



A Wake-Up Call: Colombia's Peace at Risk

What U.S. Policymakers Can Do to Help Preserve Colombia's Peace

More than two years after the signing of Colombia's peace agreement paving the way to ending 50 years of war, the Colombian government's lackluster implementation of the accord and declining international attention threaten the construction of peace. The FARC guerrillas were successfully demobilized and disarmed and violence levels dropped in many parts of Colombia. However, plans to increase the government's reach into conflict zones, reintegration of ex-combatants into civilian life, and efforts to dismantle other illegal armed groups are proceeding too slowly. Commitments to address the needs of the neglected rural population for land and jobs have stalled in Colombia's legislature. President Duque's March 2019 decision, with the U.S. embassy's support, to send the transitional justice mechanism back to the Congress for revision shook trust in the basic framework of the peace accord. As a result, many areas of the countryside are still in conflict, and violence will spiral up further if the agreements' commitments to reintegrate ex-combatants and address the root causes of the conflict are not fulfilled. The most visible and tragic symbol of the peace accord's troubles is the 164 human rights defenders, local leaders building peace in their communities, assassinated in 2018.

If implemented well, this comprehensive peace accord would end the Western Hemisphere's longest running conflict, a war that has cost the lives of over [261,000](#) people, the vast majority of them civilians, and forced nearly 8 million Colombians to flee their homes, a level of internal displacement on the order of Syria. The accord offers Colombia a roadmap to modernize and incorporate abandoned areas of the countryside, tackle illicit drug production, trafficking and organized crime in a more sustainable manner, and address deep-seated issues that fuel violence and inequality.

For the United States, much is at stake if Colombia fails to implement the accords. The U.S. government's diplomatic efforts were a crucial factor in reaching a peace agreement. This wise investment should not be wasted. Only if peace gains ground in the former conflict zones, which are also the principal areas of coca production, will sustainable advances in reducing coca production, drug trafficking, and organized crime be realized. And finally, Colombia's conflict affects the Latin American region and the consolidation of peace is an asset to its neighbors. As the Venezuelan tragedy unfolds next door, Colombia is playing a critical role offering refuge to over 1 million Venezuelan refugees.

If the conflict continues, Colombia's rural poor, including Afro-Colombian and indigenous communities, small farmers (*campesinos*), women and children, will once again bear the brunt of the violence. Another generation of Colombia's valiant and vibrant human rights and social leaders will be displaced, exiled, or killed.

This **Wake-Up Call** outlines the promises of and challenges for peace in Colombia and recommends ways the United States can contribute to sustainable solutions. If U.S. policymakers act boldly to encourage compliance with the accords, it is not too late to preserve Colombia's fragile peace.

The Promise of Colombia's Peace Accord

The peace agreement simply requires the Colombian state to provide, in the areas affected by the conflict, the basic services and protections that all governments should offer to their citizens: education, access to health services, roads, a justice system, public security, access to land and secure land titles, opportunities to make a living, the right to vote and participate in politics, and protection for citizens' rights. These conflict zones lacked basic services and infrastructure. Guerrilla and paramilitary forces were often the main authorities, and these forces and organized crime penetrated local and regional governments. The state's presence was largely military.

The accord offers an opportunity for the government to extend civilian authority over these neglected regions. By expanding land titling to family farmers and Afro-Colombian and indigenous communities, it will reduce inequality and conflict. The accord requires the government to reintegrate FARC ex-combatants into the national economy and society and provide protection, essential to prevent ex-combatants from rearming. In a first for a peace accord, it includes an innovative "drug chapter" that commits the ex-guerrillas to abandon the drug trade and assist in eradication while committing the government to work with communities to replace illicit drug crops with sustainable livelihoods.

The agreement provides an opportunity to right historical wrongs. Colombia's peace process is celebrated for its inclusion of women peacebuilders, whose spirited advocacy ensured the participation of women and LGBTQI Colombians in peace accord implementation and national life. The accord includes an Ethnic Chapter, created with ethnic authorities, that transversally applies throughout the agreement. This chapter consolidates the protection of collective land rights for Afro-Colombian and indigenous communities. The accord integrates the recommendations of the victims of violence from all sides of the conflict. Victims are placed at the center of the accord, which seeks to ensure their rights to truth, justice, reparations, and the "guarantee of non-repetition" –the promise that the brutal past will not be repeated. It sets up a Truth Commission, a Unit to Search for the Disappeared, and a transitional justice mechanism, the Special Jurisdiction for Peace.

No peace accord is perfect and this like all accords is the product of compromise and difficult tradeoffs between peace and justice. Accord critics are particularly concerned that FARC leaders, or for that matter, military officers, implicated in grave human rights abuses receive no jail time, but only reduced five- to eight-year sanctions without jail, if they confess their crimes. Yet this accord provides more justice for grave human rights abuses than any previous peace agreement in history.

If fully implemented, the accord will help to address the roots of the conflict, including extreme poverty and inequality and lack of access to land, jobs, and justice, and prevent violence from reemerging. It commits the Colombian state to do what it always should have done to protect the rights of its citizens.

Some Advances in Peace Accord Implementation

The first phase, the demobilization and disarmament of over 13,000 guerrilla fighters, overseen by a United Nations mission, was successfully completed during 2017. Homicides dropped to their lowest level in years, and some areas of the countryside are experiencing tangible peace for the first time in living memory.

The tripartite transitional justice system has been stood up and is beginning to work. The Truth Commission is collecting testimony and reports from victims all over the country and in exile. The Unit to Search for the Disappeared is established and has been hearing from family members of victims throughout the country. The Special Jurisdiction for Peace (JEP) has progressed substantially in holding hearings and advancing cases involving high-level FARC and military leaders. According to the UN Mission in Colombia, [13,271](#) people have voluntarily placed their cases under the JEP as of October 2018—including 11,303 ex-FARC members, 1,923 members of Colombia's security forces, and 33 public officials.

Growing Problems with Implementation

The first years after a peace accord is signed are critical; if there is no momentum at the start, there is little hope for the future. Today, weak implementation of many of the accords' provisions by the Colombian government is putting the outcome of the agreement in jeopardy. Under President Juan Manuel Santos, who initiated and championed the peace process, reintegration programs for ex-combatants and plans to bring the civilian part of the state into the conflict zones were rolled out far too

slowly. President Iván Duque, while critical of the peace negotiations, pledged not to abandon the accords. Yet his administration has sought to modify or not fully implement key parts of the agreement. Moreover, the government has severely underfunded the architecture of the accords, the Truth Commission, the Special Jurisdiction, and the Unit to Search for the Disappeared. With the lack of implementation, violence is returning—deadly paramilitary networks are expanding control and taking over drug routes; according to a [report](#) by Fundación Paz & Reconciliation, the Clan del Golfo or Autodefensas Gaitanistas de Colombia have a national reach with at least 2,500 members and of the 242 municipalities where there was FARC presence, 129 are occupied by organized armed groups, 18 of them because of the expansion of these groups since the FARC's withdrawal. The ranks of FARC dissident groups are growing. Social leaders at the forefront of the peace process in their communities are being assassinated. To complicate matters, the conflict with the ELN, Colombia's last major guerrilla group, has escalated. The ELN claimed responsibility for a brutal car bombing in Bogotá, and talks with the ELN have been suspended.

Serious deficiencies in implementation can be seen in: protection of communities, human rights defenders, and social leaders; reintegration of ex-combatants; implementing the Ethnic Chapter, as well as the accords' gender provisions; ensuring that the community approach of the drug chapter is maintained; fulfilling commitments to rural development and land rights; and protecting the rights of victims. Underlying many of the problems is one key failure: The Colombian government is failing to take systematic steps to dismantle the paramilitary successor groups and other organized criminal networks and their connections to politicians and security forces, which generate much of the violence affecting communities, human rights defenders, and social leaders as well as fueling the illicit drug trade.

Protection of Communities, Human Rights Defenders and Social Leaders

The number of assassinations of and threats against human rights defenders and social leaders has escalated dramatically since the signing of the peace accord. According to the Colombian government's Ombudsman's Office, from January 1, 2016 to December 31, 2018, [431 social leaders](#) were assassinated, with the highest number of homicides in 2018. Murders of women leaders [doubled](#) between 2016 and 2018. As [noted](#) by the Foundation of Peace and Reconciliation, the largest increase has taken place in areas experiencing the lowest levels of peace accord implementation, such as Cauca, Antioquia, and north of Santander. These are not isolated cases of violence but part of a systemic phenomenon as shown in a [report](#) on the patterns of the assassination of social leaders in Colombia coordinated by the Colombian Commission of Jurists (CCJ). The government has failed to properly implement some of the main protection mechanisms included in the peace accord. This includes making fully operational the National Commission for Guarantees, a mixed working group including government, civil society, and ex-combatant representatives, responsible for designing and monitoring the plan for the dismantling of paramilitary successor groups. It also includes implementing the Integral Program for Security and Protection of Communities and Organizations which was set up through the 660 Decree. Intended to carry out measures for the prevention and protection of social leaders of communities and organizations, this program has been glacially slow in being implemented.

At the same time, the National Protection Unit (UNP) that is responsible for the implementation of protection measures for social leaders and human rights defenders is failing to respond to the urgent needs of social leaders and human rights defenders. It continues to have a very narrow approach, providing for example simply a bulletproof jacket and a cell phone, rather than more integrated measures designed with beneficiaries' input, to address collective as well as individual protection needs and with differential approaches based on gender, ethnicity, and geographic location. In addition, the UNP is facing a financial deficit that is sapping its already limited ability to respond.

Instead of building on existing protection measures and developing the mechanisms included in the peace accord, the Duque Administration with much fanfare launched a new plan, the *Plan de Acción Oportuna de Prevención y Protección para los Defensores de Derechos Humanos, Líderes Sociales y Comunales (PAO)*. This plan was designed without the participation of the human rights defenders and social leaders who need protection and fails to include their participation in plan implementation. It offers a limited and mostly security (military) approach to protection and fails to emphasize the expansion of civilian state institutions in areas historically abandoned by the state which can help to prevent attacks before they occur. In addition, the appointment of General Leonardo Barrero as the liaison to the armed forces and the police for the Action Plan raises serious concerns, given that he was [removed](#) in 2014 from his post as head of the Armed Forces because of a scandal related to a recording where Barrero suggested creating a "mafia" against lawyers investigating human rights cases. Instead

of designing a new and far more limited protection plan, the Colombian government should fully implement the peace accord, which includes a more holistic approach to protection and prevention.

Reintegration of Ex-Combatants

The Colombian government is complying with its obligation to provide individual payments to ex-combatants for two years to help their transition to civilian life. However, other aspects of reintegration are slower to advance, such as productive projects to ensure that the demobilized have sustainable livelihoods. The government finally approved in late 2018 funding for some 50 projects that would benefit about one-tenth of the [demobilized](#). Given the government's reluctance to fund collective projects, ex-combatants have pooled their monthly payments to invest in nearly 200 other productive projects. Yet as the government has failed to provide ex-combatants with properly titled land for these projects, they are unlikely to be sustainable. Moreover, access to education and health services, especially for pregnant women and children, is far from adequate.

The safety of ex-combatants is of paramount importance. Since the signing of the final accords, [85 demobilized](#) members of the FARC have been assassinated. The UN Political Mission provides oversight and government security forces patrol the perimeters of FARC concentration zones, but as most demobilized members have now left the zones, security is more difficult. The government must provide protection measures to those most at risk and investigate and prosecute the attacks against ex-combatants to ensure that this does not end like another tragic chapter of Colombia's history, the murder of over 3,000 members of the Patriotic Union party after a previous demobilization.

Finally, the accords' promise to allow demobilized FARC to participate in political life is advancing but not completely fulfilled. Nine out of 10 of the seats in Congress allocated to the demobilized are occupied. Yet neither political participation nor basic legal guarantees seem assured, given debates on these subjects in the Colombian Congress and the government's lack of clarity. Outstanding U.S. extradition requests for specific FARC leaders contribute to the uncertainty. The UN Mission [notes](#) "a growing sense of legal uncertainty on the part of former FARC-EP members, which is detrimental to the peace process."

Fulfilling the government's commitments to the demobilized guerrillas is not just a question of compliance with the accords, but a question of national security. It is essential to prevent them from rejoining dissident FARC groups or being recruited by other illegal armed actors and organized crime. Already, the ranks of FARC dissident groups have swelled to [1600](#) from the 450 dissidents who refused to disarm when accords were signed.

Implementing the Ethnic Chapter

One of the most promising and innovative aspects of the peace accord is that it includes an Ethnic Chapter. This chapter contains transversal principles like the right of the indigenous and Afro-Colombian communities to be previously consulted on programs and policies that affect them and their collective territories. The chapter was developed through hearings during the peace negotiations and later dialogue between the parties to the accord and representatives of the majority of the Afro-Colombian and indigenous groupings. Due to the "Fast Track" process in which laws and programs related to the peace accords were advanced at a faster than normal rate and despite heroic efforts on the part of ethnic communities to adapt to the new plan so that the implementing legislation would be successful in guaranteeing their rights, the consultation and dialogue that occurred with ethnic peoples was minimal. Despite this, the Special High-Level Forum of Ethnic Peoples, a coordinating body set up by the peace accords, was able to develop ethnic indicators to keep the peace effort moving forward.

Since President Duque took office, the most relevant issues for ethnic communities have been put on hold or faced tremendous obstacles. Implementation of the Ethnic Chapter is handicapped by an apparent lack of interest on the part of the Duque Administration in advancing it. The Duque Administration has failed so far to provide adequate resources and implement the Ethnic Chapter, like other parts of the peace accord, and continues to alter what has been agreed to in the accords.

To put the process back on track, the Duque Administration should ensure that the Special High-Level Forum for Ethnic Peoples is moving forward and that the local dialogues for the Territorial Development Plans (PDETs) are advancing with full participation by Afro-Colombian and indigenous representatives.

On a positive note, the transitional justice system (both the JEP and Truth Commission) did engage in a prior consultation process with ethnic groups and are paving the way for a more inclusive Colombia by integrating the recommendations made by ethnic groups into their work. This will greatly facilitate harmonization of transitional justice mechanisms with indigenous justice.

Given the strong investment of the U.S. government and USAID in Afro-Colombian and indigenous communities in recent years and the commitments made in the U.S.-Colombia Racial Action Plan, it is imperative to help ensure that implementation of the Ethnic Chapter advances to consolidate gains for these populations.

Implementing Gender Provisions

The Colombian Peace Accord has been praised for including gender provisions meant to protect the rights of women and members of the LGBTQI community. However, [according](#) to the Kroc Institute, of the 130 gender-related provisions in the accord, only 4 percent have been fully implemented (as compared to implementation of all 578 provisions in the accord, of which 22 percent have been completed). In addition, the commitments where there are the greatest shortcomings with regard to implementation of gender-specific provisions are under Point 1 (rural reform), Point 2 (political participation), and Point 4 (solution to the problem of illicit drugs); all points that are “fundamental to achieving structural change enabling equality between men and women and the effective enjoyment of human rights and non-discrimination,” according to the KROC Institute. As of November 2018, only two laws regarding gender issues had been approved. These laws address visibilization and inclusion of women; however, they do not include issues directly affecting the LGBTQI community, signaling a major step backward in the strengthening of LGBTQI community’s rights and inclusion in the peace process. Finally, women continue to be underrepresented in the higher-level peace accord implementation consultative bodies.

Implementing the Drug Policy Chapter

By the end of 2018, nearly [100,000 families](#)—responsible for over 51,000 hectares of coca—had signed agreements with the Colombian government to carry out voluntary crop substitution, demonstrating the willingness of communities to eradicate coca when offered alternatives. Colombia’s social leaders have risked their lives trying to convince their communities to trust the government and sign up for voluntary eradication. Between 2017 and 2018, [63 community leaders](#) working with the alternative development program were murdered. Yet despite the risks run by community leaders, few crop-substitution programs started across the country, and their progress has been [slow](#), partly because of the government’s failure to provide communities with timely financial and technical assistance.

The Duque Administration promises to fulfill the agreements with these 100,000 families, but asserts it will not continue signing such agreements. It is increasingly turning to forced eradication methods, even raising with the Constitutional Court, which halted the use of aerial spraying with glyphosate due to human health risks, the possibility of reinitiating aerial spraying. The failure of the Colombian government to fulfill its commitments to communities and to take advantage of the opening offered by the accords will be a devastating blow to this historic opportunity to design and advance a more sustainable and effective counternarcotics strategy.

Implementing Agreements on Land and Rural Development

A number of local governments working with community members have advanced in creating Development Programs with a Territorial Focus ([PDETs](#)), plans for post-war reconstruction and local development contemplated by the peace accords. Yet the Duque Administration has not dedicated additional resources to finance these plans in the National Development Plan, which has been presented for discussion in Congress and will be the roadmap for the Duque government’s economic policies over the next four years. Additional resources are imperative in order to implement these PDETs, which are a key part of the government investment in rural areas promised by the peace accords.

There are serious concerns regarding implementation of other components of the accord’s comprehensive rural reform chapter, particularly measures intended to achieve “democratization of appropriate use of and access to land.” Not a single property has been handed over by the Land Fund, created as a result of the agreement and intended to include 3 million

hectares of land, which are to be distributed to communities affected by the conflict. Other fundamental components, such as a comprehensive and multi-purpose cadastral information system, have not been passed by Congress.

At the same time, legislation being considered by the Congress could potentially undermine both the implementation of the rural development chapter and the return of land to displaced persons promised by the Victims' Law passed in 2011. Discussion is underway in Congress on a bill to change the Agrarian Reform Law by allowing previously state-owned land to be handed over to large-scale landholders for mining and energy projects, thereby distorting the nature of the Land Fund. There is also a process underway to weaken the Land Restitution Law for victims of the armed conflict, put forward by a senator representing the government's party.

Protecting the Rights of Victims

The accord promised to "put victims at the center," meaning the nearly 9 million victims of all the armed actors. Yet it is striking how little time the Duque government spends even mentioning the rights of victims, much less devoting effort and funding to ensure their rights to truth, justice, reparations, and the guarantee of non-repetition. This is illustrated by some of President's Duque's appointees to crucial posts for victims' issues, such as the director of the Center for Historical Memory, set up prior to the peace accords, whom victims' groups regard with so little trust that some have asked the center to return the human rights documentation they had provided. The government has underfunded the three parts of the transitional justice system, the Truth Commission, the Unit to Search for the Disappeared, and the justice mechanism (JEP), which will limit their ability to reach out to victims across the country. In the case of the JEP, the President has also objected to its statutory law, further delaying and destabilizing its operations.

Victims in the conflict zones were promised 16 seats in the Congress in the accords, in order to address the exclusion suffered by this part of the population. Yet President Duque's party in the Congress has repeatedly blocked establishing these seats for victims of the conflict, and the President has done nothing himself to push forward this visible symbol of victims' rights.

Moreover, both the Santos and Duque administrations failed to establish protection and guarantees for the victims presenting or litigating cases in the transitional justice system, or for the civil society organizations and human rights lawyers accompanying the victims in these efforts.

Disturbingly, victims' representatives to "*mesas de victimas*" and other task forces set up in conflict areas to bring victims together with local and regional government representatives to oversee peace accord implementation have received death threats, and some have been attacked or killed. As a result, some victims' leaders have withdrawn from the process.

U.S. Policy: Political Support for Peace Diminishing

The United States played a crucial role in advancing the peace process. While the United States was not one of the countries officially accompanying the process, the Obama Administration provided a special envoy, Bernard Aronson, as its liaison to the negotiating table. U.S. encouragement helped the parties overcome obstacles, reach and then revise the accord. Once the accord was approved, U.S. financial support via USAID has been strategic and beneficial. USAID provides support to the Truth Commission and the Unit to Search for the Disappeared, funds efforts by victims' associations to pursue truth and justice, and supports efforts by the Ombudsman's office to protect communities. In addition, in an innovative program, USAID funds Afro-Colombian and indigenous organizations and communities' own development strategies and programs to protect their rights.

The fact that the FARC remains on the U.S. terrorist list despite having demobilized has unfortunately prevented the U.S. government from funding reintegration programs for the FARC ex-combatants or supporting the transitional justice mechanism where ex-FARC members will be tried.

In the last several years, while positive U.S. assistance for peace accord implementation continues, U.S. diplomatic support for peace accord implementation has sharply diminished, almost completely replaced with issues of illicit drug production and the crisis in Venezuela. The Trump Administration publicly threatened to [decertify](#) Colombia's compliance with counternarcotics goals, and recent bilateral meetings were cast as largely strategizing about Venezuela. The Trump

Administration is pressuring the Colombian government to return to aerial spraying, a controversial strategy that would directly undermine the drug policy agreements of the accord and their emphasis on working constructively with communities to eradicate and replace coca. The U.S. Embassy's backing of President Duque's objections to the Constitutional Court rulings on how the JEP would operate threw a wrench into the peace process, leaving demobilized FARC members and military officials alike uncertain how their cases would proceed in the transitional justice system.

Simply put, the Colombian government no longer hears clearly from the White House, Secretary of State or U.S. Embassy that peace accord implementation matters to the United States. Congressional statements and [letters](#) have played a helpful role in elevating issues related to peace and protection of human rights defenders. Yet the lack of a strong whole-of-U.S. government advocacy for peace accord implementation is felt directly on the ground.

Recommendations for U.S. Policy

- U.S. diplomacy, publicly and privately, should reinforce the importance of fully implementing the peace accords. Specific obstacles and weaknesses should be raised on a regular basis by the U.S. Embassy, State Department and National Security Council, and advances praised. The State Department should encourage the Colombian government to ensure that the Truth Commission, Unit to Search for the Disappeared and the JEP, as well as other initiatives to carry out the peace accord, are funded and supported. The U.S. Congress should continue to raise these issues in statements and letters. Consolidating peace should remain a major issue for U.S. diplomacy towards Colombia, not subsumed in Venezuela policy or a narrow counternarcotics focus.
- U.S. support via USAID for peace accord implementation should be increased and continued along the same lines. This should include support for victims' quest for truth and justice as well as for the Truth Commission and the Search Unit for the Disappeared. It is vital to support USAID's programs to provide funding directly to Afro-Colombian and indigenous organizations to consolidate peace and advance development plans of their own design. USAID support for civil society organizations, including victims' associations, should increase. USAID should continue its landmark annual consultations with Colombian and U.S. civil society organizations.
- U.S. diplomacy and interested members of Congress should make a sustained effort to urge the Colombian government to fully implement the Ethnic Chapter of the accord, with special attention to the rights to collective territory and collective protection. Similarly, U.S. diplomacy and members of Congress should encourage full implementation of all the gender provisions of the accord.
- U.S. diplomacy should encourage the Colombian government to dismantle the paramilitary successor networks involved in drug trafficking and local and transnational crime, which also fuel violence against human rights defenders and social leaders. This includes:
 - Regularly convening the National Commission of Security Guarantees set up by the peace accords to develop and implement plans to dismantle these illegal groups and protect communities, human rights defenders and social leaders, and demobilized combatants.
 - Immediately implementing with strong political will the 660 Decree to protect communities, with the adequate human and financial resources and in consultation with communities at risk throughout the country and not just via pilot projects. In addition, there must be an efficient independent monitoring process for 660 implementation.
 - Ensuring the effective functioning of the special unit in the Attorney General's office to investigate and prosecute and dismantle paramilitary successor and organized crime groups, which was the unit's original and still unfulfilled mandate.
- U.S. diplomacy should, as a critical priority, urge the Colombian government to improve its protection of human rights defenders and social leaders, encouraging the government to:

- o ensure prompt, effective, and impartial investigations of attacks and threats against human rights defenders, including uncovering those who planned and ordered these crimes and to publicly present, on a regular basis, the outcomes of its investigations.
 - o regularly consult with human rights defenders and social leaders in the existing *mesa de garantías* process regarding plans to protect them.
 - o ensure that the National Protection Unit (UNP) implements collective protection measures in consultation with affected communities, with a differentiated ethnic, gender and territorial approach. Ensure in addition an independent audit of the UNP to investigate corruption and inefficient bureaucratic procedures within the UNP and to make recommendations to streamline delivery of protection measures and ensure close consultation with beneficiaries.
 - o In addition, the U.S. Embassy should more regularly meet and consult with a wide range of civil society representatives, including human rights defenders, Afro and indigenous leaders, women, and small farmer representatives.
- The State Department and USAID should encourage the Colombian government and the Colombian Congress to implement the accord's commitments to rural conflict zones. This includes ensuring that the Land Fund is providing land to small-scale farmers, that victims of internal displacement, small-scale farmers and collective Afro-Colombian and indigenous communities are receiving individual and collective land titles, and that the Congress refrains from passing measures that undermine these goals. It also includes ensuring that the Colombian government adequately funds and respects the PDETs, the development plans developed by local governments and communities.
- The FARC's placement on the U.S. terrorist list should be reconsidered in light of its demobilization, disarmament, and the group's general compliance with the peace accords. In the meantime, U.S. regulations concerning the FARC's remaining on the terrorist list should not be applied in such a way that undermines U.S. support for reintegration programs, peace accord implementation, or USAID support for alternative development efforts.
- The U.S. National Security Council should issue an interagency executive order for declassification of documents for Colombia's Truth Commission.
- The U.S. Congress should continue to condition any U.S. military assistance on progress in ensuring justice for grave violations of human rights by Colombian security forces, dismantling paramilitary successor groups, abstaining from promoting military officers credibly alleged to have been involved in grave human rights crimes, protecting human rights defenders and social leaders, and respecting the rights and territory of Afro-Colombian and indigenous communities. The Congress should press the State Department to enforce the conditions and where necessary, hold up a portion of assistance.
- U.S. support for counternarcotics should take advantage of the opportunities provided by the peace accords to carry out eradication and crop substitution with community support. U.S. support should focus on working with communities to sustainably eradicate and replace coca and should encourage the Colombian government to fulfill its commitments to those who have signed agreements to voluntarily eradicate and to continue to expand and improve such voluntary initiatives. The aerial spraying program, which damaged human health and the environment and failed to sustainably eradicate coca, should under no circumstances be revived. The U.S. government should support and encourage efforts to dismantle paramilitary successor and other organized criminal groups.
- The U.S. government should support the United Nations' efforts to verify and encourage compliance with the peace accords, including by supporting and consulting with the UN Political Mission and providing diplomatic support and financial assistance to and consulting with the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights office in Colombia.

- The United States should not draw Colombia, itself still in conflict and not yet recovering from decades of war, into conflict with Venezuela. The U.S. should value and support Colombia's efforts to provide humanitarian assistance to Venezuelan refugees within Colombia. However, assistance should not contribute to escalating tensions at the Colombia-Venezuela border. Aid should:
 - be coordinated and implemented with international and local actors that have technical expertise in providing such assistance, for example the United Nations agencies and International Committee of the Red Cross;
 - not be administered by U.S. or Colombian military personnel;
 - take into account and support the local displaced and poor persons where it is being administered so as to mitigate xenophobia and tensions that may arise between the migrants and refugees and local communities; and
 - encourage the Colombian government to adjust its migration policy to accept expired travel documents as valid for migration purposes, as agreed to in principle in the Quito Declaration of 2018. The Colombian government should also be encouraged to take steps to provide a pathway to formal status to this population, and allow them access to education, healthcare, and legal employment.