

HIGHLIGHTS

- Ombudsman's Office presented the report *Voices and Opportunities for Children and Adolescents in Peace-Building in Colombia*.
- El Niño has reached the strong-intensity category with humanitarian consequences.
- UNDP analyzes potential risks of election fraud and violence during local elections.

FIGURES

No. of IDPs in mass events. Sept. 2015 (OCHA)	1,074
No. of people affected by access and mobility constraints. Sept. 2015 (OCHA)	57,075

FUNDING

US\$85,382,796

2015 humanitarian funding being implemented as of 20 Oct. 2015 (OCHA 4W)



OCHA/Felinto Córdoba

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Children's voices in peacebuilding

By UNICEF Colombia

On National Human Rights Day in Colombia (9 September), the Ombudsman's Office, with the support of UNICEF and COALICO¹ presented in a public event its report *Transitional Justice: Voices and Opportunities for Children and Adolescents in Peace-Building in Colombia*.

The report focuses on children and adolescents, who represent more than 30 per cent of the victims of armed conflict in Colombia. The report aims to help avoid the mistakes of the past. It explains that all the society can contribute so that children and adolescents, who continue to be victims of the conflict, see their rights repaired in the best possible way.

The report approaches transitional justice from the perspective of experiences in Colombia and internationally, with the objective of compiling lessons learned from children's points of view. Two important reference points in the report relate to the demobilization process of paramilitary groups, together with the Justice and Peace Law of 2005 (Law 975) and the Victim's Law of 2011 (Law 1448).

In the report, the Ombudsman's Office considers the voices of children and adolescents: we need to know from them what works and what doesn't work, what is lacking in the current context, and what they want for themselves and other children who have suffered throughout this long conflict.

The report contains analysis, with updated figures, of the principal violations of the rights of children in the framework of the armed conflict, based on six categories established by the United Nations Security Council. Forced displacement was also included.³ The report also analyses the implementation of current public policies on the rights of children and adolescents, taking into account the 10 principles for victims defined at the negotiating table in Havana.⁴

The numbers below relate to the armed conflict in Colombia between 1985 and 2014.²

30% of victims are or were minors at the time their rights were violated.

13.4% of minors in Colombia were victims of the conflict.

+2.1 million children were victims of forced displacement.

57,134 children and adolescents were subject to threats.

8,601 children and adolescents were victims of forced disappearance.

10,135 children and adolescents were victims of terrorism, armed confrontation or ambushes.

7 children and adolescents were murdered every day.

¹ COALICO: Coalición contra la vinculación de niños, niñas y jóvenes al conflicto armado en Colombia.

² According to the report "Justicia Transicional: Voces y Oportunidades para los niños, niñas y adolescentes en la construcción de paz en Colombia". <http://bit.ly/1JWXeif>

³ The report analyses: killing and maiming of children; recruiting and using child soldiers; attacks against schools or hospitals; rape or other grave sexual violence against children; abduction of children; denial of humanitarian access for children; forced displacement.

⁴ 1.Acknowledgment of victims; 2.Acknowledgment of responsibility; 3.Satisfaction of victims' rights; 4.Victims' participation; 5.Clarity the truth; 6.Victims' reparation; 7.Protection and security guarantees; 8.Guarantees of non-repetition; 9.The principle of reconciliation; 10.Rights-based approach.

The report formulates recommendations for a minimum humanitarian agreement that contributes to peacebuilding from the perspective of the rights of children and adolescents. Recommendations are directed to the Government and relevant institutions, including the Instituto Colombiano de Bienestar Familiar, Ministry of Defence, Ministry of Education and Agencia Colombiana para la Reintegración. The report also makes specific recommendations to FARC-EP, which could also be applicable to other non-State armed groups.

Key recommendations include:

- Release all children and adolescents who have been recruited. Consider them as victims.
- Establish effective mechanisms to reduce impunity in case of violations of children's and adolescents' rights.
- Guarantee truth, justice, full reparation and non-repetition for children and adolescents, focusing on their superior interest and the prevalence of their rights.
- Ensure the participation of children and adolescents in all issues that affect them.
- Guarantee adequate psychosocial accompaniment for children and adolescents to support the rebuilding of their life projects.

El Niño increases intensity

This section includes contributions by the Food Security and Nutrition Cluster

El Niño has increased its intensity over the past several months. It is currently in the strong-intensity category, according to the Instituto de Hidrología, Meteorología y Estudios Ambientales (IDEAM). It is expected to be stronger than El Niño 1998, one of the strongest recorded in history.

IDEAM⁵ estimates that El Niño will continue throughout 2015 and into the first quarter of 2016, when it will reach its maximum intensity, coinciding with the dry season.

The precipitation deficit in September was over 70 per cent above historical averages for the period. In some areas, such as Tolima department, temperatures were 5°C above average.

IDEAM also predicted that the second rainy season of the year, between October and November, will suffer from deficits between 40 and 60 per cent, as compared with historical averages, particularly on the Caribbean coast and in the Andean region.

Forest fires and drops in river levels are the main effects of El Niño

Strong winds, combined with the precipitation deficit and high temperatures, have helped to spread forest fires. In September, firefighters throughout the country fought more than 577 forest fires. This is 33 more than the number reported in August and 214 more than those reported in July.

Forest fires were registered in 21 out of 32 departments in Colombia, with the most devastating fires reported in Huila in the south, Caldas and Cundinamarca in the centre and Nariño in the south-west, with more than 13,000 hectares affected (see Map 1).

El Niño is a marine and atmospheric event that consists of an abnormal heating of surface waters in the central and eastern Pacific tropics, near the Peruvian, Ecuadorian and southern Colombian coastlines. Depending on its intensity, it can affect world climate patterns. This heating of the surface of the Pacific Ocean is cyclical, although not periodic, and it occurs once every two to seven years.

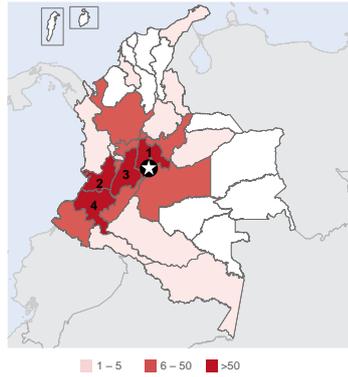
Colombia's rainy seasons tend to weaken and its dry seasons strengthen, on average, over a twelve-month period. Some registered events were shorter by about seven months, and others up to 28 months.

The effects of El Niño are notable in the northern Pacific, Andean and Caribbean coast region.

Sources: UNGRD, IDEAM.

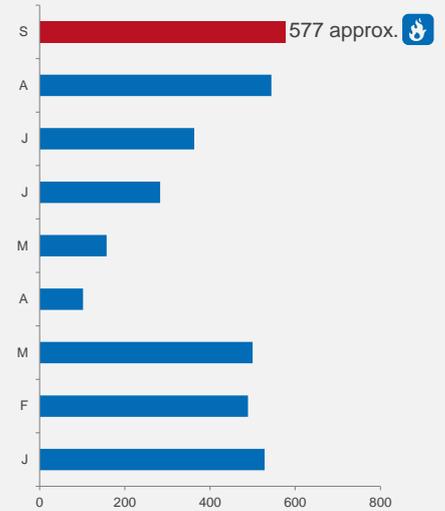
⁵ Based on international weather forecast models, such as NOAA; and the International Research Institute for Climate and Society (IRI).

Map 1: No. of forest fires. Sept. 2015



Department	No. of fires
1 Cundinamarca	131
2 Valle del Cauca	107
3 Tolima	101
4 Cauca	79
5 Nariño	47
Other	112
Total	577

Illustration 1: No. of forest fires Jan.-Sept. 2015



Source: OCHA-Monitor (Accessed on: 19/10/2015)

Through the end of September, the Ministry of the Environment estimated that 93,000 hectares were affected by forest fires related to the drought and high temperatures caused by El Niño.

In addition, the fall in precipitation has led to record low levels in rivers throughout the country. The Magdalena and Cauca rivers, which supply water to 70 per cent of the country, were the most affected.

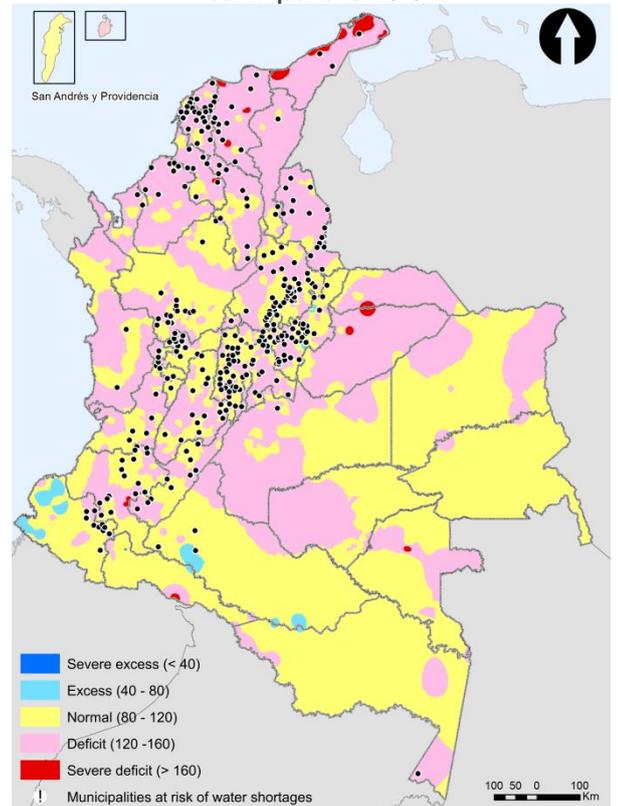
Alarming humanitarian consequences

Events associated with El Niño have serious humanitarian consequences in many regions. These are of particular concern in rural communities with access constraints and where other factors, such as armed violence and high poverty rates, increase the population's vulnerability.

Water, sanitation and hygiene

Of the 1,123 municipalities of Colombia, 238 currently face water rationing and limited access to water. The most affected departments include La Guajira, Bolívar, Valle del Cauca, Caldas, Cundinamarca, Cauca, Magdalena, Boyacá, Cesar, Huila and Tolima. IDEAM identified 312 municipalities at risk of water shortages due to El Niño (see Map 2). Depending on their capacity, affected municipalities have started

Map 2: Probable changes in precipitations during the fourth quarter of 2015



Source: IDEAM

temporarily rationing and delivering water with tankers. However, several communities have indicated that these distributions are insufficient for their consumption, hygiene and other domestic uses.

Due to a limitation on water access, affected communities are storing water in unsafe conditions that could lead to the spread of vectors. Health authorities have issued alerts due to the high risk of breakouts of diseases such as chikungunya virus and dengue fever. Since January 2015, at least 334,429 cases of chikungunya virus have been reported in Colombia.

Forest fires are also contaminating water sources with ash and other residue. In Cauca, on the Pacific coast, water infrastructure was damaged by forest fires, and more than 40,000 people were left with no water services for a week.



Food security, nutrition and livelihoods

The effects of El Niño have led to a fall in agricultural and livestock production, a loss of crops, a drop in milk and meat production, the death of livestock, a loss of rural daily labour and family incomes, an increase in food prices and a direct impact on overall food supplies.

The Sociedad de Agricultores de Colombia (Farmers Society of Colombia) predicted that food prices will increase due to the drop in production (5 per cent drop in crop production), affecting food quality, and food and livestock production costs.

There is concern over El Niño's effect on soil due to forest fires and the length of droughts, both of which affect agricultural production and food security.

The drop in river water levels is also limiting movement in many estuaries throughout Colombia, causing an increase in transportation costs and food prices.

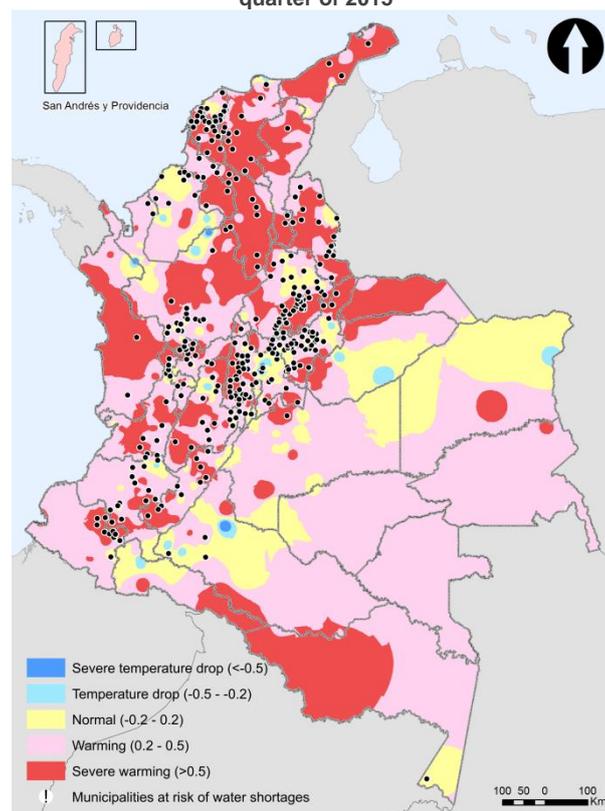
La Guajira, a case study

La Guajira department, located in the far north of Colombia along the Venezuelan border, is currently the department most affected by the lack of rainfall since 2010. The international community, and particularly the Food Security and Nutrition Cluster, expressed grave concern due to the impact of El Niño and the border crisis with Venezuela.

According to the results of a cluster evaluation, the impact on livelihoods, food security and water and sanitation limitations are affecting nutrition and health in La Guajira.

Agriculture, livestock farming, remittances and small-scale commerce are the most affected livelihoods by the current crisis. There is a severe impact in terms of food access, consumption, availability and use. In the water, sanitation and hygiene sector, the largest impacts are related to the drying out of *jagüeyes* (local wells), poor water quality, a lack of water treatment in homes, low water consumption levels, water access and distribution issues in rural areas, use of unsafe recipients for water transportation and poor water storage.

Map 3: Probable changes in temperature during the fourth quarter of 2015



Source: IDEAM

According to data from UNICEF, the anemia level among children under age 5 in some indigenous communities in La Guajira is 38 per cent. Chronic malnutrition for children under 5 years reached 50 per cent in some communities, as compared with a departmental average of 27.9 per cent. Nationally, the figure is 13.2 per cent. Acute malnutrition according to ICBF is over 3 per cent and may increase in the coming months, with some municipalities already showing levels above 5 per cent. The national average is 0.9 per cent.



Photocredit: FAO Colombia. Communities in La Guajira collecting water. Colombia, 2015.

At least 184,000 people were identified in the department in disperse rural areas and border communities who need immediate food and water assistance, as well as protection of livelihoods and property. The Food Security and Nutrition Cluster provided a series of recommendations for its partners on how to deal with this crisis.

Electoral risks during local elections

This section is contributed by UNDP Colombia

Local elections will be held throughout Colombia this month. Over the past month, institutions and civil-society organizations (CSOs) raised concern over potential risks of election fraud and violence.

According to the CSO Misión de Observación Electoral,⁶ 487 municipalities face considerable risks for election fraud (e.g., atypical null voting patterns, variation in participation at the municipal level), amounting to 44 per cent of all municipalities in the country. This is 10 per cent less than in the 2011 local elections.

Sixty-five per cent of all municipalities have had legal denunciations for attempts to stuff ballot boxes.⁷ To understand the full dimension of the problem, more than 4 million Colombians registered their identification for the first time to vote for these upcoming elections. The Consejo Nacional Electoral (CNE) invalidated more than 1.6 million of these identifications less than 20 days before the elections, corresponding to 40 per cent of new registrations. In 2011, 700,000 registrations were declared null. This situation shows the high risk for the upcoming local elections. It also reflects a closer control on registrations by the CNE.

In the upcoming elections, 113,426 candidacies were registered, of whom 967 were declared null due to disciplinary sanctions that impede the candidates from aspiring to public office. Despite this, these candidates had received the support of political parties. According to national think tank Fundación Paz y Reconciliación, 17 of 32 departments had candidacies to gubernatorial office with some sort of legal suspicion of connection to paramilitary groups or crimes connected to irregular management of public funds.⁸ Several of these candidates may be elected on 25 October.

In addition, MOE identified 438 municipalities facing risks of electoral violence, a 2 per cent drop as compared with 2011. Nonetheless, this statistic reflects that 40 per cent of Colombian municipalities continue to be at risk of violence associated with the electoral process. In particular, MOE analyses risk of violations related to freedom of the press; risk of forced displacement; risk of political violence against candidates; presence and unilateral acts by post-demobilization armed groups (PDAGs); and presence of FARC-EP and ELN.

According to data from the Ombudsman's Office, in this election cycle there have been at least 106 acts of violence in 87 municipalities, with the most common being death threats.

⁶ Electoral risks maps. Local authorities' elections, Colombia 2015. Misión de Observación Electoral (MOE). September 2015. <http://bit.ly/1RxOTba>

⁷ Stuff ballot boxes (trashumancia electoral) refer to registering to vote in a municipality different from the one of residence and is a crime based on Colombian Criminal Code under the definition of fraud in document registration (Registraduría Nacional).

⁸ Candidatos a Gobernaciones herederos de la ilegalidad. Fundación Paz y Reconciliación. Agosto, 2015. <http://bit.ly/1QdPnIB>

There have been six assassinations of candidates or their immediate family members and six assassinations of sitting public officials so far this year.

The MOE detected risks of violence together with risk of electoral fraud in 204 municipalities, 18 per cent of the national total. These figures represent a 15 per cent drop as compared with the 2011 local elections. But as these risks coincided in 241 municipalities, the situation continues to be of concern.

This analysis seeks to serve as an early warning so that the authorities and civil society mitigate risk and guarantee the exercise of free suffrage.

Violence against candidates and public officials increase

According to the [Monitor](#) information system, there were 117 violent events against candidates and public officials between January and September 2015. These attacks included 72 individual or collective threats, 20 homicides and 16 homicide attempts. Just three departments concentrated one third of all events: Valle del Cauca, Antioquia and Cauca. According to MOE, Antioquia and Cauca ranked first and second in terms of municipalities with risk of electoral violence. Valle del Cauca was in eighth place (see Map 4).

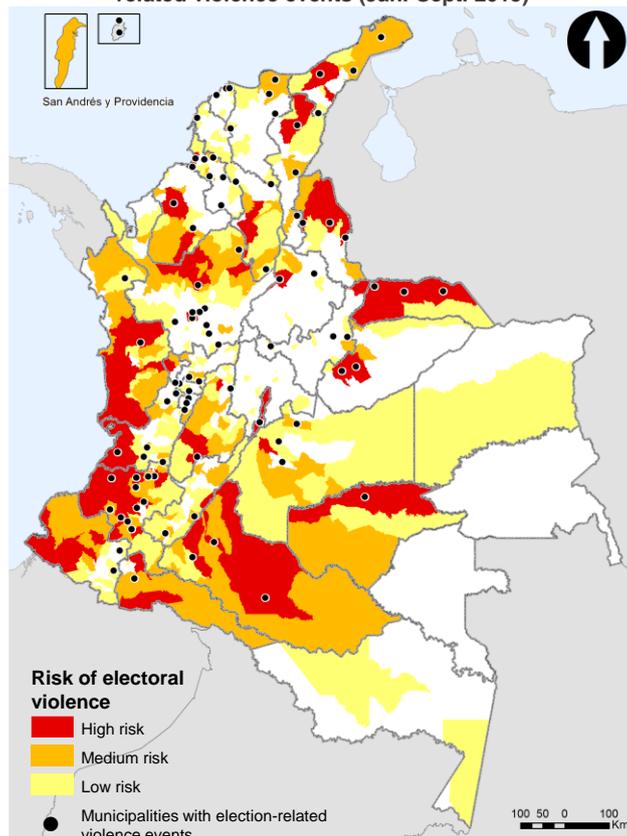
Election-related violence is hard to monitor, but 37 per cent of violent acts against candidates and officials occurred in August and September, according to a review of Monitor data.

Despite MOE estimates that the electoral violence risk has slightly decreased compared with previous elections, the think tank CERAC⁹ stated that the number of victims of political and electoral violence¹⁰ increased by 48 per cent between January and September 2015, compared with 2011 local elections. CERAC considers that electoral violence is becoming more selective; it is less linked to traditional actors of the conflict, such as FARC-EP and ELN, and it is becoming more connected to new organized crime and PDAGs.

Ninety-six per cent of electoral and political violence events reported by CERAC were perpetrated by unknown actors and concentrated in areas where guerrillas do not have a high presence. The Ombudsman's Office indicated that PDAGs represent the main threat in the current electoral process. Main risks are related to death threats, pressure on voters and mobility restrictions.

However, the Ombudsman's Office and CSOs have received information of restrictions imposed by FARC-EP in the areas where this group has major influence, such as Caquetá and Casanare. Ensuring fair and safe elections is of particular importance in the

Map 4: Municipalities at risk of electoral violence / Election-related violence events (Jan.-Sept. 2015)



Sources: Municipalities at risk of electoral violence (MOE), Municipalities with election-related violence events Jan.-Sept. 2015 (OCHA-Monitor, accessed on 09/10/2015)

According to Monitor data, 37 per cent of violent acts against candidates and officials occurred in August and September

⁹ See: http://productos.cerac.org.co/wp-content/uploads/2015/10/Semanario38_ViolenciaPolitica-SeNiegaADesaparecer.pdf

¹⁰ Including injuries, threats and homicides of municipal and departmental candidates and political movements' members.

current juncture, considering the role that local authorities will have in a possible peace-agreement scenario.

Unilateral ceasefire reached two months

The de-escalation of armed actions continued while there were major advances in the negotiations in Havana. On 23 September, the Government of Colombia and FARC-EP announced an historic agreement on transitional justice, one of the most controversial issues on the agenda.

The second month of the FARC-EP guerrilla unilateral ceasefire officially ended on 19 September. The ceasefire, which began on 20 July, led to a 72 per cent drop in armed confrontations as compared with the average of the previous period,¹¹ according to Monitor, along with an 81 per cent drop in attacks on illicit targets and a 100 per cent drop in the number of people affected by access constraints (associated with armed violence). Categories such as the number of attacks on civilians and the number of IDPs in mass events increased by 4.5 and 173 per cent, respectively. However, FARC-EP participated minimally in these events. The majority were attributed to non-identified actors or the ELN, and to armed clashes between the armed forces and the EPL or ELN.

According to OCHA's monitoring, in the two months of the FARC-EP unilateral ceasefire, FARC-EP participated in 29 violent acts, including armed confrontations, and attacks on civilians and illicit targets.

CERAC focuses its analysis on conflict de-escalation measures. During this two-month period, it identified 14 events with FARC-EP's participation, including three violations (offensive actions) of the ceasefire, three actions pending verification and eight armed confrontations with the armed forces.¹²

During the second month of the unilateral ceasefire (20 August – 19 September), CERAC registered no violent actions sufficiently documented so as to be attributed to FARC-EP, five events were identified with possible participation of FARC-EP. In that same period, the Ombudsman's Office identified at least two armed confrontations between FARC-EP and the armed forces, and another 12 possible events with FARC-EP participation.¹³ The perpetrators were not clearly identified, but the Ombudsman's Office considers it important that FARC-EP clarifies whether it participated in these events. (see Table 1).

Table 1: No. of actions with possible FARC-EP participation. Aug. 20 – Sept. 19, 2015

Type of action	Ombudsman office	CERAC	OCHA-Monitor*
Combats FARC-EP / Military	2	2	5
Attacks against military infrastructure			1
MAP/MUSE accidents (in zones with FARC-EP influence)	4	3	1
Use of IED	1		1
Threats against civilians	4		4
Kidnapping	1		
	12	5	11

ELN was principal perpetrator of armed confrontations in September

Coinciding with the FARC-EP ceasefire, since July there has been an increase in the ELN's participation in armed confrontations. In September, this guerrilla group participated in 43 per cent of all events, according to Monitor (see Illustration 1).

¹¹ 22/05/2015 - 19/07/2015.

¹² <http://blog.cerac.org.co/segundo-reporte-de-monitoreo-mensual-de-medidas-de-desescalamiento-del-conflicto-armado-interno-en-colombia>

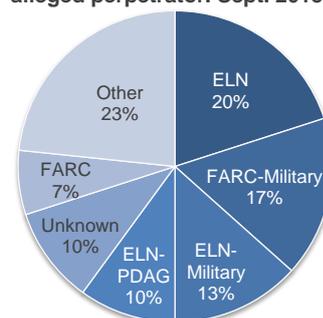
¹³ <http://www.defensoria.gov.co/es/nube/noticias/4144/Estable-situaci%C3%B3n-de-derechos-humanos-tras-segundo-mes-de-cese-al-fuego-por-parte-de-las-Farc-conflicto-armado-cese-al-fuego-proceso-de-paz-FARC-Grupos-armados-ilegales.htm>

During the FARC-EP unilateral ceasefire, EPL and ELN have caused most of mass displacement events.

As CERAC also documented, over the past two months violent events with other guerrilla groups showed a 33 per cent increase as compared with the average monthly rates registered from the beginning of the peace process with FARC-EP. The ELN's actions are the main factor of this increase.

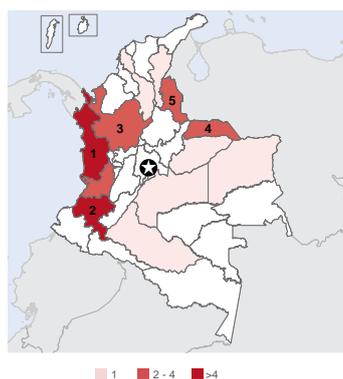
ELN actions were focused in Chocó, Cauca, Cesar, Arauca and Norte de Santander. They caused road blocks, affected civilian infrastructure, and caused forced displacements and movement limitations.

Illustration 2: Armed actions by alleged perpetrator. Sept. 2015.



Source: OCHA-Monitor (Accessed on 09/10/2015)

Map 5: No. of armed actions. Sept. 2015



Source: OCHA-Monitor (Accessed on 09/10/2015).

Indigenous people most affected by displacement and access limitations

Indigenous communities were the most affected by mass displacement during September. In Carmen de Atrato, Chocó, on the Pacific coast, at least 239 Embera indigenous people were displaced due to ELN actions and weapon contamination in their territories.¹⁴ In Morales, Cauca, also on the Pacific coast, about 790 Nasa indigenous people temporarily displaced to safe shelters in their community due to the ongoing combat between FARC-EP and armed forces. In Arauca on the Venezuelan border, the remote Hitnu indigenous community was forcibly displaced due to the presence of unexploded ordnance.

Mass displacement has dropped so far this year, as compared to prior years, but it is disproportionately affecting indigenous populations. Some 43 per cent of IDPs in mass events are indigenous, mainly from remote rural areas with limited access to basic goods and services.

Regarding access limitations, OCHA received reports of 10 situations related to armed violence that limited mobility and restricted access to basic goods and services. The event with the greatest impact affected 3,000 indigenous and Afro-Colombians in rural Riosucio, Chocó, where communities were forced to limit their movements and daily activities due to the presence of armed groups, fear of weapons contamination in their territories, and threats and restrictions imposed by non-State armed groups.¹⁵ There is no clear information about the perpetrators of these actions, but FARC-EP and the PDAG Autodefensas Gaitanistas¹⁶ are present in this area.

¹⁴ See flash update: <http://bit.ly/1NFPFT6>

¹⁵ See flash update: <http://bit.ly/1Nz1XON>

¹⁶ Also called Los Urabeños or Clan Úsuga.

Celebrating International Peace Day

International Peace Day was celebrated on 21 September, as decreed by the UN General Assembly, to reinforce the ideals of peace throughout the world. The 2015 slogan “Alliances for Peace, Dignity for All” highlights the importance that all social groups work together to achieve peace.

In Colombia, UNDP organized a concert with Santiago Cruz, the UNDP Goodwill Ambassador, and other national artists.

Fabrizio Hochschild, the Resident and Humanitarian Coordinator in Colombia, said that in moments with increasing violence in many places around the world, “Colombia is a country where, instead of sinking further into war, there is a firm advance towards peace. A country that represents hope. Hope that it is possible to say: No longer! No more conflict. No more violence. No more victims.”



Photocredit: UNDP Colombia.



CBPF finances new projects

The Country-Based Pooled Fund (CBPF),¹⁷ previously known as the Emergency Response Fund, opened its second call for projects addressing chronic and/or protracted emergencies. Eligible organizations have until 31 October 2015 to present their proposals.¹⁸

This financing modality aims to allocate resources to respond to chronic, prolonged and underfinanced emergencies, or to emergencies with clear response gaps. The CBPF will principally allot resources in financing cycles, maintaining a minimum reserve of US\$300,000. Rounds of financing will be opened twice a year through a call for proposals indicating strategic priorities, selection criteria and main steps of the review process.

CBPF-financed projects should respond to the strategic objectives stipulated in the SRP 2015:

- Improve the response capacity to provide effective and timely assistance to save lives.
- Increase the resilience of the affected communities and of those at risk.
- Promote an effective, integral and multisectoral response that assures the centrality of protection.

CBPFs focus on the needs of affected people. They prioritize victims of forced displacement and people affected by natural disasters or with access limitations. They also prioritize the protection of women, children, adolescents and youths, the elderly, disabled people, indigenous people and Afro-Colombians.

¹⁷ Country-Based Pool Funds are humanitarian financing instruments established by the Emergency Response Coordinator (ERC) of the United Nations and administered by the Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA) at the country level, with the leadership of the Humanitarian Coordinator. The CBPF allots resources in response to humanitarian needs prioritized through joint inclusive planning at country level. The CBPF promotes a strategic and pertinent response through harmonization with the Humanitarian Programming Cycle (HPC) and Humanitarian Response Plan (HRP)

¹⁸ See <https://www.humanitarianresponse.info/es/operations/colombia/article/abierta-segunda-convocatoria-fondo-cbpf-2015>

In brief

Humanitarian crisis on the Colombian-Venezuelan border

The Government of Venezuela declared a State of Constitutional Exception on 19 August in municipalities of the border state of Táchira. These measures were expanded, and by late September they were in effect in 23 municipalities of Táchira, Zulia and Apure states, bordering the Colombian departments of La Guajira, Norte de Santander, Arauca and Vichada. All border crossings are currently closed in Norte de Santander, La Guajira and Vichada.

The official registries for returnees from Venezuela in Norte de Santander, La Guajira, Arauca and Vichada were closed on 23 September. However, there are continuing reports of returns. By late September, 1,768 deportees and 22,194 returnees had returned to Colombia fearing deportation. Find the latest information in situation reports here: <http://bit.ly/1NsrtDv>

Stories from the field

A relief from forced displacement

By *Diana Anacona/OCHA Colombia*



The story of Carlos, the local nurse that works tirelessly for his people, even after being forced to displace from his community.

<http://bit.ly/1LC7dvs>

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OCHA humanitarian bulletins are available at: www.salahumanitaria.co | www.unocha.org | 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).