



Australian Government
Refugee Review Tribunal

Country Advice

Colombia

Colombia – COL38612 – FARC – Security situation – Groups at risk – State protection – Internal relocation

20 April 2011

1. Please provide information regarding the human rights/security situation in Colombia generally, particularly in reference to extortion, violence and other threats of harm perpetrated by FARC.

Colombia has been engaged in an ongoing civil war against the Revolutionary Armed Forces of Colombia (FARC – *Fuerzas Armadas Revolucionarias de Colombia*) and the National Liberation Army (ELN – *Ejercito de Liberacion Nacional*) since the 1960s. According to the US Department of State (USDOS) in 2010, Colombia's 46-year-long internal armed conflict continued between the government and terrorist organisations, particularly the FARC and ELN.¹ USDOS reported that FARC and ELN committed a number of human rights abuses in 2010, including – but not limited to – political killings; killings of members of the public, security forces and local officials; kidnappings and forced disappearances; bribery and intimidation of judges, prosecutors and witnesses; attacks against human rights activists; violence against women; and harassment, intimidation and killings of teachers and trade unionists.²

According to globalsecurity.org, FARC is Colombia's oldest, largest, most capable, and best-equipped Marxist insurgency. As a result of military and police operations against them, FARC's strength has been reduced to an estimated 8,000 members in 2010, from approximately 16,000 in 2001. While fewer FARC members deserted in 2009 than in 2008, Colombian security forces captured or killed a number of mid-level leaders. Security forces continued to debrief FARC deserters, and reduced the amount of territory in which FARC could operate freely.³

In March 2011, the Colombian government was reportedly refurbishing its armed forces in expectation of a final victory over FARC, who were thought to be losing military momentum. FARC's reputation was thought to be tarnished due to the group's association with drug lords. FARC was also affected by the recession in Venezuela, which reportedly forced Venezuelan President Hugo Chavez to reduce aid to the group. According to the Colombian Defence Minister, the "FARC guerrilla movement is surrounded...with its operational capacity very diminished and limited following government security measures".⁴

¹ US Department of State 2011, *Country Reports on Human Rights Practices 2010 – Colombia*, 8 April, Introduction – Attachment 1

² US Department of State 2011, *Country Reports on Human Rights Practices 2010 – Colombia*, 8 April, Introduction – Attachment 1

³ 'Revolutionary Armed Forces of Colombia Fuerzas Armadas Revolucionarias de Colombia FARC' (Undated), Global Security website <http://www.globalsecurity.org/military/world/para/farc.htm> – Accessed 13 April 2011 – Attachment 2

⁴ 'Colombia expects final victory over FARC rebels' 2011, Dalje website, 29 March <http://dalje.com/en-economy/colombia-expects-final-victory-over-farc-rebels/348747> – Accessed 13 April 2011 – Attachment 3

In September 2010, FARC military commander and second-in-command, Jorge Briceño Suarez – also known as ‘Mono Jojoy’ – was killed in a Colombian airstrike in the region of La Macarena in the central Colombian Meta department. Mono Jojoy’s death added to additional setbacks recently endured by FARC, including the 2008 death of high-level commander Raul Reyes in an airstrike, and the passing of the group’s founder and supreme leader Manuel Marulanda, also in 2008. An airstrike by Colombian forces also killed FARC commander Domingo Biojo, political leader of the FARC 48th Front.⁵

This, however, is not to say that FARC is a defeated entity. In February 2011, a roadside bomb in the eastern department of Arauca wounded at least 29 soldiers in FARC’s most serious attack for 2011 to date. Arauca is considered to be a “stronghold for leftist guerrilla groups due to its oil wealth and proximity with the Venezuelan border, [and it] is still a long ways from being controlled by the Colombian security forces”.⁶ FARC have a long history of targeting security forces in Arauca, and have used explosives in bicycles, cars, entire houses and strapped to donkeys. According to the Araucan governor, the region has been subject to an increase in the number of ‘express’ kidnappings, where guerrillas hold hostages in Venezuela while demanding ransoms ranging between US\$2,600 and US\$8,000. Despite a reported significant reduction in kidnappings nationally, Arauca maintains a significant number, with more than 29 cases registered in 2010.⁷

Human Rights Watch’s 2011 World Report states that FARC and ELN continued to carry out serious abuses against civilians throughout 2010, with FARC in particular regularly involved in killings, threats, forced displacements and recruiting child combatants.⁸ According to Amnesty International, the warring parties in Colombia “failed to distinguish between civilians and combatants, resulting in forced displacement, killings of civilians, sexual violence against women, hostage-taking, enforced disappearances, forced recruitment of minors and indiscriminate attacks against the civilian population”.⁹ In 2009, the overall number of kidnappings fell to 213, from 437 in 2008. While most were attributed to criminal gangs, Amnesty International claims guerrilla groups were responsible for the majority of conflict-related kidnappings.¹⁰

According to USDOS, kidnapping for both ransom and for political reasons remained a serious problem in 2010. USDOS cited the Colombian government’s National Fund for the Defence of Personal Liberty, which estimated 282 kidnappings for the year, with 64 by FARC, 35 by ELN, and the remainder by other illegal groups. Of the total, 188 were believed to be related to extortion, an increase of over 17 per cent on 2009. Some human rights groups, however, believe that many cases of kidnapping go unreported, and claim that the government figures are underestimated.¹¹ In addition to revenue-raising through extortion, FARC also reportedly held politicians, prominent citizens, and members of the security forces to use as leverage in prisoner exchanges. In March 2010, FARC kidnapped five oil company workers, all of whom were freed in a military operation. In December 2010, FARC kidnapped a police officer serving as the bodyguard of the San Antonio mayor. On the same day, FARC

⁵ ‘FARC commander ‘Mono Jojoy’ killed’ 2010, *Colombia Reports*, 23 September – Attachment 4

⁶ ‘FARC Step Up Offensive in Arauca’ 2011, In Sight website, 6 February <http://www.insightcrime.org/insight-latest-news/item/530-farc-step-up-offensive-in-arauca> – Accessed 13 April 2011 – Attachment 5

⁷ ‘FARC Step Up Offensive in Arauca’ 2011, In Sight website, 6 February <http://www.insightcrime.org/insight-latest-news/item/530-farc-step-up-offensive-in-arauca> – Accessed 13 April 2011 – Attachment 5

⁸ Human Rights Watch 2011, *World Report 2011 – Colombia*, 24 January, p.227 – Attachment 6

⁹ Amnesty International 2010, *Amnesty International Annual Report 2010 – Colombia*, p.108 – Attachment 7

¹⁰ Amnesty International 2010, *Amnesty International Annual Report 2010 – Colombia*, p.110 – Attachment 7

¹¹ US Department of State 2011, *Country Reports on Human Rights Practices 2010 – Colombia*, 8 April, Section 1.b – Attachment 1

also kidnapped a family of five, who were rescued without injury by the Colombian military the next day.¹²

In 2010, FARC continued to kill those it suspected of collaborating with government authorities or alleged paramilitary groups. USDOS cited a Presidential Program for Human Rights report that stated in the year to August 2010, FARC had killed at least 129 civilians, including a bus driver in Cauca, three civilians in Putomayo, and a man and his grand-daughter in Narino.¹³ In June 2008, four schoolteachers were reportedly killed by FARC, who claimed that the teachers, all of whom had been recently posted to remote schoolhouses, were army informants.¹⁴ According to USDOS, FARC sometimes used civilians to carry out attacks. In March 2010, FARC convinced a 12-year-old child to unknowingly carry an explosive device to a local police station where FARC detonated the device, killing the child and wounding five people, including two police officers. In November, FARC concealed a bomb in a crate of oranges and placed it on a bus, which was detonated when the unsuspecting bus driver parked in front of a police station. The driver was killed, and 11 people were injured, including 10 police officers.¹⁵

Sources state that guerrillas – including FARC – have forcibly displaced people to clear drug and weapons transit routes in strategic areas, and to remove individuals suspected of collaborating with either the government or with new illegal armed groups. Guerrillas have also imposed de facto blockades on communities in regions where they had significant influence. In such cases, indigenous people would be forcibly recruited or obligated to corroborate, and their freedom of movement would be restricted.¹⁶ In 2010, FARC continued to establish illegal checkpoints on rural highways and rivers, however the Colombian Ministry of Defense reported only one kidnapping at an illegal roadblock during the year.¹⁷

The town of La Julia has been referred to by current Colombian President Juan Manuel Santos as “the cradle of the FARC”.¹⁸ According to the Center for Strategic and International Studies in 2009, “[t]he towns of Uribe and La Julia, once FARC strong points, are now considered transition zones”¹⁹, meaning that while FARC fighters have been expelled from these areas, security is not yet fully consolidated. According to *Sky News*, however, FARC guerrillas killed two police officers in La Julia in February 2011. La Uribe was part of a demilitarised zone the size of Switzerland that former President Pastrana had granted to FARC as part of peace negotiations, but government soldiers moved into the area when talks broke down in 2002.²⁰

¹² US Department of State 2011, *Country Reports on Human Rights Practices 2010 – Colombia*, 8 April, Section 1.g – Attachment 1

¹³ US Department of State 2011, *Country Reports on Human Rights Practices 2010 – Colombia*, 8 April, Section 1.g – Attachment 1

¹⁴ ‘Cocaine Sustains War in Rural Colombia’ 2008, *New York Times*, 27 July

<http://www.nytimes.com/2008/07/27/world/americas/27colombia.html> – Accessed 18 April 2011 – Attachment 8

¹⁵ US Department of State 2011, *Country Reports on Human Rights Practices 2010 – Colombia*, 8 April, Section 1.g – Attachment 1

¹⁶ US Department of State 2011, *Country Reports on Human Rights Practices 2010 – Colombia*, 8 April, Section 1.g – Attachment 1

¹⁷ US Department of State 2011, *Country Reports on Human Rights Practices 2010 – Colombia*, 8 April, Section 2.d – Attachment 1

¹⁸ ‘Colombia Takes out Top FARC Leader’ 2010, Americas Society, 23 September – Attachment 9

¹⁹ Center for Strategic and International Studies 2009, *Assessment of the Government of Colombia Project*, USAID website, April 22, p.7 http://pdf.usaid.gov/pdf_docs/PDACN234.pdf – Accessed 15 April 2011 – Attachment 10

²⁰ ‘FARC rebels kill two policemen’ 2011, *Sky News*, 6 February – Attachment 11

A 2007 *USA Today* report stated La Julia had been home to three generations of FARC loyalists and a stronghold largely due to its inaccessibility. In addition, the article states FARC “owes much to revenues from the coca crops that once made La Julia a thriving drug market”. Since the arrival of counter-insurgency troops in 2006, half the population of La Julia is reported to have fled, with a local priest noting that school enrolments had dropped from 350 to 180. All vehicles coming and going to La Julia were being searched, and the cocaine trade had reportedly gone underground. The president of La Julia’s trucking co-operative claims it lost most of its members in 2006 when security forces detained 24 people accused of rebel ties. While he acknowledged that some were FARC members, he said most of those arrested were not. The town’s police commander acknowledged he was in hostile territory, with “nearby jungles dotted with FARC camps”.²¹

2. Please provide information on groups targeted by FARC for harm/extortion/kidnapping etc.

Main Groups at Risk

A number of groups are targeted by FARC for harm, extortion and kidnapping. According to the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR), these groups include:

i. Present and former members and supporters of one of the parties to the conflict

There is a risk that armed groups may target anyone considered to support a rival group, regardless if the support is real or imputed, forced or voluntary. There have been reports of coordinated attacks and kidnappings of Colombian police and security forces (and their respective families) interfering with the activities of armed groups. FARC and other guerrilla groups rely on narcotics production and trafficking for funding, and reportedly seek to control populations in coca production areas to guarantee a supply of labour. These workers may be forced to harvest crops by armed groups, and may become targets of rival groups.²²

ii. Local and regional government authorities

Threats by armed groups against current and former mayors, councillors and other local authorities are commonplace. Dozens of mayors – both serving and former – were reportedly murdered between 1998 and 2007, though the situation has improved in recent years. While the number of victims has decreased, intimidation, kidnappings and violence against local civil servants, elected officials and their respective families are reportedly still occurring.²³

iii. Judges and other persons involved in the administration of justice

Judges, prosecutors, witnesses, lawyers and others involved in legal proceedings and investigations relating to international humanitarian law (IHL) involving security forces or illegal armed groups are reportedly at risk of being killed, kidnapped or subject to ill-

²¹ ‘Stubborn rebels fight on in Colombia’ 2007, *USA Today*, 8 December http://www.usatoday.com/news/topstories/2007-12-08-3488138967_x.htm – Accessed 15 April 2011 – Attachment 12

²² UN High Commissioner for Refugees 2010, *UNHCR Eligibility Guidelines for Assessing the International Protection Needs of Asylum Seekers from Colombia*, UNHCR Refworld, 27 May, Section IV.B.1 – Attachment 13

²³ UN High Commissioner for Refugees 2010, *UNHCR Eligibility Guidelines for Assessing the International Protection Needs of Asylum Seekers from Colombia*, UNHCR Refworld, 27 May, Section IV.B.2 – Attachment 13

treatment. Witnesses in trials against members of illegal armed groups may be at risk on the basis of their actual or imputed political opinion.²⁴

iv. Civil society and human rights activists

Members of civil society and human rights activists constitute one of the most vulnerable groups in Colombia. Many human rights activists are labelled guerrilla associates by the government, and become targets of the paramilitaries. Conversely, illegal armed groups may target human rights activists and religious leaders and practitioners primarily for intimidation purposes.²⁵

v. Journalists and other media professionals

Journalists and other media professionals – and their respective families – who cover stories counter to the interests of guerrillas, paramilitaries and drug traffickers, are at risk of intimidation, threats, kidnapping, harassment and physical attacks by guerrillas, paramilitary groups and military personnel.²⁶

vi. Trade union leaders

Trade union leaders have been victims of harassment, threats and murders by paramilitary groups and guerrillas, with over 2,700 trade union leaders and activists having been murdered over the last two decades.²⁷

vii. Teachers, university professors and college students

Colombian teachers are reported to have community leadership roles bestowed to them, particularly in regional areas. Those with high profiles are reportedly exposed to significant risks, such as murder, threats and forced disappearances. Additional risk may be present if an individual is an active member of a teachers' union.²⁸

viii. Indigenous peoples and Afro-Colombians

Forced displacement of indigenous people is reportedly used by illegal armed groups as a mechanism to expropriate their land, in particular for military operations, narcotics production and trafficking, and arms trafficking. This has caused growing displacement of indigenous people to urban areas, with little possibility of safe and dignified return. Clashes between armed actors and changing territorial control between armed groups and narco-traffickers has resulted in individual and mass murders, torture, forced disappearance, threats and forced displacement against indigenous people and Afro-Colombians.²⁹

²⁴ UN High Commissioner for Refugees 2010, *UNHCR Eligibility Guidelines for Assessing the International Protection Needs of Asylum Seekers from Colombia*, UNHCR Refworld, 27 May, Section IV.B.3 – Attachment 13

²⁵ UN High Commissioner for Refugees 2010, *UNHCR Eligibility Guidelines for Assessing the International Protection Needs of Asylum Seekers from Colombia*, UNHCR Refworld, 27 May, Section IV.B.4 – Attachment 13

²⁶ UN High Commissioner for Refugees 2010, *UNHCR Eligibility Guidelines for Assessing the International Protection Needs of Asylum Seekers from Colombia*, UNHCR Refworld, 27 May, Section IV.B.5 – Attachment 13

²⁷ UN High Commissioner for Refugees 2010, *UNHCR Eligibility Guidelines for Assessing the International Protection Needs of Asylum Seekers from Colombia*, UNHCR Refworld, 27 May, Section IV.B.6 – Attachment 13

²⁸ UN High Commissioner for Refugees 2010, *UNHCR Eligibility Guidelines for Assessing the International Protection Needs of Asylum Seekers from Colombia*, UNHCR Refworld, 27 May, Section IV.B.7 – Attachment 13

²⁹ UN High Commissioner for Refugees 2010, *UNHCR Eligibility Guidelines for Assessing the International Protection Needs of Asylum Seekers from Colombia*, UNHCR Refworld, 27 May, Section IV.B.8 – Attachment 13

ix. Women with certain profiles

Women in Colombia have been significantly impacted by the armed conflict and forced displacement. Violence against women is used systematically by armed groups to control territories and communities, and women may be forcibly recruited into sexual servitude. According to UNHCR, profiles at risk of being targeted on account of their membership of a particular social group reportedly include victims of violence at the hands of illegal armed groups, forcibly recruited women, indigenous women or women of Afro-Colombian descent, and women who are victims of domestic violence.³⁰

x. Children with certain profiles

The recruitment and use of children by illegal armed groups – including the use of forced recruitment – remains high, despite the efforts of the Colombian government to prevent the practice. It is estimated that there are between 8,000 and 13,000 child soldiers recruited by guerrillas and paramilitaries, with children from indigenous groups and Afro-Colombians particularly at risk. Forcibly conscripted children are reportedly used as front line combatants, to plant mines and explosives, or to perform other dangerous tasks, while girls in particular face sexual abuse, rape and forced abortion. They are also forced to witness and participate in grave violations of human rights, including torture and killings. Some children who have been demobilised from illegal paramilitary groups are forced to act as informants for the security forces, particularly the Army and the Police.³¹

xi. Marginalised social groups

There have also been reports of mistreatment against marginalised social groups, such as Lesbian Gay Bisexual and Transgender (LGBT) individuals, drug addicts, persons with HIV/AIDS, sex-workers, vagrants and mentally-ill persons. This so-called ‘social cleansing’ is reportedly carried out by illegal armed groups and local gangs, intended to allow social and economic control by paramilitaries. Some threats have resulted in killing and violence against members of these groups. Investigations and prosecutions of perpetrators are reportedly ineffective, thereby granting *de facto* impunity to those responsible.³²

3. Please provide information on the availability of state protection in Colombia against attacks from FARC. Is there a reasonable level of state protection in Colombia against FARC attacks and would protection be denied to people for a Convention reason?

In 2009, the Colombian Constitutional Court observed that the State does not have the ability to suitably protect civilians seeking refuge in parts of the country not directly affected by the armed conflict.³³

As mentioned in the response to Question 2, judges, prosecutors, witnesses, lawyers and others involved in legal proceedings and investigations relating to international humanitarian law (IHL) involving security forces or illegal armed groups are reportedly at risk of being

³⁰ UN High Commissioner for Refugees 2010, *UNHCR Eligibility Guidelines for Assessing the International Protection Needs of Asylum Seekers from Colombia*, UNHCR Refworld, 27 May, Section IV.B.9 – Attachment 13

³¹ UN High Commissioner for Refugees 2010, *UNHCR Eligibility Guidelines for Assessing the International Protection Needs of Asylum Seekers from Colombia*, UNHCR Refworld, 27 May, Section IV.B.10 – Attachment 13

³² UN High Commissioner for Refugees 2010, *UNHCR Eligibility Guidelines for Assessing the International Protection Needs of Asylum Seekers from Colombia*, UNHCR Refworld, 27 May, Section IV.B.11 – Attachment 13

³³ UN High Commissioner for Refugees 2010, *UNHCR Eligibility Guidelines for Assessing the International Protection Needs of Asylum Seekers from Colombia*, UNHCR Refworld, 27 May, Section IV.C – Attachment 13

killed, kidnapped or subject to ill-treatment. According to the UNHCR, the scope and effectiveness of the Colombian Attorney-General's Protection Program for victims, witnesses and others implicated in criminal proceedings has been deemed insufficient to protect individuals from such risks.³⁴

In March 2011, more than half the population of Vegalarga in southwest Colombia threatened a mass exodus due to perceived government inaction over sustained FARC attacks. The town is reportedly virtually without public services, a problem made worse when the only school, a hospital, a church and several houses were inadvertently damaged following a controlled explosion of a FARC car bomb by local police. Residents of Vegalarga – a key strategic transit route for FARC – claim the government is ignoring its responsibilities to the people, and given that no local governors have visited the area since the incident, it is believed that local representatives are too afraid to do so.³⁵

In 2009, a national survey mandated by the Constitutional Court showed 35 per cent of internally displaced persons (IDPs) were not registered in the government's IDP registry. Some IDPs did not declare their displacement due to lack of information or from fear of coming forward, while others attempting to register were rejected. According to the Internal Displacement Monitoring Centre (IDMC), the problem of under-registration is fundamental to IDP protection, as un-registered IDPs reportedly faced a more precarious situation than those who had registered.³⁶

An article by Canadian human rights lawyer Francisco Rico-Martinez, published in *Embassy* magazine in March 2011, discussed the debate relating to the protection needs of Colombian refugees, particularly in the Canadian sphere. The article cited the Canadian Council for Refugees, which said that the declining acceptance rate for Colombian refugee claimants in Canada reflected a reduced need for international protection, based on the following alleged developments:

- FARC are no longer able to communicate nationally and have been defeated to the point that they have limited or no power to harm civilians other than locally;
- The paramilitary has been demobilised and has largely disappeared as an armed actor;
- Increases in the budget and numbers of the various security forces, including the army, police and state security, have resulted in increased state protection for civilians in Colombia; and
- Under these new conditions, Colombians under threat can improve their safety by moving from one place to another within Colombia, and in particular by moving to the capital city, Bogota.³⁷

According to Rico-Martinez, these claims lacked credibility, as while Colombia may now be safe for some, for others the danger remains. Acknowledging that FARC and the paramilitary

³⁴ UN High Commissioner for Refugees 2010, *UNHCR Eligibility Guidelines for Assessing the International Protection Needs of Asylum Seekers from Colombia*, UNHCR Refworld, 27 May, Section IV.B.3 – Attachment 13

³⁵ 'FARC stranglehold threatening mass exodus in rural Huila' 2011, *Colombia Reports*, 30 March – Attachment 18

³⁶ Internal Displacement Monitoring Centre (IDMC) 2010, 'Colombia: Government response improves but still fails to meet needs of growing IDP population', UNHCR Refworld, 10 December

<http://www.unhcr.org/refworld/docid/4d05d94f2.html> – Accessed 13 April 2011 – Attachment 19

³⁷ Rico-Martinez, F. 2011 'The future of Colombian refugees in Canada', FCJ Refugee Centre website, source:

Embassy Magazine, 23 March <http://www.fcjrefugeecentre.org/?p=1439> – Accessed 13 April 2011 – Attachment 20

have changed, the author argued that they retained the ability to “persecute their enemies throughout the country...in some circumstances working in collaboration with each other”.³⁸ The article further states that people who are threatened in one region may not be safe in another, even in Bogota, due to the growth of both state and FARC informant networks and surveillance. The author also claims that an ‘expert’, whose opinion had been relied on in a number of negative Immigration and Refugee Board decisions, “does not have – or even claim to have – current knowledge of the matter on which he is cited”.³⁹

4. Please provide information relevant to internal relocation to avoid the risk from FARC, including information on which parts of Colombia FARC is most/least active. Please also discuss the relative power/influence/presence of FARC in and around Bogota.

The United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) considers that an internal flight or relocation alternative (IFA/IRA) is generally not available in Colombia.⁴⁰ According to the UNHCR, when the perpetrator of mistreatment is the State, relocating to other areas under State control is not relevant due to the reach of authorities. Similarly, relocation to areas under the control of illegal armed groups is generally not feasible, given the difficulties in citizens gaining access to these areas due to widespread insecurity. Relocation to these regions may also expose individuals to a risk of harm from illegal armed groups controlling the areas.⁴¹

With regard to individuals fleeing harm by non-State agents, UNHCR does not consider an internal flight relevant in areas under State control where authorities tolerate or condone – including through corruption – acts perpetrated by illegal armed groups or narco-traffickers. According to UNHCR, consideration should be given to:

- The presence of illegal checkpoints throughout the country, and the possibility that individuals attempting to relocate may be identified and targeted at checkpoints by illegal armed groups;
- The reach and ability of illegal armed groups to trace and target individuals, both in rural areas, and cities such as Bogota, Medellin and Cali; and
- The profile of the asylum seeker and the existence of any reasonable grounds to believe he or she will be traced and targeted.⁴²

Where individuals are fleeing from armed conflict or generalised violence, UNHCR says consideration should be given to the concrete prospects of safely accessing areas not affected by violence, and the changing scale of the conflict and of territorial control.⁴³

³⁸ Rico-Martinez, F. 2011 ‘The future of Colombian refugees in Canada’, FCJ Refugee Centre website, source: *Embassy Magazine*, 23 March <http://www.fcjrefugeecentre.org/?p=1439> – Accessed 13 April 2011 – Attachment 20

³⁹ Rico-Martinez, F. 2011 ‘The future of Colombian refugees in Canada’, FCJ Refugee Centre website, source: *Embassy Magazine*, 23 March <http://www.fcjrefugeecentre.org/?p=1439> – Accessed 13 April 2011 – Attachment 20

⁴⁰ UN High Commissioner for Refugees 2010, *UNHCR Eligibility Guidelines for Assessing the International Protection Needs of Asylum Seekers from Colombia*, UNHCR Refworld, 27 May, Section IV.A – Attachment 13

⁴¹ UN High Commissioner for Refugees 2010, *UNHCR Eligibility Guidelines for Assessing the International Protection Needs of Asylum Seekers from Colombia*, UNHCR Refworld, 27 May, Section IV.C – Attachment 13

⁴² UN High Commissioner for Refugees 2010, *UNHCR Eligibility Guidelines for Assessing the International Protection Needs of Asylum Seekers from Colombia*, UNHCR Refworld, 27 May, Section IV.C – Attachment 13

⁴³ UN High Commissioner for Refugees 2010, *UNHCR Eligibility Guidelines for Assessing the International Protection Needs of Asylum Seekers from Colombia*, UNHCR Refworld, 27 May, Section IV.C – Attachment 13

FARC activity occurs throughout most of the country, though as mentioned previously, the group's sphere of influence is subject to change due to increased government action against the group, as well as declining membership.⁴⁴ A selection of maps is included in order to provide a cross section of FARC location and influence. While the extent of FARC presence varies across the following maps, it appears consistent that the south-eastern region of the country is least affected by FARC influence, with no apparent FARC activity.^{45 46 47}

'FARC in Colombia' 2010, For what we are...they will be Blog website, 11 October
<http://forwhatwearetheywillbe.blogspot.com/2010/10/farc-reject-surrender-offer-demand.html> - Accessed 18 April 2011



FARC in Colombia

Legend: Red to white scale tries to reflect stronger or weaker guerrilla presence in each department. Bright red would be nearly effective control and white no visible presence in the last many years.

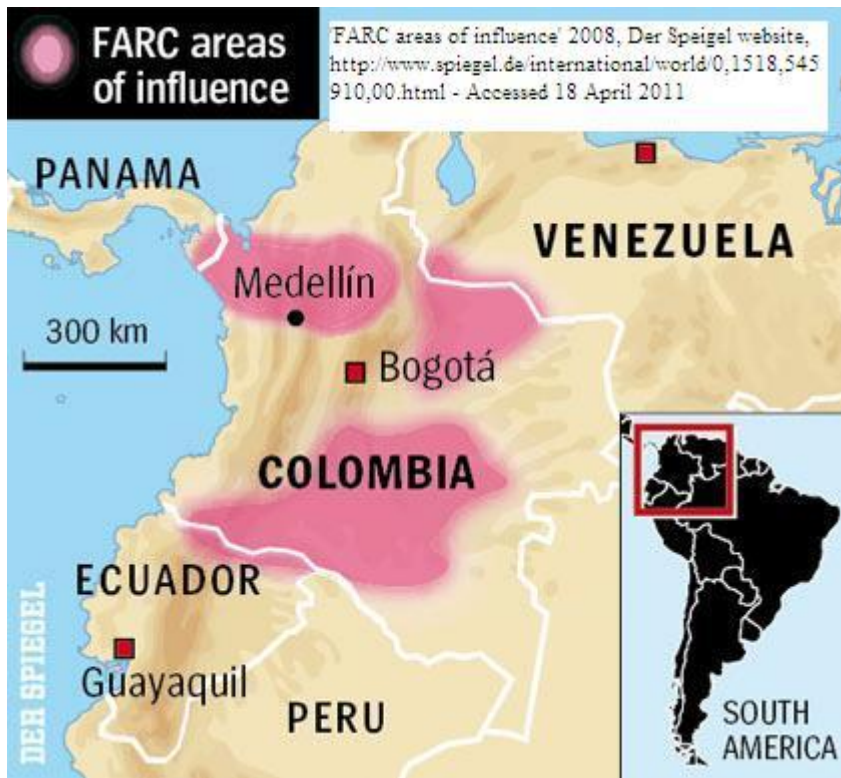
Map 1 – FARC in Colombia

⁴⁴ 'Revolutionary Armed Forces of Colombia Fuerzas Armadas Revolucionarias de Colombia FARC' (Undated), Global Security website <http://www.globalsecurity.org/military/world/para/farc.htm> – Accessed 13 April 2011 – Attachment 2

⁴⁵ 'FARC in Colombia' 2010, For what we are...they will be Blog website, 11 October <http://forwhatwearetheywillbe.blogspot.com/2010/10/farc-reject-surrender-offer-demand.html> – Accessed 18 April 2011 – Attachment 21

⁴⁶ 'FARC areas of influence' 2008, *Der Spiegel*, 4 July <http://www.spiegel.de/international/world/0,1518,545910,00.html> – Accessed 18 April 2011 – Attachment 22

⁴⁷ 'Colombia FARC' 2009, Language and Conflict website <http://www.languageandconflict.info/lang/en/farc.html> – Accessed 18 April 2011 – Attachment 23



Map 2 – FARC areas of influence



Map 3 – Colombia FARC

Little information was found specifically regarding FARC's presence and influence in Bogota, however, as stated previously, people who are threatened in one region of Colombia may not be safe in another, even in Bogota, due to the growth of informant networks and surveillance,⁴⁸ suggesting that FARC do maintain a degree of power and influence in the city.

While Colombian security forces have reportedly pushed back FARC guerrillas to remote jungle positions, the group maintains the intent and capability to carry out attacks in major metropolitan areas, including Bogota. In August 2010, a bomb placed outside a radio station in Bogota was attributed to FARC, and according to the Colombian Defense Minister, the government offensive against the group may provoke an intensification of the insurgency.⁴⁹

This is not to say FARC can operate without impediment in Bogota. In October 2010, Colombian police reportedly seized four explosive devices and captured a female guerrilla, who was planning to detonate the explosives when a motorcade of government officials travelled through Bogota.⁵⁰ According to *Colombia Reports*, a suspected FARC member accused of being a key liaison between the FARC and international arms traffickers was arrested in Bogota in March 2011. The suspect was reportedly in possession of an AK-47 and an AK-45, which police believe were samples to promote a larger shipment.⁵¹

⁴⁸ Rico-Martinez, F. 2011 'The future of Colombian refugees in Canada', FCJ Refugee Centre website, source: *Embassy Magazine*, 23 March <http://www.fcjrefugeecentre.org/?p=1439> – Accessed 13 April 2011 – Attachment 20

⁴⁹ 'FARC responsible for explosion in Colombia's Bogota' 2010, EITB News World, source: *Reuters*, 3 October <http://www.eitb.com/news/world/detail/514591/farc-responsible-explosion-colombias-bogota/> – Accessed 18 April 2011 – Attachment 24

⁵⁰ 'Police foil FARC Bogota bomb plot' 2010, *Colombia Reports*, 21 October <http://colombiareports.com/colombia-news/news/12493-police-foil-farc-bomb-bogota.html> – Accessed 18 April 2011 – Attachment 25

⁵¹ 'FARC arms trafficker captured in Bogota' 2011, *Colombia Reports*, 18 March <http://colombiareports.com/colombia-news/news/14998-farc-arms-trafficker-captured-in-bogota.html> – Accessed 18 April 2011 – Attachment 26

Attachments

1. US Department of State 2011, *Country Reports on Human Rights Practices 2010 – Colombia*, 8 April.
2. ‘Revolutionary Armed Forces of Colombia Fuerzas Armadas Revolucionarias de Colombia FARC’ (Undated), Global Security website <http://www.globalsecurity.org/military/world/para/farc.htm> – Accessed 13 April 2011.
3. ‘Colombia expects final victory over FARC rebels’ 2011, Dalje website, 29 March <http://dalje.com/en-economy/colombia-expects-final-victory-over-farc-rebels/348747> – Accessed 13 April 2011.
4. ‘FARC commander ‘Mono Jojoy’ killed’ 2010, *Colombia Reports*, 23 September. (CISNET Colombia CX257046)
5. ‘FARC Step Up Offensive in Arauca’ 2011, In Sight website, 6 February <http://www.insightcrime.org/insight-latest-news/item/530-farc-step-up-offensive-in-arauca> – Accessed 13 April 2011.
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