

HIGHLIGHTS

- The centrality of protection must be a priority in all phases of response (UNHCR)
- The humanitarian crisis in La Guajira and its impact on Wayúu women (Fundación Plan)
- The positive impact of the reduced participation of the FARC-EP in conflict-related events
- Concerns remain on the protection and practical needs of women and girls in a post agreement (GenCap)

FIGURES

IDPs mass events
(July 2016) 49

#people affected
by access and
mobility
constraints
(July 2016) 868

#people affected
by natural
disasters
(July 2016
UNGRD) 113,907

FUNDING

USD\$ 44,015,587
Humanitarian funding (HRP
2016), 24 August 2016
(OCHA 4W)



Photo: MIRA, Lórica and San Bernardo del Viento,
Córdoba department. 18-19 August 2016
Credits: OCHA

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Protection, a primary element to humanitarian action

This article is contributed by the United Nations High Commission for Refugees (UNHCR)

As the Inter-Agency Standing Committee (IASC) affirmed in its Declaration of 17 December 2013, “the protection of human rights in accordance with international and national instruments should be at the heart of humanitarian action”. For this reason, the centrality of protection must be a priority in all phases of response, from preparation through implementation and monitoring.

The centrality of protection means the adoption of a differential focus in humanitarian response to ensure that adequate assistance plans are defined, taking into account needs and risks in accord with gender, age, ethnicity, and physical and psychological conditions.

The application of a protection focus in humanitarian action allows responding to a crisis with a rights-based approach, not only to deliver assistance and services, but also to carry out actions that guarantee the rights of people over the long-term. For this reason, it is important to carry out an analysis of rights, based on local context, identifying possible protection risks. In Colombia, for example, in border areas that have historically been affected by the armed conflict, the response to protection risks faced by local populations is challenging. Populations are exposed to protection risks such as gender-based violence and forced recruitment, as well as mixed migration flows, including undocumented foreigners arriving to Colombia in search of international protection, or Colombians who have left the country due to the conflict and now seek to return. These people require legal and material protection to rebuild their lives in Colombia. In other words, they need a comprehensive protection strategy to respond, prevent and reduce the impact of human rights violations and infractions of international humanitarian law.

In Colombia, through July 2016, 8,092,394 people were registered in the Registro Único De Víctimas (RUV – official victims registry), of which 6.8 million are victims of forced displacement. The peace process represents a unique opportunity to create the conditions to guarantee security and stability in areas affected by armed conflict for more than 50 years, and to offer solutions to victims. Nonetheless, the signature of a peace agreement does not suppose the end of violence; humanitarian crises are likely to continue, as it has been the case in Chocó department throughout the first semester of 2016. To respond to these situations, it is indispensable to overcome the pure delivery of assistance and to apply a comprehensive protection strategy. The centrality of protection becomes one more element in the effort to build a long-lasting and sustainable peace.

The difficult situation of Wayúu women

By Marcela Henao Alvarez, National Technical Advisor on Gender, Fundación Plan



Photo:
Credits: Fundación PLAN

"Simply surviving an earthquake, a flood or a drought is not the sole objective of humanitarian work. It should also be a priority for the humanitarian and development community to guarantee that those who survive, particularly the most vulnerable, receive the support that they need to face their losses and trauma and that they have the necessary resources to rebuild their lives, as well as to prepare for future crises" (Plan International: The State of Girls of the World 2013: Teens and Disasters.)

It is important to focus our actions on the lives of women, especially the youngest, who due to the crisis limit their food intake, increase their domestic labors, and are forced into child labor

Since May 2016, Fundación Plan, member of Plan International, in association with the World Food Programme, has been working with Wayuu community located in the municipalities of Maicao and Uribá in La Guajira department. The intervention seeks to facilitate access to food for families, as the population of La Guajira lives a humanitarian crisis that impacts their effective enjoyment of rights, particularly the rights of women, girls and teens.

Three years of intense drought, combined with a lack of state intervention to respond to the structural causes of poverty, inequality, malnutrition and access and control to resources, have forced many Wayuu families in Alta Guajira to live in a downward spiral that brings them face to face with death on a daily basis.

Women and children of all ages have been the most affected. Majayura and Wimpeshy tell the story of the drought, which has reduced the income of their homes, since their crops were lost and they can no longer sell their products at the market. This has resulted in a reduced access to food and a feeling of "worthlessness", since they use to work with their husbands in collecting food and now they feel that they are a "burden for them".

The river, an artery for the territory, considered the guardian of ancestral wisdom, no longer exists. When the river dries up, the same occurs to the life around it, including human life: the bodies of women dry up, the water is consumed. The same thing occurs with the bodies of their children, their vital strength disappears, their lives are handed over. Water, a natural resource, is now purchased. Animals dies, access to protein is limited, there is not enough food or life.

Women now must walk long paths to find any water apt for human consumption. "Without the river, without the support of the State and with the Venezuelan border closed, the life of Wayuu women is very difficult", says Wimpeshy.

It is important to focus our actions on the lives of women, especially the youngest, who due to the crisis limit their food intake, increase their domestic labors, and are forced into child labor which sometimes results in exploitation, especially sexual and commercial exploitation.

May water return and continue to inspire with its colors the vital strings that weave and fill women's culture.

One year of FARC-EP unilateral ceasefire

On 20 July 2016 the FARC-EP's unilateral ceasefire reached its first year; during this time, the FARC-EP and the Government of Colombia, negotiating in La Havana, also agreed on de-escalation measures to decrease the impact of the conflict.

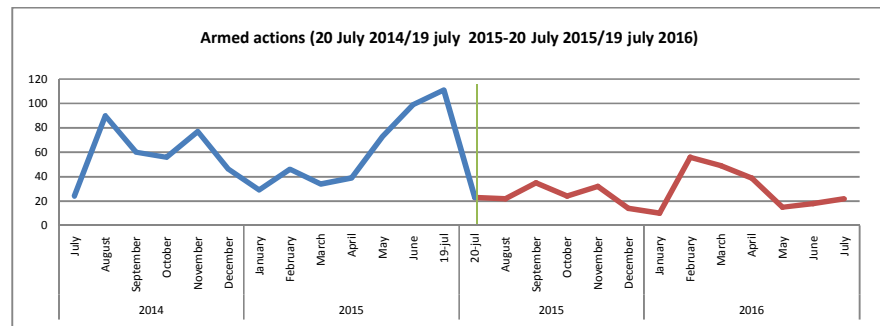
The increasingly reduced participation of the FARC-EP in conflict-related events has had a positive impact on humanitarian indicators. Nonetheless, other actors such as the ELN and post-demobilization armed groups (PDAGs) continue to create humanitarian impacts both due to unilateral actions, as well as confrontations with other armed actors.

Participation of ELN and PDAGs in armed actions increases

During the first year of the FARC-EP's unilateral ceasefire (20 July 2015/19 July 2016), armed actions dropped by 54 per cent as compared to the same period one year earlier (OCHA).

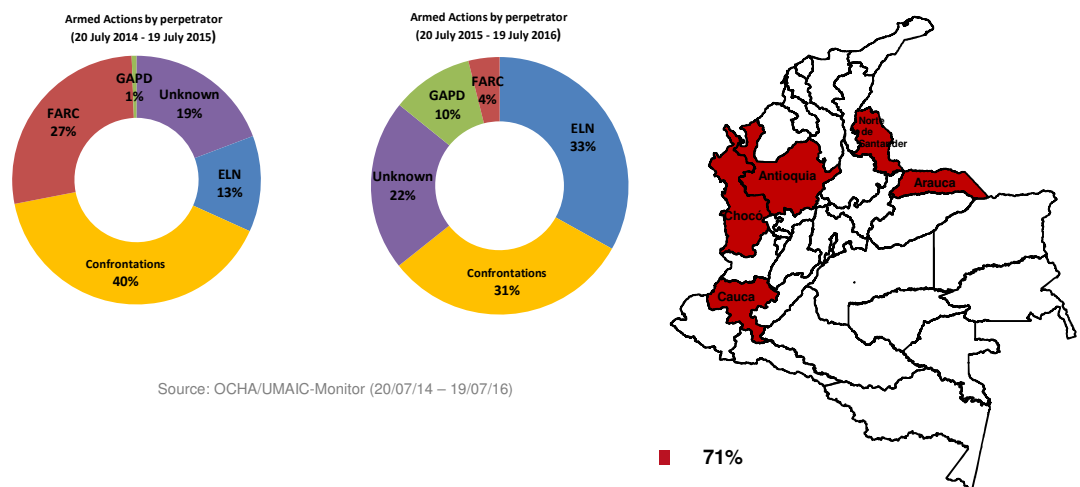
Armed actions directly attributable to the FARC-EP dropped by 93 per cent, in line with de-escalation measures implemented by the parties in the framework of the peace process.

The increasingly reduced participation of the FARC-EP in conflict-related events has had a positive impact on humanitarian indicators. Nonetheless, other actors such as the ELN and post-demobilization armed groups (PDAGs) continue to create humanitarian impacts



Despite a drop in the overall number of armed actions, OCHA highlights the increased participation of the ELN and post-demobilization armed groups in these kind of events. During the first year of the ceasefire, the ELN participated in 33 per cent of all reported armed actions, a 21 per cent increase as compared to the same period one year earlier. Post-demobilization armed groups' participation reached 10 per cent, a 640 per cent increase compared with the year prior.

Map No. 1. Departments most affected by Armed Actions (20 July 2015/19 July 2016)



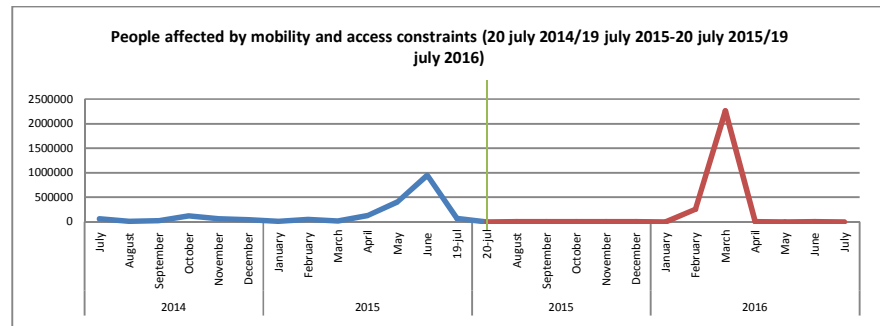
Source: OCHA/UMAIC-Monitor (20/07/14 - 19/07/16)

PDAGs the main perpetrators of movement and access constraints

According to OCHA's monitoring, during the first year of the unilateral cease-fire by the FARC-EP, movement restrictions and limitations on access to basic goods and services impacted more than 2.5 million people.

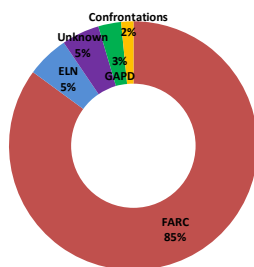
The participation of the FARC-EP in movement and access restrictions represented only 1 per cent during the cease-fire period. On the other hand, post-demobilization armed groups caused 89 per cent of the victims of these restrictions, a 4,000 per cent increase as compared to the previous period. The ELN participated in 9 per cent of these events during the period, a 125 per cent increase compared to the period (20 July 2014/19 July 2015).

The high participation of post-demobilization armed groups and the ELN in access and movements limitations is principally linked to the impact of the two armed strikes declared by the ELN in February and the AGC/Clan del Golfo in March 2016

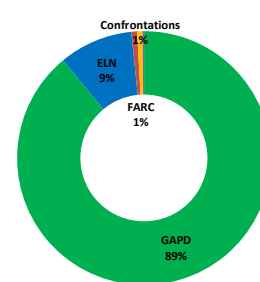


The high participation of post-demobilization armed groups and the ELN in access and movements limitations is principally linked to the impact of the two armed strikes declared by the ELN in February and the AGC/Clan del Golfo in March 2016. These events, despite limited in time, were able to limit the movements and access to goods and services of a large number of people (200,000 in the case of the ELN; and 2.5 million in the case of AGC/Clan del Golfo), having a humanitarian impact as well as giving evidence of increased social control by these groups.

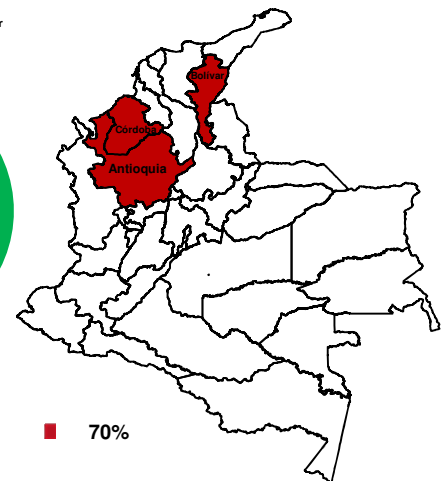
Mobility and access constraints by perpetrator (20 July 2014 - 19 July 2015)



Mobility and access constraints by perpetrator (20 July 2015 - 19 July 2016)



Map No. 2. Departments most affected by mobility and access constraints (20 July 2015/19 July 2016)

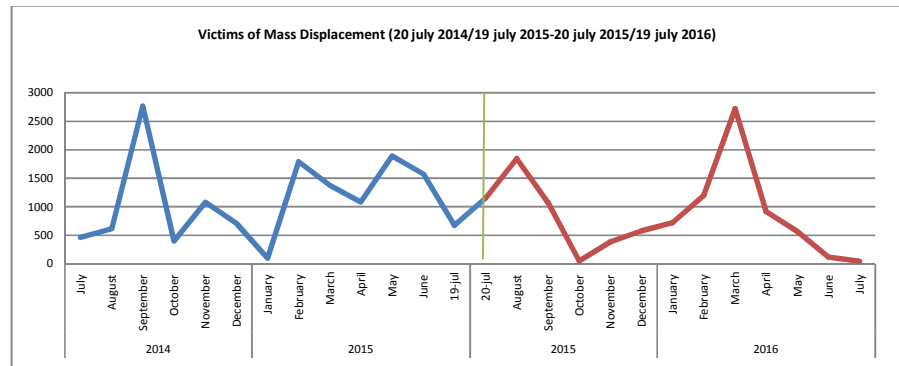


Source: OCHA/UMAIC-Monitor (20/07/14 – 19/07/16)

Confrontations between armed actors cause the majority of IDPs in mass displacement

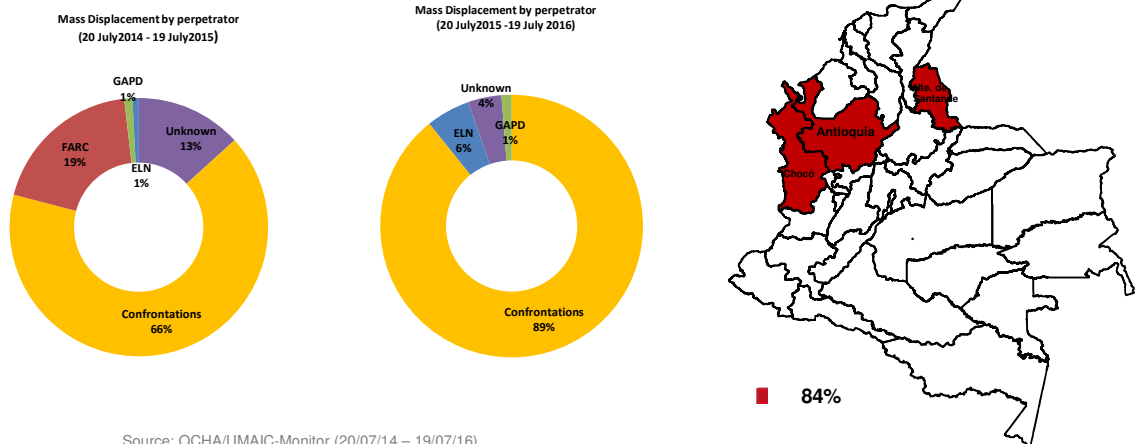
According to OCHA's monitoring, during the first year of the FARC-EP's unilateral cease fire, there were 11,403 victims of mass displacement, a 22 per cent drop as compared to the same period one year earlier. During the first year of the unilateral ceasefire, OCHA registered no mass displacement events caused by the FARC-EP.

Confrontations between armed actors caused 89 per cent of the victims of mass displacement during the period 20 July 2015/19 July 2016



Confrontations between armed actors caused 89 per cent of the victims of mass displacement¹ during the period 20 July 2015/19 July 2016. In particular, between January and May 2016, 6,135 people were forcibly displaced in mass events in Chocó, due to confrontations between the ELN and the AGC/Clan del Golfo, and military operations against the ELN.

Map No. 3. Departments most affected by Mass Displacement (20 July 2015/19 July 2016)



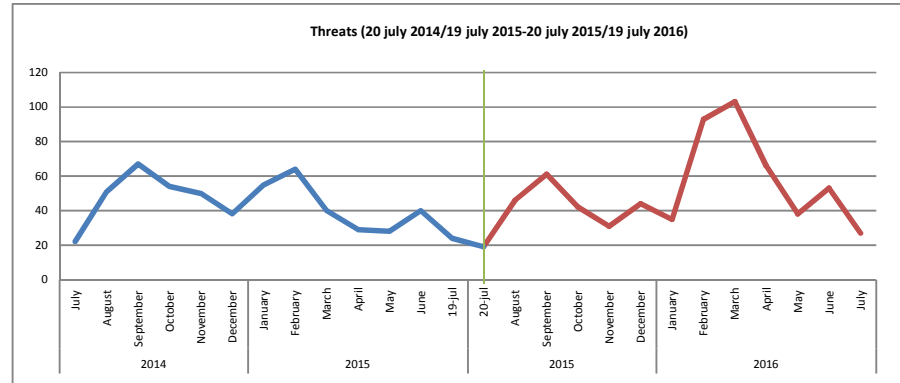
Source: OCHA/UMAIC-Monitor (20/07/14 – 19/07/16)

¹ More than 50 people or 10 families displaced for the same event.

Threats: main attacks against civilians

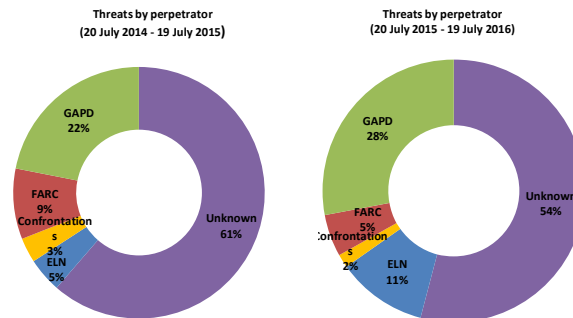
During the first year of the FARC-EP's unilateral ceasefire, threats made up 59 per cent of attacks against civilians, followed by homicides (9 per cent), and kidnappings (6 per cent). While the total number of attacks against civilians dropped by 9 per cent as compared to the preceding period, threats increased by 17 per cent.

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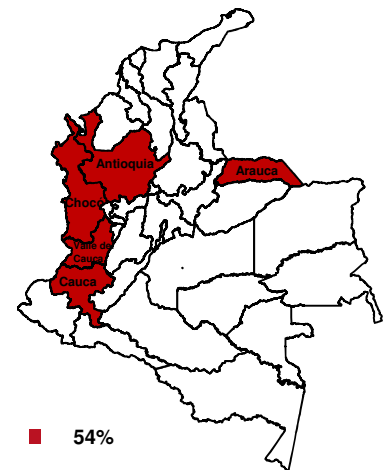
The increase in these forms of attacks against civilians would be related to the reduction in the highly visible acts of lethal violence such as massacres, and the increase in other types of intimidation and social control that are more difficult to monitor.

According to OCHA's monitoring, the ELN and post-demobilization armed groups participated in nearly 40 per cent of threats, while the FARC-EP's participation only reached 5 per cent, a 33 per cent drop compared to the period prior.



Source: OCHA/UMAIC-Monitor (20/07/14 – 19/07/16)

Map No. 4. Departments most affected by threats (20 July 2015/19 July 2016)



Addressing the humanitarian needs of women and girls, a critical step for achieving peace in Colombia

By Devanna de la Puente (GenCap)



During the past months Colombia has been making headlines on promoting Gender equality in the peace process. Parties negotiating in La Havana have been pioneers in setting a dedicated structure for gender equality at the peace talks.

While the peace process has reduced some of the humanitarian impact of the conflict, concerns remain on the protection and practical needs of women and girls in a post agreement. This entails the

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continuous risks associated with other armed groups active in the conflict, the limited available services in some remote areas such as sexual and reproductive health services, education, protection and legal services, particularly for victims of gender based violence.

To ensure a lasting peace, women and girl's rights and needs must be fulfilled: they must be ensured equal participation and access to services, promoting equality and equity in all aspects of life, including a life free of violence.

The humanitarian community in Colombia is taking active steps to ensure that the specific needs of women and girls are visible and reflected adequately in rapid needs assessments such as MIRA (Multi-Cluster/Sector Initial Rapid Assessment), to allow decision makers, humanitarian organizations and other key actors to meet the needs of women and girls affected by conflict and natural disasters.

In the recent months several MIRAs have been conducted using a set of dedicated tools for a gender sensitive process. The tools provided guidance to humanitarian teams in the field to understand how a specific crisis affects women in the respective sectors; and provided useful elements to formulate recommendations.² Some of the key concerns, identified through dedicated focus group discussions and interviews with women and adolescent girls, have been related to livelihoods alternatives, including training and access to higher education. The lack of income generation opportunities for women has created dependency on their partners, including in situations of domestic violence, limiting their ability to leave such abusive situations. The lack of income has also resulted in the adoption of negative coping mechanisms including sexual exploitation and prostitution, drug dealing, armed recruitment and child labor.

Adolescent pregnancy has been identified as a "common" practice, linked to the lack of opportunities, poor access to higher education for girls; and poor access to adequate sexual and reproductive health services. Health consequences for the young mother and child, including malnutrition are frequent; long term consequences of this situation include a disruption in education and lack of working and other opportunities.

² These tools are part of an inter-agency initiative promoted through GenCap project in coordination with national and international partners, such as OCHA, UN Women, UNFPA, UNHCR, UNICEF, NRC, Fundación Plan, and Diakonie among others.

Protection of women and girls has been identified through the assessments as a critical need. Many of the communities interviewed are not aware of the existing services, laws and referral pathways in case of gender based violence. Situations of GBV are often resolved in the community in the absence of government services in remote areas; at times the mediation can even result in negative consequences for the victim. Protection risks are not only created by the conflict and armed actors; risks are also associated to the environment and living conditions, such as remote location of water points, lack of safe and adequate WASH facilities and overcrowded shelters.

To respond to these needs, programmes need to integrate the equal participation of women and adolescent girls in all sectors: women must be recognized as active agents in humanitarian and recovery response.

While Colombia moves into a transition towards peace and gender equality remains high in the agenda, it is important that humanitarian needs continue to be addressed to ensure that women and girls can fulfill their rights. Women and girls must be protected from all forms of violence and they must be provided with access to justice and safety at all times. All actors working in humanitarian, peace and development sectors must ensure close coordination and join efforts to ensure women and girls can enjoy lasting peace in Colombia.

In Brief

Natural Disasters

According to the Unidad Nacional para la Gestión del Riesgo de Desastres (UNGRD – Disaster Response Unit), due to the rainy season, between 1 July and 1 August more than 22,000 families (more than 100,000 people) were affected by natural disaster events. The Government of Colombia, through the UNGRD, supported municipalities and departments that decreed the public calamity due to the rains, implementing more than US\$1,840,276 in relief assistance.

Events due rainy season 156 <small>(July-August 2016, UNGRD)</small>	68 Floods	Families affected +22,000
	54 Wind storms	
	28 Landslides	
	3 Torrential rains	
	3 Flash flood	

The departments of Arauca, Cauca, Chocó, Vichada and Guaviare received 10,572 food kits, 1,000 hammocks, 3,863 cooking kits, 23,804 blankets, 14,872 cleaning kits, 3,500 mosquito nets, 9,800 mattresses and 107,010 sets of building materials.³

The Disaster Risk Management System informed that landslides and torrential rains are likely in the short term, particularly in the Pacific, Piedmont and Amazon regions, as well as the northern Andes, including Antioquia and Santander. According to the National Hydrology and Meteorology Institute-IDEAM, the likelihood of a La Niña event remains steady between 55 and 65 per cent.⁴

³ UNGRD. En Agosto descenden las lluvias en gran parte del territorio nacional. 01 agosto 2016. See: <http://goo.gl/jxodmo>

⁴ IDEAM. Boletín de predicción climática y alertas. Publicación No. 28. Agosto de 2016. See: <http://goo.gl/M3KBEA>

In Brief

Borders

Border with Panama: According to the Ombudsman's Office census carried out at the end of July, a total of 1,723 undocumented Cuban migrants (452 women and 821 men, including 300 minors) were stranded in a warehouse in Turbo, unable to cross the border into Panama in order to continue their journey to the United States.

On 10 August Migración Colombia announced that the majority of the migrants in the warehouse had requested voluntary deportation and had left the country.

Border with Venezuela: On 10, 16 and 17 July, the Government of Venezuela authorized the opening of the border with Colombia along several crossings in Norte de Santander and Arauca. More than 170,000 people crossed into Colombia from Venezuela, primarily to purchase food and medicine. An estimated 90 per cent were Venezuelans and 10 per cent Colombians.

In early August, the Presidents of Colombia and Venezuela agreed upon a slow reopening of the border starting 13 August on 6 specific crossings: three in Norte de Santander, two in Arauca and one in La Guajira, initially for a three month period. The Colombian authorities reported that on 13, 14 and 15 August more than 127,000 Venezuelans had crossed into Colombia at these points.

Peace process

On 24 August the Government and the FARC-EP announced having reached a final agreement, almost four years after the beginning of peace talks. The bilateral ceasefire between the FARC-EP and the Colombian Armed Forces will start on Monday 29 August. The formal signature of the agreement will take place between 20 and 30 September. President Santos has informed that the plebiscite will take place on 2 October.