

EDITORIAL

Making peace and peacebuilding: the peace process in Colombia from the point of view of Peace and Conflict Transformation Studies

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Photo: Tica Font

Researchers in peace studies, as well as those working on conflict resolution and transformation, have for several decades been applying Johan Galtung's seminal proposal (from 1968) for dealing with the analysis and the resolution of conflicts, using the ABC triangle. Thus three elements are identified: A, the *Attitudes* of the actors in the conflict; B, the *Behaviour* of the actors in the conflict; and C, *Contradiction*, referring to the contradictions or incompatibilities which explain the dispute, clash or conflict. Some years later, Galtung coined the term peacebuilding¹, which was subsequently used by the UN in *An Agenda for Peace*.

Galtung recently returned to his triangle, to refer to the generations of approaches to the making of peace from the perspective of peace studies. Specifically, he defined the third generation approaches, which emerged after the Cold War, in terms of their refusal to deal with the task of building peace on the basis of simplistic, reductionist and superficial viewpoints. What

characterises them is their emphasis on cultures of peace (deep attitudes), the satisfaction of basic human needs (which are non-negotiable) and the creation of institutions and structures which make it possible to manage in a sustainable way the contradictions and differences.

And that is precisely what this latest issue of *Per la Pau / Peace in Progress* deals with; issues related to two expressions which are very widely used, but are misleading and ambiguous: "peace processes" and "peace building". And it does so in the hopeful but complex and unpredictable context of the opening of direct peace talks between the Revolutionary Armed Forces of Colombia (FARC) and the Colombian government, without the prior condition of a mutually agreed ceasefire².

In addition, this issue of the magazine coincides with the commemoration of twenty years of the disarmament and demobilisation in El Salvador (16 December 1992), as well as with an increasing growth of critical voices concerning the motivations and results of the so called *liberal peacebuilding consensus*. Furthermore, now that some decades have passed since the signing of various Central American peace agreements, there are widely expressed opinions concerning the contradictions, even the futility, revealed by the evolution of different peace processes, including those in this region. Given that fifteen or twenty years after the signing of broad and multidimensional agreements in Central America we find, alongside greater political stability, societies which suffer high degrees of violence of a direct and murderous nature, violence which is chronic despite lacking any political objective, these reflections sometimes argue that the foregoing peace processes were pointless.

From this we can derive two corollaries which will serve as the framework or guiding thread for the underlying concern of this issue of the magazine.

Firstly, we must define what a peace process is, what can be expected of it and insist on the importance of "the day after" in building peace. That is, on conflict transformation, on the essential link between making the peace (the peace process, the agreements that are signed) and building peace (conflict transformation when initiating the implementation of the agreements).

Secondly, and now considering the Colombian case, given that we know much more than we did twenty years ago, it becomes crucial for us to consider the link between the peace process and peacebuilding right from the beginning of negotiations. That is to say, we must always take into account the post-conflict situation, creating institutions and structures that ensure the management of the contradictions that will continue to exist, as well as the various processes for resolution, reconstruction and reconciliation following the long violent phase. Knowing also that even in the event of successful negotiations with the FARC — and in the future with the ELN — there will still remain significant violent actors, with great potential for homicidal violence even though they lack any clearly political objective. Suffice it to recall the threat of the BACRIM (emerging criminal gangs; "bandas criminales emergentes" in Spanish), that have a growing and documented presence in at least 200 municipalities across Colombia.

Hence ICIP's commitment to closely follow the Colombian process and to investigate in the future, in the light of lessons learned from the past, the relationship between peace processes (making peace) and peacebuilding, which means analysing how, following the signing of peace agreements, processes of peace, development, democracy and human rights are put in place.

1. It is noteworthy that the term "peacebuilding" can be translated into Spanish literally as "*construcción de paz*" ("the construction of peace"), although the translation that the United Nations has used since *An Agenda for Peace*, in 1992, is "*consolidación de la paz*" ("the consolidation of peace"), with a seemingly more restrictive meaning.
2. Although on the first day of talks in Havana (19 November) the FARC announced a two month unilateral ceasefire.

CONTENTS

EDITORIAL	1	FINDING OUT MORE	11
IN DEPTH	2	INTERVIEW	13
INTRODUCTION	2	PLATFORM	15
CENTRAL ARTICLES	3	Understanding and addressing violence in El Salvador and Honduras	15
Negotiating peace and building peace: lessons learned, with a view to Colombia	3	Twenty years of peace in El Salvador	16
Slow peace or 'express peace': What kind of peace is possible in Colombia?	4	RECOMMENDATIONS	17
Building confidence for peace in Colombia	6	NEWS	20
Women's contribution to peacebuilding in a polarised country: Colombia. Threats and challenges	7	ICIP News	20
The indigenous peoples of Colombia and the peace process	9	International News	21
Colombia: A peace with winners and losers? Challenges for human development in the context of peacebuilding	10		

IN DEPTH

INTRODUCTION

Negotiating peace and building peace: the case of Colombia

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Throughout the last months of 2012, peace talks between the Colombian government and the FARC have brought the peace-building process into the media spotlight. While not entering into an analysis of the content of the negotiations themselves or a strict assessment of the current successes and obstacles, ICIP feels that the broader goals and challenges posed by peacebuilding in Colombia at this historic time deserve consideration.

This edition of *Per la Pau / Peace in Progress* presents some of those considerations. The first article, by Rafael Grasa, analyses lessons learned in peace negotiations and peace-building with a look at Colombia. Next, Jenny Pearce considers steps taken by the negotiating parties and asks what kind of peace is possible in Colombia. Virginia Bouvier then looks at the need to build trust in order to reach peace in Colombia, with a special focus on civil society. The

Peace Team of CIASE, including Rosa Emilia Salamanca G., Carolina Dávila and Paula Valentina Gamez, assesses the goals and challenges faced by Colombian women in the context of peace-building. In the following article, Weidler Guerra tells us about the impact of the armed conflict on indigenous populations and what stance they take in the peace process. Alejandro Matos then presents factors related to armed conflict that stand in the way of human development and therefore peace-building.

The section *To Learn More* provides recommendations for additional sources on these subjects and more. Additionally, this edition includes an *Interview* with Luz Marina Bernal whose son was the victim of an extrajudicial killing in Colombia and one of the five women from Soacha who won the ICIP Peace in Progress Award.

This issue also addresses other important topics of peace and security. In the *Platform* section readers will find a reflection on understanding and addressing violence in El Salvador and Honduras by Rachel Meyer and a contribution from Manuel Montobio on the 20th anniversary of the signing of the El Salvador Peace Agreements.

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ARTICLES CENTRALS

Negotiating peace and building peace: lessons learned, with a view to Colombia

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As stated in the editorial, negotiating peace and building peace are inextricably linked processes, both conceptually and in the practical side, of intervention. And that is precisely the objective of this article: to clarify what a peace process is and what can be expected of it, establishing the connections with the building of peace on the basis of the knowledge and the lessons learned up to now. In this way, they can be taken into account from the beginning of this new attempt at negotiations and, if these are successful, in the course of dealing with the situation subsequent to the violent conflict.

Let us begin by recalling that there are few terms as misleading as that of “peace process”, particularly when seen from the point of view of the resolution and transformation of conflicts. In practice, the term refers to a diverse range of processes of political negotiations aimed at putting an end to a protracted armed conflict; negotiations with different actors, formats, objectives and of course, results. Let’s see why.

Firstly, conceptually, a peace process is simply an ongoing peace initiative which involves different actors of an armed conflict. In other words, political negotiations, with crucial and different contexts, whose aim is to achieve “peace” in a narrow sense: an end to armed hostilities and some agreements to deal with the subsequent process of rehabilitation and post-war reconstruction. In the best of cases, in a comparative perspective, they are negotiations from which there may emerge a partially agreed “roadmap” concerning the process for the actual construction of peace, for conflict transformation, focusing on the “three R’s”: reconstruction, resolution and reconciliation.

Secondly, we are talking therefore about political negotiations to put an end to a protracted armed conflict that may have gone through different phases and stages, even including some with little or no violence. Where, as is the case from the point of view of ICIP, the ultimate goal is the transformation of conflicts (that is to say, to change unjust social relations and substantially alter the situation that created or exacerbated the motives for the dispute and for the use of violence), reconciliation takes on a key role, to the extent to which the conflict (understood as a dispute or antagonism between parties) will continue to exist following the peace agreement. What we aim to achieve, that which can be changed, is to reduce or eliminate the likelihood that violent methods and behaviour will be resorted to when dealing with this conflict. We should not forget that all peace processes are fragile and that, sooner or later, most of them fail.

Thirdly, the analysis of real peace processes over recent decades, including those which involve multilevel diplomacy and not just deals from the top, show that we must take into account several different issues and phases: a) the preparations for peace; b) the negotiations in the strict sense; c) the management of violence, something which it is always difficult to handle, given that examples abound of violent episodes during the negotiation process even when — unlike the Colombian case we are discussing now— there is a ceasefire; d) the specific peace agreements; and e) the construction and consolidation of peace, in terms of the “three R’s” mentioned above.

Fourthly, with regard to the conflict and negotiations, both theory and practice show that in order to achieve success, a necessary, though not a sufficient, condition, is the search for win-win outcomes and mutual commitments between the parties. However, the initial positions of the parties usually reveal “win-lose” strategies, which often lead to “lose-lose” results which are negative for all parties. Therefore, the task of conflict resolution is to help the parties to turn zero-sum games (“win-lose”) into positive-sum games, with results that bring positive change for all. In short, success requires negotiations based on interests and needs, and not on the basis of postures and positions. Key to this is the intervention of third parties in the negotiations, to help search for ways out of what appear to be dead ends, and to establish new models of communication.

Fifthly, the role of third parties. Specifically, the post Cold War period has brought new fields and possibilities, both broader and more effective, for the intervention of third party facilitators. The lessons learned show us that, with the real broadening in the meaning of multilateral diplomacy, which comes to be multilevel, enabling bottom-up interventions; a new role for internal peacemakers; and in general an increasing role for unofficial mediators and facilitators (in the jargon, “track 2”, such as churches, NGOs, specialised centres) as well as citizens’ and grassroots organisations (“track 3”). The well-known Lederach pyramid or triangle shows this graphically. In the case that we are dealing with, we should remember that far away, over the coming months, many players could be at the table in Havana.

This brings me to a sixth and final reflection, concerning the lessons learned from the debate between William Zartman and John Paul Lederach. Lederach has argued, against the former’s thesis that negotiations can only be considered to be fruitful when a situation has been reached of “ripeness” or blockage in the battlefield which is mutually harmful to the contestants (a “hurting stalemate”), that the important thing are on-going processes over the long term. In his words, if you want to make peace, first you must strive to visualize the long-term outcome: constructing or making peace, transforming the conflict. Nothing is ever ripe unless you first cultivate the soil, which means clearing the land, making it fertile, allowing it to rest and regenerating it. The resolution and transformation of conflict requires cultivation and preparation. It is not possible to make peace unless — before, during and after the direct negotiations — we make an effort to construct that peace and to think and to analyse the feasibility of and the means to reach the post armed conflict scenarios we desire.

In short, the core element in the task of peacebuilding is precisely to nurture and sustain authentic, committed relationships across the various lines and fractures in the conflict, and thus between the different direct and indirect actors in that conflict. For that reason, peace in Colombia now does not depend only on what happens in Havana, or in the different capitals of the countries which are acting as facilitators and guarantors of the process. It also depends heavily on what is being done and what will be done in cities and communities across Colombia, and in many other parts of the world. As noted by Oliver Richmond, we must understand peace as both a process and a goal; as a process which, along with development and democracy, is in constant construction.

Slow peace or ‘express peace’: What kind of peace is possible in Colombia?

Jenny Pearce

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Ivan Marquez, the FARC negotiator has rejected what he called ‘express peace’. The government on the other hand is hoping that the end of the armed conflict could be negotiated in 8 to 12 months. In the opening speeches on 17 October in Oslo to a global audience he could address for the first time, Marquez caused consternation when he suggested that the FARC might want to go beyond the tight schedule and the five negotiating points carefully agreed during the secret pre-negotiation talks. These five points (rural development policy, political participation, ending the conflict, the illicit drug problem and victims’ rights) are in themselves very significant, and one of the thorniest, the land question, was selected as the first item for discussion after the transfer to Havana in November. However, Marquez made it clear that for the FARC, the issue of land could not be reduced to the Restitution of Land and Rural Development Law designed by the government. He wanted to put on the agenda the ‘*suelo, subsuelo and sobresuelo*’, which means the wide areas of landownership, mining and energy, agro industry and forestry, the role

of multinationals and foreign investment. In other words, the very development model of Colombia. This wider agenda would most probably scupper the prospects of an accelerated move to peace.

However, we know that Marquez used his moment on the global stage to communicate big messages to a wider audience rather than announce a real shift in the negotiating agenda. Other messages were that the FARC did not come to the table from a sense of military weakness, to negotiate the ‘*paz de los vencidos*’ but rather they would negotiate the ‘*paz de jus-*

ticia social. Alfredo Molano wrote afterwards in *El Espectador*: '*Una negociacion sobre intereses que durante medio siglo se han tratado de resolver a balazos no podria haber comenzado con besos*'. Nevertheless, Marquez makes us reflect on what can be expected from the peace talks and what kind of peace is possible in Colombia.

Colombians are desperate to end the violence which has overwhelmed their country for decades. The former period of '*La Violencia*', was ended in the late 1950s with a peace pact between the Conservative and Liberal Party elites, which ushered in a political agreement to alternate in power, known as the Frente Nacional (FN), which lasted formally from 1958-1971 and informally beyond that. This dramatically reduced the inter-party violence. However, a new violence emerged as guerrilla groups were founded to contest the post '*La Violencia*' social and political order, influenced by varied social and ideological drivers. The FN ushered in a modernisation of the Colombian economy which accelerated the population shift from rural to urban centres, but it exacerbated the problem of concentration of land ownership and the social inequalities which today make Colombia the third most unequal country in Latin America and one of the most unequal in the world.

Social, economic and political exclusion lie behind the violence which has shaken the country, but do not explain it entirely. The mechanisms of the reproduction of violence in Colombia are multiple. They include the army's role in scuppering previous peace efforts, the alliances of wealthy elites with private armed or paramilitary groups against the guerrilla threat, the rise of violent drug trafficking cartels and the criminalization of all armed groups as they have entered the drug trade. A dark cloud of massive human rights abuses against civilians hangs over the peace talks. A large number are women, many of them victims of sexual violence by all parties in the armed conflict; however their voices are not represented around the table. Indeed, there is only one woman in the delegation, Tanja Nijmeijer, the Dutch CARC combatant known as Alexandra, who was accepted round the table only at the last minute.

It is evident that the peace talks will not succeed if the entire agenda required to build sustainable peace is addressed. They must disappoint. The question is by how much? The issue of impunity and amnesty weighs heavily over the process. How can human rights be defended if they are to be traded for 'peace'? Can the negotiations persuade the FARC to trust the state to protect its militants who demobilise? The last time they attempted to build a political option, the Patriotic Union, an estimated 3,000 members were assassinated, and this casts another dark shadow over the negotiations for the FARC. This time, there are retired military around the table, they are part of the government negotiating team and this is a clever means to persuade the armed forces to 'buy into' this peace process. The talks must make it possible for the wider agenda laid out by Marquez to be struggled for politically once the ending of the armed conflict has been agreed. The FARC, with its own history of authoritarianism and abuse, will have to accept it is not the sole representative of the struggle for social justice. Over the last two decades, Colombia's social activism has come out of the shadow of the guerrilla forces and these voices are not round the table either.

The peace talks should be seen as only Phase One of the peace process. They must focus on the conditions for the laying down of arms. However, that does not mean that the wider agenda for peace should be postponed. The very debate the peace talks will open up will mean that excluded voices could be heard as never before. Other themes need to be discussed parallel with the formal talks, including the important issue of the rule of law. Violence, not war, is the opposite of peace and the talks will not in themselves put a stop to the multiple forms of violence which have come to be seen as 'normal' in many regions of Colombia. The drugs trade must be high on the agenda. Its persistence will scupper prospects for long term peace. And last, but by no means least, there is the question who will pay for the peace. Without productive futures demobilised armed actors will find little incentive to support the peace. Colombia's wealthy elites and foreign investors were once persuaded to pay a war tax. It is time for a peace tax to be collected. These are the agendas of the 'slow peace' which must end the intergenerational cycles of violence. It must begin while the 'express peace' brings an end to the war as quickly as possible.

Building confidence for peace in Colombia

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A decade after the last round of dialogues between the Colombian government and the FARC ended in Caguán, peace is again peeking over the horizon in Colombia. For many, the announcement of Colombia's peace process just a few months ago was an unexpected surprise.

We know now that the Colombian government established contact with the FARC shortly after Santos took office and that from February until August 2012 the parties engaged in six months of secret exploratory talks in Cuba - what is now referred to as Phase One of the three anticipated phases of the peace talks. Phase Two began on October 18th with the launching of the *Mesa de Conversación* in Norway and its resumption in Havana. Once the parties agree on a peace deal to end the conflict the third and final phase of implementation and peace-building will follow.

In hindsight, the signals that a peace process was coming could not have been clearer. Both the FARC and the smaller National Liberation Army (ELN) had been publicizing their desire to talk peace with the government for more than two years. In January 2012, FARC leader Timoleón Jiménez, a.k.a. Timochenko, called on Santos to address the agenda that was still pending from the peace talks in Caguán a decade ago. The ELN leadership has echoed the calls for dialogue, although so far different agendas and priorities have precluded its participation at the peace tables in Havana.

For his part, President Santos has spoken of the need for reconciliation in Colombia since he came to office. In his inauguration speech, Santos announced that he guarded the key to peace in his pocket and would use it when conditions were right. This marked a major shift from the era of former President Alvaro Uribe, who denied the existence of an armed conflict in Colombia altogether.

The parties have quietly engaged in a cumulative process of linked commitments that have built mutual trust in the process. The government advanced a legislative agenda that addressed key FARC priorities on agrarian issues and a constitutional amendment that would provide a framework for future negotiations. It lifted outstanding arrest warrants against members of the FARC negotiating team and has legalized the *Marcha Patriótica*, which provides a potential platform for future ex-FARC engagement in civic life. For its part, the FARC announced it would cease the practice of kidnapping, released its remaining military and police hostages, and on November 19 declared a unilateral ceasefire that would last through January 20, 2013.

Civil society has no official representative participating in the peace talks - and some sectors are clamoring for a place at the table. However, to suggest that civil society has not had a role in this peace process would be highly misleading. The preamble of the framework agreement signed by the parties on August 26 specifies that the *Mesas de Conversación* are in response to "the clamor of the population for peace." This clamor has been growing. For the last two years, *Colombianos y Colombianas por la Paz*, a civil society alliance led by former Senator Piedad Córdoba, has engaged in "epistolary dialogues" on humanitarian and peace issues with the FARC and the ELN. Academics, former combatants, and religious leaders have done the same. Women's organizations, indigenous and Afro-Colombian communities, labor leaders, peasants, victims' groups, journalists, human rights defenders, cultural workers and artists, and politicians—have also intensified their call for peace, as have a variety of social movements and new platforms, including the *Ruta Social por la Paz*, *Mujeres por la Paz*, and the *Mesa Nacional de Unidad Agraria*.

The framework agreement anticipates three general vehicles for civil participation: consultations with experts, establishing a mechanism for receiving proposals electronically or in person, and "direct consultations" - possibly conducted by a third party. These mechanisms are in the process of being defined. At this point, civil society groups are supporting the talks, pressuring for ceasefires and humanitarian agreements, and expecting to engage in the implementation of agreements.

The broader civil society needs to be brought along, however. Although President Santos' popularity skyrocketed after he announced the talks, the prior experience in Caguán hangs heavy over the Colombian psyche. Much like Charlie Brown in the "Peanuts" comic strip, who time after time tries to kick the football only to have it whisked away by Lucy, Colombians fear that the peace they so desperately want will be pulled out from under them at the last minute. This could happen, but there are many good reasons to envision a different denouement this time around.

First, the teams have already worked together and achieved a framework agreement that details the path ahead. The agreed agenda includes six items, and is more focused and manageable than previous agendas. Second, both parties appear to have accepted that a military victory is not possible. Third, the process appears to be serious and well designed, and the parties agree that the goal is to end the conflict. Fourth, both parties are building on lessons learned from the past. Among other things, they have maintained considerable discretion and are largely avoiding the temptation to negotiate through the press, which proved disastrous for the last peace process. Likewise, the government negotiating team includes representatives from the military, police, and business — sectors that have been spoilers in past peace processes.

Fifth, both sides have upheld the agreements that have been made thus far. Sixth, the international context is more favorable for peace today than it was in Caguán. Armed struggle in Latin America has fallen out of favor and change through the ballot box is demonstrably possible. Finally, the international community, through Cuba, Norway, Venezuela, and Chile, is playing a quietly constructive role in helping to move the process along. While there will undoubtedly be bumps, delays, and crashes along the way, the prospects for peace look better than they have in many years.

Women's contribution to peacebuilding in a polarised country: Colombia. Threats and challenges

Peace Team - CIASE

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The wounds of war have profound consequences for those who live in the midst of the conflict. Many of these consequences are invisible but are nonetheless deep. Hence the building of peace in a country in conflict poses major challenges for society that can not be solved overnight. In the search for a sustainable and lasting peace it is necessary to understand that a long-term project is required, one which aims to understand what happened, and to identify and heal the wounds and the mistrust produced by the war. We have to recognise one another's humanity. This requires a process of demilitarisation in our ideas and our everyday lives. We have to start thinking in terms of winning the peace, and not just winning the war and putting an end to armed violence.

What does it take to achieve peace in this sense? It takes the work of all men and women; there have to be, within each of the different social, political, economic and ethnic groups in the country, individuals with the will and the ability to break stereotypes, and create relationships of dialogue and trust. The key point is that the country needs a vision for the future which speaks to the aspirations and rights of all the social and political viewpoints.

In this task, women are called upon to play a leading role. Women from various sectors, locally, nationally and internationally, have highlighted the need to build sustainable peace proposals not only for them, but from these women to society, thus breaking with the idea that women only talk about women's issues. They have also shown that due to the different way in which they have been socialised they can contribute to peacebuilding with new ingredients and tools; they have been capable of seeing that the day to day care for others and for their environment is fundamental to life. Life should be at the heart of the debate; defending it and valuing it must be a central element in the achievement of a lasting peace.

In Colombia, due to the different forms of violence and the intertwining of conflicts, society is divided, fractured, highly polarised and mistrustful. All of this is an obstacle to the development of proposals amongst people from different sectors, and to reaching agreements without having to feel that to some extent there has been a prior symbolic defeat. That is why women from various sectors of civil society have seen the need to rebuild trust in those who are different, in order to develop joint proposals and agreements on the strategies and mechanisms necessary to achieve a sustainable peace; first overcoming the lack of interest in some sectors and then establishing dialogue between women with advocacy capacity in different social spheres.

The development of peace proposals among women — in all their diversity, and with their ideological and political differences — is a real contribution to the building of a lasting peace and to the creation of mechanisms which allow peace to be understood as a process involving the whole of society and not just the armed groups. It enables processes of the rebuilding of confidence in the other side and of the generation of proposals from among women which, while maintaining their impact at local level, achieve systematic impact at a national level (in various spheres: organised civil society, business,

government, minority communities, etc.) and it links in to peace initiatives, from and with women, on the international stage.

From this a number of women's initiatives have emerged in recent times, which are the result of the many efforts which have been kept up constantly, even in the most critical moments of the armed conflict.

Thus today we have many examples which, unlike in other sectors, are reaching out despite their differences and are attempting to act together both around substantive issues on the negotiating table today and around future strategic issues, such as the need to disarm discourses and deepen the exercise of democracy, with all that this implies.

With respect to the negotiating table, the women's movement has argued that although this process is an essential element for peace, it is not the only one. "The men with weapons are on our agenda, but we women are not on the agenda of the men with weapons" is a sentence which is often used to sum up the fact that for us it is essential to end the war and make a transition to a political debate in which everyone has a place and which is not dominated by arms. That is to say that the debates and struggles of the Colombian people should not be left in the hands of the armed groups.

But the opportunity presented by the negotiating table is no small matter; as we have said, it is a vital component. In this regard, we lay out below five points which Colombian women in general are asking for in the context of the negotiating table.

1. The inclusion of women on the negotiating panels, in fulfilment of the terms of UN Security Council Resolution 1325;
2. A ceasefire during the negotiations;
3. Fulfilment of the law on victims;
4. Truth, justice, reparations and guarantees of non-repetition for the victims of sexual violence in the context of the armed conflict;
5. Continuity of the talks until they reach an agreement for an end to the confrontation.

Away from the negotiating table, we women believe that there is a peacebuilding process which implies a profound ethical transformation involving everyone and which implies:

- Recognising and overcoming the profound pain caused by all the forms of violence that have affected us for decades.
- Rejecting the individualistic, opportunist, corrupt, even criminal practices that have been present in all areas, social spheres and groups in the country.
- Putting into question our anger and distrust deconstructing prejudices and pre-established ideas.
- Recognising the contributions made by all people to a shared understanding of the real situation.
- Establishing the idea and the practice of a "fair justice" and the guarantee of non-repetition for all, which allows us to know the truth and not lose the memory of what happened.
- Transforming our daily practices into practices which show respect for the rights of everyone.

We women in Colombia are going along a difficult path towards the building of a sustainable peace, and this will require the support and backing of the largest possible number of women worldwide; we hope we will receive that support.

The Peace Team of CIASE (Corporación de Investigación y Acción Social y Económica) consists of Rosa Emilia Salamanca G, Carolina Dávila and Valentina Paula Gamez.

The indigenous peoples of Colombia and the peace process

Weidler Guerra Curvelo

Anthropologist, member of the Wayuu people



This scene takes place at the heart of the Sierra Nevada de Santa Marta, Colombia. An elderly indigenous woman, Ana Teresa Alberto, looks at the diminished flow of an ancient river and thinks back nostalgically to her youth, when a woman could not cross the waters alone; now a six year old child can cross them unaided. "More violence means less water" she concludes with resignation.

In the territory of Colombia there is an indigenous population of 1.37 million people, which represents just over 3% of the country's total population, estimated at 46 million. They include very distinct groups, which have very different ways of making a living. They include horticulturalists; people who live from hunting, fishing and gathering; pastoralists; farmers; artisans and merchants. Many of them are distributed in peripheral areas, far from the centre of the country. They live in the Amazonian rainforests, in the rugged mountains of the Andes, on the interfluvial plains, on the coastal areas of the Pacific and the semidesert territories on the shores of the Caribbean. For more than half a century, they have seen armed groups of different ideologies marching across their lands. These pass through decade after decade, like so many Roman cohorts, leaving pain and devastation in their wake. It is an endless violence that, far from representing the birth pains for the emergence of a new and fairer political and economic order, is more like an excruciatingly painful, chronic, incurable disease with no useful social role.

Years of the colonisation of their land, of the clearing of their forests to plant illegal crops, of legal and illegal mining, of the expansion of monocultures like palm oil and of the construction of dams for power generation have led to different forms of violence that go not only against human beings but also against the very landscape. For this reason, and also because as social beings they have their own symbolic vision concerning the physical environment, and a point of view different from Western ideas of 'development', most members of the Amerindian peoples make a direct association between environmental changes and alterations in society. Thus the military conflict in Colombia is perceived by indigenous peoples as something that goes beyond a mere armed clash between human beings.

Among the central issues of indigenous demands we find both the defence of their territories and natural resources, and the affirmation of the autonomous power of their traditional authorities to exercise social control with respect to these. Some indigenous territories have been considered by the contending factions as vital strategic corridors. In these territories, they recruit children for the war, they plant mines, they establish laboratories to process drugs and they transport weapons to fuel the conflict. The frequent clashes and bombings affect the civilian population, which has responded with calls for the demilitarisation of their reserved territories, in accordance with Article 30 of the UN Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples which lays down that military operations in their territories must have been freely agreed to or requested by the indigenous inhabitants.

Persistent acts of discrimination, paramilitary violence, the extraction of resources without their consent, loss of land and social exclusion have eroded the legitimacy of the state from the viewpoint of these groups of people. While indigenous organisations are distrustful of political parties and of religious activists, because of the divisions they tend to create within their communities, the truth is that neither do they support the insurgent groups. According to indigenous representatives, a recurrent practice of such groups is to try to capitalise on the civilian population's social mobilisations, presenting them as a product of the armed conflict. In a letter to FARC commander Timochenko the indigenous authorities of the northern Cauca told him firmly: "We are not on different banks of the same river. We are actually on two completely different rivers; perhaps both flow into the same sea, but we think it unlikely that your river will lead to that of a fairer country."

The indigenous peoples have suffered more than most Colombians from violent actions against their members on the part of all the armed factions. The rhetoric of the guerrilla commanders is one thing; something completely different are the cruel actions of their middle ranking officers and soldiers. The futile use of violence has led to a kind of bureaucratisation of war which allows the simple, effortless and impersonal processing of deaths. "War is like that", the guerrillas claim in their defence. "But life does not have to be like that", the indigenous people respond.

The indigenous peoples of Colombia have reiterated their willingness to support any effort aimed at achieving a process of peace that is taken forward through dialogue, which includes the participation of civil society and is carried out within the terms of respect for international humanitarian law. Peace, if achieved, should lead to a country in which there prevails a plural vision of Colombian-ness, which incorporate within its social and economic model the principles of solidarity and reciprocity. Like many Colombians, the indigenous peoples believe in maintaining their moral optimism, understood as an unshakeable faith in humanity despite the mistakes that have been made.

The age old experience of these peoples in conflict resolution could make an invaluable contribution to the search for peace. They are convinced, as in the case of the Wayuu artisans, that aesthetics is a guiding principle for dealings between human beings. Thus peace must be woven with the same dedication and skill that are used when creating a lovely bag and it must be as harmonious as a delicate necklace. As they lean on their sturdy old walking sticks, they know that these sticks also symbolise the legitimacy and verticality of justice. A restorative justice based more on the search for truth and the reconstruction of the social ties broken by the prolonged violence than on mere punishment or revenge.

Colombia: A peace with winners and losers? Challenges for human development in the context of peacebuilding

Alejandro Matos

Intermón Oxfam



Many factors in Colombia interweave development and the causes of the armed conflict. I will refer in this article to two of them: land and mining. Both of these elements are strongly implicated in serious human rights violations, including enforced disappearances and extrajudicial executions, on a scale which reflects the depth of the problems faced by human development.

Land. Colombia's model of rural development is highly inequitable and exclusionary, a fact which provokes the emergence of countless conflicts. The seizing and abandonment of land in Colombia as a result of violence affected, between 1980 and July 2010, 12.9% of the country's cultivable area. Almost half of this land was seized or abandoned between 1998 and 2010. Article 99 of Law 1448, the Victims' and Land Restitution Law, which is part of the legal framework for peace, lays down that if the lands appropriated from small farmers are in the hands of corporations setting up megaprojects (African palm for palm oil, rubber, corn, etc.) there are two possible outcomes. If the multinational holds the land in good faith, the small farmer is obliged to negotiate with the company (that is to say, with a powerful law firm) because productivity takes precedence over peasants' rights. If the multinational did not acquire the land in good faith, the megaproject is transferred to a state entity, which in turn hands it over to a third party (possibly another multinational) and the profits would go towards collective restitution, including the small peasant proprietor. In neither case is there full recognition of the rights of the peasant farmer to the use and exploitation of their seized land. This legal situation makes it very difficult for the forcibly displaced population to go back and rebuild their lives. It is an example of how in Colombia, even when laying down the laws for peace, the political commitment is maintained to an unjust development model in which the rights of the poor are sacrificed to the economic interests of the elites.

Mining. Colombia has not traditionally been a mineral extracting country, if we compare it with Venezuela, for example. However, the mining industry has been implicated in the financing of the armed conflict: when subjected to extortion, they have paid the guerrilla groups and then, in order to stop paying the guerrillas, they have funded the creation of paramilitary groups and/or Army brigades which have sometimes then been used for various dirty operations, such as the elimination of trade unionists or the displacement of populations so as to permit energy exploration. President Santos declared that his government would be economically driven by the locomotive of mining. And that is what is happening, but without a rural development or environmental policy which ensures the conservation of the territory and the people who live in it. Thus, once again, they ignore the rights of the citizens in the areas affected by the impact of the exploitation of natural resources.¹ The growth of mining in Colombia is not being planned as part of a strengthening of national industry and manufacturing, but rather fits into the transnational strategy which aims to cover, in the countries of the South, the great international demand for minerals and energy from the developed countries or the emerging economies. Given this framework, there will be less decision-making power in the hands of the central government, not to mention local governments, and still less the indigenous peoples, the communities of African origin and the peasants in whose territories the oil, the coltan or the coveted gold are to be found.

Fortunately, development has long since ceased to be thought of simply in terms of economic statistics. It has come to be understood as "a process of expanding the real freedoms that people enjoy", and from this viewpoint rights are both the primary end and the principal means of achieving development.² In Colombia, the degree of human rights violations in relation to the two factors mentioned above is so high that this has itself become an impediment to human development and thereby to the building of peace. It should be recalled for example that as of October 2011, the National Registry of Disappeared Persons included 16,884 victims of enforced disappearance.³ Furthermore, the Colombian state is investigating about 2,500 suspected cases of extrajudicial killings, mostly committed between 2004 and 2008, involving at least 3,527 victims.⁴

The "general agreement for ending the conflict and building a stable and lasting peace", the roadmap which lays down the guidelines for the current negotiations between the Colombian government and the FARC, speaks of truth, but does not mention justice. South Africa is often referred to as an example of a conflict resolved through truth. However, this does not take into account the fact that the central importance of the truth was directly and proportionally related to the fact that those who had been oppressed under apartheid are now in power. In Colombia there will be no negotiation to permit the victims (the indigenous people, children, women, the population of African origin, peasants, trade unionists, etc.) to come to power. They will probably continue to be oppressed and excluded.

For that reason, this process might well produce a peace of winners and losers. But not in the typical way, with the victory of one warring party over the other. What could happen is that the winners are precisely the parties in conflict (landowners, politicians, guerrillas, paramilitaries, the military, businessmen, ranchers, etc.) and that the vanquished are the victims of the conflict; that is, the vast bulk of the civilian population, especially those from the poorer social classes and/or the ethnic groups other than the white Creoles. This outcome would reproduce exactly the unequal development model that has been

applied in Colombia over its more than two centuries of existence. If impunity, transnational investment and the legalisation of accumulation prevail, then without a doubt the process which is now beginning, which is supposed to bring an end to the conflict, will paradoxically but very really contribute to reinforcing the causes of the war.

1. See CINEP, *Minería, conflictos sociales y violación de los derechos humanos en Colombia*, ["Mining, social conflicts and violation of human rights in Colombia"] Bogotá, October 2012.
2. Sen, Amartya, *Development as Freedom*, Oxford University Press, 1999, p. 36.
3. OHCHR, *Report of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights on the situation of human rights in Colombia, 2011*, A/HRC/19/21/Add.3, Bogota, 31 January 2012, paragraph 62.
4. Christian Salazar Volkman, OHCHR Representative in Colombia, "Presentation of the Annual report of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights 2011" [in Spanish: "Presentación del Informe Anual de la Alta comisionada de las Naciones Unidas para los Derechos Humanos 2011", <http://www.hchr.org.co/publico/pronunciamientos/ponencias/ponencias.php?cod=133&cat=24>

FINDING OUT MORE

From the wealth of information that can be found on the Internet about peacebuilding in Colombia, we have selected some of the most relevant websites, audiovisuals, journal articles and reports of NGOs and think tanks. (Materials produced by: Rachel Meyer).

Websites and blogs

Colombia Calls: Notes on a nation's struggle for peace and justice blog (<http://vbouvier.wordpress.com/tag/virginia-bouvier/>) Opinion pieces by Virginia Bouvier of the United States Institute of Peace. (English, selected posts in Spanish)

Just the Facts Blog (<http://justf.org/blog>) U.S. defence and security assistance to Latin America and the Caribbean with on-going coverage of the peace talks. (English, selected links in Spanish)

Oficina Internacional de Derechos Humanos Acción Colombia (OIDHACO) (<http://www.oidhaco.org/>). A network of international NGOs that assist and support human rights efforts in Colombia. (Spanish)

Consultoría para los Derechos Humanos y el Desplazamiento (CODHES) (<http://www.codhes.org/>). A Colombian NGO dedicated to working for human rights, especially displaced people and refugees. (Spanish)

Colectivo de Abogados José Alvear Restrepo (CCAJAR) (<http://www.colectivodeabogados.org/>). Lawyers and human rights advocates against impunity who seek judicial and political responses to grave violations of human rights and historical memory in Colombia. (Spanish)

International Center for Transitional Justice (ICTJ) (<http://ictj.org/>). NGO specialized in justice in periods of transition. Their section on Colombia includes news, publications and research. (English and Spanish)

Comisión Colombiana de Juristas (<http://www.coljuristas.org/>). Seeking to improve human rights in Colombia and contribute to international human rights and humanitarian law, their website provides documentation and legal analyses. (Spanish)

Iniciativa de las Mujeres Colombianas por la Paz (IMP) (<http://www.mujeresporlapaz.org/web/>) This initiative came out of the UN resolution requiring countries in conflict to pay special attention to the needs and rights of women and the role of women in conflict resolution. (Spanish) For more information about women and peace in Colombia, we also recommend the work of the Popular Women's Organization (<http://organizacionfemeninapopulareng.blogspot.com.es/>); Ruta Pacífica de Mujeres (<http://www.rutapacifico.org.co/>) and Casa de la Mujer de Bogotá (<http://www.casmujer.org/>).

Organización Nacional Indígena de Colombia (ONIC) (<http://cms.onic.org.co/>). Reference for and information about indigenous peoples and their role within Colombia, including but not limited to peace and human rights. (Spanish)

Etnias de Colombia (<http://www.actualidadetnica.com/>). An online magazine dedicated to current events, opinion pieces, seminars and upcoming demonstrations. We also recommend The Indigenous Peoples Proposal to the Colombian Government (http://www.actualidadetnica.com/index.php?option=com_content&view=article&id=8626:la-propuesta-de-los-indigenas-al-gobierno-de-colombia&catid), 13 August 2012 (Spanish)

Movimiento de Víctimas de Crímenes de Estado en Colombia (MOVICE) (<http://www.movimientodevictimas.org/>) works in a variety of areas including education, calls to action, visibility and other types of advocacy for people and organizations who have been the direct victims of crimes by the state. (Spanish)

Arco Iris (<http://www.arcoiris.com.co/>) A Colombian website with news covering the armed conflict, justice, peace, politics, security, territory and development, and land and victims. (Spanish)

The following websites have put together **collections of links** that we recommend: Latin American Working Group Blog (<http://www.lawg.org/action-center/lawg-blog/69-general/1102-talking-peace-in-colombia>) (Links from a variety of perspectives including civil society, Colombian newspapers, international NGOs and more. English, selected Spanish sources); PBS: Learn More About Colombia (<http://www.pbs.org/wnet/women-war-and-peace/uncategorized/women-war-peace-in-colombia-resources/>) (Background information on Colombia, the role of women in peace and paramilitary groups. English); Insight On Conflict (<http://www.insightonconflict.org/conflicts/colombia/conflict-profile/resources/>) (A great collection for general information and links to government and international organizations. English); Witness For Peace (<http://www.witnessforpeace.org/article.php?id=214>) (Predominately US and Colombian sources related to policy analysis and peace organizations. English, selected Spanish sources); Centro de Investigación y Educación Popular/Programa por la Paz (CINEP/PPP) (<http://www.cinep.org.co/>) (Offers data and analyses on human rights, political violence, development, social struggle, etc. Spanish); and Taula per la Pau i els Drets Humans a Colòmbia (<http://www.taulacolombia.org/recursos.html>) (Major international human rights organizations working in Colombia. Catalan and Spanish).

Documentaries and Panel Discussions

Comisión Intereclesial de *Justicia y Paz* (<http://justiciaypazcolombia.com/-Documentales->) A collection of short documentaries related to peace, human rights, memory and poverty in Colombia. (Spanish)

Impunity, What Kind of War for Colombia? (<http://www.impunitythefilm.com/en/film/>) A documentary based on an idea by Hollman Morris, directed by Juan José Lozano. It bears witness to the process of victims and paramilitary coming face to face in court hearings. It also looks at the economy, the role of politicians and military personnel in the paramilitary war. (Spanish with French or English subtitles)

The Colombian Peace Talks: Perspectives from Civil Society (http://www.wola.org/video/the_colombian_peace_talks_perspectives_from_civil_society) A panel discussion on the prospects, pitfalls and central themes of the peace talks hosted by the Washington Office on Latin America. (Spanish)

The War We Are Living (<http://www.pbs.org/wnet/women-war-and-peace/full-episodes/the-war-we-are-living/>) A PBS documentary about Afro-Colombian women and their fight to protect their local communities from gold mining. (English)

Academic Articles and Reports by NGOs and Think Tanks

For a selection of academic articles related to Colombia, please see our Bibliographic Dossier (http://www20.gencat.cat/docs/icip/Continguts/Centre%20de%20documentaci%C3%B3/Dossiers%20tem%C3%A0tics/dossier_bibliografic/Arxius/06%20ENG%20ICIP%20dossier%20bibliogr%C3%A0fic.pdf), Issue 6 Summer 2012.

Amnesty International, Colombia: The Victims and Land Restitution Law (<http://www.amnesty.org/pt-br/library/asset/AMR23/018/2012/en/9cfa36ee-95c2-406b-bea0-4d5aff522d60/amr230182012en.pdf>), London, May 2012. A report that assesses shortcomings in the Land Restitution Law and its effects on victims of human rights violations. (Available in English and Spanish)

International Crisis Group, Colombia, peace at last? (<http://www.crisisgroup.org/~media/Files/latin-america/colombia/045-colombia-peace-at-last.pdf>) Latin America Report N°45, September 2012. A report that includes background on the peace talks and recommendations to the stakeholders. (English)

Meertens, D., Forced Displacement and Gender Justice in Colombia. Between Disproportional Effects of Violence and Historical Injustice (<http://ictj.org/sites/default/files/ICTJ-Brookings-Displacement-Gender-Colombia-CaseStudy-2012-English.pdf>), International Center for Transitional Justice (ICTJ) and Brookings-LSE Project on Internal Displacement, July 2012. A report on the relationship between forced displacement and transitional justice from a gender perspective. (English)

Montealegre, D. M. et al., Verdad, Justicia y Reparación: una deuda pendiente con las mujeres víctimas de las violencias (<http://www.rutapacifica.org.co/descargas/publicaciones/Verdadjusticiayreparacion.pdf>), November 2011. A report by a Colombian NGO on obstacles women face for truth, justice and reparations after passage of the 2005 Ley de Justicia y Paz (Justice and Peace Law). (Spanish)

Observatorio de Derechos Humanos y Derecho Humanitario, Desapariciones forzadas en Colombia. En búsqueda de la

justicia. Mesa de trabajo sobre desaparición forzada de la Coordinación Colombia-Europa-Estados Unidos (<http://coeuropa.org.co/files/Desapariciones%20Forzadas%20en%20Colombia.pdf>), May 2012. Analysis regarding forced disappearances in Colombia and the policy framework that favors impunity. (Spanish)

Thornton, C.; Gude, R., Towards Peace in Colombia: The economic obstacles to a Colombian Peace Process (http://www.humansecuritygateway.com/documents/PCR_TowardsPeaceinColombia_TheEconomicObstaclestoColombianPeace-Process.pdf), *Peace and Conflict Review*, Volume 5, Issue 2, 2011. This article compares the current peace process to previous attempts and assesses the relationship between socio-economic grievances and the sustainability of peace. (English)

Vargas Meza, R., Drugs and the Peace Process in Colombia (<http://peacebuilding.no/Regions/Latin-America-and-the-Caribbean/Publications/Drugs-and-the-peace-process-in-Colombia>), Norwegian Peacebuilding Resource Center, 19 November 2012. A policy brief that addresses the relationship between drug-trafficking interests and the peace process. (English)

United States Institute of Peace, Georgetown University, Universidad de los Andes, Centro de Investigación y Educación Popular, Lessons for Colombia's Peace Talks in Oslo and Havana (<http://www.usip.org/files/Colombia/LessonsForOsloHavana.pdf>), Bogota and Washington, October 2012. An assessment of the current context of peace talks based on USIP's long-term work in the region. (Available in English and Spanish)

INTERVIEW

Luz Marina Bernal, 'Mother of Soacha' and winner of the 2012 ICIP Peace in Progress Award

Iolanda Parra

ICIP collaborator



Photo: Irati Lafragua

Luz Marina Bernal, along with four other Colombian women of the group known as the 'Mothers of Soacha', has been declared the winner of the second ICIP Peace in Progress Award, for 2012. The award recognises the struggle for justice of these women, the mothers of youths extrajudicially executed by Colombian security forces, in cases known as "false positives".

What are "false positives"?

They relate to the recruitment of indigenous people, peasants, poor youth, who are taken, with false promises of work, far from their homes. Once there, the army buys them as a commodity, they simulate a battle, kill them and, once they're dead, they put uniforms on them to make them look like members of outlawed groups, such as the guerrillas.

Why do the soldiers kill these youths?

In 2005, during the government of Alvaro Uribe, they introduced the payment of rewards to soldiers for the deaths of guerrillas in combat. Large sums of money, in addition to letters of congratulation, medals or leave. It doesn't only happen in Soacha: more than 3,000 extrajudicial killings have been reported across Colombia. They look for the most vulnerable people, as they believe that their families will not be able to face up to the state. Very few of us are willing to keep fighting for their memory.

What happened to your son and why was the group of Mothers of Soacha formed?

My son, Fair Leonardo Porras Bernal, was 26 years old and mentally disabled; he could not read or write, nor did he know the value of money. He disappeared on 8 January 2008 and a few days later he was killed by an army brigade. Since then, I have belonged to the group of Mothers of Soacha, which now includes 21 families. We discovered that they murdered them with the simple objective of making money. They stole their identities and put them in mass graves so that we wouldn't find them. Our goal is to fight against a state that does not want to recognise what happened and admit its responsibility for the murders.

How many cases have been filed and what stage are they at?

For Soacha, 19 cases have been filed. In 2011, eight soldiers were condemned for two youths found in the town of Cimitarra. Six soldiers have been found guilty for the death of my son, although the highest ranking officer has escaped. What concerns us most is that there are still seven cases which are being left with total impunity. The judges do not accept that within the army there is a criminal group, nor do they recognise that these are crimes against humanity. It's very sad, and here nobody, absolutely nobody, speaks out about the issue.

In your son's case and in others it has been shown that the accusations of membership of an illegal group and of death in combat were false. What was the government's response?

In 2010, the then President Uribe met with some mothers and offered them 18 million pesos in compensation. When they offered it to me, I told them that I didn't give birth to my children for the war nor to sell them. I even had a message sent to the President saying that if it was a question of negotiating, and he offered me 18 million pesos for my son, who was from a low social class, I would pay him 40 million for one of his sons. My son is an irreplaceable human being: not even all the money in the world could bring him back. What I demand is truth and justice, and that such events never happen again.

Your fight against impunity is risky. Do you receive threats?

Yes, ever since the first complaint. Maria Sanabria was approached by two men who told her that if she didn't shut up, the same thing that had happened to her son would happen to her. They began threatening me in 2009: they tell me to keep quiet or else something will happen to my other son. They leave us notes at our homes with bullets, saying they are for us. We are frightened, because we have other children, but I'm prepared to give my life for this fight.

Do you have faith in the peace negotiations that are currently going on between the government and the FARC?

The process was created overnight by the President because he wants to achieve peace within his government. As a victim, I long for peace for future generations, but I think this process is not positive because it is built on lies. They have not interviewed a single victim to know what we think. Only the interested parties are negotiating.

What role should civil society play?

The organisations, the victims and the lawyers that represent us should play an important role and they have not been taken into account in this process. It would be very sad if this process were to be based on a big lie.

What are the essential conditions for peace in Colombia?

Colombia needs equal rights, the hand over of weapons, and an end to the killings of people in the countryside. An end to hunger, and education, health and decent homes for poor people. And respect for human rights activists. In Colombia there is no respect, we've got the prisons full of human rights activists.

PLATFORM

Understanding and addressing violence in El Salvador and Honduras

Rachel Meyer
ICIP collaborator



Under provocative headlines such as “Most Dangerous Countries in the World”, El Salvador and Honduras have garnered attention for having, outside of war zones, the highest murder rates in the world. Time Magazine recently reported that Honduras’ San Pedro Sula now holds the title of the world’s most violent city, beating out Ciudad Juárez, Mexico, which held the spot for the last three years running. Another Central American country, Guatemala, is not too far behind, prompting the coining of the term “Northern Triangle” as shorthand for the geographical region that has become home to so much bloodshed.

The ceaseless violence prompts many observers to consider its causes. Some focus on the civil wars and political violence of the 1980s, whose weapons and fighters were suddenly left without direction once peace agreements were signed. Others point to the process of democratization that swept the region after those peace agreements were signed, which overemphasized the procedural aspects of democracy (political parties and regular elections) without addressing the human aspects that make those institutions work (rebuilding societal relationships, fighting impunity, corruption). Still others blame poverty and vast inequality in the region. Surely, there is some truth in each of these claims and improving our understanding of the causes of violence will only increase the potential for effective public policies that appear to be still lacking.

There is an important initiative underway in El Salvador that has the potential to set the country on a different path. In the spring of 2012, incarcerated leaders of El Salvador’s two most notorious gangs negotiated a truce with eventual backing from the government. The gangs agreed to a ceasefire in exchange for better prison conditions – though not reduced sentences. Homicide rates dropped immediately and dramatically and, so far, the rates have stayed low. Despite some claims that the drop in homicides has led to spikes in other kinds of violence such as disappearances, there is no evidence to support this. Yet, this breath of hopeful air in Salvadoran society raises many questions and offers few answers. Will the truce last? Will the gangs come to hold the government hostage by demanding more concessions in return for continued cooperation? How will the rest of Salvadoran society react to these marginalized members and will they be willing to offer a second chance to those seeking a new life? Will the private sector offer jobs to ex-gang members so that they can have legitimate alternatives to gang life?

Violence in Honduras, by contrast, shows no signs of abating. Under pressure from public figures like Julieta Castellano, director of the largest Honduran university, whose 22-year old son was murdered by the national police last year, President Lobo has reluctantly agreed to purge police who fail a confidence test. Deep structural reforms have also been recommended to overhaul the police and the judiciary, but in the short term the military, also with a poor human rights record, is still being used for domestic policing under a declared state of emergency. Recent headlines suggest that purged police officers may not go quietly, which is troubling in light of the political turmoil that resulted in the 2009 coup d’état.

Under public pressure, both El Salvador and Honduras implemented “Iron Fist” policies in the 2000s to little avail. During the same period, some Latin American leaders took risks on unconventional policies and were surprised by the results. Former Bogota mayor Antanas Mockus reduced homicide rates and violence in Colombia’s capital by hiring mimes to publicly shame bad drivers, closing bars early and organizing evening events just for women, while asking fathers to stay home with their children. There is no roadmap to guide policymakers or citizens forward to a more peaceful future, but the gang truce appears to be the most promising new idea in El Salvador. Meanwhile, as the Honduran military continues to police its citizens and homicide rates continue to climb, an old refrain comes to mind: Insanity is doing the same thing over and over again but expecting different results. Keeping in mind the very serious nature of the problem, it is well worth remembering that all measures, including the truly innovative, need to be on the table in the months and years to come.

Twenty years of peace in El Salvador

Manuel Montobbio

Diplomat and doctor in political science specialising in the Central American peace processes



This year began with the twentieth anniversary of the photo of the embrace between President Cristiani and the members of the General Command of the FMLN, following the signing of the El Salvador Peace Agreements, and it will end this 15th December, with the anniversary of the photo of the final handover and destruction of arms, which concluded the demobilisation of the FMLN. Twenty years from that crucial moment in Tom Thumb's metamorphosis, which lead us to consider the legacy of the peace process which made all this possible and its lessons for peace building, or for peace under construction. Since peace is always under construction: it includes peace processes, but peace is in itself a process. A process of the eradication of violence in its three dimensions, as indicated by Galtung: direct, structural —understood as the absence of democracy and of development — and cultural.

And perhaps that distinction leads us to one of the main paradoxes and at the same time lessons of this El Salvador which has democracy and development, yet is plagued by the violence of organized crime. Only the overcoming of structural violence, with democracy and the possibility of development, made it possible to overcome direct violence as a means of political action; in order to achieve negative peace it was necessary to build positive peace. But it is cultural violence, the idea which normalises the use of violence in social action, that which it is most difficult to eradicate, and that which takes most time, education, and the overcoming of traumas and habits; this largely explains the persistence of violence, not as a means of political action — on the contrary, this violence is opposed by the political actors — but as a means of collective action for unlawful purposes. Thus El Salvador faces today the challenge of overcoming this, which largely means overcoming cultural violence, building peace in the hearts, minds and souls of the people. Arguably this was partly the inevitable result of the normalisation of violence which led to the war and nourished it; far from seeing this as a failure, it would be more correct to see it as the final challenge in the construction of peace, something difficult to achieve without the overcoming of structural violence brought by the peace agreement, a peace which has been consolidated over the years, with no going back being possible.

Legacy or conceptual lesson on peace; but also operational and paradigmatic, as ONUSAL — the United Nations Observer Group in El Salvador, responsible for verifying and carrying forward the peace agreements — is Peacekeeping Operation which was to inaugurate and then become the reference model for the second generation of peace missions — those not only verifying the ceasefire and demobilisation, but also overseeing the political and socioeconomic transformations that constitute the real substance of peace -; and the experience of El Salvador's peace process would become the basic inspiration for the formulation of *An Agenda for Peace*, presented by Boutros-Ghali in 1992, reflecting the paradigms and key concepts through which peace processes have been seen since then.

Legacy in the collective imaginary, because of its intangible importance in the face of the prior History of fratricidal confrontation, the symbolic, referential, fundamental value of the possibility of agreement between Salvadorans. And that is why, apart from their content in itself, the Peace Agreements became the essential reference point for nation-building, the founding pact for contemporary El Salvador, of all and for all.

Legacy, in substance, of the instauration of democracy. Since although, as I noted in my book *La metamorfosis del Pulgarcito. Transición política y proceso de paz en El Salvador*. (The metamorphosis of Tom Thumb. Political transition and peace process in El Salvador), there may be many ways of seeing the Salvadoran process — at the international level, as a peace process, and at the national level, depending on the perspective, as a process of democratic transition, as a revolutionary process or as a process of transformation from the state of nature to the social contract —, visions concerning these processes which converge in the process, different ways in the way, there is one single point of arrival: a political regime substantially different from that which existed before the “coup of the captains” of 15th October 1979, which set off the conflict to which the Agreements put an end. A democratic regime from a polyarchic perspective. Since such is the substance of the “afterwards”, the today in which the Agreements have moved from paper to reality. Democracy, however, in consolidation, what poses, when looking towards the future, to the actors both the challenge of consolidation -of the actors themselves and of the party system - and that of efficacy. Because citizens not only want their political system to be democratic, they also want it to actually respond to their needs. They want democracy to effectively mean development and governance.

Consolidation in which the fact that these twenty years of peace are being celebrated with the FMLN in power as a result of an election stands for a milestone and meanwhile a lesson of the peace process. A milestone of the process of the consolidation of democracy, since, as noted by Morlino, this can be seen to be definitive when the party that made the transition while in Government hands power over democratically in elections, and both citizens and parties can experience the reality of political pluralism, and the political system has at least one alternative party of government. Legacy and lesson for future peace processes, as the Salvadoran process is presented to us not only as one of the peace processes whose agreements have been considered by the United Nations to be completely fulfilled, but also as the only one in which a former rebel movement that exchanged the bullet for the votes has come to power thanks to them in application of the rules of the

political game which they helped to create with the negotiation of peace. By showing us the possibility of such alchemy, this metamorphosis of bullets into votes, as one of the fruits and also characteristics of Tom Thumb's metamorphosis.

The metamorphosis of the Tom Thumb of twenty years ago into the Tom Thumb of today, a vantage point from which to look forwards, to the road ahead, the challenges which the future poses us. Feeling that if we could, we can. That the path is made by walking, and we are walking the path. That the future is possible, and it is yet to be written.

1. El Salvador is known as "Pulgarcito", or Tom Thumb, due to its small geographical size.

RECOMMENDATIONS



CAPMATCH: online platform for exchanging experiences in post-conflict situations

<https://capmatch.dfs.un.org/Capmatch/>

The new online platform called Global Marketplace for Civilian Capacities (in short: CAPMATCH), launched by the UN in September this year, allows both governmental and non-governmental organizations to share post-conflict transition experiences, in order to learn more from policies and peacebuilding strategies which have been put in place so far.

CAPMATCH, which forms part of the UN Civilian Capacities Initiative, aims to capture experiences from all over the world, with a particular focus on "the global South". Stressing that there is no single model for institution-building, organizations are recommended to look at numerous different types of experience and to adapt these to their own local contexts.

Examples of CAPMATCH experience exchanges include Liberia requesting support in implementing its national capacity development strategy or Cote d'Ivoire offering to share its experience of its first post-conflict election process while at the same time asking for expertise to continue to build the functions of its independent electoral commission.

Aiming to address areas in which expertise is in high demand, the platform prioritises: safety and security (including community violence reduction, disarmament and demobilization, mine action, police, protection of civilians, security sector reform, and transnational crime and counter-terrorism), justice (incl. criminal justice, judicial and legal reforms and transnational justice), core government functionality, economic revitalization, and inclusive political process.

Clearly, the more government agencies and civil society organizations take part in this initiative, the more useful CAPMATCH will be, which is why all organizations with experience in post-conflict situations are encouraged to sign up to this platform. Organizations can also create joint ventures, by offering their combined experience through a package of services and/or capacities for third parties. For more information, see the user guide available on the CAPMATCH website.

L.v.T.



Latituds: Armes sota control

<http://blogs.tv3.cat/latituds.php?itemid=47727>

Aquest documental, coproduït per Televisió de Catalunya i l'ICIP, fa el seguiment de la darrera conferència sobre el Tractat de Comerç d'armes que va tenir lloc a la seu de les Nacions Unides (Nova York) al juliol de 2012. A través de les entrevistes que els tècnics de l'ICIP, Eugènia Riera i Xavier Alcalde, van fer a activistes i diplomàtics que participaven a la conferència, el documental recorda els principals arguments a favor de l'adopció per part de la comunitat internacional d'un nou instrument de control de comerç d'armes. També il·lustra l'agenda i els reptes que afronten els activistes per la pau i els drets humans en conferències diplomàtiques com aquesta.

Latituds: Armes sota control (<http://blogs.tv3.cat/latituds.php?itemid=47727>) es pot veure per internet. El web (<http://www20.gencat.cat/portal/site/icip/menuitem.a0d8dad669f5ec7556159f10b0c0e1a0/?vgnnextoid=34a4ea341fe60310VgnVCM1000008d0c1e0aRCRD&vgnextchannel=34a4ea341fe60310VgnVCM1000008d0c1e0aRCRD&vgnnextfmt=default>) i el bloc (<http://blocs.gencat.cat/blocs/AppPHP/icip/>) de l'ICIP ofereixen informació detallada sobre el procés cap a un tractat de comerç d'armes.

S.P.



Human Security Report Project, Human Security Report 2012: Sexual Violence, Education, and War: Beyond the Mainstream Narrative, (Vancouver: Human Security Press, 2012)

<http://hsrgroup.org/human-security-reports/2012/text.aspx>

What we know about wartime sexual violence and the impact of war on education is sometimes flat-out wrong. That is the conclusion of the *Human Security Report 2012*, which is full of surprising, often counter-intuitive, findings on global and regional trends in armed conflict.

The report, which aims to shed new light on the human costs of war and which is inspired by the UN's Human Development Report, claims for example that there is no compelling evidence to support the widely held assumptions that conflict-related sexual violence is on the rise or that rape is increasingly being deployed as a "weapon of war".

Another counter-intuitive finding of the report is that the mainstream narrative actually ignores the greatest source of wartime sexual violence, namely domestic sexual violence in wartime, which the study claims is far more pervasive and which victimizes a far greater number of women than sexual violence committed by combatants. Similarly surprising is the conclusion that more often than not educational outcomes in war-affected countries actually improve over time, even in the regions worst affected by conflict.

The study also presents new research on two issues which are often overlooked, wartime sexual violence against males and female perpetration of sexual violence, claiming that these types of violence occur much more frequent than generally believed.

L.v.T.



Carmen Magallón Portolés, Contar en el mundo. Una mirada sobre las relaciones internacionales desde las vidas de las mujeres, Madrid, Horas y horas, 2012

The title that the author has chosen for her book reflects very well the essence she wants to give to her work. The Spanish verb “*contar*” means not only “to count” in the sense of numeric values, but also “leaving a footprint, being recognized and being appraised”. Additionally, “*contar*” means to make something known, to report on something, to narrate, to communicate, or to tell a story.

The book intends to show how women both count and matter in the area of the international relations. In order to do so, the author reports on how global feminism is related to the will to have an impact upon decisions about conflict management, peace and war. She also explains how, in the field of peacebuilding, the daily practice of human life support is both relevant from a material point of view, as well as significant in the area of theoretical and conceptual reflection. Activism and life maintenance confer on women discourse, sense and value in the international context. The fact that both lines of action have had no voice in the historical and political discourse is a loss that we have to attribute to patriarchy, but that does

not reduce the importance of the work done by the women of the world.

The proposal of Carmen Magallón is that women bring presence and meaning from their diverse experiences in order to count in the world and to tell the world by rewriting international relations with their own voices.

E.G.



Documentary series “Després de la pau” (After Peace)

despresdelapau.wordpress.com

“*Després de la pau*” (After Peace) is a documentary series of seven episodes, produced by the associations Fora de Quadre and Contrast, which explains to us and confronts us with the different paths towards peace that were undertaken in countries like Bosnia, Lebanon, Guatemala, Rwanda, Argentina, South Africa, and Cambodia. Peace does not necessarily arrive with the signature of an agreement and the end of war. Rather, it requires a complex and difficult process of constructing peace, memory, truth, reconciliation and justice. “*Després de la pau*” explains this process in a very illustrative way.

On 18 December the episodes “*Guatemala: Rescuing memory*” (coproduced with ICIP) and “*Rwanda: The compulsory reconciliation*” will be premiered in Barcelona. Two previous episodes, “*Bosnia: The divided peace*” and “*Lebanon: Pact of silence*”, will also be projected.

The videos are also available with English subtitles: <http://vimeo.com/50772358> (Bosnia); <http://vimeo.com/49970274> (Lebanon).

For more information visit: despresdelapau.wordpress.com

S.P.

NEWS

ICIP NEWS

Campaigns. Collectives. Persons. 30 years of peace movement in Catalonia

In December 2012, and throughout the year 2013, it will be possible to visit the exhibition *Campanyes. Col·lectius. Persones. 30 anys de moviment per la pau a Catalunya* in the ICIP exposition area (Gran Via de les Corts Catalanes 658, Barcelona). The selection highlights the visual and street dimensions of the peace movement, giving prominence to posters, photographs and other graphic materials that were produced in Catalonia between 1971 and 2003.

The exhibition shows the vitality of this movement and reminds visitors of some grassroots peace initiatives based on collective creativity, personal commitment, a strong will of mobilizing people, and a good deal of protest abilities that brought in new proposals.

The opening of the exhibition will take place on 4th December at the occasion of the celebration of the fifth anniversary of the adoption of law 14/2007 (http://www20.gencat.cat/docs/icip/Continguts/LInstitut/Arxius/llei_1407_cat.pdf), adopted by the Parliament of Catalonia, which created ICIP.

ICIP's first Lipdub-for-Peace Contest

On 21 December the deadline to send in videos for the first Lipdub-for-Peace Contest organised by ICIP will expire. The competition, which is open to all non-university educational establishments of Catalonia, aims to promote school activities in favour of peace and nonviolence through a collective activity that must be creative, participatory and fun.

The best lipdubs submitted will be screened during a public event to be held by ICIP on January 30, 2013, School Day of Non-violence and Peace. The prize, consisting of a video camera, will be presented to the winning team during this event.

"Madres de Soacha" winners of the 2012 ICIP Peace in Progress Award

This year, on the occasion of the celebration of the International Day of the Peace, ICIP has made public the winning candidature of the 2012 Peace in Progress Award. The Governing Board of ICIP has awarded the 2012 ICIP Peace in Progress Award to Luz Marina Bernal, Carmenza Gómez, Maria Sanabria, Melida Bermúdez and Lucero Carmona, five women who are part of a group of Colombian mothers often referred to in the media as "Madres de Soacha" (Mothers of Soacha; Soacha being a town near Bogotá).

The five mothers have been awarded for the work they have carried out in response to the extrajudicial killings of some of their children by the Colombian security forces. Their persistent and very courageous work has become a symbol of the almost 3,000 allegations of extrajudicial killings committed between 2004 and 2008, and still under judicial investigation. These executions were subsequently justified with accusations that have proven to be false; the so-called "false positives".

The ICIP Peace in Progress Award consists of public recognition, a sculpture created by Nobel Peace Prize winner Adolfo Pérez Esquivel, called *Puerta del Sol*, and 6,000 euros. It will be presented at the beginning of 2013 in an event to be held at the Parliament of Catalonia.

New publications and didactic materials

The collection *Paz y Seguridad*, co-edited by ICIP and Edicions Bellaterra, has expanded this autumn with the publication of the title *Construir la paz: la experiencia y el papel de las mujeres en perspectiva internacional* by Elisabeth Porter. The book, which explores the experience and the role of women in peacebuilding processes, provides us with a valuable reflection on concepts, debates and proposals about what it means to build peace and establishes a notion of peacebuilding as an integral and multidimensional process. The prologue to this Spanish edition has been written by Carmen Magallon.

Amongst the latest ICIP publications we can also highlight the Working Papers *Does Warfare Matter? Severity, Duration, and Outcomes of Civil Wars*, by Laia Balcells and Stathis Kalyvas (published in English); *Las posiciones de los diferentes grupos políticos israelíes sobre la resolución de la situación de los Refugiados*, by Aritz García (in Spanish); and *Els esperantistes catalans. Un col·lectiu pacifista en un món global*, by Hèctor Alòs (in Catalan).

In the collection Research Results the following works have been published: *Las Operaciones Militares de España en el Exterior* (in Spanish), written by Eduardo Melero; *Justicia de Transición: El caso de España* (in Spanish), directed by Santiago Ripol Carulla and Carlos Villán Durán; *Lecciones aprendidas de la participación española en guerras asimétricas (2000-2012)* (in Spanish), directed by Rafael Martínez; and *La política de exportaciones de armamento de los países de la Unión Europea a África (2002-2010)* (in Spanish), written by Eduardo Melero.

This autumn ICIP has also published Bibliographic Dossier, Issue 7, which highlights a selection of recent articles published in

academic journals available in the ICIP library and with a special section about chronic violence and urban violence.

Moreover, a book of teaching material entitled *Studying the Libyan conflict by use of the 'Libya, Year Zero' Exposition* has been edited by ICIP. This volume aims to support educators working on the Libyan conflict with their students by offering them Alfonso Moral's photographic material on the subject. With this volume ICIP hopes to help students understand the causes of violent conflict, incite them to reflect upon the consequences of violence and military intervention, and encourage them to be critical of the view that there is no alternative to war in the transformation of conflict. The book is also designed to bring our students at home closer to the reality lived by the Libyan population, shed light upon the things that both populations have in common, and to find connections between the youth in these two countries joined culturally and geographically by the Mediterranean.

INTERNATIONAL NEWS

New report warns of rising conflict fears in Kosovo

A report entitled *Still Time to Act: Rising Conflict Fears in Kosovo* (http://www.saferworld.org.uk/downloads/pubdocs/Kosovo:%20Still_time_to_act.pdf), published in October 2012 by Saferworld, points to a serious decline in public perceptions of safety and security in the country. The report indicates how tensions in Northern Kosovo have an impact on security perceptions and argues that divides between Pristina and the North have widened. The survey points out that, while across all ethnic groups fears of violent conflict resuming in the next five years have increased, more than 50% of respondents believe that a special status for Northern Kosovo would affect security negatively.

Five EU countries call for new "civilian-military structures"

On 15 November the foreign and defence ministers of France, Germany, Italy, Poland and Spain issued a joint communiqué which argues the EU needs new "civilian-military structures" for overseas operations. Taking into account the economic crisis, it also called for more "pooling and sharing" of EU defence hardware, including ballistic-missile defence, drones, and airlift capacities. Last year the UK blocked the creation of a new operational headquarters (OHQ) for EU military missions in Brussels.

Russia-Iraq arms deal worth USD 4.2 billion

On 9 October Iraq and Russia concluded an arms deal worth USD 4.2bn. Iraq, which has been rebuilding its armed forces since the end of US combat operations on its territory, reportedly purchased 30 Mi-28 attack helicopters and 42 Pantsir-S1 surface-to-air missile systems (which can also be used to defend against attacks from jets). It is said discussions are also underway for the acquisition of MiG-29 jets and heavy armoured vehicles along with other weaponry. These arms deals are said to be strategic for Russia, now the second largest arms supplier after the US, due to uncertainty about the future of its arms contracts with Syria and Libya.

New report on Nepali civil war calling for justice for war abuses

On 8 October the UN Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights released the *Nepal Conflict Report* (http://www.ohchr.org/Documents/Countries/NP/OHCHR_Nepal_Conflict_Report2012.pdf), which argues Nepal should investigate war abuses perpetrated during the Nepali civil war, which lasted from 1996 to 2006 and during which approximately 13,000 people were killed. The report criticises, amongst others, the fact that the transitional justice mechanisms which were promised in the 2006 peace accords still haven't been established and that perpetrators of serious violations have not been held accountable, and in some cases have even been promoted or offered amnesties.

EU Aid Volunteers

In September 2012 the European Commission set out its plans to develop the EU Aid Volunteers initiative, which will provide a path for Europeans eager to actively participate in humanitarian tasks. It will bring volunteers and organizations from different countries to work together in common projects. Conditions to become an EU Aid Volunteer include being over 18 years of age and being a citizen or a long-term resident in the EU and certain other European countries. Volunteers will be trained according to their profile and subsequently examined before being deployed. The proposal includes a budget of €239.1 million that will be used for an extensive training package (€58 million), deployment (€137 million), capacity building in communities hit by disasters (€35 million) and supporting activities. For more information: http://ec.europa.eu/echo/euaidvolunteers/index_en.htm

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