARC-EP guerrillas, progress is clear, and the possibilities for a peace accord between the two parties are more real than ever. Inside and outside Colombia, there is recognition of this possibility, and the country's institutions are preparing for the day after. In a scenario of goodwill and hope to build a stable and lasting peace, evidence from the field and the risks that a post-agreement situation may bring, cannot be ignored.

What short-term implications might a peace accord have for Colombia's humanitarian situation? How should international humanitarian organizations prepare themselves to be more useful and efficient in a post-agreement scenario? OCHA commissioned IECAH to write the report titled "The humanitarian dimension in the aftermath of a peace agreement: Proposals for the international community in Colombia". It gives several clues and proposals on humanitarians' role in such a scenario.

Despite improvements in some indicators since the peace dialogues began, the humanitarian situation remains serious and the period immediately following an agreement could be complicated in humanitarian terms. Between November 2012 and September 2014, while negotiations were ongoing with FARC-EP in Havana, 15,100 people were forced to abandon their place of origin every month due to the conflict and violence, and one of every five IDPs was displaced due to the actions of post-demobilization armed groups (PDAGs). Movement restrictions continue to affect tens of thousands of Colombians along with other humanitarian issues, such as antipersonnel mine contamination, the use and recruitment of children and adolescents, sexual and gender-based violence and kidnapping. In many areas, the humanitarian crisis is not the past, but rather the very difficult present. In addition, a post-agreement scenario with FARC-EP will not automatically mean an end to all forms of violence. For this reason, our report explains that a rushed withdrawal of humanitarian aid could have negative consequences for vulnerable people and affect the peace process. This is particularly relevant to regions most affected by the conflict, which face historical gaps and development challenges.

Humanitarian organizations should adapt their actions to the new scenario, contribute to find long-lasting solutions and seek new relationships with State institutions and Colombian civil society. The international humanitarian community's role in a post-accord scenario should at least be maintained and, if necessary, increased, since the short-term risks would make a solid international presence advisable. The humanitarian architecture and presence of international humanitarian actors continues to provide a value-added, for which there is no substitute in many areas of Colombia.

The IECAH report is available here: <http://j.mp/IECAHreport>

## FIGURES

No. of IDPs in mass events. Feb. 2015 (OCHA)	2,016
No. of people affected by mobility/ access restrictions. Feb. 2015 (OCHA)	119,524
No. of people affected by natural disasters. Feb. 2015 (UNGRD)	23,670

## FUNDING

**US\$42,630,197**

2014 humanitarian funding being implemented as of 15 March 2015 (OCHA 4W)

## PDAGs responsible for majority of attacks against human rights defenders in 2014

*Attacks against human rights defenders increased by 147 per cent in 2014*

According to the non-governmental programme Somos Defensores<sup>1</sup>, PDAGs were responsible for 73 per cent of the 626 registered attacks against human rights defenders in Colombia during 2014. These attacks increased by 147 per cent compared with 2013. This creates one of the largest challenges for the protection of civilians in Colombia in the short and medium term, as this violence is expected to persist even if a peace accord is achieved. The FARC-EP and ELN guerrillas are the main actors of the country's internal armed conflict, but their participation in these particular attacks is minimal (1 and 0.5 per cent, respectively, for 2014). Therefore, the end of conflict with these groups will not significantly change the situation of human rights defenders.

### A challenge for a peace agreement

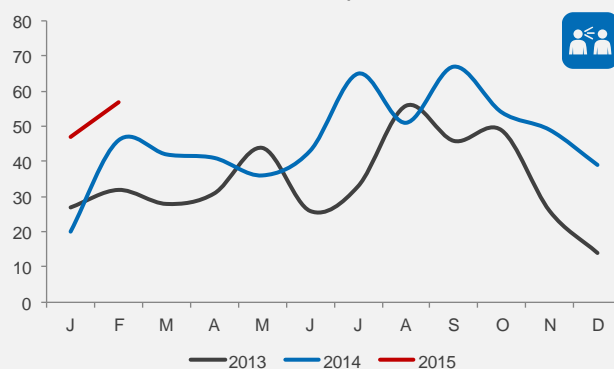
According to Somos Defensores' registry, 2014 had the largest number of attacks against human rights defenders since 2010. There were an average of two attacks per day, and the assassination of a defender each week during 2014. Somos Defensores registered attacks in 27 of 32 departments, which indicates the geographic dispersion of the problem (the most affected departments after the capital were Valle del Cauca, Cauca, Santander, Antioquia, Caquetá and Atlántico). The persistence of these attacks is a challenge for the implementation of the eventual peace agreement, as the main victims (land claimants, community leaders and the members of indigenous groups, unions, Afro-Colombians, and women

and victim's groups) will become more visible and play a more important role during a post-agreement period. PDAGs could sabotage the peace process by creating an atmosphere of fear and violence through attacks against human rights defenders and other community leaders in regions key for peace agreement implementation. This is combined with the fact that the peace agreement will likely lead to an increase in visibility for other groups with protection needs, such as IDPs, returnees, demobilized guerrillas or public officials in charge of land restitution. An atmosphere of threats and violence would make truth, justice and reparation more difficult. These aspects instead are key to building sustainable peace for the long term.

### Threats against human rights defenders increase 133 per cent

The increase in attacks is likely related to the rising number of threats against human rights defenders. Threats increased by 133 per cent, as compared with 2013. In 2014, the majority of registered attacks (78 per cent) were threats, followed by assassinations (9

Illustration 1: No. of threat events (2013 / 2014 / Jan-Feb 2015)



According to Monitor data, the number of threats (individual and collective) was one of the indicators of violence with more impact in 2014, with an increase of 34 per cent compared to the number of events reported in 2013. This trend seems to be maintained in 2015, with more than 100 reports between January and February, almost 60 per cent more than in the same period of 2014. Cauca, in the Pacific; Antioquia and Sucre, in the North are the departments with the largest number of events. In Cauca, indigenous and Afro-Colombian leaders have received threats, -in some cases attributed to the FARC-EP, in other cases to PDAGs- for their activities in defense of their communities. While in the North, threats against leaders of land reclamation are frequent, in urban areas of cities like Medellin armed groups or gangs use threats as a mean for social and economic control.

<sup>1</sup> See full report here: <http://somosdefensores.org/attachments/article/132/la-divina-comedia-web-final.pdf>

per cent) and assassination attempts (6 per cent). According to Somos Defensores, PDAGs were responsible for 88 per cent of all threats registered in 2014.

This reading coincides with the analysis conducted by the Ombudsman's Office Early Warning System on Human Rights and IHL situations during 2014, in which PDAGs held "first place in terms of threats and violations of fundamental rights and IHL". In 2014, these groups created risk situations in 171 municipalities in 27 of 32 departments (16 per cent of the country).

## Child protection: a main agenda topic

In February FARC-EP announced its commitment to stop the recruitment of children under age 17, and to hand over to the authorities 13 children under age 15 who the guerrillas recognize are currently members of the group. FARC-EP made these public announcements during discussions on a de-escalation of the armed conflict. These actions build greater confidence in the peace process, but they are insufficient to protect children from the effects of war. They should be accompanied by other prevention, assistance and protection measures that prevent children being disproportionately affected as victims of violence in Colombia.

FARC-EP and other armed groups should commit to stop the use of children under age 18, in accord with the Optional Protocol to the Convention on the Rights of the Child on the involvement of children in armed conflict, which was signed and ratified by Colombia.

All children who have been recruited or used in hostilities should be demobilized and given access to services for their physical and psychological recovery and subsequent reinsertion into society. It is indeed positive that FARC-EP has announced it will hand over the 13 children (presented as children of guerrilla members or orphans who requested refuge with the group), but this does not correspond with available information on the true magnitude of the group's recruitment of children (even taking into account that FARC-EP only made reference to children under age 15). Between 1999 and 2015, 5,708 children were recovered from non-state armed groups and put into ICBF protection programmes. Sixty per cent of these children were from FARC-EP. In 2014, 277 children recovered from non-state armed groups entered ICBF programmes. In 2013, the UN verified 81 cases of child recruitment, with FARC-EP responsible for 71 per cent of those cases.

It is vital that children in FARC-EP do not become invisible. They must be returned formally to their homes and receive a guarantee that they will be recognized as victims and can receive integral reparations to which they have a right. Beyond FARC-EP's above-mentioned public commitment, it is urgent to agree concrete non-state armed group mechanisms to allow the identification and release of all children in the group. They also need free access to child-protection actors for these children to verify that they enter pertinent programmes relevant to their age, sex and ethnic group. International experience with action plans for non-state armed groups to end recruitment and other grave violations against children, within the framework of UN Security Council resolution 1612, can be a reference point for the case of Colombia. At the international level there have been 23 action plans of this type signed. Nine have concluded, putting an end to serious violations against children.

### **Committee on the Rights of the Child concerned about high levels of violence against children**

The FARC-EP announcement coincides with the Committee on the Rights of the Child<sup>2</sup> examination of progresses reported by the Colombian State in the implementation of rights of the child.

The committee recognized Colombia's efforts and institutional advances to protect children, but it manifested its concern about high levels of violence suffered by children, who continue to be the victims of murders, recruitment, forced disappearance, torture,

<sup>2</sup> The Committee on the Rights of the Child (CRC) is the body of 18 Independent experts that monitors implementation of the Convention on the Rights of the Child by its State parties

*FARC-EP committed publicly to hand over to the authorities 13 children under age 15 currently within its ranks.*

anti-personnel mines and forced displacement. These abuses especially affect children from rural areas, indigenous and Afro-Colombian children and children in marginalized urban areas.

The committee also manifested its concern about PDAGs' high level of recruitment of children; children being treated as criminals rather than victims; violations against the rights of children allegedly committed by the armed forces and the police; the insufficient territorial presence of the ICBF-child welfare agency and other protection agencies in remote areas; and the lack of attention for IDP children's specific needs.

The committee insists that the Colombian State guarantees that child victims of PDAGs receive support and compensation under the Victim's Law; monitors compliance with directives that prohibit the participation of children in civic-military activities, and stops the military's occupation of schools; assigns adequate resources for mine-risk education; and carries out a response to ensure the demobilization and reintegration of children used in hostilities.

## Threats and drought cause access constraints

In January and February 2015, OCHA and Local Humanitarian Teams reported at least 44 movement restrictions on basic goods and services in 12 departments (see Map 2). These situations affected more than 130,000 people. In 2014, nearly 600,000 people suffered these types of limitations, and at least 12,000 were confined for one week or more. In 2014, 85 per cent of these situations were related to armed violence events (see [2014 summary bulletin](#)). These statistics represent only a portion of the total impact, since in many cases it is not possible to estimate the number of affected people due to the complexity of the events and the difficulty of accessing consolidated information.

Since 2013, OCHA Colombia has systematically monitored [humanitarian access limitations](#) in Colombia that affect humanitarian organizations and limit civilians' access to basic goods and services or humanitarian aid. Within this monitoring framework, aside from taking into account [limitations on mobility](#), monitoring is also carried out for armed actions, arms contamination, restrictions put in place by armed groups, road blockades, and security situations caused by protests, natural disasters and geographic and logistical limitations, which can restrict community access to basic goods and services or humanitarian aid. Movement restrictions typically are reflected by access limitations for communities to their crops or work (such as hunting, fishing, commerce), which subsequently affects their food insecurity. A [confinement](#) situation is declared when these restrictions last for more than a week and affect at least three sectors (food security, protection, health, education, WASH and livelihoods).

More information on these concepts can be found here: <http://j.mp/AccesoOCHA>

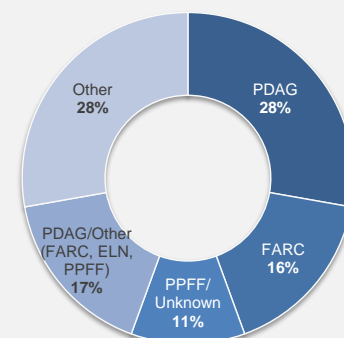
### Limitations related to armed violence

In January and February 2015, nearly 25,000 people suffered movement restrictions due to armed violence. More than sixty per cent of cases were associated with threats and pressure by a non-state armed group, leading to a suspension of commercial and educational activity and movement restriction. PDAGs were involved in nearly half of the events, either due to direct actions or clashes with other armed groups.

In Córdoba, on the Caribbean coast, due to FARC-EP and the PDAG Los Urabeños, commercial activities were suspended, affecting about 5,000 people for a week. Also in Córdoba, risks associated with armed violence (such as forced recruitment, sexual exploitation, threats, etc.), have caused limited access to education in several municipalities, this situation

18 Events Jan-Feb 2015	24,804 People affected. Jan- Feb 2015
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Illustration 2: Participation (%) in access /movement restrictions by alleged author Jan-Feb 2015



Source: OCHA-Monitor.



adds to structural factors such as delays in hiring teachers and the lack of school feeding programmes.

In Caquetá, in southern Colombia, FARC-EP pressures limited access to social services for 500 people in February. This situation could be occurring in other areas of the department, or departments such as Putumayo on the Ecuadorian border.

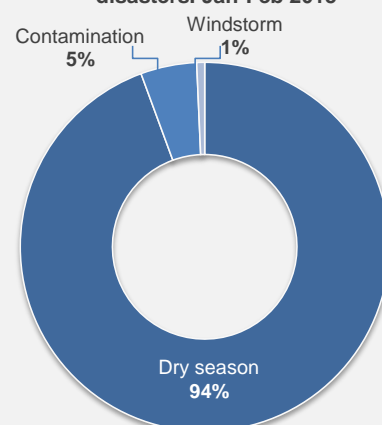
Due to fear of the presence of and confrontations between the ELN and PDAGs, nearly 1,500 Afro-Colombians and indigenous people in Chocó on the Pacific coast limited their movements in late February (see [Flash update](#)).

### Restrictions related to disasters

During the first months of 2015, the prolongation of the dry season in several regions of Colombia, particularly along the Caribbean coast, caused major limitations to water access. This also affected education, suspending classes and affecting food security and health-care access. In Córdoba, about 78,000 people were affected by these restrictions.

<b>10</b>	<b>86,466</b>
Events	People affected
Jan.-Feb. 2015	Jan. – Feb. 2015

Illustration 3: % of people affected by access / movement restrictions related to disasters. Jan-Feb 2015



Source: OCHA-Monitor

### Restrictions related to social protests

On the Caribbean and Pacific coasts, there were reports of mass protests that limited movements and access to basic goods and services in January and February.

<b>12</b>	<b>754</b>
Events	People directly affected
Jan.-Feb. 2015	Jan. – Feb. 2015

In Cauca, more than 10,000 indigenous people mobilized in late February to protest against a lack of Government response on land restitution, and against the human rights violations in their communities. Clashes between protesters and the police left 60 civilians injured. There were intermittent blockades on the main roads in the area, which reduced humanitarian access and local movements in three municipalities. UN OHCHR carried out verification for these events and called for dialogue between the parties.

In Nariño, during protests by teachers and students against precarious working conditions in the education sector, the main road was blocked between the capital and the Pacific coast, limiting humanitarian access for NGOs.

In February there were also protests by miners. In Antioquia, in the north, the blockades led to the temporary suspension of activities of an ERF project implemented in the area.

## UN and World Bank visit Buenaventura

This article has been contributed by the Office of the Resident Coordinator

The United Nations carried out a joint mission to Buenaventura on 5 and 6 February. The delegation was led by RC/HC Fabrizio Hochschild and Issam Abousleiman, Country Manager of the World Bank for Colombia. During the mission, the delegation observed the dramatic humanitarian situation of this port city.

Authorities affirm that the situation in Buenaventura has improved since the national Government decided one year ago to increase military and police presence in the city. The local Prosecutor's office has also been strengthened and military presence is highly visible. However, the stories that the mission heard directly from people living in Buenaventura indicate that the protracted conflict is still creating an important humanitarian impact in this port city. Indigenous and Afro-Colombian people are the main victims, particularly children and adolescents.

The mission, supported by UNHCR and OCHA, spoke with local authorities, representatives of the Ombudsman Office and the Catholic Church, and with leaders, activists and members of civil organizations and Indigenous and Afro-Colombian communities.

Groups related to organized crime are fighting over territorial control of several neighbourhoods, particularly in the Bajamar area and in Comuna 12. They have established a state of terror over local inhabitants. Dismembered corpses and clandestine graves are frequently discovered. Crossing the invisible borders that divide the zones controlled by different groups can turn into a death sentence for young people. Many fear to leave their neighbourhoods and live under a strict social control. The situation of children and adolescents is dramatic; they are often recruited as killers or sexual slaves.

Most commercial activities, including the trade of the most basic products, such as eggs or meat, have to pay extortion. The city has the country's highest rate of intra-urban displacements. It has the highest number of mass displacement events and is the first expelling municipality of the country. Thousands of displaced people from surrounding rural areas seek shelter in Buenaventura. They include 700 indigenous Wounan who have fled from their settlements in the area of the river San Juan. More than 160,000 of the 400,000 inhabitants are registered as victims. The drop in the homicide rate has been offset by the increase of forced disappearances: almost 500 since 1990 with many more under registered. Poverty and inequality levels in this area break all national records.

In this context, the UN has decided to strengthen its focus on Buenaventura and the Pacific Coast and to make significant efforts to increase its presence in the region.

## CARTAGENA+30

This article has been contributed by the Norwegian Refugee Council

### Latin America

In December 2014, the countries of Latin America and the Caribbean proposed a new direction for the protection of IDPs and people with needs for international protection in the region during the upcoming decade.

Thirty years ago, a group of Government experts from Belize, Colombia, Costa Rica, El Salvador, Guatemala, Honduras, México, Nicaragua, Panamá and Venezuela paved the way for a common regional effort to protect displaced populations on the continent, called the Cartagena Declaration.

This declaration was adopted by 10 countries in 1984. Since then, it has been praised for its flexibility, pragmatism and innovation in terms of protection needs caused by forced displacement.

The declaration recommended expanding the concept of "refugee" in order to include people threatened by general violence, foreign attacks, internal conflicts, human rights violations and other circumstances that could seriously affect public order.

## Cartagena+30 and the need to adapt to new contexts

Over the past 30 years, the Cartagena Declaration has served as a strategic framework for the Governments of Latin America, UNHCR, civil society and the international community.

Despite being a non-binding regional instrument, with different degrees of ratification and application, many of the objectives designed to improve the living conditions of uncounted IDPs have been implemented due to the declaration.

Nonetheless, now that the declaration's thirtieth anniversary has passed, the region faces new protection challenges, such as displacement caused by organized crime and other situations of violence, as well as displacement caused by natural disasters and climate change.

### A new opportunity

To celebrate the anniversary, and to define an action plan that takes into account new challenges and realities in the region, representatives of the Governments and civil society for Latin America and the Caribbean met in Brasilia in December 2014. This process, led by UNHCR and supported by the Norwegian Refugee Council, gave way to a new Plan of Action to strengthen international protection for refugees, IDPs and stateless people. This has been adopted and will guide the region's actions in the coming decade. The plan introduced new elements related to the protection of refugees and IDPs, geographic expansion to integrate the Caribbean, recognition of complex challenges due to organized crime in the region, the need to improve analysis and comprehension of displacement and identify its causes, a commitment to end statelessness within the next decade, and a recognition of challenges due to climate change and natural disasters. Despite these major achievements, there are still challenges to recognize due to new causes of displacement in the region.

The Plan of Action translates to a new protection agenda that includes the possibility to build a common understanding, best practices and tools, as well as standards for protection and operational responses.



Photocredit: NRC Colombia / Sergio Mejía. 2014

Esaud is 17 years old and lives in Tumaco (Nariño), in August 2013 the armed group that exercises control in his neighborhood issued an ultimatum to the young people: "Join us, get out of Tumaco or you will be killed." Supported by his family and teachers, Esaud fled to Bogotá. Soon after, the armed group that controls his neighborhood killed two of his friends. Esaud decided to return to Tumaco, currently he is attending an educational program of the Norwegian Refugee Council, and he rarely goes out after school.

## In brief

### InfoRM in Colombia

The InfoRM index was designed by the Joint Research Centre (JRC) of the European Commission and OCHA to identify and prioritize humanitarian risk throughout the world. Bringing experience from the Global Focus Model and building new tools for risk monitoring and measurement, this index is designed to provide a ranking of humanitarian risk by country, and to isolate threats and vulnerabilities by country in order to mitigate that risk and support humanitarian actors' decision-making.

Colombia has experience with a series of risk measurement tools, which is why JRC and OCHA piloted a sub-national InfoRM index for the country. It will build on earlier experiences, such as the Humanitarian Situation Risk Index of OCHA Colombia and the Government's Victimization Risk Index. In consultation with JRC, OCHA and UNICEF will design an InfoRM index for children and adolescents, providing a specific indicator by municipality for general risk and specific risk to children and adolescents. UNICEF will

hold a workshop on 19 March, during which members of the humanitarian community will be consulted to provide their inputs to this new information management tool<sup>3</sup>.

### Colombia launches the Core Humanitarian Standards in Spanish

HAP International and the Instituto de Estudios sobre Conflictos y Acción Humanitaria (IECAH), with the support of the Humanitarian Studies Institute (HSI), launched the [Core Humanitarian Standards \(CHS\)](#) in Bogota on 18 February<sup>4</sup>.

The CHS represent a major advance in humanitarian standards. They are the result of an international consultative process led by HAP, People in Aid and the Sphere Project, in collaboration with humanitarian agencies worldwide. The CHS also define the quality of humanitarian action, paying particular attention to accountability to affected communities and people affected by humanitarian crises.

Following the launch, the first practical CHS workshop was held on 19 and 20 February. Members of humanitarian organizations from across the country, as well as UARIV and UNGRD representatives, were trained on implementing the standards. They will be able to replicate this knowledge and apply it to their interventions.

## Stories from the Field

**From health promoter to medicine student**  
By: Aleyda Valdes, OCHA.



Read the story:  
<http://bit.ly/1GjbtK>

Photocredit: Aleyda Vlades, OCHA. Resguardo indígena Makaguan, Tame (Arauca), Colombia.

**New roof, new life**  
By: Diana Anacona, OCHA.



Read the story:  
<http://bit.ly/18X83pD>

Photocredit: Diana Anacona, OCHA. Tame (Arauca), Colombia.

**Colombian Red Cross, 100 years of stories**  
By: Cruz Roja Colombiana.



Read the story:  
<http://bit.ly/1Etm3mn>

Photocredit: Cruz Roja Colombiana. Reubicación de comunidad (Sucre), Colombia.

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OCHA humanitarian bulletins are available at: [www.salahumanitaria.co](http://www.salahumanitaria.co) | [www.unocha.org](http://www.unocha.org) | [www.reliefweb.int](http://www.reliefweb.int)

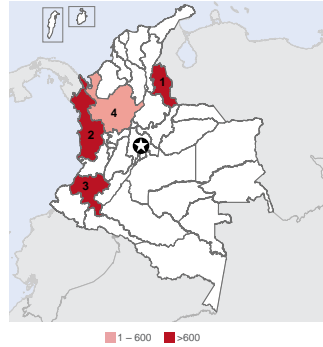
All the information reflected in this report has been processed by OCHA from official and secondary sources. Data for mass displacement and protection of civilians has been processed by OCHA Colombia through the Integrated Humanitarian Information System. Sources: Unidad para la Atención y Reparación Integral a las Víctimas (UARIV); Dirección para la Acción Integral Contra Minas Antipersonal (DAIMCA); Sistema Integrado de Información Humanitaria (SIDIH/Monitor).

<sup>3</sup> For more information, visit: <http://www.inform-index.org/>

<sup>4</sup> Download the CHS in Spanish: <http://www.corehumanitarianstandard.org/files/files/Core%20Humanitarian%20Standard%20-%20Spanish.pdf>



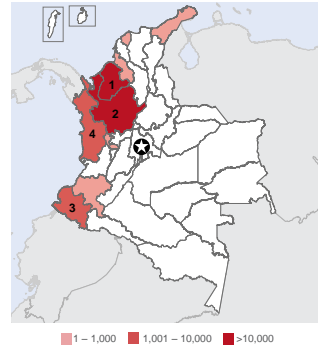
Map 1: No. of IDPs in mass events. Feb. 2015



Department	No.IDPs
1 Norte de Santander	661
2 Chocó	655
3 Cauca	654
4 Antioquia	46
<b>Total</b>	<b>2,016</b>

Source: OCHA-Monitor

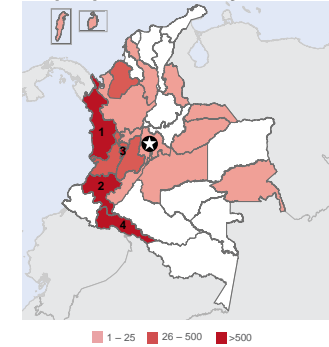
Map 2: No. of People affected by access and mobility constraints. Feb. 2015



Department	No.People
1 Córdoba	95,300
2 Antioquia	15,934
3 Nariño	4,250
4 Chocó	1,700
5 Sucre	816
Other	1,524
<b>Total</b>	<b>119,524</b>

Source: OCHA-Monitor

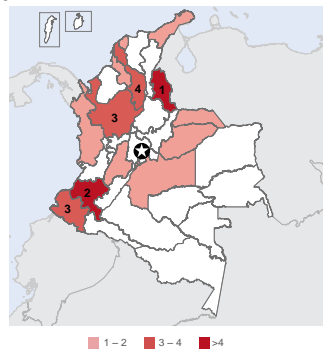
Map 3: No. of people affected by disasters. Feb. 2015



Department	No.People
1 Chocó	20,210
2 Cauca	1,450
3 Quindío	642
4 Putumayo	641
5 Valle del Cauca	283
Other	444
<b>Total</b>	<b>23,670</b>

Source: UNGRD

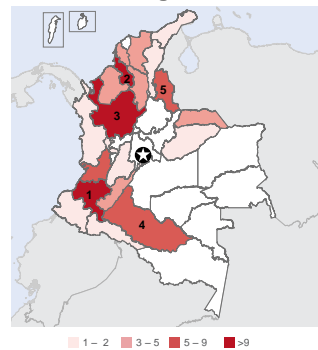
Map 4: No. of armed actions. Feb. 2015



Department	No.Actions
1 Norte de Santander	9
2 Cauca	5
3 Antioquia	4
4 Nariño	4
5 Bolívar	3
Other	13
<b>Total</b>	<b>38</b>

Source: OCHA-Monitor

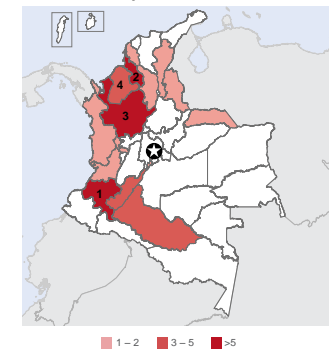
Map 5: No. of attacks against civilians. Feb. 2015



Department	No.Attacks
1 Cauca	24
2 Sucre	11
3 Antioquia	10
4 Caquetá	8
5 Norte de Santander	7
Other	38
<b>Total</b>	<b>98</b>

Source: OCHA-Monitor

Map 6: No. of threats (individual/collective). Feb. 2015



Department	No.Threats
1 Cauca	14
2 Sucre	11
3 Antioquia	6
4 Córdoba	5
5 Caquetá	3
Other	16
<b>Total</b>	<b>55</b>

Source: OCHA-Monitor