



LEIDEN UNIVERSITY

**FACULTY OF GOVERNANCE AND GLOBAL AFFAIRS**

# CRISIS-INDUCED LEARNING AND THE REINTEGRATION OF FORMER FARC COMBATANTS

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## **Abstract**

Many Colombian presidents have attempted consolidating peace during the country's 70-year-old internal conflict. However, the reintegration of former combatants has put a strain these peacebuilding attempts. Reintegration processes often resulted in continued violence and failed to end Colombia's internal conflict. To prevent history from repeating itself, the Colombian state created a peace agreement with the FARC in 2016 that systematically included lessons from past crises to successfully reintegrate former FARC combatants. This thesis assesses to what extent crisis-induced learning in this peace agreement resulted in the successful reintegration of former FARC combatants. By 2019, the lion's share of former combatants received education, created businesses, reconciled with victims and participated in politics. These advances can be ascribed chiefly to the provisions of the peace agreement, which were shaped by crisis-induced learning. This made crisis-induced learning relatively successful in improving the reintegration of former FARC combatants. Notwithstanding these positive signs, challenges to the reintegration process remain. The continued violence against former FARC combatants and social leaders continues to polarize public opinion on the reintegration process and jeopardizes its fragile advances.

**Keywords:** ex-combatants, FARC, reintegration, crisis-induced learning, Colombia, internal conflict, post-conflict, AUC, ELN, peace process, guerrilla, paramilitary, peacebuilding

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*Simon Carmiggelt*

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## **Abbreviations**

AUC – Autodefensas Unidas de Colombia (United Self-Defense Forces of Colombia)

Bacrim – Bandas Criminales (Criminal Bands)

CNMH – Centro Nacional de Memoria Histórica (National Center of Historical Memory)

ELN – Ejército de Liberación Nacional (National Liberation Army)

EU – European Union

FARC – Fuerzas Armadas Revolucionarias de Colombia (Armed Revolutionary Forces of Colombia, Guerilla)

FARC – Fuerza Alternativa Revolucionaria del Común (Common Alternative Revolutionary Force, Political Party)

IDDRS – Integrated Disarmament, Demobilization and Reintegration Standards

M-19 – Movimiento 19 de Abril (19th of April Movement)

NGO – Non Governmental Organization

SANDF – South African National Defence Force

UN – United Nations

## I. Introduction

On 12 November 2016, a long-awaited peace agreement ended conflict between the Colombian state and the Armed Revolutionary Forces of Colombia (FARC)<sup>1</sup>. Violent internal conflict has dominated Colombia since the 1950s, which has resulted in the deaths of hundreds of thousands of people and the biggest internal displacement crisis in the world<sup>2</sup>. Throughout the conflict, numerous Colombian presidents have tried to restore peace and engage combatants from guerilla and paramilitary groups in reintegration processes<sup>3</sup>. However, attempts to reintegrate former combatants have often resulted in continued violence, increasing polarization and high rates of recidivism<sup>4</sup>. To prevent history from repeating itself, the peace agreement with the FARC systematically incorporated lessons from past crises to improve the reintegration of former combatants and consolidate peace at last<sup>5</sup>. Due to the central focus on learning and Colombia's long history with failed peace processes, the peace agreement with the FARC provides an exciting opportunity to gauge the impact of learning from crisis on the reintegration of former combatants. Crisis-induced learning is a concept that allows us to study this process and could be a mechanism for improving it. To explore this premise, the research question of this thesis is the following: *to what extent has crisis-induced learning in the peace agreement with the FARC resulted in the successful reintegration of former FARC combatants into Colombian society between 2017 and 2019?*

First, the thesis provides a literature review on crisis-induced learning, the reintegration of former combatants and the Colombian conflict. After, it carries out a two-fold analysis. The first stage of the analysis explains how crisis-induced learning shaped the peace agreement with the FARC and discusses the main lessons drawn from previous crises. The second stage evaluates the reintegration of former FARC combatants between 2017 and 2019 to assess whether the peace agreement translated into a more successful reintegration process. This study contributes to the academic literature on crisis-induced learning, the reintegration of former combatants and adds to our understanding of the Colombian peace process. The reintegration

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<sup>1</sup> Phelan, Alexandra. "Engaging Insurgency: The Impact of the 2016 Colombian Peace Agreement on FARC's Political Participation." *Studies in Conflict & Terrorism* 42, no. 9 (2019): 836

<sup>2</sup> Bilotta, Nicola. "The FARC, land reform, and the future of Colombia's security." *Global Risk Insights*, October 1, 2017.

<sup>3</sup> Jaramillo et al. "Transitional Justice and DDR: The Case of Colombia." *International Center for Transitional Justice* (June 2009): 12

<sup>4</sup> El tiempo. "¿Por qué Santos sí pudo dialogar con las Farc?" *El Tiempo*, September 30, 2016.

<sup>5</sup> Gomez-Suarez, Andrei, and Jonathan Newman. "Safeguarding Political Guarantees in the Colombian Peace Process: Have Santos and FARC Learnt the Lessons from the Past?" *Third World Quarterly* 34, no. 5 (2013): 820

process of the FARC in Colombia is an emblematic case around the world and highly relevant to other post-conflict societies that face the difficult task of consolidating peace.

## II. Body of Knowledge

### 2.1 Crisis-induced Learning

#### *Crisis*

It is necessary to understand what a crisis is before looking at the concept of crisis-induced learning. There is no generally accepted definition of crisis in the academic literature and definitions slightly differ depending on the respective academic field<sup>6</sup>. Roux-Dufort, a humanities scholar, defines crisis as “a privileged moment during which to understand things differently”<sup>7</sup>. This definition sees a crisis as a unique and urgent moment that allows for decisions and actions that would not have been possible in usual circumstances<sup>8</sup>. The field of economics has a slightly different approach and defines a crisis as a low probability event that has the potential of jeopardizing the survival and profitability of companies<sup>9</sup>. Other definitions argue that a crisis covers “all types of negative events”, provided that these events take place unexpectedly, lead to undesirable outcomes and cause disbelief among the actors involved<sup>10</sup>. All three definitions have one thing in common: they are rather general and slightly customized to fit a certain academic context. The thesis follows this trend and uses Deverell’s definition of a crisis, who tailored the concept to fit the context of crisis-induced learning. Deverell (2009) sees a crisis as “a situation that subjects a community of people, such as an organization, a state or a municipality, to a serious threat to its basic structures of fundamental norms which, under time pressure and uncertainties, necessitates making crucial decisions”<sup>11</sup>. If we follow the logic of this definition, we can operationalize the concept of crisis through three components. A given situation needs to include a sense of urgency, a serious threat to organizational structures and

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<sup>6</sup> Pergel, Ramona, and Alexandros Psychogios. "Making Sense of Crisis: Cognitive Barriers of Learning in Critical Situations." *Management Dynamics in the Knowledge Economy* 1, no. 2 (2013): 180

<sup>7</sup> Tony, Jaques. "Learning from Past Crises – Do Iconic Cases Help or Hinder?" *Public Relations Journal* 3, no. 1 (2009): 2

<sup>8</sup> Ibid.

<sup>9</sup> Smith, 1999 and Shrivastava and Mitroff 1987. Mentioned in: Pergel, Ramona, and Alexandros Psychogios. "Making Sense of Crisis: Cognitive Barriers of Learning in Critical Situations." *Management Dynamics in the Knowledge Economy* 1, no. 2 (2013): 180

<sup>10</sup> Dubrovski 2009 and Malle 2009 and Kouzmin 2008. Mentioned in: Pergel, Ramona, and Alexandros Psychogios. "Making Sense of Crisis: Cognitive Barriers of Learning in Critical Situations." *Management Dynamics in the Knowledge Economy* 1, no. 2 (2013): 180

<sup>11</sup> Deverell, Edward. "Crises as Learning Triggers: Exploring a Conceptual Framework of Crisis-Induced Learning." *Journal of Contingencies and Crisis Management* 17, no. 3 (2009): 180



high pressure on decision-makers. The following paragraph provides a fictional scenario and uses this operationalization to determine whether or not it can be considered a crisis.

A big storm is about to hit country A and country B. Country A is well-equipped to deal with the storm because of its solid dikes and effective protocols and there is high trust in decision-makers. When the storm hits country A, it only causes minor damage. Furthermore, as most people trust in the government's capacities, no extreme pressure is being put on decision-makers to take additional measures. The storm has a more significant impact on country B. Its protocols are outdated and its dikes are weak. Soon after the arrival of the storm, the strong winds and high water levels start pushing water over the dikes and vast bodies of water are moving towards the big cities, endangering a big part of country B's population. Initially, the president of country B decides not to start evacuations to avoid panic. However, as the storm grows in size, national newspapers, politicians, civil society organizations and the international community increase the pressure on the president of country B to start evacuating people to higher grounds. The longer the president postpones this difficult decision, the greater the pressure on him and other decision-makers becomes.

If we apply the Deverell's operationalization to the situation in country A and country B, we can draw the following conclusions. There was no serious threat to country A, physically or otherwise, nor did we see extreme pressure put on decision-makers by external actors. We do not speak of a crisis in country A, because the three conditions to qualify as a crisis were not present. In contrast, country B experienced a serious threat as well as high a sense of urgency and pressure on decision-makers to take action. All three components of Deverell's definition were present in this case, so we do speak of a crisis in country B.

### *Organizational learning*

There is a consensus in the academic literature on how to define organizational learning. Various academic articles cite Schwab (2007), who specifies that organizational learning occurs "when experience systematically alters behaviors"<sup>12</sup>. To operationalize the concept, Schwab discusses two conditions required for organizational learning. First, organizational learning needs to include cognitive learning, which describes the process of reflecting on past events to

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<sup>12</sup> Schwab 2007. Mentioned in: Pergel, Ramona, and Alexandros Psychogios. "Making Sense of Crisis: Cognitive Barriers of Learning in Critical Situations." *Management Dynamics in the Knowledge Economy* 1, no. 2 (2013): 190 and Deverell, Edward. "Crises as Learning Triggers: Exploring a Conceptual Framework of Crisis-Induced Learning." *Journal of Contingencies and Crisis Management* 17, no. 3 (2009): 180

acquire new insights into the functioning of an organization<sup>13</sup>. Second, organizational learning needs to include behavioral learning which is the process of using new insights to adjust and improve organizational structures<sup>14</sup>. As such, there is a clear distinction between the cognitive learning dimension, in which organizations distill lessons, and the behavioral learning dimension in which organizations implement them<sup>15</sup>. From this definition, we can deduce that organizational processes only qualify as organizational learning when organizational members both distill new information and use this information to change organizational structures.

### *Crisis-induced Learning*

Crisis-induced learning is organizational learning triggered by the experience of crisis<sup>16</sup>. Whether we can qualify a case as crisis-induced learning is based on the same two criteria as organizational learning. Crisis-induced learning only occurs when new information is both acquired by members of an organization and practically implemented in the organizational structures. However, the main distinction between crisis-induced learning and organizational learning is that pressure on decision-makers is considerably higher during a crisis<sup>17</sup>. If we take into account this additional criterion, we can understand crisis-induced learning to be occasions in which the experience of crisis alters both the knowledge and behavior within organizational structures<sup>18</sup>. In case lessons are not distilled, not implemented, or if the information for said lessons does not come from crisis experience, we do not speak of crisis-induced learning. The following paragraph uses these three criteria to analyze two real-life examples briefly.

In 2017, the United States was hit by three different monster storms, an abnormal number of hurricanes and massive wildfires that created hundreds of billions of dollars in damages<sup>19</sup>. American scientists and the Government Accountability Office agreed that the leading cause for the extreme weather phenomena had been climate change and pressured the

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<sup>13</sup> Deverell, Edward. "Crises as Learning Triggers: Exploring a Conceptual Framework of Crisis-Induced Learning." *Journal of Contingencies and Crisis Management* 17, no. 3 (2009): 180

<sup>14</sup> Broekema, Wout, Jan Porth, Trui Steen, and René Torenvlied. "Public Leaders' Organizational Learning Orientations in the Wake of a Crisis and the Role of Public Service Motivation." *Safety Science* 113 (2019): 201

<sup>15</sup> Pergel, Ramona, and Alexandros Psychogios. "Making Sense of Crisis: Cognitive Barriers of Learning in Critical Situations." *Management Dynamics in the Knowledge Economy* 1, no. 2 (2013): 190

<sup>16</sup> Broekema, Wout, Jan Porth, Trui Steen, and René Torenvlied. "Public Leaders' Organizational Learning Orientations in the Wake of a Crisis and the Role of Public Service Motivation." *Safety Science* 113 (2019): 201

<sup>17</sup> Ibid.

<sup>18</sup> Deverell, Edward. "Crises as Learning Triggers: Exploring a Conceptual Framework of Crisis-Induced Learning." *Journal of Contingencies and Crisis Management* 17, no. 3 (2009): 185

<sup>19</sup> Winkler Dawson, Kate. "With recent disasters, history is repeating itself." *My San Antonio*, October 31, 2017.

American government to act<sup>20</sup>. The response of President Donald Trump to these allegations was categorical: he denied the existence of climate change, called it a hoax and continued his plans to withdraw the United States from the Paris climate agreement<sup>21</sup>. By systematically denying the role of climate change in environmental disasters, Trump defied pressure to learn from the environmental crisis, running opposite to the press, scientists and the congress' watchdog group<sup>22</sup>. Despite the high pressure on officials, Trump's administration neither distilled nor implemented lessons and the frequency of extreme weather phenomena only further increased in the US. In this case, none of the criteria for learning was met and we do not speak of crisis-induced learning. Whether climate change is the actual cause for the storms in the US is not relevant for this example. It merely demonstrates that the serious threat of the storms in the US did not result in new lessons being drawn, despite the high pressure on Trump and his administration.

In 1995, an earthquake hit Japan's Hanshin region, which killed thousands of people and destroyed many houses<sup>23</sup>. In the wake of the catastrophe, the Japanese government was strongly pressured to prevent a future debacle and the search for possible solutions began<sup>24</sup>. Soon after, the Japanese government discovered that the earthquake had barely damaged buildings designed by the architect Yasuhisa Itakura due to the rubber layers that he had fitted to the foundation<sup>25</sup>. Building on this new insight, the Japanese government decided to use Itakura's design in the construction of almost 10 thousand new buildings to prepare the severely struck Hanshin region for possible future earthquakes. As such, the response of Japan to the 1995 earthquake met all the criteria of crisis-induced learning. The Japanese government both distilled and implemented the lesson that rubber foundations could reduce damages during earthquakes which was directly triggered by the experience of crisis in the Hanshin region.

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<sup>20</sup> Winkler Dawson, Kate. "With recent disasters, history is repeating itself." *My San Antonio*, October 31, 2017.

<sup>21</sup> Foster, John Bellamy. "Trump and the Climate Catastrophe." *Monthly Review* 68, no. 9 (2017): 1. And Friedman, Lisa. "'I Don't Know That It's Man-Made,' Trump Says of Climate Change. It Is." *The New York Times*, October 15, 2018.

<sup>22</sup> Winkler Dawson, Kate. "With recent disasters, history is repeating itself." *My San Antonio*, October 31, 2017.

<sup>23</sup> Dupont, William, and Ilan Noy. "What Happened to Kobe? A Reassessment of the Impact of the 1995 Earthquake in Japan." *Economic Development and Cultural Change* 63, no. 4 (2015): 777-778

<sup>24</sup> Fuller et al. "Buildings Can Be Designed to Withstand Earthquakes. Why Doesn't the U.S. Build More of Them?" *The New York Times*, June 7, 2019.

<sup>25</sup> Ibid.

## 2.2 The Reintegration of Former combatants

The reintegration of former combatants is a process that takes place in the aftermath of war to consolidate peace in post-conflict societies. It is seen as one of the most critical aspects of peacebuilding and is considered a prerequisite for restoring security, achieving post-conflict stability and preventing the recurrence of war<sup>26</sup>. Maringira (2018) notes that the reintegration of former combatants is vital because “unless appropriately re-integrated, former combatants remain potentially available for violence”<sup>27</sup>.

Traditionally, the reintegration of former combatants was characterized by a minimalist approach, which described reintegration as a short-term process of dismantling armed groups and neutralizing former combatants as violent actors<sup>28</sup>. More recently, most academics have abandoned the minimalist approach and switched to a maximalist approach. This approach goes further than merely eliminating former combatants as armed actors and focusses on restoring the relationship between former combatants and affected communities by providing them with the support they need to become an active part of civilian life<sup>29</sup>. Bowd and Özerdem follow this line of reasoning and define the reintegration of former combatants as the process whereby former combatants, their families and other displaced persons are assimilated into the social and economic life of communities<sup>30</sup>. This definition goes beyond the idea that the reintegration of former combatants is the mere neutralization of an armed group. Instead, Bowd and Özerdem stress that restoring the relationship between former combatants and affected communities is needed to provide for an environment in which reintegration and reconciliation can take place. The United Nations’ definition of the reintegration of former combatants also fits the maximalist approach. The UN defines the concept as “the long-term process of providing former combatants with peaceful livelihoods and achieving national reconciliation”<sup>31</sup>. Note that both the UN and Bowd and Özerdem underline the importance of reconciliation alongside restoring peace. Other definitions go even further and argue that the reintegration of former

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<sup>26</sup> Bowd, Richard, and Alpaslan Özerdem. "How to Assess Social Reintegration of Ex-Combatants." *Journal of Intervention and Statebuilding* 7, no. 4 (2013): 453

<sup>27</sup> Maringira, Godfrey. "When Ex-combatants Became Peaceful: Azania People's Liberation Army Ex-combatants in Post-apartheid South Africa." *African Studies* 77, no. 1 (2018): 56

<sup>28</sup> Willems, Rens, and Mathijs Van Leeuwen. "Reconciling Reintegration: The Complexity of Economic and Social Reintegration of Ex-combatants in Burundi." *Disasters* 39, no. 2 (2015): 321

<sup>29</sup> Ibid.

<sup>30</sup> Bowd, Richard, and Alpaslan Özerdem. "How to Assess Social Reintegration of Ex-Combatants." *Journal of Intervention and Statebuilding* 7, no. 4 (2013): 462

<sup>31</sup> United Nations. "The Operational Guide to the Integrated Disarmament, Demobilization and Reintegration Standards (IDDRS)." *Inter-Agency Working Group on DDR*, 2014.

combatants includes economic, political and social dimensions. Pugal (2009) is one of the authors that describes such an approach. He notes:

“The reintegration of former combatants is a multidimensional, post-conflict and peace-building intervention process that enables communities to reform anew after conflict and accepts their displaced and war-affected population as fully-fledged citizens. This long-term endeavour requires a secure environment as a pre-condition to pursuing the requisite social, economic, political and psychological outcomes for sustained peace, prosperity and progress<sup>32</sup>.”

This definition epitomizes the trend towards a maximalist approach and examines the reintegration of former combatants through a combination of economic, political and social components.

### *Examples and Pitfalls*

The reintegration of former combatants usually takes place after the signing of a peace agreement between the state and an illegal armed actor in countries that deal with internal conflict<sup>33</sup>. Examples of reintegration processes after negotiated peace agreements are the reintegration of former Maoist combatants in Nepal in 2006, the reintegration of former SANDF combatants in South Africa after Apartheid and the reintegration of former combatants of the Burundian civil war in 2003<sup>34</sup>. The cases of Nepal, South Africa and Burundi also help us to understand why the reintegration of former combatants is such a fragile and challenging process. Former combatants have a stigmatized identity in the communities in which they return and are often seen as untrustworthy, violent and unintelligent<sup>35</sup>. Because the reintegration process takes place in a highly polarized environment with deteriorated relationships between former combatants and affected communities, post-conflict societies often experience recidivism and violence<sup>36</sup>. As a result, violence continued after the end of Apartheid in South

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<sup>32</sup> Pugal 2009, 79. Mentioned in: Willems, Rens, and Mathijs Van Leeuwen. "Reconciling Reintegration: The Complexity of Economic and Social Reintegration of Ex-combatants in Burundi." *Disasters* 39, no. 2 (2015): 321

<sup>33</sup> Rouw, Hans. "Disarmament, demobilization and reintegration in the Colombian context." *Colombia Reports*, March 15, 2011.

<sup>34</sup> Subedi, Db. "Dealing with Ex-Combatants in a Negotiated Peace Process: Impacts of Transitional Politics on the Disarmament, Demobilization and Reintegration Programme in Nepal." *Journal of Asian and African Studies* 49, no. 6 (2014): 675 and Maringira, Godfrey. "When Ex-combatants Became Peaceful: Azania People's Liberation Army Ex-combatants in Post-apartheid South Africa." *African Studies* 77, no. 1 (2018): 53 and Willems, Rens, and Mathijs Van Leeuwen. "Reconciling Reintegration: The Complexity of Economic and Social Reintegration of Ex-combatants in Burundi." *Disasters* 39, no. 2 (2015): 323

<sup>35</sup> Maringira, Godfrey. "When Ex-combatants Became Peaceful: Azania People's Liberation Army Ex-combatants in Post-apartheid South Africa." *African Studies* 77, no. 1 (2018): 53

<sup>36</sup> Ibid.

Africa and few former combatants were able to find jobs due to stigmatization in Burundi<sup>37</sup>. The following paragraph briefly discusses other frequent pitfalls.

There are various reasons why the reintegration of former combatants has failed in the past. The first common pitfall is the power vacuum that is often left behind when an armed actor demobilizes<sup>38</sup>. The rule of law tends to be weak in remote areas of countries with internal conflict which allows armed groups to replace the state as the primary governing authority. Therefore, it often happens that various smaller armed actors start competing for power in the vacuum left behind by the demobilized de facto governing authority<sup>39</sup>. The competition between a myriad of armed actors that all fight for the same slice of pie often results in an increase of violence during the reintegration of former combatants.

Another frequent pitfall is the lack of income-generating opportunities. Poverty, marginalization and unemployment make people more susceptible to recidivism and recruitment by armed groups which makes the productive legal engagement of former combatants a vital issue<sup>40</sup>. The economic support provided during reintegration processes often lacks the structural and long-term investment that is needed to alleviate former combatants from poverty which has resulted in remobilization and rearming<sup>41</sup>.

Centralization of the reintegration of former combatants also tends to be an issue. Centralized government bodies often implement reintegration programs through military structures and rarely include local government and communities in the process<sup>42</sup>. The top-down structure of the reintegration of former combatants can increase tensions between former combatants and receiving communities<sup>43</sup>. The lack of local engagement can also hinder the coordination between national policy and local realities and make the execution of the reintegration program more difficult.

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<sup>37</sup> Willems, Rens, and Mathijs Van Leeuwen. "Reconciling Reintegration: The Complexity of Economic and Social Reintegration of Ex-combatants in Burundi." *Disasters* 39, no. 2 (2015): 318 and Maringira, Godfrey. "When Ex-combatants Became Peaceful: Azania People's Liberation Army Ex-combatants in Post-apartheid South Africa." *African Studies* 77, no. 1 (2018): 53

<sup>38</sup> Herrera, Dylan, and Paola Gonzalez. "The State of the Art of DDR in Colombia against International Standards in DDR (IDDRS)." *Colombia Internacional*, no. 77 (2013): 297

<sup>39</sup> Nussio, Enzo, and Kimberly Howe. "When Protection Collapses: Post-Demobilization Trajectories of Violence." *Terrorism and Political Violence* 28, no. 5 (2016): 849

<sup>40</sup> Jairo Munive, and Finn Stepputat. "Rethinking Disarmament, Demobilization and Reintegration Programs." *Stability: International Journal of Security and Development* 4, no. 1 (2015): 7

<sup>41</sup> Mcevoy, Kieran, and Peter Shirlow. "Re-imagining DDR: Ex-combatants, Leadership and Moral Agency in Conflict Transformation." *Theoretical Criminology* 13, no. 1 (2009): 34.

<sup>42</sup> Denissen, Marieke. "Reintegrating Ex-Combatants into Civilian Life: The Case of the Paramilitaries in Colombia." *Peace & Change* 35, no. 2 (2010): 339

<sup>43</sup> Bowd, Richard, and Alpaslan Özerdem. "How to Assess Social Reintegration of Ex-Combatants." *Journal of Intervention and Statebuilding* 7, no. 4 (2013): 457

Many reintegration processes lack an individual approach. There is a tendency to focus on communal reintegration through a ‘one-size-fits-all’ approach that does not address the specific needs of individual combatants<sup>44</sup>. Former combatants frequently struggle to adapt to their new environment and feel neglected by the government and their former military groups. As a result, former combatants become more vulnerable to recruitment by illegal armed actors and recidivism<sup>45</sup>. Many former combatants suffer from post-traumatic stress and deal with a wide variety of problems such as drug addiction and behavioral conditions. However, an individual approach that addresses these problems is often absent<sup>46</sup>.

The provision of justice and reparations to victims are essential in addressing the grievances of victims, rebuilding social capital and fostering reconciliation<sup>47</sup>. However, impunity and a lack of justice for victims often characterize the reintegration of former combatants. After the signing peace accords and the start of the reintegration process, we frequently see that transitional justice mechanisms only sentence high-ranking combatants and chieftains, while the vast majority obtains full amnesty<sup>48</sup>. When transitional justice mechanisms do not provide a sense of justice, affected communities and victims generally find it difficult to forgive and receive former combatants during the reintegration process<sup>49</sup>.

### *Analytical Approaches*

As we have seen, the reintegration of former combatants includes economic, political and social dimensions. However, most of the research on reintegration processes has exclusively focused on economic reintegration<sup>50</sup>. Jairo explains that focusing on economics is an attractive option for governments and agencies because it is something that can be easily measured and something that donors are willing to fund<sup>51</sup>. However, the economic side of reintegration only shows a part of the full picture. Therefore, an increasing number of scholars argue for a

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<sup>44</sup> Bowd, Richard, and Alpaslan Özerdem. "How to Assess Social Reintegration of Ex-Combatants." *Journal of Intervention and Statebuilding* 7, no. 4 (2013): 457

<sup>45</sup> Ibid.

<sup>46</sup> Denissen, Marieke. "Reintegrating Ex-Combatants into Civilian Life: The Case of the Paramilitaries in Colombia." *Peace & Change* 35, no. 2 (2010): 339

<sup>47</sup> Herrera, Dylan, and Paola Gonzalez. "The State of the Art of DDR in Colombia against International Standards in DDR (IDDRS)." *Colombia Internacional*, no. 77 (2013): 279

<sup>48</sup> Jairo Munive, and Finn Stepputat. "Rethinking Disarmament, Demobilization and Reintegration Programs." *Stability: International Journal of Security and Development* 4, no. 1 (2015): 4

<sup>49</sup> Ibid.

<sup>50</sup> Herrera, Dylan, and Paola Gonzalez. "The State of the Art of DDR in Colombia against International Standards in DDR (IDDRS)." *Colombia Internacional*, no. 77 (2013): 278

<sup>51</sup> Jairo Munive, and Finn Stepputat. "Rethinking Disarmament, Demobilization and Reintegration Programs." *Stability: International Journal of Security and Development* 4, no. 1 (2015): 9

comprehensive analytical approach that includes all dimensions of reintegration<sup>52</sup>. Comprehensive analytical frameworks have gained momentum in recent years and require a combined focus on the economic, political and social reintegration of former combatants. The following paragraph briefly discusses the definition, importance and components of each reintegration dimension to clarify what an comprehensive analytical framework needs to include.

We can understand economic reintegration as “the way in which to equip former fighters with productive skills and employment so that they can return to civilian life”<sup>53</sup>. For economic reintegration to be successful, Willems (2015) argues that former combatants need to have acquired sustainable employment and income<sup>54</sup>. Providing income-generating opportunities is paramount to the success of the reintegration process because former combatants are less prone to recur to violence when they can fulfill their basic needs and provide for their families<sup>55</sup>. Furthermore, employment and productive livelihoods give a sense of purpose and status to former combatants within communities which helps them to construct a non-violent identity<sup>56</sup>. Key components of economic reintegration include vocational training, life skills training, education, business training, technical support and apprenticeships<sup>57</sup>.

The UN defines political reintegration as “the involvement and participation of former combatants in post-conflict decision- and policy-making processes at national, regional and community levels”<sup>58</sup>. Political reintegration is instrumental in the reintegration process because it provides former combatants with a non-violent platform through which they can express their concerns and grievances<sup>59</sup>. The thought behind the political reintegration is that if former combatants feel included in the decision-making process, they will be less prone to rearm and constructively voice their opinion. Key components of political reintegration include access to

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<sup>52</sup> Bowd, Richard, and Alpaslan Özerdem. "How to Assess Social Reintegration of Ex-Combatants." *Journal of Intervention and Statebuilding* 7, no. 4 (2013): 459

<sup>53</sup> Ibid.

<sup>54</sup> Willems, Rens, and Mathijs Van Leeuwen. "Reconciling Reintegration: The Complexity of Economic and Social Reintegration of Ex-combatants in Burundi." *Disasters* 39, no. 2 (2015): 318

<sup>55</sup> United Nations. “The Operational Guide to the Integrated Disarmament, Demobilization and Reintegration Standards (IDDRS).” *Inter-Agency Working Group on DDR*, 2014.

<sup>56</sup> Ibid.

<sup>57</sup> Willems, Rens, and Mathijs Van Leeuwen. "Reconciling Reintegration: The Complexity of Economic and Social Reintegration of Ex-combatants in Burundi." *Disasters* 39, no. 2 (2015): 318

<sup>58</sup> United Nations. “The Operational Guide to the Integrated Disarmament, Demobilization and Reintegration Standards (IDDRS).” *Inter-Agency Working Group on DDR*, 2014.

<sup>59</sup> Bowd, Richard, and Alpaslan Özerdem. "How to Assess Social Reintegration of Ex-Combatants." *Journal of Intervention and Statebuilding* 7, no. 4 (2013): 456-457



funds, campaigning support, leadership training and protection measures for former combatants that participate in politics<sup>60</sup>.

Bowd and Özerdem define social reintegration as “the degree to which receiving communities are willing and able to accept former combatants and the efforts they expend in making this a realistic possibility”<sup>61</sup>. In the crucible of violent internal conflict, the relationship between former combatants and communities is often damaged and restoring these relationships requires overcoming traumas and bringing perpetrators of violence to justice<sup>62</sup>. Herrera and Gonzalez (2013) explain that if former combatants return in communities whose grievances have been addressed and are willing to take them back, the chances of successful reintegration are higher<sup>63</sup>. Willems notes that the desired outcome of social reintegration is reconciliation, which he defines as “a method of creating encounters between conflicting parties to restore relationships”<sup>64</sup>. The social reintegration process includes truth-telling bodies, reparations, social capital building and transitional justice measures to foster reconciliation and address the grievances of victims<sup>65</sup>.

### *The United Nations’ IDDRS*

The UN’s Integrated Disarmament, Demobilization and Reintegration Standards (IDDRS) is the most renowned tool for the comprehensive analysis of the reintegration of former combatants. Before, there was no structured approach to guiding the reintegration of former combatants and countries designed reintegration processes from the bottom up<sup>66</sup>. This changed when the UN created the IDDRS in 2006 to address the diverse nature of reintegration processes and provide an operational guide for monitoring and evaluating reintegration processes. Since then, the IDDRS has become the global blueprint for reintegration processes and the principle

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<sup>60</sup> United Nations. “The Operational Guide to the Integrated Disarmament, Demobilization and Reintegration Standards (IDDRS).” *Inter-Agency Working Group on DDR*, 2014.

<sup>61</sup> Bowd, Richard, and Alpaslan Özerdem. "How to Assess Social Reintegration of Ex-Combatants." *Journal of Intervention and Statebuilding* 7, no. 4 (2013): 459

<sup>62</sup> United Nations. “The Operational Guide to the Integrated Disarmament, Demobilization and Reintegration Standards (IDDRS).” *Inter-Agency Working Group on DDR*, 2014.

<sup>63</sup> Herrera, Dylan, and Paola Gonzalez. "The State of the Art of DDR in Colombia against International Standards in DDR (IDDRS)." *Colombia Internacional*, no. 77 (2013): 278

<sup>64</sup> Willems, Rens, and Mathijs Van Leeuwen. "Reconciling Reintegration: The Complexity of Economic and Social Reintegration of Ex-combatants in Burundi." *Disasters* 39, no. 2 (2015): 321

<sup>65</sup> Kaplan, Oliver, and Enzo Nussio. "Community Counts: The Social Reintegration of Ex-combatants in Colombia." *Conflict Management and Peace Science* 35, no. 2 (2018): 133

<sup>66</sup> United Nations. “The Operational Guide to the Integrated Disarmament, Demobilization and Reintegration Standards (IDDRS).” *Inter-Agency Working Group on DDR*, 2014.

roadmap for implementation<sup>67</sup>. The IDDRS includes a wide range of theoretical and operational components which distinguish between different types of reintegration processes and explicitly underline the importance of the economic, political and social reintegration<sup>68</sup>. Due to the IDDRS' comprehensive approach and clear operational guide, the thesis chooses to use them for the analysis of the reintegration of former FARC combatants in Colombia.

### *Defining Success*

Because reintegration processes are complex and multi-levelled, one of the biggest challenges is to define their success. Defining success can result particularly difficult because the perception of successful reintegration might differ between politicians, communities and former combatants<sup>69</sup>. Rouw (2011) explains that authors have often determined the success of reintegration without a comprehensive set of goals and indicators which makes it difficult to verify their claims<sup>70</sup>. The IDDRS from the UN solves this conundrum by comparing real outcomes to desired outcomes as a way to determine success<sup>71</sup>. Following this logic, we can gauge the success of a reintegration program in four steps.

First, one needs to determine the desired outcome of each dimension of reintegration<sup>72</sup>. If we take economic reintegration in country X as an example, the desired outcome could be to provide former combatants with sustainable employment and income. After determining the desired outcome, one needs to use the IDDRS to establish input, output and outcome indicators that can measure the progress made during the reintegration process. In the case of economic reintegration, a possible indicator could be vocational training. This indicator can then be used to analyze the inputs, outputs and outcomes of the economic reintegration process in country X. For economic reintegration, this could mean tracking the resources put into vocational training, establishing the number of former combatants that completed vocational training and determining the number of former combatants that became gainfully employed. After the

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<sup>67</sup> Herrera, Dylan, and Paola Gonzalez. "The State of the Art of DDR in Colombia against International Standards in DDR (IDDRS)." *Colombia Internacional*, no. 77 (2013): 273

<sup>68</sup> United Nations. "The Operational Guide to the Integrated Disarmament, Demobilization and Reintegration Standards (IDDRS)." *Inter-Agency Working Group on DDR*, 2014.

<sup>69</sup> Bowd, Richard, and Alpaslan Özerdem. "How to Assess Social Reintegration of Ex-Combatants." *Journal of Intervention and Statebuilding* 7, no. 4 (2013): 456

<sup>70</sup> Rouw, Hans. "Disarmament, demobilization and reintegration in the Colombian context." *Colombia Reports*, March 15, 2011.

<sup>71</sup> United Nations. "The Operational Guide to the Integrated Disarmament, Demobilization and Reintegration Standards (IDDRS)." *Inter-Agency Working Group on DDR*, 2014.

<sup>72</sup> *Ibid.*

analysis, the last step is to discuss to what extent the inputs and outputs of the reintegration process have resulted in the desired outcome. If a high percentage of former combatants in country X obtain jobs due to vocational training, the desired outcome of engaging former combatants in income-generating opportunities would have come significantly closer. Having followed all four steps, we can argue that the economic reintegration process in country X has been relatively successful. It is important to note that challenges to the reintegration of former combatants always remain and that success is always relative, depending on the relationship between desired and real outcomes.

The IDDRS approach allows for a layered assessment of success. Each dimension of reintegration is studied as a separate module, which means that a reintegration process could have been successful economically, but catastrophic politically. It also allows for nuances within reintegration dimensions: social reintegration efforts might have been successful in bringing former combatants to justice, but might have failed in achieving reconciliation. The following section places the reintegration of former combatants in the Colombian context and provides a historical contextualization of the internal conflict.

## **2.3 Historical Contextualization**

### *The Colombian Conflict*

It is vital to consider the origins of the Colombian conflict to understand the reintegration of former combatants in the Colombian context. Colombia's armed struggle is rooted in *La Violencia*, an extremely violent period between the liberal and conservative party in the 1950s<sup>73</sup>. During this political stand-off, both parties took up arms to dispute the political upper hand which resulted in some two hundred thousand civilian casualties<sup>74</sup>. In 1958, the liberal and conservative parties made a truce and decided to divide political rule. The arrangement determined that the liberal and conservative parties would alternately occupy the presidency for four years while dividing strategic political positions amongst members of both parties. The system brought an end to the extreme violence that had characterized *La Violencia* but excluded

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<sup>73</sup> Phelan, Alexandra. "Engaging Insurgency: The Impact of the 2016 Colombian Peace Agreement on FARC's Political Participation." *Studies in Conflict & Terrorism* 42, no. 9 (2019): 838

<sup>74</sup> Denissen, Marieke. "Reintegrating Ex-Combatants into Civilian Life: The Case of the Paramilitaries in Colombia." *Peace & Change* 35, no. 2 (2010): 331

all other political actors from the political spheres<sup>75</sup>. As a result, guerrilla groups emerged around the country to oppose political exclusion. The Armed Revolutionary Forces of Colombia (FARC) and the National Liberation Army (ELN) were the biggest among these guerrilla groups.

The FARC and ELN are leftist guerrilla groups founded in 1964 to fight for political inclusion and social justice<sup>76</sup>. Both the FARC and ELN are inextricably connected to the drug trade. This lucrative business provided them with the resources to challenge the power of the state<sup>77</sup>. In the 1980s, the FARC and ELN used the increasing profits from the drug trade to professionalize their organization. At the same time, they mobilized vast rural armies that kidnapped people for ransom and extorted local governments<sup>78</sup>. The FARC and ELN's size, a wide range of activities and central position in the drug trade sets them apart from many other guerrilla groups in South America<sup>79</sup>. As the guerrilla groups grew in size and capacity, they started posing a threat to wealthy landowners in rural areas<sup>80</sup>. To protect themselves and their lands, a collective of landowners founded the counterinsurgent paramilitary group United Self-Defense Forces of Colombia (AUC) in 1997<sup>81</sup>. The tactic of the AUC was to assassinate or intimidate members of guerrilla groups, which resulted in massacres around the country<sup>82</sup>. Just like the ELN and FARC, the AUC relied on money from the drug trade to finance its activities<sup>83</sup>.

### *Past Reintegration Experiences*

Colombia harbors many guerrilla and paramilitary groups and some of them entered into reintegration processes. Examples are the reintegration process with the guerrilla M-19 in 1990 and EPL in 1991<sup>84</sup>. However, this essay only focusses on reintegration processes that have not

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<sup>75</sup> Denissen, Marieke. "Reintegrating Ex-Combatants into Civilian Life: The Case of the Paramilitaries in Colombia." *Peace & Change* 35, no. 2 (2010): 331

<sup>76</sup> González, Olga. "Colombia: Last Chance for Peace Talks?" *Mouvements* 76, no. 4 (2013): 78

<sup>77</sup> Capone, Francesca. "An Overview of the DDR Process Established in the Aftermath of the Revised Peace Agreement between the Colombian Government and the FARC: Finally on the Right Track?" *Global Jurist* 18, no. 1 (2017): 1

<sup>78</sup> Guáqueta, Alexandra. "The Way Back In: Reintegrating Illegal Armed Groups in Colombia Then and Now: Analysis." *Conflict, Security & Development* 7, no. 3 (2007): 437

<sup>79</sup> Angelo, Paul. "The Colombian Peace Process: Trial and Error." *Survival* 59, no. 1 (2017): 135

<sup>80</sup> Tabak, Shana. "False Dichotomies of Transitional Justice Gender, Conflict and Combatants in Colombia." *New York University Journal of International Law and Politics* 44, no. 1 (2011): 131

<sup>81</sup> Jaramillo et al. "Transitional Justice and DDR: The Case of Colombia." *International Center for Transitional Justice*. June, (June 2009): 8

<sup>82</sup> Denissen, Marieke. "Reintegrating Ex-Combatants into Civilian Life: The Case of the Paramilitaries in Colombia." *Peace & Change* 35, no. 2 (2010): 331

<sup>83</sup> Ibid.

<sup>84</sup> Villarraga Sarmiento, Alvaro. "Recent Historical Experiences of Ex-combatant Reintegration in Colombia." *Colombia Internacional* 77 (2013): 116

been aborted prematurely and have included the FARC, ELN, or AUC. Other guerilla groups and paramilitary organizations are not comparable to the FARC, ELN and AUC in scope, capacity and resilience and present fundamentally different challenges to the reintegration process<sup>85</sup>.

Under President Belisario Betancur (1982-1986), the Colombian state made serious attempts to reintegrate combatants from the FARC and ELN<sup>86</sup>. Betancur offered full amnesty to former combatants from both groups that participated in the reintegration process and supported the creation of the Patriotic Union (UP), the political party of the FARC<sup>87</sup>. However, the reintegration process of the FARC and ELN finished prematurely due to the extreme violence against former combatants and political candidates of the UP<sup>88</sup>. The reintegration process with the AUC between 2003 and 2006 was the first reintegration process that included one of the three major illicit groups in Colombia and completed the full implementation cycle<sup>89</sup>. Therefore, this thesis will focus on the reintegration process with the AUC as the most critical ‘learning trigger’ for the peace agreement with the FARC in 2016.

### *The Reintegration Process with the AUC*

In 2002, right-wing President Alvaro Uribe started peace negotiations with the AUC<sup>90</sup>. As a result of these negotiations, the state implemented various legal instruments that guaranteed amnesty and reintegration benefits for former AUC combatants. Persuaded by these attractive conditions, chieftains of the AUC signed the Santa Fé de Ralito peace agreement with the Colombian government in 2003 through which the AUC entered into a collective reintegration process<sup>91</sup>. In the agreement, the AUC agreed to disarm and demobilize between 2003 and 2006 and submitted itself to transitional justice measures designed to provide justice and address the grievances of victims<sup>92</sup>. The Santa Fé de Ralito agreement was a major milestone for Colombia,

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<sup>85</sup> Jaramillo et al. “Transitional Justice and DDR: The Case of Colombia.” *International Center for Transitional Justice*. (June 2009): 7

<sup>86</sup> González, Olga. "Colombia: Last Chance for Peace Talks?" *Mouvements* 76, no. 4 (2013): 79

<sup>87</sup> Porch, Douglas, and María José Rasmussen. "Demobilization of Paramilitaries in Colombia: Transformation or Transition?" *Studies in Conflict & Terrorism* 31, no. 6 (2008): 520

<sup>88</sup> Villarraga Sarmiento, Alvaro. "Recent Historical Experiences of Ex-combatant Reintegration in Colombia." *Colombia Internacional* 77 (2013): 115-116

<sup>89</sup> *Ibid.*, 108

<sup>90</sup> Guáqueta, Alexandra. "The Way Back In: Reintegrating Illegal Armed Groups in Colombia Then and Now: Analysis." *Conflict, Security & Development* 7, no. 3 (2007): 419

<sup>91</sup> Nussio, Enzo, and Kimberly Howe. "When Protection Collapses: Post-Demobilization Trajectories of Violence." *Terrorism and Political Violence* 28, no. 5 (2016): 849

<sup>92</sup> Prieto, Juan Diego. "Together after War While the War Goes On: Victims, Ex-Combatants and Communities in Three Colombian Cities." *International Journal of Transitional Justice* 6, no. 3 (2012): 525-526

as it was the first time that a peace agreement included the premise of transitional justice<sup>93</sup>. In 2005, the state introduced the so-called Justice and Peace Law to practically implement these transitional justice elements<sup>94</sup>. The central premise of this law was to offer reduced prison sentences to former AUC combatants in exchange for confessions of war crimes, information on criminal organizations and reparations provided to victims of AUC violence<sup>95</sup>. Through the reintegration process with the AUC, the Colombian government aspired to achieve six goals.

- |       |   |
|-------|---|
| (I)   | Restoring the state's monopoly of violence                      |
| (II)  | Improving civilian security after decades of excessive violence |
| (III) | Acquiring more international support and legitimacy             |
| (IV)  | Creating better coordination between government institutions    |
| (V)   | Eliminating the AUC as a military power                         |
| (VI)  | Achieving national and local reconciliation                     |

Table 1. *Goals of the Reintegration Process with the AUC*<sup>96</sup>

Initially, the reintegration process appeared successful. In the three years after the start of the reintegration process in 2003, over 30 thousand former AUC combatants had engaged in the reintegration program, as well as over 20 thousand individual guerilla combatants<sup>97</sup>. The reintegration of former AUC combatants resulted in a decrease in violence between 2003 and 2006, as the AUC had been responsible for the lion's share of assassinations, kidnappings and other illegal activities in Colombia<sup>98</sup>.

Despite these initial positive signs, violence increased in many parts of the country and thousands of former AUC combatants took up arms again after the end of the reintegration process in 2006<sup>99</sup>. Due to the continued violence and high rates of recidivism, the remainder of this thesis refers to AUC's reintegration process as failed. Chapter four will explain the causes for this failure and the lessons that were drawn from it greater detail.

<sup>93</sup> Jaramillo et al. "Transitional Justice and DDR: The Case of Colombia." *International Center for Transitional Justice*, (June 2009): 8

<sup>94</sup> Ibid.

<sup>95</sup> Angelo, Paul. "The Colombian Peace Process: Trial and Error." *Survival* 59, no. 1 (2017): 140

<sup>96</sup> Based on: Marieke. "Reintegrating Ex-Combatants into Civilian Life: The Case of the Paramilitaries in Colombia." *Peace & Change* 35, no. 2 (2010): 328-334

<sup>97</sup> Prieto, Juan Diego. "Together after War While the War Goes On: Victims, Ex-Combatants and Communities in Three Colombian Cities." *International Journal of Transitional Justice* 6, no. 3 (2012): 525-526

<sup>98</sup> Nussio, Enzo, and Kimberly Howe. "When Protection Collapses: Post-Demobilization Trajectories of Violence." *Terrorism and Political Violence* 28, no. 5 (2016): 850

<sup>99</sup> Summers, Nicole. "Colombia's Victims' Law: Transitional Justice in a Time of Violent Conflict?" *Harvard Human Rights Journal* 25 (2012): 233

## 2.4 Gap in the Literature and Relevance

The relationship between crisis-induced learning and the reintegration of former FARC combatants contributes to the academic literature on various levels. On a conceptual level, both crisis-induced learning and the reintegration of former combatants have become increasingly relevant in recent years. The academic literature includes ample research on organizational learning, but the subcategory of crisis-induced learning is a relatively novel concept<sup>100</sup>. Therefore, there is a lack of empirical research that applies crisis-induced learning to real-life cases. Learning from crisis in the peace agreement with the FARC helps filling this gap in the academic literature.

This study also contributes to the literature on the reintegration of former combatants. There is a vast body of academic literature that has analyzed the reintegration of former combatants in numerous cases. However, most of these cases have exclusively focused on the economic dimension of reintegration<sup>101</sup>. Only recently academics have started using comprehensive analytical approaches that include all dimensions of reintegration. Therefore, there is a lack of empirical research that uses this approach. This thesis address this gap in the literature by using a comprehensive analytical approach (IDDRS) for the analysis of the reintegration of former FARC combatants that includes all dimensions reintegration. Moreover, there have been no academic articles that have analyzed the reintegration of former combatants through the lens of crisis-induced learning. This way, thesis also contributes to the academic literature on crisis-induced learning as a tool for improving reintegration processes.

Finally, this thesis contributes to the academic literature on the Colombian conflict and the reintegration of former FARC combatants. Since the start of the reintegration process in 2016, scholars have published numerous academic articles on the economic, political and social reintegration of former FARC combatants. However, none of these articles has included all dimensions of reintegration dimensions, nor provided a comprehensive evaluation of the reintegration process' success. This way, the findings of this study provide a practical oversight of the FARC's reintegration process which policymakers can use to improve the process even further. Insights from the Colombian case may also be useful for other post-conflict societies around the world that face the challenging task of reintegrating former combatants.

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<sup>100</sup> Deverell, Edward. "Crises as Learning Triggers: Exploring a Conceptual Framework of Crisis-Induced Learning." *Journal of Contingencies and Crisis Management* 17, no. 3 (2009): 180

<sup>101</sup> Jairo Munive, and Finn Stepputat. "Rethinking Disarmament, Demobilization and Reintegration Programs." *Stability: International Journal of Security and Development* 4, no. 1 (2015): 6

### **III. Research Design**

This study takes crisis-induced learning as the independent variable and the reintegration of former FARC combatants as the dependent variable. The hypothesis is that there is a positive correlation between the extent of crisis-induced learning and the successful reintegration of former combatants. The reintegration process of the FARC is an excellent case to assess this relationship because crisis experience shaped the peace agreement with the FARC.

To deconstruct this relationship, the thesis uses an explorative single case study design that assesses the performance of the reintegration of former FARC combatants between 2017 and 2019. A single case study design helps to study phenomena that are complex and have to be studied in their respective context to obtain an in-depth understanding of the case<sup>102</sup>. Reintegration programs are tailored to their national context, which means that we have to consider the specific context of the Colombian conflict to understand the reintegration of former FARC combatants<sup>103</sup>. Therefore, a single case study design is the most suitable option. This thesis does not use research designs such as comparative case study design, surveys, or statistical approaches because they do not consider the uniqueness and contextuality of each case and instead focus on a small number of variables between a large N of cases. As such, these approaches would be less suited to analyze the complex process of reintegrating former combatants.

#### **3.1 Methodology**

To assess to what extent crisis-induced learning has resulted in the successful reintegration of former FARC combatants, this paper includes a two-fold analysis. In the first stage, Chapter four analyzes how crisis-induced learning shaped the peace agreement with the FARC. The chapter starts by explaining the context of the peace agreement and identifies the crises that sparked learning. After, it specifies the crisis-induced lessons that were triggered by these crises.

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<sup>102</sup> De Young, Kyle P., and Angeline R. Bottera. "A Summary of Reporting Guidelines and Evaluation Domains for Using Single-case Experimental Designs and Recommendations for the Study of Eating Disorders." *International Journal of Eating Disorders* 51, no. 7 (2018): 618

<sup>103</sup> United Nations. "The Operational Guide to the Integrated Disarmament, Demobilization and Reintegration Standards (IDDRS)." *Inter-Agency Working Group on DDR*, 2014.



Chapter five evaluates the reintegration of former FARC combatants between 2017 and 2019 to assess whether the peace agreement translated into a more successful reintegration process. For this stage of the analysis, the thesis uses a comprehensive analytical framework created through the IDDRS. To construct such an analytical framework, the IDDRS specifies three steps which help tailoring the framework to the specific reintegration process. The first step is determining the type and timing of evaluations. The reintegration of former FARC combatants started in 2016 and is still in the implementation phase, which requires the so-called ‘mid-term evaluations’<sup>104</sup>. Mid-term evaluations are suited to assess the performance of ongoing reintegration processes and allow for a preliminary assessment of their success. The second step is coming up with suitable evaluation criteria. Mid-term evaluations are well-equipped to measure performance, effectiveness and outcomes of reintegration processes. The focus of this study is on the effectiveness of reintegration. The final step is to establish indicators for the analysis. To gauge the progress of the reintegration process over time, indicators have to be developed for the inputs, outputs and outcomes while taking into account the different dimensions of the reintegration processes. The codebook specified below integrates all the steps above and mentions the indicators used to measure the economic, political and social reintegration of former FARC combatants.

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<sup>104</sup> United Nations. “The Operational Guide to the Integrated Disarmament, Demobilization and Reintegration Standards (IDDRS).” *Inter-Agency Working Group on DDR*, 2014.

<b>Dimension of Integration</b>	<b>Component of Reintegration Analysis</b>	<b>Definition</b>	<b>Indicators</b>
<b>Economic Reintegration</b>	<b>Input</b>	<b>The resources to equip es-combatants with skills and employment opportunities</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Experts, equipment and funds made available to provide productive opportunities, vocational training and education to FARC-EP members</li> </ul>
	<b>Output</b>	<b>The education, vocational training and technical assistance provided</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The number of FARC members that created and benefitted from productive projects, received vocational training and obtained education</li> </ul>
	<b>Outcome</b>	<b>Former FARC combatants have obtained productive skills and employment</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The extent to which the reintegration process stimulate education, vocational training and productive projects to former FARC combatants</li> </ul>
<b>Political Reintegration</b>	<b>Input</b>	<b>The resources to protect and stimulate political participation by former FARC combatants</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Experts, equipment and funds made available s to protect the FARC political party</li> <li>• The technical support and funds provided to the FARC political party</li> </ul>
	<b>Output</b>	<b>Protection schemes for former combatants in politics and support the FARC party</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The number of police forces, military forces or protection forces deployed and trained for the protection of FARC party candidates</li> <li>• The number of registered candidates, representatives in congress and campaigning activities by the FARC political party</li> </ul>
	<b>Outcome</b>	<b>Politically active former FARC combatants are protected and productively participate in politics</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The number of assassinated politically active former FARC members and the number of reported incidents during campaigning activities and elections</li> <li>• The extent to which the reintegration process resulted in fair and productive participation of the FARC political party</li> </ul>
<b>Social Reintegration</b>	<b>Input</b>	<b>The resources provided to improve protection measures, support justice mechanisms and foster reconciliation</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Experts, equipment and funds granted by government bodies and other stakeholders to protect former FARC combatants and affected communities</li> <li>• Experts, equipment and funds granted by government bodies and other stakeholders to provide truth, justice and stimulate reconciliation with victims</li> </ul>
	<b>Output</b>	<b>Protection schemes, cases treated by the justice mechanisms and reconciliation activities</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The number of police forces, military forces or protection forces deployed and trained for the protection of former FARC combatants and affected communities</li> <li>• The number of case processed by the Comprehensive System for Truth, Justice, Reparation and Non-Repitition and the organization of reconciliation activities</li> </ul>
	<b>Outcome</b>	<b>Former FARC combatants and communities are protected, transitional justice mechanisms work and perpetrators and victims have reconciled</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The number of received threats and assassinations of former FARC combatants and local leaders throughout the reintegration process</li> <li>• The extent to which former FARC combatants are actively engaged in the Comprehensive Justice system and reconciliation has taken place</li> </ul>

Table 2. Codebook for Economic, Political and Social Reintegration

To gauge the performance of economic reintegration, the analysis focuses on accreditation, education, vocational training and productive projects. Former combatants need accreditation

to be accepted in the reintegration progress and access reintegration benefits which is a crucial prerequisite for economic reintegration. Education, vocational training and productive projects are essential indicators for economic reintegration because they prepare former combatants for the labor market and stimulate their engagement in income-generating initiatives<sup>105</sup>. For political reintegration, the analysis focusses on the protection measures for politically engaged former FARC combatants and the funds and technical support offered to stimulate their political participation. In the past, politically engaged former FARC combatants have been primary targets of violence, which makes protection measures crucial<sup>106</sup>. Technical support is needed to guide former combatants in the transition from guerilla to political actor<sup>107</sup>. To assess the social reintegration process, the analysis focusses on the provision of protection to communities, transitional justice mechanisms and reconciliation between former combatants and communities affected by the conflict. Protection is needed to make sure that the reunification of former combatants and victims can take place in a secure environment<sup>108</sup>. At the same time, the transitional justice mechanisms and reconciliation activities are important to address the grievances of victims and restore the deteriorated relationship between former combatants and communities<sup>109</sup>.

After both stages of the analysis, the thesis summarizes the progress made after three years of reintegration. It discusses to what extent real outcomes aligned with desired outcomes to determine the success of each dimension of reintegration and answer the research question. Furthermore, it considers alternative explanations for the successes and shortcomings of the reintegration process besides crisis-induced learning.

### **3.2 Data and Limitations**

The thesis uses academic articles, policy documents, newspaper articles and NGO reports for the body of knowledge. There is a wide variety of peer-reviewed academic literature on the reintegration of former combatants, crisis-induced learning and the context of the Colombian

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<sup>105</sup> Willems, Rens, and Mathijs Van Leeuwen. "Reconciling Reintegration: The Complexity of Economic and Social Reintegration of Ex-combatants in Burundi." *Disasters* 39, no. 2 (2015): 318

<sup>106</sup> Porch, Douglas, and María José Rasmussen. "Demobilization of Paramilitaries in Colombia: Transformation or Transition?" *Studies in Conflict & Terrorism* 31, no. 6 (2008): 520

<sup>107</sup> United Nations. "Report of the Secretary-General on the United Nations Mission in Colombia." *United Nations Mission in Colombia*, (September 26, 2017): 8

<sup>108</sup> United Nations. "The Operational Guide to the Integrated Disarmament, Demobilization and Reintegration Standards (IDDRS)." *Inter-Agency Working Group on DDR*, 2014.

<sup>109</sup> Herrera, Dylan, and Paola Gonzalez. "The State of the Art of DDR in Colombia against International Standards in DDR (IDDRS)." *Colombia Internacional*, no. 77 (2013): 278

conflict which provides for a reliable and feasible theoretical base. For the analysis of crisis-induced learning in the peace agreement, the thesis uses a combination of academic articles, NGO reports and newspaper articles. Many scholars have written on the peace agreement with the FARC and published articles that analyze its contents. There are data limitations that make the analysis of the FARC's reintegration process difficult. The continuous nature of the reintegration process means that conclusions from the analysis will not be absolute and need to be considered alongside the data that has become available while the thesis was written. The recent and ongoing nature of the reintegration process also means that there is a lack of academic literature that covers the full span of the analysis. However, the UN Verification Mission in Colombia has monitored the progress of the reintegration process and has published reports every three months since 2016 which offer a significant body of data to compensate for the lack of academic literature. The timespan of the analysis is 2017-2019. The thesis focusses on this period, because the reintegration process started in 2017 and 2019 is the last year with a full data set from the UN Mission.

Because the thesis uses a single case study design, it may not be possible to generalize the findings from the Colombian context to other cases. To a certain extent, statistical generalization is possible because many post-conflict countries share common traits such as faulty governance systems, high levels of human rights abuse and weak economies<sup>110</sup>. However, statistical generalization remains limited because the reintegration of former FARC combatants is shaped by the Colombian context which is in many ways unique<sup>111</sup>. The purpose of a single case study research is to provide an in-depth understanding of a specific case and obtain high internal validity, not to obtain high external validity<sup>112</sup>. As such, the reintegration process of the FARC can provide relevant theoretical insights on crisis-induced learning that can help improving other reintegration processes in other post-conflict societies, while the case itself may not be applicable to the broader population of cases.

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<sup>110</sup> United Nations. "The Operational Guide to the Integrated Disarmament, Demobilization and Reintegration Standards (IDDRS)." *Inter-Agency Working Group on DDR*, 2014.

<sup>111</sup> Ibid.

<sup>112</sup> De Young, Kyle P., and Angeline R. Bottera. "A Summary of Reporting Guidelines and Evaluation Domains for Using Single-case Experimental Designs and Recommendations for the Study of Eating Disorders." *International Journal of Eating Disorders* 51, no. 7 (2018): 618

## IV. Crisis-induced Learning in the 2016 Peace Agreement

This chapter discusses how crisis-induced learning shaped the peace agreement with the FARC. First, it provides a brief overview of the context that shaped the peace agreement and identifies the crises that triggered learning. After, it discusses the crisis-induced lessons included in the peace agreement with the FARC.

### 4.1 Context

After the conclusion of AUC's reintegration process in 2006, violence and recidivism soared, which sparked the call for a new peace process<sup>113</sup>. When Juan Manuel Santos became President in 2010, he responded to the public call for peace and staked his entire political legacy on reaching a peace agreement with the FARC<sup>114</sup>. In 2012, Santos engaged in negotiations with the FARC to end the armed conflict between the state and the guerrilla group. To avoid a repetition of AUC's failed reintegration process, Santos' systematically incorporated lessons from the AUC experience into the negotiations with the FARC. The peace negotiations concluded on 26 September 2016, when the Colombian government and the FARC drafted an agreement that included the following components.

(I)	Comprehensive agrarian reform,
(II)	Political participation
(III)	A comprehensive plan to tackle the illicit drug trade
(IV)	A comprehensive system of truth, justice, reparations and non-repetition
(V)	A bilateral and definitive ceasefire
(VI)	Terms and conditions for demobilization, disarmament and reintegration

Table 3. *Components of the Peace Agreement with the FARC*<sup>115</sup>

To give legitimacy to the peace agreement, the FARC and the Colombian government organized a referendum on 2 October 2016 that allowed citizens to accept or reject the agreement<sup>116</sup>. The expected outcome was that the camp in favor of the peace agreement would

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<sup>113</sup> Angelo, Paul. "The Colombian Peace Process: Trial and Error." *Survival* 59, no. 1 (2017): 137

<sup>114</sup> Quintero, Liliana Zambrano. "La reincorporación colectiva de las FARC-EP: una apuesta estratégica en un entorno adverso." *Revista CIDOB d'Afers Internacionals* (2019): 47

<sup>115</sup> Bustamante-Reyes, Juliana. "Colombia's Path to Peace." *New Zealand International Review* 42, no. 1 (2017): 14

<sup>116</sup> Gomez-Suarez, Andrei. "Peace Process Pedagogy: Lessons from the No-vote Victory in the Colombian Peace Referendum." *Comparative Education: Education, Conflict, and Transitional Justice* 53, no. 3 (2017): 467

win, but the odds drastically changed in the days before the referendum<sup>117</sup>. A fierce campaign against the peace agreement, headed by former President Uribe, spread fear and misinformation on the implications of the agreement and convinced many voters to reject the agreement<sup>118</sup>. As a result, a small majority of 50.2% voted against the referendum<sup>119</sup>. The rejection of the peace agreement in the referendum would have been an anti-climactic end to four years of peace negotiations. However, both the Colombian government and the FARC remained committed to ending the conflict<sup>120</sup>. Immediately after the peace-referendum, Santos reinitiated negotiations with the FARC and gathered over 500 proposals from the no-camp to address their concerns<sup>121</sup>. Santos and the FARC used the proposals to draft a revised version of the peace agreement, which was approved by Colombian Congress on 12 November 2016<sup>122</sup>. The peace agreement brought the violent conflict between the state and the FARC to a formal conclusion and determined the strategy for the reintegration of former FARC combatants.

As we have seen in the body of knowledge, a situation needs to include both a serious threat to basic organizational structures and high pressure on decision-makers to be considered a crisis. Following these criteria, we can distinguish two influential crises that triggered learning in the peace agreement with the FARC: AUC's failed reintegration process and the rejection of the peace agreement in the referendum. The following two sections separately discuss these crises and specify the lessons they triggered in the peace agreement.

#### **4.2 Crisis-induced lessons from the Reintegration Process with the AUC**

After the conclusion of AUC's reintegration process in 2006, violence and recidivism soared. The reintegration process had been unsuccessful in pacifying the country and the inability of

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<sup>117</sup> Jeisson Oswaldo Martínez Leguízamo. "Colombia: The Peace Process and Solutions for Forced Migrants." *Forced Migration Review*, no. 53 (2016): 68

<sup>118</sup> Gamboa, Laura. "Latin America's Shifting Politics: The Peace Process and Colombia's Elections." *Journal of Democracy* 29, no. 4 (2018): 54 and González, Olga. "Colombia: Last Chance for Peace Talks?" *Movements* 76, no. 4 (2013): 78

<sup>119</sup> Liendo, Nicolás, Jessica Maves Braithwaite, Thomas E Flores, and Juan F Vargas. "Determinants of Colombian Attitudes toward the Peace Process." *Conflict Management and Peace Science* 35, no. 6 (2018): 623

<sup>120</sup> Farid Samir Benavides Vanegas. "Introducción: El Acuerdo De Paz Entre El Gobierno Colombiano Y Las FARC-EP O La Paz Esquiva." *Revista CIDOB D'Afers Internacionals*, no. 121 (2019): 14

<sup>121</sup> Angelo, Paul. "The Colombian Peace Process: Trial and Error." *Survival* 59, no. 1 (2017): 137 and Brodzinsky, Sibylla. "Colombia signs historic peace deal with Farc." *The Guardian*, November 24, 2016.

<sup>122</sup> Capone, Francesca. "An Overview of the DDR Process Established in the Aftermath of the Revised Peace Agreement between the Colombian Government and the FARC: Finally on the Right Track?" *Global Jurist* 18, no. 1 (2017): 1

the state to address the increasing violence became a serious threat to its legitimacy<sup>123</sup>. As a result, the call for a new peace process under a different president increased<sup>124</sup>. When Juan Manuel Santos became President in 2010, he responded to this call and staked his entire political legacy on reaching a peace agreement with the FARC<sup>125</sup>. If we consider these factors, the failed reintegration process of the AUC includes both conditions to qualify as a crisis. The unabated violence posed a serious threat to the legitimacy of the Colombian state while the pressure on decision-makers to address this threat exponentially<sup>126</sup>. This section identifies five crisis-induced lessons triggered by AUC's failed reintegration process. Santos put the National Center of Historical Memory (CNMH) in charge of identifying the pitfalls of AUC's reintegration process<sup>127</sup>.

### *Lesson 1. Improving Peace and Justice Mechanisms*

The transitional justice mechanism of AUC's reintegration process was fundamentally flawed. Although it had been the first time that the reintegration process included an element of transitional justice, it proved highly ineffective. Despite the implementation of the Justice and Peace law in 2005, the cornerstone of the mechanism, former AUC combatants found ways to bypass transitional justice provisions. Law 782, which had been implemented several years before the AUC's reintegration process, offered full amnesty to former combatants that voluntarily engaged in reintegration<sup>128</sup>. In contrast, the Justice and Peace law only offered reduced sentences and required depositions of their crimes<sup>129</sup>. Between the two laws, the more attractive option was engaging in the reintegration process through law 782, as it did not include entry-conditions and offered full amnesty<sup>130</sup>. As a result, only 2695 of the 30 thousand ex-combatants that engaged in the collective reintegration process chose to demobilize through the

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<sup>123</sup> Bartel, Rebecca C. "Confession and the Anthropology of Forgiveness: Reflections on Colombia's Processes of Transitional Justice." *Journal of Latin American and Caribbean Anthropology* 24, no. 1 (2019): 148

<sup>124</sup> Angelo, Paul. "The Colombian Peace Process: Trial and Error." *Survival* 59, no. 1 (2017): 137

<sup>125</sup> Quintero, Liliana Zambrano. "La reincorporación colectiva de las FARC-EP: una apuesta estratégica en un entorno adverso." *Revista CIDOB d'Afers Internacionals* (2019): 47

<sup>126</sup> Bustamante-Reyes, Juliana. "Colombia's Path to Peace." *New Zealand International Review* 42, no. 1 (2017): 15

<sup>127</sup> Verdad Abierta. "Las amargas lecciones que dejó la desmovilización de las Auc." *Verdad Abierta*, November 9, 2015.

<sup>128</sup> Bartel, Rebecca C. "Confession and the Anthropology of Forgiveness: Reflections on Colombia's Processes of Transitional Justice." *Journal of Latin American and Caribbean Anthropology* 24, no. 1 (2019): 147

<sup>129</sup> Prieto, Juan Diego. "Together after War While the War Goes On: Victims, Ex-Combatants and Communities in Three Colombian Cities." *International Journal of Transitional Justice* 6, no. 3 (2012): 525-526

<sup>130</sup> Gomez-Suarez, Andrei. "Peace Process Pedagogy: Lessons from the No-vote Victory in the Colombian Peace Referendum." *Comparative Education: Education, Conflict, and Transitional Justice* 53, no. 3 (2017): 467

Justice and Peace law<sup>131</sup>. Because of this loophole, very few ex-AUC combatants were sentenced to prison after engaging in the reintegration process while the few sentences that were given, were lenient<sup>132</sup>. To make things worse, many ex-combatants that demobilized through the Justice and Peace law lied in their depositions and downplayed the volume of their assets<sup>133</sup>. This way, many ex-AUC combatants managed to retain their wealth which hampered the reparations that could be paid to victims<sup>134</sup>. The lack of justice created a sense of impunity and put a strain on the reconciliation process between affected communities and former AUC combatants. The CNMH identified this problem and stressed that future reintegration processes would need to include better transitional justice mechanisms that address the grievances of victims in Chapter V of its 2015 report<sup>135</sup>.

President Santos used the experience of AUC's faulty transitional justice mechanisms to create a new justice mechanism that would include victims and strike a balance between security and justice. To this end, the 2016 peace agreement specified an alternative sentencing system for former FARC combatants<sup>136</sup>. Through this system, former FARC combatants do not receive prison sentences but instead have to move to 'territorial areas for training and reintegration' with limited freedom of movement<sup>137</sup>. In these areas, former FARC combatants have to take part in drug eradication programs, landmine clearance and judicial proceedings while they are gradually prepared for reintegration into society<sup>138</sup>. Upon arrival in the territorial areas, former FARC combatants have to give up their arms and assets which the Colombian state uses to compensate victims and pay for the implementation of the reintegration program<sup>139</sup>. The peace agreement also established initiatives and development programs in the territorial areas to help restore the deteriorated relationship between the former FARC combatants and

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<sup>131</sup> Bartel, Rebecca C. "Confession and the Anthropology of Forgiveness: Reflections on Colombia's Processes of Transitional Justice." *Journal of Latin American and Caribbean Anthropology* 24, no. 1 (2019): 140

<sup>132</sup> Villarraga Sarmiento, Alvaro. "Recent Historical Experiences of Ex-combatant Reintegration in Colombia." *Colombia Internacional* 77 (2013): 128

<sup>133</sup> Guáqueta, Alexandra. "The Way Back In: Reintegrating Illegal Armed Groups in Colombia Then and Now: Analysis." *Conflict, Security & Development* 7, no. 3 (2007): 446

<sup>134</sup> Jeisson Oswaldo Martínez Leguízamo. "Colombia: The Peace Process and Solutions for Forced Migrants." *Forced Migration Review*, no. 53 (2016): 68

<sup>135</sup> Centro Nacional de Memoria Histórica. "REARMADOS Y REINTEGRADOS. Panorama posacuerdos con las AUC." *Centro Nacional de Memoria Histórica*, (2015): 316-325

<sup>136</sup> Meertens, Donny. "Gender and Land Justice in Colombia: Challenges for the Post-Peace Accords Era." *European review of Latin American and Caribbean studies* 102 (2016): 93 and Angelo, Paul. "The Colombian Peace Process: Trial and Error." *Survival* 59, no. 1 (2017): 143-144

<sup>137</sup> Jeisson Oswaldo Martínez Leguízamo. "Colombia: The Peace Process and Solutions for Forced Migrants." *Forced Migration Review*, no. 53 (2016): 68

<sup>138</sup> Angelo, Paul. "The Colombian Peace Process: Trial and Error." *Survival* 59, no. 1 (2017): 143-144

<sup>139</sup> Farid Samir Benavides Vanegas. "Introducción: El Acuerdo De Paz Entre El Gobierno Colombiano Y Las FARC-EP O La Paz Esquiva." *Revista CIDOB D'Afers Internacionals*, no. 121 (2019): 15



victims<sup>140</sup>. Through the alternative sentencing system, the transitional justice mechanism of the peace agreement aspires to satisfy the call for justice and address the needs of victims.

## *Lesson 2. Ensuring the Physical security of the actors involved in the peace agreement*

An important goal of the AUC's reintegration process was to decrease violence and end violence against former combatants and affected communities. However, violence increased again after the reintegration process ended in 2006<sup>141</sup>. The protection measures taken in the reintegration process were not sufficient or not effective, which created fear among former AUC combatants and affected communities and put a strain on the reintegration process<sup>142</sup>. As a result, the Colombian government learned that a new peace agreement would need better measures to protect former combatants and communities<sup>143</sup>. The CNMH distilled the lesson of ensuring the physical security of the affected communities and former combatants in chapters V and VI of its 2015 report<sup>144</sup>.

To improve protection measures, the 2016 peace agreement includes a robust protection system. This system carries out risks analysis, identifies particularly vulnerable groups or individuals and offer extra protection to politically active former FARC combatants<sup>145</sup>. The protection system also stations military police officers in a one-kilometer parameter around the territorial areas for training<sup>146</sup>. Only members of the UN's verification team, former FARC combatants and state actors can be present within this parameter<sup>147</sup>. This measure helps to protect demobilized former FARC combatants in the territorial areas and prevents other armed actors from taking over the territory and drug trafficking activities of the FARC<sup>148</sup>.

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<sup>140</sup> Capone, Francesca. "An Overview of the DDR Process Established in the Aftermath of the Revised Peace Agreement between the Colombian Government and the FARC: Finally on the Right Track?" *Global Jurist* 18, no. 1 (2017): 5

<sup>141</sup> Angelo, Paul. "The Colombian Peace Process: Trial and Error." *Survival* 59, no. 1 (2017): 143

<sup>142</sup> Ibid.

<sup>143</sup> Gomez-Suarez, Andrei, and Jonathan Newman. "Safeguarding Political Guarantees in the Colombian Peace Process: Have Santos and FARC Learnt the Lessons from the Past?" *Third World Quarterly* 34, no. 5 (2013): 828

<sup>144</sup> Centro Nacional de Memoria Histórica. "REARMADOS Y REINTEGRADOS. Panorama posacuerdos con las AUC." *Centro Nacional de Memoria Histórica*, (2015): 331

<sup>145</sup> Angelo, Paul. "The Colombian Peace Process: Trial and Error." *Survival* 59, no. 1 (2017): 143

<sup>146</sup> Guáqueta, Alexandra. "The Way Back In: Reintegrating Illegal Armed Groups in Colombia Then and Now: Analysis." *Conflict, Security & Development* 7, no. 3 (2007): 446

<sup>147</sup> Capone, Francesca. "An Overview of the DDR Process Established in the Aftermath of the Revised Peace Agreement between the Colombian Government and the FARC: Finally on the Right Track?" *Global Jurist* 18, no. 1 (2017): 5

<sup>148</sup> Ibid.

### *Lesson 3. Force the Demobilized Groups to forfeit their wealth and break ties with the drug trade*

One of the central ideas behind the AUC's reintegration process was to compensate victims and pay for the implementation with assets handed in by demobilized AUC members<sup>149</sup>. However, the AUC managed to retain most of its assets by understating their wealth to the state and maintaining connections to the drug trade<sup>150</sup>. As a result, the reintegration process neither eliminated the illicit infrastructure controlled by the AUC nor received the funds needed for its implementation. In some cases where the AUC did give up their stake in the drug trade, former AUC combatants merely 'sold' their territory to other armed actors<sup>151</sup>. The consequent lack of funds hampered the implementation of the reintegration program, limited reparations paid to victims and allowed illicit activity to continue in the areas where the AUC demobilized<sup>152</sup>. The CNMH distilled the lesson to shatter the demobilized group's connection to the drug trade in chapter III of the 2015 report<sup>153</sup>.

To prevent such events from happening again in the reintegration program with the FARC, the peace agreement puts extra pressure on former FARC combatants to surrender the wealth that they accumulated through the drug trade. The peace agreement does this by making the active participation of former FARC combatants in the collection of assets a precondition for receiving reintegration benefits<sup>154</sup>. The goal of this measure is to increase the funds that the state can use for the implementation of the reintegration program and pay reparations to victims<sup>155</sup>. To ensure that FARC breaks its ties with the drug trade, the peace agreement includes a comprehensive government strategy that stimulates the substitution of drug crops for agricultural activity<sup>156</sup>.

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<sup>149</sup> Tabak, Shana. "False Dichotomies of Transitional Justice Gender, Conflict and Combatants in Colombia." *New York University Journal of International Law and Politics* 44, no. 1 (2011): 149

<sup>150</sup> Angelo, Paul. "The Colombian Peace Process: Trial and Error." *Survival* 59, no. 1 (2017): 144

<sup>151</sup> Verdad Abierta. "Las amargas lecciones que dejó la desmovilización de las Auc." *Verdad Abierta*, November 9, 2015.

<sup>152</sup> Tabak, Shana. "False Dichotomies of Transitional Justice Gender, Conflict and Combatants in Colombia." *New York University Journal of International Law and Politics* 44, no. 1 (2011): 131

<sup>153</sup> Centro Nacional de Memoria Histórica. "REARMADOS Y REINTEGRADOS. Panorama posacuerdos con las AUC." *Centro Nacional de Memoria Histórica*, (2015): 223-295

<sup>154</sup> Angelo, Paul. "The Colombian Peace Process: Trial and Error." *Survival* 59, no. 1 (2017): 144

<sup>155</sup> Ibid.

<sup>156</sup> Flisi, Isabella. "The Reintegration of Former Combatants in Colombia." *Oxford Research Group*, February 13, 2017.

#### *Lesson 4. Preventing Rearmament, Power Vacuum and Repetition of the Bacrim*

Another major flaw of the AUC's reintegration process was the lack of mechanisms to prevent recidivism and rearmament. Between 20 and 30 percent of former AUC combatants took up arms again after the end of the reintegration process in 2006<sup>157</sup>. These high recidivism rates translated into spikes in violence and increased tensions between former AUC combatants and recipient communities<sup>158</sup>. The primary causes for recidivism were the lack of income-generating opportunities, disappointment in the government, lack of education, stigmatization, wartime masculinities and the persisting involvement of the AUC in criminal activity<sup>159</sup>. As a result, many former AUC combatants took up arms again, recurred to violence or became part of 'Bacrim' (criminal gangs)<sup>160</sup>. The Bacrim significantly grew in size after 2006, as an increasing number of dissident AUC combatants re-occupied the drug terrain that had been left behind by their former commanders<sup>161</sup>. Since the end of the AUC's reintegration process, the Bacrim have been responsible for the lion's share of violence in Colombia<sup>162</sup>. The CNMH distilled the lesson to prevent future rearmament and propagation of Bacrim in chapters I, II and V of the report<sup>163</sup>.

To prevent rearmament, the peace agreement prescribed psychological support to former FARC combatants to deconstruct violent wartime masculinities and overcome personal traumas<sup>164</sup>. Furthermore, the peace agreement established the National Reintegration Council to guide the reintegration process and provide financial support, education and vocational

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<sup>157</sup> Verdad Abierta. "Las amargas lecciones que dejó la desmovilización de las Auc." *Verdad Abierta*, November 9, 2015.

<sup>158</sup> Tabak, Shana. "False Dichotomies of Transitional Justice Gender, Conflict and Combatants in Colombia." *New York University Journal of International Law and Politics* 44, no. 1 (2011): 131

<sup>159</sup> Farid Samir Benavides Vanegas. "Introducción: El Acuerdo De Paz Entre El Gobierno Colombiano Y Las FARC-EP O La Paz Esquiva." *Revista CIDOB D'Afers Internacionals*, no. 121 (2019): 14 and Flisi, Isabella. "The Reintegration of Former Combatants in Colombia." *Oxford Research Group*, February 13, 2017. And Verdad Abierta. "Las amargas lecciones que dejó la desmovilización de las Auc." *Verdad Abierta*, November 9, 2015. And Capone, Francesca. "An Overview of the DDR Process Established in the Aftermath of the Revised Peace Agreement between the Colombian Government and the FARC: Finally on the Right Track?" *Global Jurist* 18, no. 1 (2017): 4

<sup>160</sup> Wienand, Sandra, and Stiven Tremaria. "Paramilitarism in a Post-Demobilization Context? Insights from the Department of Antioquia in Colombia." *European Review of Latin American and Caribbean Studies / Revista Europea De Estudios Latinoamericanos Y Del Caribe*, no. 103, 26

<sup>161</sup> Porch, Douglas, and María José Rasmussen. "Demobilization of Paramilitaries in Colombia: Transformation or Transition?" *Studies in Conflict & Terrorism* 31, no. 6 (2008): 520

<sup>162</sup> Maher, David, and Andrew Thomson. "A Precarious Peace? The Threat of Paramilitary Violence to the Peace Process in Colombia." *Third World Quarterly* 39, no. 11 (2018): 2149

<sup>163</sup> Centro Nacional de Memoria Histórica. "REARMADOS Y REINTEGRADOS. Panorama posacuerdos con las AUC." *Centro Nacional de Memoria Histórica*, (2015): 49-399

<sup>164</sup> Flisi, Isabella. "The Reintegration of Former Combatants in Colombia." *Oxford Research Group*, February 13, 2017.

assistance to former FARC combatants<sup>165</sup>. These measures are meant to avoid rearmament and the recruitment of former FARC combatants by Bacrim by providing them with a constructive environment for reintegration that addresses their needs<sup>166</sup>.

### *Lesson 5: Addressing the Needs of Victims*

Until Uribe introduced the Justice and Peace law in 2005, the AUC's reintegration process did not include measures to address the grievances of victims<sup>167</sup>. Women, rural communities, indigenous groups and afro-descendants suffered severely from AUC violence<sup>168</sup>. However, the AUC's reintegration process did not specifically address the needs of victims while former AUC combatants were receiving reintegration support<sup>169</sup>. This made many victims feel as if the perpetrators of violence were receiving preferential treatment, while they did not receive anything<sup>170</sup>. This discrepancy made it harder for affected communities to forgive former AUC combatants and obstructed the reconciliation process<sup>171</sup>. The CNMH distilled the lesson to better address the needs for victims in chapter VI of the report<sup>172</sup>.

The peace agreement included a central victim-based perspective to stimulate reconciliation between victims and former FARC combatants<sup>173</sup>. Santos invited different groups of victims to participate in the peace negotiations with the FARC and created special commissions to address the grievances of women, indigenous groups and ethnic minorities<sup>174</sup>.

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<sup>165</sup> Capone, Francesca. "An Overview of the DDR Process Established in the Aftermath of the Revised Peace Agreement between the Colombian Government and the FARC: Finally on the Right Track?" *Global Jurist* 18, no. 1 (2017): 5

<sup>166</sup> Ibid.

<sup>167</sup> Flisi, Isabella. "The Reintegration of Former Combatants in Colombia." *Oxford Research Group*, February 13, 2017.

<sup>168</sup> Krystalli, Roxanne. "The Colombian peace agreement has a big emphasis on the lives of women. Here's how." *The Washington Post*, August 19, 2016.

<sup>169</sup> Liendo, Nicolás, Jessica Maves Braithwaite, Thomas E Flores, and Juan F Vargas. "Determinants of Colombian Attitudes toward the Peace Process." *Conflict Management and Peace Science* 35, no. 6 (2018): 629

<sup>170</sup> Ibid.

<sup>171</sup> Farid Samir Benavides Vanegas. "Introducción: El Acuerdo De Paz Entre El Gobierno Colombiano Y Las FARC-EP O La Paz Esquiva." *Revista CIDOB D'Afers Internacionals*, no. 121 (2019): 15

<sup>172</sup> Centro Nacional de Memoria Histórica. "REARMADOS Y REINTEGRADOS. Panorama posacuerdos con las AUC." *Centro Nacional de Memoria Histórica*, (2015): 331

<sup>173</sup> Farid Samir Benavides Vanegas. "Introducción: El Acuerdo De Paz Entre El Gobierno Colombiano Y Las FARC-EP O La Paz Esquiva." *Revista CIDOB D'Afers Internacionals*, no. 121 (2019): 15

<sup>174</sup> Phelan, Alexandra. "Engaging Insurgency: The Impact of the 2016 Colombian Peace Agreement on FARC's Political Participation." *Studies in Conflict & Terrorism* 42, no. 9 (2019): 846-847 Gomez-Suarez, Andrei. "Peace Process Pedagogy: Lessons from the No-vote Victory in the Colombian Peace Referendum." *Comparative Education: Education, Conflict, and Transitional Justice* 53, no. 3 (2017): 466

The agreement also included provisions to empower Colombia's traditionally marginalized sectors through better access to political participation<sup>175</sup>.

### 4.3 Crisis-induced Lessons from the Peace-Referendum

The second crisis that triggered learning in the peace agreement with the FARC was the rejection of the peace agreement in the referendum. The rejection of the peace agreement jeopardized over four years of peace negotiations and posed a serious threat to the legitimacy of Santos' administration<sup>176</sup>. If we consider these factors, the rejection of the peace agreement in the referendum qualifies as a crisis as it included urgency, pressure on decision-makers and a serious threat to Santos' administration. Santos did not succumb to the pressure of the crisis and instead used it to learn and address the concerns of no-voters in a revised version of the peace agreement. This section distinguishes three crisis-lessons that were triggered by the peace-referendum.

#### *Lesson 1. Clearing up terms for land distribution*

The unequal distribution of land is one of the root causes of Colombia's internal conflict and addressing fighting for land reform has been the *raison d'être* for the FARC since the 1960s<sup>177</sup>. The initial peace accord included terms and conditions for land distribution and provisions to reduce rural poverty, but they were not clearly delineated<sup>178</sup>. As a result, many landowners that possessed significant holdings were afraid of being expropriated from their lands and voted against the peace agreement in the referendum<sup>179</sup>.

The final peace agreement underlined the government's commitment to respect property titles and clarified the terms and conditions of land distribution through a three-fold agrarian

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<sup>175</sup> Krystalli, Roxanne. "The Colombian peace agreement has a big emphasis on the lives of women. Here's how." *The Washington Post*, August 19, 2016.

<sup>176</sup> Farid Samir Benavides Vanegas. "Introducción: El Acuerdo De Paz Entre El Gobierno Colombiano Y Las FARC-EP O La Paz Esquiva." *Revista CIDOB D'Afers Internacionals*, no. 121 (2019): 14

<sup>177</sup> Bilotta, Nicola. "The FARC, land reform, and the future of Colombia's security." *Global Risk Insights*, October 1, 2017.

<sup>178</sup> Angelo, Paul. "The Colombian Peace Process: Trial and Error." *Survival* 59, no. 1 (2017): 144 and Bilotta, Nicola. "The FARC, land reform, and the future of Colombia's security." *Global Risk Insights*, October 1, 2017.

<sup>179</sup> Angelo, Paul. "The Colombian Peace Process: Trial and Error." *Survival* 59, no. 1 (2017): 144

program<sup>180</sup>. First, the program established a land fund that would redistribute millions of hectares of land to people without land and small-scale farmers<sup>181</sup>. Second, the program specified legislative measures to protect the property rights of farmers that received lands through the land restitution program and installed a mechanism for resolving agricultural disputes<sup>182</sup>. Finally, the revised peace agreement emphasized the government's commitment to invest in infrastructure, modernization of the agricultural sector and public services to improve the quality of life in marginalized communities<sup>183</sup>.

## *Lesson 2. Changing the conditions for the FARC's political participation*

Many Colombians voted no in the referendum on the peace agreement due to its provisions on political participation<sup>184</sup>. The initial agreement stated that FARC's political party would receive an allowance, media coverage, security guarantees and a fixed number of seats in congress regardless of the votes obtained by the party between 2018 and 2026<sup>185</sup>. While the majority of Colombians did not disapprove of the FARC's political participation per se, the idea that a widely criticized guerilla group would receive such extensive benefits was hard to swallow, pushing many to vote no in the referendum<sup>186</sup>.

The revised version of the peace agreement recognized the concern around the FARC's political participation. President Santos stressed that the objective of the peace negotiations had been the FARC's transition from a guerilla group to a political party and that, as such, the provisions concerning congressional seats would not be changed<sup>187</sup>. However, the revised accord reduced funding for the political party and included a ban on the political participation

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<sup>180</sup> Phelan, Alexandra. "Engaging Insurgency: The Impact of the 2016 Colombian Peace Agreement on FARC's Political Participation." *Studies in Conflict & Terrorism* 42, no. 9 (2019): 844 and Angelo, Paul. "The Colombian Peace Process: Trial and Error." *Survival* 59, no. 1 (2017): 144

<sup>181</sup> Bilotta, Nicola. "The FARC, land reform, and the future of Colombia's security." *Global Risk Insights*, October 1, 2017.

<sup>182</sup> Phelan, Alexandra. "Engaging Insurgency: The Impact of the 2016 Colombian Peace Agreement on FARC's Political Participation." *Studies in Conflict & Terrorism* 42, no. 9 (2019): 844

<sup>183</sup> Bilotta, Nicola. "The FARC, land reform, and the future of Colombia's security." *Global Risk Insights*, October 1, 2017.

<sup>184</sup> Bustamante-Reyes, Juliana. "Colombia's Path to Peace." *New Zealand International Review* 42, no. 1 (2017): 14

<sup>185</sup> Liendo, Nicolás, Jessica Maves Braithwaite, Thomas E Flores, and Juan F Vargas. "Determinants of Colombian Attitudes toward the Peace Process." *Conflict Management and Peace Science* 35, no. 6 (2018): 622 and Phelan, Alexandra. "Engaging Insurgency: The Impact of the 2016 Colombian Peace Agreement on FARC's Political Participation." *Studies in Conflict & Terrorism* 42, no. 9 (2019): 845

<sup>186</sup> Capone, Francesca. "An Overview of the DDR Process Established in the Aftermath of the Revised Peace Agreement between the Colombian Government and the FARC: Finally on the Right Track?" *Global Jurist* 18, no. 1 (2017): 1 and Angelo, Paul. "The Colombian Peace Process: Trial and Error." *Survival* 59, no. 1 (2017): 144

<sup>187</sup> Angelo, Paul. "The Colombian Peace Process: Trial and Error." *Survival* 59, no. 1 (2017): 144

of former FARC combatants in the regions most affected by the conflict<sup>188</sup>. Furthermore, the revised peace agreement changed the span of the reintegration process from 10 to 15 years to give the government more space to gather enough resources for reconciliation initiatives<sup>189</sup>.

### *Lesson 3. Addressing the Issue of Impunity*

The initial agreement included a controversial transitional justice mechanism that established an alternative sentencing system for FARC members that complied with the reintegration program instead of prison sentences<sup>190</sup>. During the campaign for the referendum, former President Uribe took advantage of this sensitive provision and argued that the peace agreement's alternative sentences would cause impunity because of its lenient punishments<sup>191</sup>. The idea that the peace agreement would cause impunity, pushed many Colombians to vote against the peace agreement in the referendum<sup>192</sup>.

Santos did not abandon the system of alternative sentencing in the revised version of the peace agreement. This was not a possibility, because full or partial amnesty had been a critical negotiating condition for the FARC<sup>193</sup>. Instead, the modified peace agreement clarified the conditions for amnesty and made the alternative sentences more strict<sup>194</sup>. Only FARC members guilty of lighter or political offenses would receive the most extensive amnesty, while FARC members guilty of the graver crimes would receive alternative sentences provided that they extended dispositions of their crimes and paid reparations to victims<sup>195</sup>. The modified agreement still did not introduce prison sentences. Instead, the alternative sentencing system of the peace agreement restricted the liberty of former FARC combatants to the territorial areas for training and reintegration for a period between five and eight years<sup>196</sup>.

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<sup>188</sup> Capone, Francesca. "An Overview of the DDR Process Established in the Aftermath of the Revised Peace Agreement between the Colombian Government and the FARC: Finally on the Right Track?" *Global Jurist* 18, no. 1 (2017): 7

<sup>189</sup> Angelo, Paul. "The Colombian Peace Process: Trial and Error." *Survival* 59, no. 1 (2017): 144

<sup>190</sup> *Ibid.*, 136

<sup>191</sup> Bustamante-Reyes, Juliana. "Colombia's Path to Peace." *New Zealand International Review* 42, no. 1 (2017): 15

<sup>192</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>193</sup> Angelo, Paul. "The Colombian Peace Process: Trial and Error." *Survival* 59, no. 1 (2017): 144

<sup>194</sup> Phelan, Alexandra. "Engaging Insurgency: The Impact of the 2016 Colombian Peace Agreement on FARC's Political Participation." *Studies in Conflict & Terrorism* 42, no. 9 (2019): 844

<sup>195</sup> Capone, Francesca. "An Overview of the DDR Process Established in the Aftermath of the Revised Peace Agreement between the Colombian Government and the FARC: Finally on the Right Track?" *Global Jurist* 18, no. 1 (2017): 6-7

<sup>196</sup> Willis, Andrew. "Colombia approves revised FARC peace deal, triggering disarmament." *The Sydney Morning Herald*, December 1, 2016.

#### 4.4 Limitations

This chapter has discussed eight essential crisis-induced lessons that were triggered by AUC's failed reintegration process and the referendum on the peace agreement. However, this does not mean that there were no other crisis-induced lessons or crises that impacted the 297-page peace agreement. For example, the peace agreement included an increased focus on involving the international community and a clearer gender perspective triggered by AUC's failed reintegration process<sup>197</sup>. However, it is beyond the scope of this study to give a detailed description of each crisis-induced lesson, which would take an entire thesis. With these limitation in mind, this chapter has discussed the crisis-induced lessons and crises most prominent in the academic literature. Not having included each possible lesson does not restrict the study's argument, because the goal of this chapter has been merely to epitomize the significant impact of crisis-induced learning on the peace agreement. The eight crisis-induced lessons mentioned above are good indicators of this impact. However, this study recognizes that more extensive research would be needed to cover the full scope of learning from crisis in the 2016 peace agreement.

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<sup>197</sup> Porch, Douglas, and María José Rasmussen. "Demobilization of Paramilitaries in Colombia: Transformation or Transition?" *Studies in Conflict & Terrorism* 31, no. 6 (2008): 525



## V. The Reintegration of Former FARC Combatants

The following analysis assesses the reintegration process of the FARC between 2017 and 2019. Each year first summarizes notable events and after evaluates the progress made on economic, political and social reintegration.

### 5.1 The Reintegration of Former FARC Members in 2017

In January 2017, former FARC combatants moved to designated zones where they handed in their weapons and demobilized<sup>198</sup>. The disarmament and demobilization process went smoothly and the laying down and handing in of arms was completed on 27 June<sup>199</sup>. With the disarmament and demobilization completed, the FARC arrived at the reintegration phase. To provide a suitable environment for the reintegration of thousands of former FARC combatants, the government converted the disarmament and demobilization zones into 26 ‘territorial areas for training and reintegration’<sup>200</sup>. The territorial areas protect former FARC combatants and their families while gradually preparing them for their reintegration into Colombian society. Former FARC combatants moved into the territorial areas after 1 August and the state finished building all camps on 15 August 2017<sup>201</sup>. A second UN mission arrived in Colombia on 26 September to verify the economic, political and social reintegration of former FARC combatants and monitor the implementation of the final peace agreement<sup>202</sup>.

#### *Economic Reintegration*

##### 1. Accreditation and legal status

The reintegration process introduced numerous initiatives to stimulate economic reintegration in 2017. The first task was to resolve the legal status of former FARC combatants and provide

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<sup>198</sup> United Nations. “Report of the Secretary-General on the United Nations Mission in Colombia.” *United Nations Mission in Colombia*, 23 June, (2017): 2

<sup>199</sup> United Nations. “Report of the Secretary-General on the United Nations Mission in Colombia.” *United Nations Mission in Colombia*, September 26, (2017): 1

<sup>200</sup> *Ibid.*, 5

<sup>201</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>202</sup> United Nations. “Report of the Secretary-General on the United Nations Mission in Colombia.” *United Nations Mission in Colombia*, 23 June, (2017): 4

them with the accreditation needed to engage in the reintegration process<sup>203</sup>. Without accreditation, former FARC combatants cannot access education, vocational training and other reintegration benefits. On 15 August, the FARC created and submitted a list with 14,178 ex-members to the government as candidates for accreditation<sup>204</sup>. The government put the Office of the High Commissioner for Peace in charge of reviewing this list and overseeing the accreditation process<sup>205</sup>. The National Registry also contributed to resolving the legal status of former FARC combatants by issuing identity documents to former combatants<sup>206</sup>.

Through these initiatives, the reintegration process made considerable progress in resolving the legal status of former FARC combatants. Throughout 2017, the Commissioner accredited 12,451 former FARC combatants of which 11,860 opened bank accounts. Furthermore, 11,362 former FARC combatants received a one-off allowance and 10,200 received monthly stipends<sup>207</sup>. Despite this progress, challenges to resolving the legal status of former FARC combatants remained. Some 1,700 former FARC combatants still awaited accreditation due to a lack of identity documents or delays in the review of their applications<sup>208</sup>.

## 2. Education and Vocational Training

Many FARC members lacked professional experience and never finished primary or secondary education before arriving in the territorial areas. To educate former FARC combatants, the Ministry of Education created the *Arando La Educación* program, which offered primary and secondary education<sup>209</sup>. Moreover, the national university of Colombia carried out a census of former FARC combatants to identify their needs, aspirations, levels of education and productive experience. Information from this census was later used by the National Reintegration Council to improve vocational programs and educational opportunities<sup>210</sup>.

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<sup>203</sup> United Nations. “United Nations Verification Mission in Colombia Report of the Secretary-General.” *United Nations Mission in Colombia*, (October 1, 2019): 11

<sup>204</sup> United Nations. “United Nations Verification Mission in Colombia Report of the Secretary-General.” *United Nations Mission in Colombia*, (September 28, 2018): 4

<sup>205</sup> United Nations. “Report of the Secretary-General on the United Nations Mission in Colombia.” *United Nations Mission in Colombia*, September 26, (2017): 9

<sup>206</sup> *Ibid.*, 1

<sup>207</sup> United Nations. “Report of the Secretary-General on the United Nations Verification Mission in Colombia.” *United Nations Mission in Colombia*, (December 27, 2017): 9

<sup>208</sup> *Ibid.*, 7

<sup>209</sup> United Nations. “Report of the Secretary-General on the United Nations Mission in Colombia.” *United Nations Mission in Colombia*, September 26, (2017): 9

<sup>210</sup> United Nations. “Report of the Secretary-General on the United Nations Mission in Colombia.” *United Nations Mission in Colombia*, 23 June, (2017): 5

Through these initiatives, the reintegration process experienced notable progress in the provision of vocational training and education. In total, the National Vocational Training Service provided vocational training to 2,870 former FARC combatants while another 5,200 received training from the cooperative ECOMUN<sup>211</sup>. Furthermore, over 400 former FARC combatants and 1.500 members from communities enrolled in the *Arando la educación* program to obtain their primary or secondary school diploma<sup>212</sup>. Notwithstanding these efforts, challenges to accessing education and vocational training remained. Infrastructure in remote areas continued to be precarious and hampered the provision of education and vocational training.

### 3. Productive projects

Engaging former FARC combatants in income-generating activities was one of the central provision of the peace agreement and deemed crucial to the success of the reintegration process. To assist former FARC combatants in finding and creating productive opportunities, the government established the National Vocational Training Service, which opened offices in all 26 territorial areas<sup>213</sup>. Moreover, the Agency for Reintegration and Normalization and the National Reintegration Council visited numerous territorial areas and established work-groups to help former FARC combatants design productive projects<sup>214</sup>. Furthermore, the National Reintegration Council established a procedure through which former FARC combatants could apply for 2,700 USD starting capital upon submitting productive projects to the Council<sup>215</sup>.

However, these efforts did not yield significant results. Former combatants and cooperatives drafted just 90 productive projects in 21 territorial areas, which benefitted around 3,000 former FARC combatants (compared to a total number of 14,178)<sup>216</sup>. The biggest strain on the creation of productive projects was the lack of land for economic activity<sup>217</sup>. Another

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<sup>211</sup> United Nations. “Report of the Secretary-General on the United Nations Verification Mission in Colombia.” *United Nations Mission in Colombia*, (December 27, 2017): 11

<sup>212</sup> United Nations. “Report of the Secretary-General on the United Nations Mission in Colombia.” *United Nations Mission in Colombia*, (September 26, 2017): 9-11

<sup>213</sup> *Ibid.*, 10

<sup>214</sup> United Nations. “Report of the Secretary-General on the United Nations Mission in Colombia.” *United Nations Mission in Colombia*, 23 June, (2017): 11

<sup>215</sup> *Ibid.*, 8

<sup>216</sup> United Nations. “Report of the Secretary-General on the United Nations Mission in Colombia.” *United Nations Mission in Colombia*, September 26, (2017): 9-11 and United Nations. “Report of the Secretary-General on the United Nations Verification Mission in Colombia.” *United Nations Mission in Colombia*, (April 2, 2018): 9

<sup>217</sup> United Nations. “Report of the Secretary-General on the United Nations Mission in Colombia.” *United Nations Mission in Colombia*, September 26, (2017): 11

logistical challenge to economic reintegration process was the increasing number of former FARC combatants that moved out of the territorial areas, which required professional assistance beyond the infrastructure established in the peace agreement<sup>218</sup>.

### *Political Reintegration*

#### 1. Protection to former FARC combatants politics

The transition of the FARC into a political party was one of the cornerstones of the peace agreement and protecting candidates of the FARC political party was one of its central provisions<sup>219</sup>. In the past, politically engaged former FARC combatants have been primary targets of violence<sup>220</sup>. To protect former FARC combatants that participate in politics, the government established a tripartite protection mechanism which includes the Comprehensive Security System for the Exercise of Politics, the Special Investigation Unit and the Elite Police Unit<sup>221</sup>. Later in the year, congress also established a political sub directorate of the National Protection Unit which installed protection schemes for former FARC combatants engaged in politics<sup>222</sup>. In light of the elections congressional elections of March 2018, the National Protection Unit identified 162 FARC members in need of protection and provided 104 of them with physical security schemes<sup>223</sup>. These protection measures proved their relevance when the electoral period started and many politically active former FARC combatants were receiving threats<sup>224</sup>.

#### 2. Stimulating the political participation of former FARC combatants

Besides protection, the peace agreement stipulated the provision of technical support and funding to guide the transition of the FARC into a political party. To this end, the National

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<sup>218</sup> United Nations. "Report of the Secretary-General on the United Nations Verification Mission in Colombia." *United Nations Mission in Colombia*, (December 27, 2017): 10

<sup>219</sup> United Nations. "Report of the Secretary-General on the United Nations Mission in Colombia." *United Nations Mission in Colombia*, (September 26, 2017): 8

<sup>220</sup> Porch, Douglas, and María José Rasmussen. "Demobilization of Paramilitaries in Colombia: Transformation or Transition?" *Studies in Conflict & Terrorism* 31, no. 6 (2008): 520

<sup>221</sup> United Nations. "Report of the Secretary-General on the United Nations Mission in Colombia." *United Nations Mission in Colombia*, 23 June, (2017): 4

<sup>222</sup> *Ibid.*, 2

<sup>223</sup> United Nations. "Report of the Secretary-General on the United Nations Verification Mission in Colombia." *United Nations Mission in Colombia*, (December 27, 2017): 4

<sup>224</sup> *Ibid.*

Reintegration Council created the Policy and Research Institute Centre for Political Thought and Dialogue in June 2017<sup>225</sup>. Furthermore, congress approved the Special Jurisdiction for Peace, the transitional justice mechanism of FARC's reintegration process, which ensured the participation of the FARC political party in the political system<sup>226</sup>.

On 1 September, the FARC inaugurated its political party, Fuerza Alternativa Revolucionaria del Común, which was formally recognized in October by the National Electoral Council<sup>227</sup>. As there were no elections scheduled for 2017, the FARC party did not yet receive technical support and campaigning funds.

### *Social Reintegration*

#### 1. Protection to former FARC combatants and affected communities

Numerous FARC members and social leaders were killed after the start of the reintegration process in 2017 and improving protection became a priority<sup>228</sup>. In addition to the security measures for protecting political candidates, the government established the Technical Committee on Security and Protection and the Security and Protection Corps. These bodies were meant to increase the state's security presence throughout the country<sup>229</sup>. Furthermore, the government started pilot projects to identify patterns of violence against social leaders and human rights defenders, offered training schemes to former FARC combatants for joining the National Protection Unit and deployed police troops and armed forces around the territorial areas<sup>230</sup>. Moreover, the armed forces started the 'Blue Tents' initiative and created 'plan Horus' to improve coordination between the different security bodies at the local and national level<sup>231</sup>. Through plan Horus, the police and the army joined forces to protect high-priority and medium-priority regions that faced severe security threat<sup>232</sup>.

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<sup>225</sup> United Nations. "Report of the Secretary-General on the United Nations Mission in Colombia." *United Nations Mission in Colombia*, 23 June, (2017): 10

<sup>226</sup> United Nations. "Report of the Secretary-General on the United Nations Mission in Colombia." *United Nations Mission in Colombia*, September 26, (2017): 2

<sup>227</sup> United Nations. "Report of the Secretary-General on the United Nations Mission in Colombia." *United Nations Mission in Colombia*, 23 June, (2017): 10

<sup>228</sup> *Ibid.*, 5

<sup>229</sup> *Ibid.*, 7

<sup>230</sup> *Ibid.*, 3-7

<sup>231</sup> *Ibid.*, 7

<sup>232</sup> United Nations. "Report of the Secretary-General on the United Nations Mission in Colombia." *United Nations Mission in Colombia*, September 26, (2017): 6

Via these security initiatives, 162 former FARC combatants and social leaders were earmarked as threatened individuals, 104 got protection schemes and 609 former FARC combatants finished the National Protection Unit's training program in 2017<sup>233</sup>. The state stationed over 30 police officers and 350 soldiers in the proximity of each territorial area and carried out risk assessments in 20 areas<sup>234</sup>. Despite the progress made on security measures, 31 former FARC combatants and 121 social leaders were killed in 2017<sup>235</sup>. If we only focus on the killings of social leaders and human rights defenders, the number of homicides increased by over 30 percent compared to 2016<sup>236</sup>. The primary victims of violence were people involved in local politics, drug elimination programs and land redistribution schemes that resided in areas strongly affected by the drug trade<sup>237</sup>. Dissident groups and illegal armed actors were the central provenance of the security threat<sup>238</sup>. These groups violently competed for power and a stake in the drug trade in the vacuum that the FARC had left behind, wreaking havoc in their path.

## 2. Providing justice and stimulating reconciliation

Implementing transitional justice mechanisms and addressing the grievances of victims is the last and arguably most crucial step in achieving reconciliation between former FARC combatants and affected communities<sup>239</sup>. On 14 November 2017, the government approved the central justice mechanism of the reintegration process: the Comprehensive System for Truth, Justice, Reparation and Non-Repetition<sup>240</sup>. The system included three main components: the Special Jurisdiction for Peace, the Truth Commission and the Special Unit for the Search for Persons Deemed as Missing<sup>241</sup>. The Comprehensive Justice System provided an alternative

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<sup>233</sup> United Nations. "Report of the Secretary-General on the United Nations Verification Mission in Colombia." *United Nations Mission in Colombia*, (December 27, 2017): 4

<sup>234</sup> United Nations. "Report of the Secretary-General on the United Nations Verification Mission in Colombia." *United Nations Mission in Colombia*, (December 27, 2017): 7 and United Nations. "Report of the Secretary-General on the United Nations Mission in Colombia." *United Nations Mission in Colombia*, September 26, (2017): 2

<sup>235</sup> United Nations. "United Nations Verification Mission in Colombia Report of the Secretary-General." *United Nations Mission in Colombia*, (December 26, 2019): 9

<sup>236</sup> United Nations. "Report of the Secretary-General on the United Nations Verification Mission in Colombia." *United Nations Mission in Colombia*, (December 27, 2017): 10

<sup>237</sup> Ibid.

<sup>238</sup> United Nations. "Report of the Secretary-General on the United Nations Mission in Colombia." *United Nations Mission in Colombia*, 23 June, (2017): 8 and United Nations. "Report of the Secretary-General on the United Nations Mission in Colombia." *United Nations Mission in Colombia*, (September 26, 2017): 5

<sup>239</sup> Kaplan, Oliver, and Enzo Nussio. "Community Counts: The Social Reintegration of Ex-combatants in Colombia." *Conflict Management and Peace Science* 35, no. 2 (2018): 133

<sup>240</sup> United Nations. "Report of the Secretary-General on the United Nations Verification Mission in Colombia." *United Nations Mission in Colombia*, (December 27, 2017): 2

<sup>241</sup> Ibid.

route for former FARC combatants to submit themselves to justice and provide dispositions of their crimes while stimulating the active participation of victims. Furthermore, the participation of former FARC combatants in the system was encouraged by making it a prerequisite for receiving reintegration benefits. To address the grievances of victims, the government installed a special victims' unit where people could apply for victim status and receive reparations. The government planned on seizing assets and property from the FARC to pay for these reparations<sup>242</sup>. For reconciliation and rebuilding trust, the police created the 'Communities Safe and at Peace' program to organize events through which former FARC combatants and communities could enter into dialogue<sup>243</sup>.

The decommissioning of assets started on 15 August, when the FARC handed in a final list of its possessions<sup>244</sup>. The Comprehensive System for Truth, Justice, Reparation and Non-repetition was finished in November but did not yet open its door to former FARC combatants and victims in 2017.

## **5.2 The Reintegration of Former FARC Members in 2018**

The year 2018 was dominated by elections. On 11 March, former FARC combatants participated for the first time in the political system during the congressional elections and participated again in May and June during the presidential elections<sup>245</sup>. Iván Duque from Colombia's center-right party *Centro Democrático* came out victorious in these elections and was sworn-in as the Colombian President on 7 August<sup>246</sup>. Various reports of the UN verification mission underlined the possible risk of regime change to the reintegration process<sup>247</sup>. However, President Duque positioned himself as a firm supporter of the reintegration process and

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<sup>242</sup> United Nations. "Report of the Secretary-General on the United Nations Mission in Colombia." *United Nations Mission in Colombia*, September 26, (2017): 1

<sup>243</sup> United Nations. "Report of the Secretary-General on the United Nations Mission in Colombia." *United Nations Mission in Colombia*, 23 June, (2017): 7 and United Nations. "Report of the Secretary-General on the United Nations Mission in Colombia." *United Nations Mission in Colombia*, September 26, (2017): 11

<sup>244</sup> United Nations. "Report of the Secretary-General on the United Nations Mission in Colombia." *United Nations Mission in Colombia*, (23 June, 2017): 1

<sup>245</sup> United Nations. "United Nations Verification Mission in Colombia Report of the Secretary-General." *United Nations Mission in Colombia*, (July 20, 2018): 1

<sup>246</sup> United Nations. "United Nations Verification Mission in Colombia Report of the Secretary-General." *United Nations Mission in Colombia*, (September 28, 2018): 1

<sup>247</sup> United Nations. "Report of the Secretary-General on the United Nations Verification Mission in Colombia." *United Nations Mission in Colombia*, (December 27, 2017): 2

repeatedly reaffirmed his commitment during the first months of his presidency<sup>248</sup>. As such, the Colombian state continued to actively support the reintegration of former FARC combatants<sup>249</sup>.

### *Economic Reintegration*

#### 1. Accreditation and legal status

In 2017, the FARC had submitted a list with 14,178 FARC members to the High Commissioner for Peace for accreditation. In addition to this list, the High Commissioner for Peace received a list with another 1000 former FARC combatants in August 2018<sup>250</sup>. To resolve the legal status of these new candidates and other former FARC combatants in need of accreditation, the Office of the High Commissioner visited different regions of the country<sup>251</sup>. These visits also served to inform former FARC combatants in remote areas of their accreditation so that they could start receiving their reintegration benefits<sup>252</sup>. The international community and the UN provided further support to boost the legal situation of former FARC combatants whose cases remained under judicial review and had not been accredited in 2017<sup>253</sup>. Moreover, the Special Jurisdiction for Peace hired eight lawyers to assist former FARC combatants in the accreditation process and another 17 to provide legal counselling<sup>254</sup>.

The additional measures resulted in 598 new accreditations in 2018, which brought the new total to 13,049 accredited former FARC combatants<sup>255</sup>. As of December 2018, more than 96 percent of accredited former FARC combatants disposed of a bank account, 99 percent had received a singular reintegration allowance, 87 percent were receiving their monthly stipends and 12,181 former FARC combatants had been notified of their accreditation<sup>256</sup>. Despite these positive developments, little progress was made on the cases that remained under judicial

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<sup>248</sup> United Nations. “United Nations Verification Mission in Colombia Report of the Secretary-General.” *United Nations Mission in Colombia*, (December 26, 2018): 8

<sup>249</sup> Ibid.

<sup>250</sup> United Nations. “United Nations Verification Mission in Colombia Report of the Secretary-General.” *United Nations Mission in Colombia*, (September 28, 2018): 6

<sup>251</sup> United Nations. “United Nations Verification Mission in Colombia Report of the Secretary-General.” *United Nations Mission in Colombia*, (July 20, 2018): 6

<sup>252</sup> Ibid.

<sup>253</sup> United Nations. “Report of the Secretary-General on the United Nations Verification Mission in Colombia.” *United Nations Mission in Colombia*, (April 2, 2018): 5

<sup>254</sup> United Nations. “United Nations Verification Mission in Colombia Report of the Secretary-General.” *United Nations Mission in Colombia*, (December 26, 2018): 8

<sup>255</sup> Ibid.

<sup>256</sup> United Nations. “Report of the Secretary-General on the United Nations Verification Mission in Colombia.” *United Nations Mission in Colombia*, (April 2, 2018): 15



review and various former FARC combatants were imprisoned while awaiting the outcome<sup>257</sup>. Due to the delays in resolving the legal situation of these former combatants, numerous former FARC combatants continued to experience legal uncertainty<sup>258</sup>.

## 2. Education, vocational training and productive projects

Various new inputs were introduced in 2018 to improve professional opportunities for former FARC combatants. The Arando la Educación initiative continued providing primary and secondary education to former FARC combatants and received extra funding from the Norwegian government to expand its operational capacity<sup>259</sup>. In another notable effort, a wide array of actors joined forces to stimulate the creation of productive projects by former FARC combatants. Moreover, the National Land Agency issued decrees facilitating access to land for productive projects, the private sector stimulated the provision of education in the territorial areas and the international community created a communal fund with millions of dollars to support the financing of productive projects<sup>260</sup>. All former FARC combatants whose projects had been approved by the National Reintegration Council remained eligible for a 2,700 USD allowance<sup>261</sup>.

In 2018, 5,433 former FARC combatants were certified upon completing the program from the National Vocational Training Service and resources were made available for another 1,400 interested in the program<sup>262</sup>. Through *Arando la Educación*, some 500 former FARC combatants completed their secondary education and another 5,668 got enrolled<sup>263</sup>. As of December 2018, 294 productive projects led by or involving former FARC combatants were up and running in almost all of the territorial areas. Former FARC combatants funded most of these projects themselves and started businesses in agriculture, fishing, the manufacturing of

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<sup>257</sup> United Nations. “United Nations Verification Mission in Colombia Report of the Secretary-General.” *United Nations Mission in Colombia*, (December 26, 2018): 8-9

<sup>258</sup> Ibid.

<sup>259</sup> United Nations. “United Nations Verification Mission in Colombia Report of the Secretary-General.” *United Nations Mission in Colombia*, (December 26, 2018): 7

<sup>260</sup> United Nations. “United Nations Verification Mission in Colombia Report of the Secretary-General.” *United Nations Mission in Colombia*, (July 20, 2018): 4 and United Nations. “United Nations Verification Mission in Colombia Report of the Secretary-General.” *United Nations Mission in Colombia*, (September 28, 2018): 12 and United Nations. “United Nations Verification Mission in Colombia Report of the Secretary-General.” *United Nations Mission in Colombia*, (December 26, 2018): 7

<sup>261</sup> United Nations. “Report of the Secretary-General on the United Nations Verification Mission in Colombia.” *United Nations Mission in Colombia*, (April 2, 2018): 6

<sup>262</sup> Ibid., 6-7

<sup>263</sup> United Nations. “United Nations Verification Mission in Colombia Report of the Secretary-General.” *United Nations Mission in Colombia*, (December 26, 2018): 7

clothing, trade or tourism<sup>264</sup>. Despite these efforts, progress in providing professional opportunities was disappointing in 2018. At the end of the year, only a small share of the 14 thousand former FARC combatants had engaged in productive economic activity due to the considerable delays in approving productive projects, insufficient technical assistance and the lack of allocated land<sup>265</sup>. The lack of income-generating activity for the numerous of former combatants translated into an increasing sense of economic insecurity for those engaged in the reintegration process.

### *Political Reintegration*

#### 1. Protection to former FARC combatants in politics

Mostly undeterred by the measures taken in 2017, violence against social leaders, human rights defenders, communities and former FARC combatants continued. On 20 February 2018, the National Protection Unit, the National Police and the United Nations Verification Mission joined forces to set up a tripartite protection mechanism to reverse the trend of accumulating violence<sup>266</sup>. The protection mission paid particular attention to protecting political candidates of the FARC political party and established protection bodies in all territorial areas for training and reintegration<sup>267</sup>. Furthermore, the National Protection Unit offered close protection to FARC members that had to leave the territorial areas to partake in the political party's campaigning activities<sup>268</sup>. Later in 2018, the government also started developing a security plan for protecting candidates of the FARC political party in the upcoming congressional elections<sup>269</sup>.

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<sup>264</sup> United Nations. "United Nations Verification Mission in Colombia Report of the Secretary-General." *United Nations Mission in Colombia*, (December 26, 2018): 7

<sup>265</sup> United Nations. "Report of the Secretary-General on the United Nations Verification Mission in Colombia." *United Nations Mission in Colombia*, (April 2, 2018): 7 and United Nations. "United Nations Verification Mission in Colombia Report of the Secretary-General." *United Nations Mission in Colombia*, (July 20, 2018): 4 and United Nations. "United Nations Verification Mission in Colombia Report of the Secretary-General." *United Nations Mission in Colombia*, (September 28, 2018): 5

<sup>266</sup> United Nations. "Report of the Secretary-General on the United Nations Verification Mission in Colombia." *United Nations Mission in Colombia*, (April 2, 2018): 4

<sup>267</sup> United Nations. "United Nations Verification Mission in Colombia Report of the Secretary-General." *United Nations Mission in Colombia*, (July 20, 2018): 7

<sup>268</sup> United Nations. "Report of the S United Nations. "Report of the Secretary-General on the United Nations Verification Mission in Colombia." *United Nations Mission in Colombia*, (April 2, 2018): 4

<sup>269</sup> United Nations. "United Nations Verification Mission in Colombia Report of the Secretary-General." *United Nations Mission in Colombia*, (December 26, 2018): 8

Through these measures, over 935 people completed the National Protection Unit's training program and 23 of the 73 candidates of the FARC Party running for congress received close protection schemes<sup>270</sup>. Collective protection programs were set up in cities around the country to protect the other 44 candidates,<sup>271</sup>. These measures did not have the desired effect on the campaign of the FARC party. In the months leading up to the congressional elections, 17 incidents were reported, which left numerous candidates of the FARC party assaulted and their property vandalized<sup>272</sup>. Due to these circumstances, the FARC party briefly stopped campaigning in February. When the FARC party restarted campaigning activities on 23 February, fewer irregularities were reported<sup>273</sup>. The election day itself witnessed no serious incidents and was considered the most peaceful in decades<sup>274</sup>. The presidential elections that were held later in May were even more successful as no violent incidents against former combatants in politics were reported during the two rounds of presidential elections<sup>275</sup>.

## 2. Stimulating the political participation of former FARC combatants

Besides the Policy and Research Institute Centre for Political Thought and Dialogue, which had been set up in 2017 to provide funding and technical support, the reintegration process did not include new initiatives to support the political participation of the FARC in 2018. In the period leading up to the congressional elections, the FARC party managed to organize over a hundred campaigning activities and the elections experienced a considerable increase in participation rates<sup>276</sup>. The congressional elections experienced a 3.6 million increase in the number of votes compared to the elections of 2014 and a notable boost in the participation of people living in Colombia's most vulnerable regions<sup>277</sup>. The presidential elections that followed in May and June continued this trend and were the most inclusive elections in decades<sup>278</sup>.

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<sup>270</sup> United Nations. "Report of the Secretary-General on the United Nations Verification Mission in Colombia." *United Nations Mission in Colombia*, (April 2, 2018): 4

<sup>271</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>272</sup> United Nations. "Report of the Secretary-General on the United Nations Verification Mission in Colombia." *United Nations Mission in Colombia*, (April 2, 2018): 9

<sup>273</sup> *Ibid.*, 6

<sup>274</sup> United Nations. "United Nations Verification Mission in Colombia Report of the Secretary-General." *United Nations Mission in Colombia*, (July 20, 2018): 1

<sup>275</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>276</sup> United Nations. "Report of the Secretary-General on the United Nations Verification Mission in Colombia." *United Nations Mission in Colombia*, (April 2, 2018): 4

<sup>277</sup> *Ibid.*, 1

<sup>278</sup> United Nations. "United Nations Verification Mission in Colombia Report of the Secretary-General." *United Nations Mission in Colombia*, (July 20, 2018): 1

These developments were positive signs for the political reintegration of former FARC combatants. However, various obstacles continued to hinder political participation and put the FARC party at a disadvantage compared to other parties. The disadvantage was particularly tangible during the congressional elections. The National Electoral Council experienced significant delays in transferring campaigning funds to the FARC<sup>279</sup>. This problem was further exacerbated by the delays in opening a bank account for the party. The FARC party received campaigning funds from the National Electoral Council only days before the actual elections, which obstructed the party's political campaign<sup>280</sup>. The state resolved the issue of funding for the FARC party in the months leading up to during the presidential elections. However, due to the suddenly deteriorating health of the presidential candidate of the FARC, the party had to withdraw from the presidential elections<sup>281</sup>.

### *Social Reintegration*

#### 1. Protection to former FARC combatants and affected communities

As mentioned briefly before, the tripartite mechanism was a critical new tool for the provision of security. Throughout the year, the tripartite security mechanism of the National Protection Unit, the National Police and the United Nations Verification Mission carried out visits in territorial areas to identify areas of improvement and address local security needs<sup>282</sup>. Other efforts to solidify national security schemes were the nation-wide expansion of the *Blue Tent* coordination initiative and the establishment of offices from the Technical Committee on Security and Protection in all territorial areas<sup>283</sup>. These efforts mainly served to increase the state's security presence and analyze the patterns of assassinations in areas heavily impacted by the conflict<sup>284</sup>. To support this process, President Duque issued two new decrees -on 18 April and 19 November- that established extra protection for communities as well as the "Action Plan for the Protection of Social and Community Leaders, Human Rights Defenders and

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<sup>279</sup> United Nations. "Report of the Secretary-General on the United Nations Verification Mission in Colombia." *United Nations Mission in Colombia*, (April 2, 2018): 4

<sup>280</sup> United Nations. "Report of the Secretary-General on the United Nations Verification Mission in Colombia." *United Nations Mission in Colombia*, (April 2, 2018): 4

<sup>281</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>282</sup> United Nations. "United Nations Verification Mission in Colombia Report of the Secretary-General." *United Nations Mission in Colombia*, (December 26, 2018): 10

<sup>283</sup> United Nations. "Report of the Secretary-General on the United Nations Verification Mission in Colombia." *United Nations Mission in Colombia*, (April 2, 2018): 4

<sup>284</sup> *Ibid.*, 11

Journalist”<sup>285</sup>. The action plan specified three strategies to improve protection schemes: reconfiguring the executive protection teams, decentralizing management of government agencies and improving inter-institutional communication<sup>286</sup>. Through the additional security efforts, the Technical Committee on Security and Protection approved another 36 protection schemes in territorial areas around Colombia and hired some 50 extra bodyguards. At the same time, the National Protection Unit intensified its protection education program<sup>287</sup>.

Notwithstanding the significant government commitment to providing security for former FARC combatants and social leaders, violence against these groups only further increased in 2018. By the end of the year, the UN verification mission had verified 65 assassinations of former FARC combatants and 42 killed social leaders, while hundreds more had been reported<sup>288</sup>. Over 75 percent of all assassinations occurred in Antioquia, Caquetá, Nariño and Norte de Santander, which are regions with a weak state presence and substantial involvement in the drug trade<sup>289</sup>. On a national level, more than one-third of Colombia’s departmental zones witnessed killings of this nature<sup>290</sup>. Most victims of violence were people that protected their lands, those involved in the execution of the peace provisions, participants in drug elimination programs, contributors to land restitution schemes, social leaders, or former FARC combatants<sup>291</sup>. Being a woman, child, black, or indigenous further exacerbated the rates of violence within these categories<sup>292</sup>. In 2018, the patterns of violence and provenance of threat remained largely the same to those of 2017: most perpetrators of violence were part of criminal groups such as the growing Clan del Golfo, recidivist fractions of the FARC or the guerilla group ELN<sup>293</sup>.

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<sup>285</sup> United Nations. “United Nations Verification Mission in Colombia Report of the Secretary-General.” *United Nations Mission in Colombia*, (July 20, 2018): 10 and United Nations. “United Nations Verification Mission in Colombia Report of the Secretary-General.” *United Nations Mission in Colombia*, (December 26, 2018): 11

<sup>286</sup> United Nations. “United Nations Verification Mission in Colombia Report of the Secretary-General.” *United Nations Mission in Colombia*, (December 26, 2018): 11

<sup>287</sup> United Nations. “United Nations Verification Mission in Colombia Report of the Secretary-General.” *United Nations Mission in Colombia*, (December 26, 2018): 11

<sup>288</sup> Ibid.

<sup>289</sup> United Nations. “United Nations Verification Mission in Colombia Report of the Secretary-General.” *United Nations Mission in Colombia*, (December 26, 2018): 10-11 and United Nations. “United Nations Verification Mission in Colombia Report of the Secretary-General.” *United Nations Mission in Colombia*, (December 26, 2019): 9

<sup>290</sup> United Nations. “United Nations Verification Mission in Colombia Report of the Secretary-General.” *United Nations Mission in Colombia*, (September 28, 2018): 8

<sup>291</sup> Ibid.

<sup>292</sup> United Nations. “United Nations Verification Mission in Colombia Report of the Secretary-General.” *United Nations Mission in Colombia*, (December 26, 2018): 11

<sup>293</sup> United Nations. “United Nations Verification Mission in Colombia Report of the Secretary-General.” *United Nations Mission in Colombia*, (July 20, 2018): 9 and United Nations. “United Nations Verification Mission in Colombia Report of the Secretary-General.” *United Nations Mission in Colombia*, (December 26, 2018): 10

## 2. Providing justice and stimulating reconciliation

The government increased the capacity of the three components of the Comprehensive System for Truth, Justice, Reparation and Non-Repetition in 2018. In March, the Special Jurisdiction for Peace became active and started processing cases of alleged crimes perpetrated by former FARC combatants and army soldiers during the internal conflict<sup>294</sup>. Ten lawyers were hired by the Independent System for Advice and Defense to assist victims with presenting cases to the Special Jurisdiction<sup>295</sup>. With help of the UN mission, victims could also access legal representation provided by NGOs<sup>296</sup>. The second component of the Comprehensive Justice System, the Truth Commission, broadened the scope of its regional offices in 2018. This made it easier for victims and former FARC combatants to provide dispositions of crimes committed during the conflict and submit material that could help with the presented cases<sup>297</sup>. On 2 August, the government established the organizational structure of the Special Unit for the Search for Persons Deemed as Missing and thereby opened up the last segment of the Comprehensive Justice System<sup>298</sup>. To develop procedures in line with the needs of victims and affected communities and solidify its organizational approach, the Special Unit hired another 80 people for the government body<sup>299</sup>. Besides the Comprehensive Justice System, the government presented the *Peace with Legality* plan on 17 December, which aspired to consolidate the peace process in the most vulnerable areas by improving coordination between the reintegration initiatives and increase the participation of victims and private actors to foster reconciliation<sup>300</sup>.

Boosted by the resources mentioned above, the Special Jurisdiction received over 6,000 cases in 2018 for processing that had been submitted by former FARC combatants, members of the army, government workers and citizens<sup>301</sup>. At the end of the year, the Special Jurisdiction for Peace had enlisted 11,700 individuals, most of whom were former FARC combatants<sup>302</sup>. The Special Jurisdiction started working on seven cases emblematic for the internal conflict of

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<sup>294</sup> United Nations. "United Nations Verification Mission in Colombia Report of the Secretary-General." *United Nations Mission in Colombia*, (September 28, 2018): 1-3

<sup>295</sup> United Nations. "United Nations Verification Mission in Colombia Report of the Secretary-General." *United Nations Mission in Colombia*, (December 26, 2018): 9

<sup>296</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>297</sup> *Ibid.*, 3-4

<sup>298</sup> *Ibid.*, 4

<sup>299</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>300</sup> *Ibid.*, 2

<sup>301</sup> United Nations. "Report of the Secretary-General on the United Nations Verification Mission in Colombia." *United Nations Mission in Colombia*, (April 2, 2018): 2

<sup>302</sup> United Nations. "United Nations Verification Mission in Colombia Report of the Secretary-General." *United Nations Mission in Colombia*, (December 26, 2018): 3

crimes that had affected hundreds of thousands of victims<sup>303</sup>. To foster reconciliation, the Catholic Church, the UN and the High Commissioner for Peace organized reconciliation activities in various Colombian departments through which perpetrators, victims, business representatives and politicians could enter in dialogue<sup>304</sup>. The early results from the Special Jurisdiction for Peace and the mushrooming of inclusive reintegration efforts had a positive impact on social reintegration. The UN verification mission in Colombia reports:

“The willingness of former combatants, farmers, soldiers, police, entrepreneurs, religious leaders and victims in the rural areas to come together and leave the confrontations of the past behind are all signs that the basis for a broader national consensus, the foundation of national reconciliation, exists”<sup>305</sup>

### 5.3 The Reintegration of Former FARC Combatants in 2019

Colombia experienced increased polarization around the peace agreement and the reintegration process in 2019<sup>306</sup>. Despite significant effort, violence against former FARC combatants and social leaders became more excessive and sparked widespread protests around the country<sup>307</sup>. During the protests, social organizations mobilized groups of people to join marches. They demanded the complete implementation of the peace provisions and provide better protection measures for communities and social leaders<sup>308</sup>. Polarization further grew when Iván Márquez, one of the most influential figures in the ranks of the FARC, declared a return to arms on 29 August, claiming that the state betrayed the peace agreement<sup>309</sup>. In this context of polarization, the FARC party participated for the first time in departmental elections on 27 October<sup>310</sup>. The elections passed relatively peacefully. However, the tensions that been accumulating throughout the year detonated later in November, just three days before the third anniversary

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<sup>303</sup> United Nations. “United Nations Verification Mission in Colombia Report of the Secretary-General.” *United Nations Mission in Colombia*, (December 26, 2018): 3

<sup>304</sup> United Nations. “Report of the Secretary-General on the United Nations Verification Mission in Colombia.” *United Nations Mission in Colombia*, (April 2, 2018): 15

<sup>305</sup> United Nations. “United Nations Verification Mission in Colombia Report of the Secretary-General.” *United Nations Mission in Colombia*, (July 20, 2018): 13-16

<sup>306</sup> United Nations. “United Nations Verification Mission in Colombia Report of the Secretary-General.” *United Nations Mission in Colombia*, (March 26, 2019): 1

<sup>307</sup> United Nations. “United Nations Verification Mission in Colombia Report of the Secretary-General.” *United Nations Mission in Colombia*, (March 26, 2019): 2 and United Nations. “United Nations Verification Mission in Colombia Report of the Secretary-General.” *United Nations Mission in Colombia*, (June 27, 2019): 16

<sup>308</sup> United Nations. “United Nations Verification Mission in Colombia Report of the Secretary-General.” *United Nations Mission in Colombia*, (June 27, 2019): 2

<sup>309</sup> United Nations. “United Nations Verification Mission in Colombia Report of the Secretary-General.” *United Nations Mission in Colombia*, (October 1, 2019): 1

<sup>310</sup> United Nations. “United Nations Verification Mission in Colombia Report of the Secretary-General.” *United Nations Mission in Colombia*, (December 26, 2019): 2

of the peace agreement<sup>311</sup>. On 21 November, a national strike started which mobilized hundreds of thousands of people and united a wide range of economic, political and social sectors. These sectors demanded: “withdrawal of proposed tax reforms, opposition to possible modifications to the pension system, the implementation of previous agreements with student groups, the protection of social leaders and former FARC combatants and the comprehensive implementation of the peace agreement”<sup>312</sup>. The nation-wide polarization in 2019 put a strain on the reintegration of former FARC combatants and jeopardized the sustainability of the peace agreement.

### *Economic Reintegration*

#### 1. Accreditation and legal status

In 2019, the Office of the High Commissioner remained committed to resolving the legal status of former FARC combatants and enable their entrance in the reintegration program. The Office created a list of former FARC combatants that had still not been accredited or informed of their accreditation to allocate its resources more efficiently<sup>313</sup>. Furthermore, the Office created an online platform where the accreditation of former FARC combatants’ was made accessible for those still unsure of their legal status<sup>314</sup>.

Through this online publication system, the Office of the High Commissioner made considerable progress in the administration of the accreditation progress. At the end of 2019, 236 former combatants had been notified of their resolved accreditation, 11,018 former FARC combatants had been registered in the reintegration program<sup>315</sup>. Moreover, all former FARC combatants registered in the reintegration program were receiving a monthly stipend. Nevertheless, the Office did not make any progress in the issuing of new accreditations and even withdrew six initially extended accreditations, leaving the total number of accredited

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<sup>311</sup> United Nations. “United Nations Verification Mission in Colombia Report of the Secretary-General.” *United Nations Mission in Colombia*, (December 26, 2019): 1

<sup>312</sup> United Nations. “United Nations Verification Mission in Colombia Report of the Secretary-General.” *United Nations Mission in Colombia*, (December 26, 2019): 2

<sup>313</sup> United Nations. “United Nations Verification Mission in Colombia Report of the Secretary-General.” *United Nations Mission in Colombia*, (March 26, 2019): 9

<sup>314</sup> United Nations. “United Nations Verification Mission in Colombia Report of the Secretary-General.” *United Nations Mission in Colombia*, (June 27, 2019): 11

<sup>315</sup> *Ibid.*, 5



former combatants at 13,057; a decrease compared to 2018<sup>316</sup>. The lack of progress in the accreditation process was a worrying development, as almost 300 former combatants continued without accreditation despite having submitted all necessary documents and with some having waited for more than a year<sup>317</sup>. There was no progress in the accreditation of the 1,000 candidates that the FARC had presented on 10 August 2018 either. The Office changed its original decision of reviewing the additional names and declined all accreditation applications submitted after the original deadline in 2017<sup>318</sup>. As a result, a considerable number of former combatants found themselves in a ‘legal limbo’ with no access to education, vocational support and other reintegration benefits which increased their vulnerability to recidivism<sup>319</sup>.

## 2. Education, vocational training and productive projects

To maintain adequate access to education for former combatants and communities, the Ministry of Education extended Arando la Educación until April 2020 and created over three thousand extra spaces in the program for interested individuals<sup>320</sup>. Beyond education, the reintegration process included numerous new initiatives to stimulate productive activity by former FARC combatants. A notable effort on the part of the government was the presentation of a long-term national development plan. This plan extended monthly stipends for former combatants, identified land plots for productive projects and specified a Road Map for Stabilization to consolidate the successes of the reintegration processes in vulnerable regions<sup>321</sup>. Moreover, the Agency for Reintegration and Normalization started a national reintegration registry and stimulated the engagement of the private sector in the creation of productive projects<sup>322</sup>. The National Registry helped to identify the professional capacities and ambitions of former combatants to create better vocational opportunities. At the same time, big corporations such as Proantioquia provided lands, funds and technical support to assist former combatants in the

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<sup>316</sup> United Nations. “United Nations Verification Mission in Colombia Report of the Secretary-General.” *United Nations Mission in Colombia*, (October 1, 2019): 11

<sup>317</sup> Ibid.

<sup>318</sup> Ibid.

<sup>319</sup> United Nations. “United Nations Verification Mission in Colombia Report of the Secretary-General.” *United Nations Mission in Colombia*, (December 26, 2019): 17

<sup>320</sup> United Nations. “United Nations Verification Mission in Colombia Report of the Secretary-General.” *United Nations Mission in Colombia*, (October 1, 2019): 7 and United Nations. “United Nations Verification Mission in Colombia Report of the Secretary-General.” *United Nations Mission in Colombia*, (December 26, 2019): 7

<sup>321</sup> United Nations. “United Nations Verification Mission in Colombia Report of the Secretary-General.” *United Nations Mission in Colombia*, (June 27, 2019): 2-6

<sup>322</sup> United Nations. “United Nations Verification Mission in Colombia Report of the Secretary-General.” *United Nations Mission in Colombia*, (March 26, 2019): 6 and United Nations. “United Nations Verification Mission in Colombia Report of the Secretary-General.” *United Nations Mission in Colombia*, (October 1, 2019): 6

development of productive projects<sup>323</sup>. Furthermore, international donors also became increasingly involved in supporting the economic reintegration of former FARC combatants and provided tens of millions of dollars in funds and equipment for the development of productive projects. The UN, EU and the countries Norway, France and Sweden played vital roles in this process<sup>324</sup>.

Via the inputs discussed above, the reintegration process made considerable progress in the provision of education, vocational training and productive projects<sup>325</sup>. The year 2019 witnessed a steep increase in the number of former FARC combatants enrolled in training or education programs. Some 3,500 people enrolled in vocational training programs offered by the National Training Service and over 5,000 former FARC combatants enjoyed academic education through Arando la Educación<sup>326</sup>. Other notable outputs were the approval of 47 productive projects, 705 individual projects and the engagement of some 5,000 former FARC combatants in productive organizations<sup>327</sup>. At the end of the year, almost twenty percent of former FARC combatants with accreditation had received disbursements for productive projects<sup>328</sup>. On the whole, 2019 witnessed a significant increase in the number of former FARC combatants that became involved in income-generating initiatives and received education, while an increasingly wide array of local and national actors started contributing to the process.

Shortcomings persisted despite the notable progress made on education, vocational training and productive projects. In remote areas, access to education remained difficult at times and the areas most affected by the conflict did not create many vocational opportunities<sup>329</sup>. A particularly daunting challenge that emerged in 2019 was the growing relocation of former FARC combatants that, as the legal term for the territorial areas was coming to an end, decided to move to other zones of the country<sup>330</sup>. The growing dispersion of former FARC combatants

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<sup>323</sup> United Nations. “United Nations Verification Mission in Colombia Report of the Secretary-General.” *United Nations Mission in Colombia*, (December 26, 2019): 7

<sup>324</sup> United Nations. “United Nations Verification Mission in Colombia Report of the Secretary-General.” *United Nations Mission in Colombia*, (March 26, 2019): 7 and United Nations. “United Nations Verification Mission in Colombia Report of the Secretary-General.” *United Nations Mission in Colombia*, (October 1, 2019): 14 and United Nations. “United Nations Verification Mission in Colombia Report of the Secretary-General.” *United Nations Mission in Colombia*, (December 26, 2019): 6

<sup>325</sup> *Ibid.*, 7

<sup>326</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>327</sup> United Nations. “United Nations Verification Mission in Colombia Report of the Secretary-General.” *United Nations Mission in Colombia*, (October 1, 2019): 6

<sup>328</sup> United Nations. “United Nations Verification Mission in Colombia Report of the Secretary-General.” *United Nations Mission in Colombia*, (December 26, 2019): 7

<sup>329</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>330</sup> United Nations. “United Nations Verification Mission in Colombia Report of the Secretary-General.” *United Nations Mission in Colombia*, (October 1, 2019): 7

around the country made it more challenging to allocate resources efficiently and provide everyone with adequate services. By mid-2019, almost 9,000 former FARC combatants lived outside of the old territorial areas<sup>331</sup>. Another big challenge to the sustainability of former FARC combatants' professional activity was the accessibility of purchased land for productive projects<sup>332</sup>. Almost 80 percent of the productive projects created in 2019 had been mounted on rented plots of land, while only very few land plots were allocated for permanent economic activity<sup>333</sup>. The lack of permanently available lands poses a threat to the sustainability of the established productive projects, which makes it a prime concern for the reintegration process.

### *Political Reintegration*

#### 1. Protection to former FARC combatants in politics

To prepare for the departmental elections of 27 October, the Tripartite Protection and Security Mechanism carried out risk assessments to improve protection measures for political candidates of the FARC party and identify security risks early on<sup>334</sup>. Another noteworthy effort was the establishment of the *Comprehensive Security System of the Exercise of Politics* which had been stipulated in the peace agreement and was finally completed in July 2019<sup>335</sup>. Furthermore, the Ministry of the Interior created a 'road map' to improve the security situation for candidates of the FARC party further<sup>336</sup>. With the support of numerous security measures and the road map, the Comprehensive Security System provided 78 protection schemes to candidates of the FARC party ahead of the elections<sup>337</sup>.

On 27 October, former combatants and the FARC party participated for the first time in departmental elections<sup>338</sup>. During the campaigning period, numerous FARC candidates had been killed, stigmatized, or threatened -especially in the fragile Cauca and Norte de Santander

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<sup>331</sup> United Nations. "United Nations Verification Mission in Colombia Report of the Secretary-General." *United Nations Mission in Colombia*, (October 1, 2019): 7

<sup>332</sup> United Nations. "United Nations Verification Mission in Colombia Report of the Secretary-General." *United Nations Mission in Colombia*, (December 26, 2019): 7

<sup>333</sup> United Nations. "United Nations Verification Mission in Colombia Report of the Secretary-General." *United Nations Mission in Colombia*, (October 1, 2019): 6 and United Nations. "United Nations Verification Mission in Colombia Report of the Secretary-General." *United Nations Mission in Colombia*, (December 26, 2019): 6-16

<sup>334</sup> United Nations. "United Nations Verification Mission in Colombia Report of the Secretary-General." *United Nations Mission in Colombia*, (October 1, 2019): 9

<sup>335</sup> Ibid.

<sup>336</sup> Ibid.

<sup>337</sup> United Nations. "United Nations Verification Mission in Colombia Report of the Secretary-General." *United Nations Mission in Colombia*, (December 26, 2019): 8

<sup>338</sup> Ibid., 2

departments- but the elections themselves reported only a few incidents against former FARC combatants<sup>339</sup>. On the day of the election, five assassinations were recorded compared to almost 30 killings in the previous departmental elections of 2015<sup>340</sup>. Despite incidents during the campaign, the consistent decrease of violence on election days from the signing of the peace agreement in 2016 is a hopeful sign for the legitimacy of Colombian democracy and the political participation of the FARC party.

### 3. Stimulating the political participation of former FARC combatants

A wide array of national and international actors invested resources to encourage the equal participation of all political parties in the departmental elections. The United Nations, the National Electoral Council, various government Ministries and a designated NGO observation mission joined forces to monitor the electoral process and ensure a leveled playing field for all political parties<sup>341</sup>. With support from these actors, the FARC party took an active part in the electoral process. The party organized numerous campaigning events around the country as well as presenting over 300 candidates running for “municipal councils, departmental assemblies and mayors”<sup>342</sup>. Other former FARC combatants participated in the campaigning activities of other political parties.

If we look at the big picture, the departmental elections of October 2019 embodied many of the positive developments of the elections held since the signing of the final peace agreement. The elections witnessed less violent incidents, engaged a broad spectrum of political actors in the electoral process and had high participation rates. Over 60 percent of eligible voters participated in the elections, boosted by the 13 percent increase in the number of polling stations, which was a significant increase compared to the previous departmental elections of 2015<sup>343</sup>. Moreover, 12 former FARC combatants were elected for different political offices, of which three were elected mayor<sup>344</sup>. Notwithstanding these achievements, some considerable

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<sup>339</sup> United Nations. “United Nations Verification Mission in Colombia Report of the Secretary-General.” *United Nations Mission in Colombia*, (October 1, 2019): 16 and United Nations. “United Nations Verification Mission in Colombia Report of the Secretary-General.” *United Nations Mission in Colombia*, (December 26, 2019): 8

<sup>340</sup> United Nations. “United Nations Verification Mission in Colombia Report of the Secretary-General.” *United Nations Mission in Colombia*, (December 26, 2019): 2

<sup>341</sup> United Nations. “United Nations Verification Mission in Colombia Report of the Secretary-General.” *United Nations Mission in Colombia*, (March 26, 2019): 8

<sup>342</sup> United Nations. “United Nations Verification Mission in Colombia Report of the Secretary-General.” *United Nations Mission in Colombia*, (October 1, 2019): 8

<sup>343</sup> United Nations. “United Nations Verification Mission in Colombia Report of the Secretary-General.” *United Nations Mission in Colombia*, (December 26, 2019): 2

<sup>344</sup> *Ibid.*, 6

challenges to the political participation of the FARC party persisted, as violence and stigmatization against former FARC combatants during the campaign continued and funding for their political participation was delayed once again<sup>345</sup>. However, in comparison with previous elections, the departmental elections of 27 October epitomized a broader trend of safer and more inclusive electoral processes.

### *Social Reintegration*

#### 1. Protection to former FARC combatants and affected communities

In 2019, the Colombian government made the protection of former FARC combatants and communities one of its top priorities due to the continued violence. To increase the capacity of the Special Investigation Unit, the government opened new offices in vulnerable regions as well as hiring extra police personnel and attorneys for legal assistance<sup>346</sup>. Other notable government efforts to improve protection were the implementation of new training initiatives to make up for the lack of bodyguards in close protection schemes and the extension of the *Action Plan for the Protection of Social and Community Leaders*<sup>347</sup>. Coordinators of the Action Plan held over 20 meetings around the country to harmonize actions between different security bodies and create a more comprehensive approach to protect the areas most exposed to violence<sup>348</sup>. The Ministry of the Interior played a central role in this harmonization process by providing counseling and overseeing the implementation of protection provisions<sup>349</sup>. Backed up by these efforts, the number of implemented collective protection schemes grew significantly by more than 300 in 2019 while the National Protection unit hired 1,124 additional bodyguards to improve the provision of close protection to high-risk individuals<sup>350</sup>.

Rates of violence in Colombia further increased and 2019 saw the most assassinations of former FARC combatants and community leaders since the start of the reintegration phase

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<sup>345</sup> United Nations. “United Nations Verification Mission in Colombia Report of the Secretary-General.” *United Nations Mission in Colombia*, (December 26, 2019): 6

<sup>346</sup> United Nations. “United Nations Verification Mission in Colombia Report of the Secretary-General.” *United Nations Mission in Colombia*, (June 27, 2019): 9 and United Nations. “United Nations Verification Mission in Colombia Report of the Secretary-General.” *United Nations Mission in Colombia*, (October 1, 2019): 9

<sup>347</sup> United Nations. “United Nations Verification Mission in Colombia Report of the Secretary-General.” *United Nations Mission in Colombia*, (December 26, 2019): 9

<sup>348</sup> United Nations. “United Nations Verification Mission in Colombia Report of the Secretary-General.” *United Nations Mission in Colombia*, (June 27, 2019): 10

<sup>349</sup> United Nations. “United Nations Verification Mission in Colombia Report of the Secretary-General.” *United Nations Mission in Colombia*, (December 26, 2019): 10

<sup>350</sup> *Ibid.*, 9

in 2016<sup>351</sup>. As of December 2019, the UN verification mission had reported 77 killings of former FARC combatants as well as 86 assassinations of social leaders, compared to 65 killed former FARC combatants and 42 liquidated social leaders in 2018<sup>352</sup>. These additional deaths brought the total number of assassinations since the signing of the peace agreement to 173 former FARC combatants and 303 social leaders<sup>353</sup>. Numerous others disappeared or survived assassination attempts. The provenance of threat remained the same as in earlier years. Most cases of murder under review by the Special Investigation Unit identified armed criminal organizations as the main perpetrators of homicides, with the ELN, the Clan del Golfo and dissident factions of the FARC being the most notable groups<sup>354</sup>. The areas hardest-hit by the violence followed the pattern of earlier years and culminated in Norte de Santander, Valle del Cauca, Caquetá and Antioquia. These were departments with weak state control, a strong presence of the drug trade and were previously controlled by the FARC<sup>355</sup>. The illegal armed groups violently competed for the power vacuum left by the FARC as well as its previous position in the drug trade<sup>356</sup>. This competition caused most of the violence in areas where the FARC had demobilized<sup>357</sup>. Social leaders, former FARC combatants, local implementors of the peace agreement, human rights defenders and communities were the main targets of the violence<sup>358</sup>. Especially members of rural communities, indigenous, ethnic minorities and women fell victim to this violence within these categories<sup>359</sup>. The continuing ineffectiveness of measures to protect former combatants, communities and social leaders, is one of the biggest obstacles to the sustainability of the reintegration process.

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<sup>351</sup> United Nations. “United Nations Verification Mission in Colombia Report of the Secretary-General.” *United Nations Mission in Colombia*, (December 26, 2019): 10

<sup>352</sup> Ibid.

<sup>353</sup> United Nations. “United Nations Verification Mission in Colombia Report of the Secretary-General.” *United Nations Mission in Colombia*, (December 26, 2019): 10

<sup>354</sup> United Nations. “United Nations Verification Mission in Colombia Report of the Secretary-General.” *United Nations Mission in Colombia*, (June 27, 2019): 9

<sup>355</sup> United Nations. “United Nations Verification Mission in Colombia Report of the Secretary-General.” *United Nations Mission in Colombia*, (October 1, 2019): 9

<sup>356</sup> Ibid.

<sup>357</sup> Ibid.

<sup>358</sup> United Nations. “United Nations Verification Mission in Colombia Report of the Secretary-General.” *United Nations Mission in Colombia*, (December 26, 2019): 9

<sup>359</sup> United Nations. “United Nations Verification Mission in Colombia Report of the Secretary-General.” *United Nations Mission in Colombia*, (March 26, 2019): 11 and United Nations. “United Nations Verification Mission in Colombia Report of the Secretary-General.” *United Nations Mission in Colombia*, (December 26, 2019): 9

## 2. Providing justice and stimulating reconciliation

The government increased the budget of the Comprehensive System for Truth, Justice, Reparation and Non-Repetition by 15 percent in 2019<sup>360</sup>. Utilizing these extra funds, the Special Jurisdiction for Peace organized projects in the territorial areas to educate former combatants on the functioning of the Jurisdiction, hired 42 lawyers to arrange legal support for former FARC combatants and contracted 19 extra liaison officers to coordinate cases<sup>361</sup>. Other notable developments of the Special Jurisdiction were the provision of legal support, protection measures and the establishment of the “statutory law of the Special Jurisdiction for Peace”<sup>362</sup>. These measures were meant to encourage the participation of victims in the justice system and completed the Jurisdiction’s legal structure<sup>363</sup>. The increased budget of the Comprehensive Justice System also boosted the capacity of the Unit for the Search for Persons deemed Missing, which opened up new offices in ten Colombian cities to consolidate its national presence<sup>364</sup>. The UN also increased its support for the reintegration process and authorized extra funds for the reparation of victims and their participation in the justice process to foster reconciliation and support due process<sup>365</sup>.

Backed up by the new inputs, the bodies of the Comprehensive Justice System made notable advances in 2019. The Special Jurisdiction for Peace accredited over 60,000 victims and took significant steps in its seven emblematic cases<sup>366</sup>. At the end of the year, the Truth Commission had received over 900 dispositions of affected communities and individuals and established 22 ‘Houses of Truth’ in regions around the country to facilitate the provision of testimonies<sup>367</sup>. The Truth Commission also set up several activities in the old territorial areas that facilitated dialogue between victims and former FARC combatants and stimulated

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<sup>360</sup> United Nations. “United Nations Verification Mission in Colombia Report of the Secretary-General.” *United Nations Mission in Colombia*, (October 1, 2019): 2

<sup>361</sup> United Nations. “United Nations Verification Mission in Colombia Report of the Secretary-General.” *United Nations Mission in Colombia*, (March 26, 2019): 9 and United Nations. “United Nations Verification Mission in Colombia Report of the Secretary-General.” *United Nations Mission in Colombia*, (June 27, 2019): 12

<sup>362</sup> United Nations. “United Nations Verification Mission in Colombia Report of the Secretary-General.” *United Nations Mission in Colombia*, (June 27, 2019): 3 and United Nations. “United Nations Verification Mission in Colombia Report of the Secretary-General.” *United Nations Mission in Colombia*, (October 1, 2019): 3

<sup>363</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>364</sup> United Nations. “United Nations Verification Mission in Colombia Report of the Secretary-General.” *United Nations Mission in Colombia*, (June 27, 2019): 4

<sup>365</sup> United Nations. “United Nations Verification Mission in Colombia Report of the Secretary-General.” *United Nations Mission in Colombia*, (December 26, 2019): 13

<sup>366</sup> *Ibid.*, 5

<sup>367</sup> United Nations. “United Nations Verification Mission in Colombia Report of the Secretary-General.” *United Nations Mission in Colombia*, (October 1, 2019): 4

reconciliation<sup>368</sup>. Other accomplishments of merit were the completion of 12 regional forums by the Unit for the Search for Persons Deemed Missing. These offices started gathering information on kidnappings and commenced the search for disappeared former FARC combatants, social leaders and others<sup>369</sup>.

Altogether, 2019 continued a positive trend in the scope of transitional justice measures. Members from affected communities increasingly participated in the Comprehensive Justice System and took advantage of possibilities to make their voices heard in the reintegration process<sup>370</sup>. The reintegration process witnessed significant progress in the reconciliation between former FARC combatants and victims. More and more communities were willing to leave the past behind and take in former combatants and the vast majority of FARC members remained committed to the reintegration process<sup>371</sup>. The Agency for Reintegration and Normalization corroborated these positive developments through a survey with 10,708 former FARC combatants that gauged their engagement in the reintegration process<sup>372</sup>. In the survey, all of the participants reiterated their active engagement in the reintegration process, demonstrating the continued commitment of former FARC combatants to the process<sup>373</sup>. However, considerable challenges continue to jeopardize the positive signs of social reintegration, three years after the signing of the final peace agreement. The increasing polarization between the Colombian government and the FARC party is particularly worrisome in this regard. Both parties claim that the other did not abide by the obligations stipulated by the peace agreement and are increasingly wary towards each other<sup>374</sup>.

On the one hand, the government claims that the FARC party did not fulfill the duties specified in the peace agreement by holding on to their assets, hindering the payment of compensation to victims<sup>375</sup>. On the other hand, the FARC party claims that the government did not uphold all parts of the bargain, by not installing enough security schemes for the protection of former FARC combatants and not honoring the integrity of the provision agreed upon in the

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<sup>368</sup> United Nations. "United Nations Verification Mission in Colombia Report of the Secretary-General." *United Nations Mission in Colombia*, (December 26, 2019): 4

<sup>369</sup> *Ibid.*, 5

<sup>370</sup> United Nations. "United Nations Verification Mission in Colombia Report of the Secretary-General." *United Nations Mission in Colombia*, (December 26, 2019): 15

<sup>371</sup> United Nations. "United Nations Verification Mission in Colombia Report of the Secretary-General." *United Nations Mission in Colombia*, (December 26, 2019): 4

<sup>372</sup> United Nations. "United Nations Verification Mission in Colombia Report of the Secretary-General." *United Nations Mission in Colombia*, (June 27, 2019): 5

<sup>373</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>374</sup> United Nations. "United Nations Verification Mission in Colombia Report of the Secretary-General." *United Nations Mission in Colombia*, (December 26, 2019): 3

<sup>375</sup> *Ibid.*



peace agreement<sup>376</sup>. The continuing tensions between the signatories to the peace agreement and the security situation of former FARC combatants and communities could become highly problematic if left unattended. As such, the returning to arms of Iván Marquez and a group of former FARC combatants in August 2019 serves as a reminder of the fragility of some of the advances made on social reintegration<sup>377</sup>.

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<sup>376</sup> United Nations. “United Nations Verification Mission in Colombia Report of the Secretary-General.” *United Nations Mission in Colombia*, (December 26, 2019): 3

<sup>377</sup> United Nations. “United Nations Verification Mission in Colombia Report of the Secretary-General.” *United Nations Mission in Colombia*, (October 1, 2019): 15

## VI. Discussion

The objective of the thesis has been to assess whether crisis-induced learning resulted in the successful reintegration of former FARC combatants. This section differentiates between the economic, political and social dimensions of reintegration and compares desired outcomes to real outcomes to determine success. After, it considers alternative explanations for the success and shortcomings of the reintegration process besides the peace agreement and crisis-induced learning.

### 6.1 Reintegration Success

#### *Economic Reintegration*

The analysis has focused on accreditation, education, vocational training and productive projects to gauge the performance of economic reintegration.

#### 1. Accreditation

Some three years after the signing of the final peace agreement with the FARC, significant progress had been made on the accreditation process. By December 2019, the Office of the High Commissioner accredited 13,057 former FARC combatants (or 92 percent) of the 14,178 reintegration candidates presented by the FARC in 2017<sup>378</sup>. Out of these 13,057 accredited former FARC combatants, 12,417 had been notified of their accreditation which allowed them to participate in the reintegration process and receive benefits<sup>379</sup>. Resolving the legal status of the majority of former FARC combatants was a significant achievement. Even more so, when we consider that many former FARC combatants had scattered around the country, often relocating to remote areas, which made notification of accreditation a significant challenge<sup>380</sup>. However, the accreditation process also showed severe shortcomings. After the initial quick progress in accreditation in 2017 and early 2018, almost no progress was made on the hundreds

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<sup>378</sup> United Nations. "United Nations Verification Mission in Colombia Report of the Secretary-General." *United Nations Mission in Colombia*, (October 1, 2019): 11

<sup>379</sup> United Nations. "United Nations Verification Mission in Colombia Report of the Secretary-General." *United Nations Mission in Colombia*, (October 1, 2019): 11

<sup>380</sup> *Ibid.*

of cases still under judicial review. There was a lack of legal counseling for former combatants as well as a lack of capacity at the Special Jurisdiction for Peace to process their cases quickly. As a result, 1,121 former FARC combatants were still awaiting their accreditation at the end of 2019 despite having submitted the required documents and waiting for a long time<sup>381</sup>. These former FARC combatants found themselves in a ‘legal limbo’ of sorts; not being able to enter into the reintegration process despite their commitment to it.

## 2. Education

The performance of education initiatives such as *Arando la Educación* was commendable. The number of former combatants that enrolled in educational activities and obtained diplomas consistently increased in the years following the signing of the peace agreement. By the end of 2019, 1,843 former FARC combatants had obtained high school diplomas while another 5,059 took part in educational activities. As a result, some 53 percent of accredited former combatants was benefitting or had benefitted from educational initiatives as the reintegration process entered into its third year. On another positive note, the capacity of educational initiatives substantially increased, with thousands of additional spots for interested former combatants. However, former FARC combatants that moved away from the territorial areas experienced more difficulties accessing these educational initiatives<sup>382</sup>.

## 3. Vocational training

A considerable share of former FARC combatants received vocational training. From 2017 to 2019, some 5,400 former combatants finished their vocational training in solidarity economics with support of the National Vocational Training service and ECOMUN, accounting for almost 42 percent of the total number of accredited former FARC combatants<sup>383</sup>. Moreover, the number of former FARC combatants enrolled in other types of vocational training initiatives steadily grew. From 2,870 in 2017 to 3,475 in 2019<sup>384</sup>. As a result of these activities, a total

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<sup>381</sup> United Nations. “United Nations Verification Mission in Colombia Report of the Secretary-General.” *United Nations Mission in Colombia*, (December 26, 2019): 7

<sup>382</sup> United Nations. “United Nations Verification Mission in Colombia Report of the Secretary-General.” *United Nations Mission in Colombia*, (October 1, 2019): 11

<sup>383</sup> United Nations. “Report of the Secretary-General on the United Nations Verification Mission in Colombia.” *United Nations Mission in Colombia*, (April 2, 2018): 6-7

<sup>384</sup> United Nations. “United Nations Verification Mission in Colombia Report of the Secretary-General.” *United Nations Mission in Colombia*, (December 26, 2019): 7

number of 8,908 accredited former FARC combatants (approximately 70 percent) either completed or remained enrolled in vocational training activities. The main challenge for vocational training was the same as for education. Former FARC combatants that had spread around the country and moved away from the territorial areas experienced more difficulty in accessing training<sup>385</sup>.

#### 4. Productive projects

While the number of former FARC combatants that enjoyed education or vocational training increased quickly early on, the creation of productive projects had a slow start. Former FARC combatants only submitted three productive projects in 2017 due to delays in establishing the procedure for submitting productive projects to the National Reintegration Council<sup>386</sup>. However, the number of productive projects significantly increased in the years that followed, boosted by funding from the private sector, international actors and local communities. By the end of 2019, the 47 collective projects and 705 individual projects approved by the National Reintegration Council benefitted 3,372 former combatants<sup>387</sup>. Besides creating productive projects, some 5,000 former combatants found work in existing productive organizations, which increased the total share of accredited former FARC combatants engaged in productive livelihoods to 59 percent<sup>388</sup>. A big challenge remained to the sustainability of many productive projects, as almost 80 percent of productive projects had been realized on rented land<sup>389</sup>. In contrast, only a few plots had been definitively allocated.

#### 5. Success

As discussed earlier, the desired outcome of economic reintegration is to provide former combatants with productive skills and employment to facilitate their return to civilian life<sup>390</sup>. The reintegration process has only been underway three years. However, notable steps have

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<sup>385</sup> United Nations. "United Nations Verification Mission in Colombia Report of the Secretary-General." *United Nations Mission in Colombia*, (October 1, 2019): 7

<sup>386</sup> United Nations. "United Nations Verification Mission in Colombia Report of the Secretary-General." *United Nations Mission in Colombia*, (September 28, 2018): 5

<sup>387</sup> United Nations. "United Nations Verification Mission in Colombia Report of the Secretary-General." *United Nations Mission in Colombia*, (October 1, 2019): 6

<sup>388</sup> Ibid.

<sup>389</sup> Ibid.

<sup>390</sup> Ginifer 2003, 43. Mentioned in: Bowd, Richard, and Alpaslan Özerdem. "How to Assess Social Reintegration of Ex-Combatants." *Journal of Intervention and Statebuilding* 7, no. 4 (2013): 456

already been taken that have put the reintegration process on track to achieve the desired economic reintegration outcome. The vast majority of former FARC combatants have been accredited and entered into the reintegration program, almost 50 percent have enjoyed or are currently enrolled in educational programs, more than two-thirds have had vocational training and almost 60 percent have become productively active. Furthermore, the capacity of educational programs, vocational training and support for productive projects has been steadily increasing, which makes it likely that the number of former FARC combatants involved in these activities will only further increase in the future. Challenges to economic reintegration continue to hinder the process, with the increasing dispersion of former FARC combatants and the delays in the accreditation process being the most notable ones. However, if we consider the significant progress that has been made in all areas of economic reintegration and its steadily increasing output, the desired outcome of providing former FARC combatants with skills and employment has come significantly closer. As such, the reintegration process has been relatively successful economically.

### *Political Reintegration*

In the dimension of political reintegration, the analysis has focused on two things. On the one hand, it has looked at the protection to politically active former FARC combatants while on the other, it has assessed the measures implemented to stimulate their political participation. Since the start of the reintegration progress and the transition of FARC into a political party, three elections were held: the congressional elections of March 2018, the presidential elections of May and June 2018 and the departmental elections of October 2019.

#### 1. Protection to the FARC Party and politically active former FARC combatants

All three elections between 2017 and 2019 have been more peaceful compared to the elections held before the signing of the peace agreement<sup>391</sup>. The campaigning activities leading up to congressional elections of 2018 had a worrisome start, with 17 reported incidents of vandalism,

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<sup>391</sup> United Nations. "Report of the Secretary-General on the United Nations Mission in Colombia." *United Nations Mission in Colombia*, 23 June, (2017): 4

threats, or violence against former combatants<sup>392</sup>. However, eventually, all FARC party candidates were provided with individual or collective protection schemes and election day itself passed without any big incidents as former combatants participated and voted in peace<sup>393</sup>. The efficiency of protection schemes further improved during the presidential elections that followed two months after. During these election, not a single serious incident involving the FARC party or former FARC combatants was reported<sup>394</sup>. During the most recent elections, the departmental elections of 2019, various cases of assassinations, stigmatization and threats against FARC party candidates were reported despite the provision of protection schemes to all 78 candidates<sup>395</sup>. Nevertheless, only 5 assassinations of former FARC combatants were listed during the actual elections, which was almost six times less than the number of killings during the departmental elections that took place before the signing of the peace agreement<sup>396</sup>.

## 2. Stimulating the political participation of former FARC combatants

The FARC party and politically engaged former FARC combatants actively participated in politics in the years following the start of the reintegration process, except for the presidential elections of 2018, when the FARC party's presidential candidate had to withdraw from the electoral campaign due to illness. Despite the security incidents that occurred early in the campaigning period, the FARC Party and politically engaged former FARC combatants actively participated in the congressional elections, organizing or taking part in over a hundred campaigning activities<sup>397</sup>. These elections were the first elections in which the FARC party participated and presented a landmark for the transition of the guerrilla group into a political party. Former FARC combatants and the FARC Party were also actively involved in the departmental elections of 2019. During these elections, they organized numerous campaigning events around the country while some 300 former FARC combatants ran political offices<sup>398</sup>.

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<sup>392</sup> United Nations. "Report of the Secretary-General on the United Nations Verification Mission in Colombia." *United Nations Mission in Colombia*, (April 2, 2018): 9

<sup>393</sup> United Nations. "Report of the Secretary-General on the United Nations Verification Mission in Colombia." *United Nations Mission in Colombia*, (April 2, 2018): 9

<sup>394</sup> United Nations. "United Nations Verification Mission in Colombia Report of the Secretary-General." *United Nations Mission in Colombia*, (July 20, 2018): 7

<sup>395</sup> United Nations. "United Nations Verification Mission in Colombia Report of the Secretary-General." *United Nations Mission in Colombia*, (December 26, 2019): 8

<sup>396</sup> *Ibid.*, 2

<sup>397</sup> United Nations. "Report of the Secretary-General on the United Nations Verification Mission in Colombia." *United Nations Mission in Colombia*, (April 2, 2018): 4

<sup>398</sup> United Nations. "United Nations Verification Mission in Colombia Report of the Secretary-General." *United Nations Mission in Colombia*, (October 1, 2019): 8

The increasing political participation is positive development that accounts for all elections between 2017 and 2019. Millions more people casted their vote in the elections between 2017 and 2019 compared to elections before the peace agreement<sup>399</sup>. A significant obstacle that hampered the participation of the FARC in politics was the issue of funding, which was delayed during both the congressional elections and the departmental elections<sup>400</sup>. During the former, funding was only received three days before election day by the FARC Party. The delays in funding combined with the continued stigmatization, threats and violence against politically active former FARC combatants, put the FARC Party at a slight disadvantage compared to other political parties<sup>401</sup>.

### 3. Success

The desired outcome of the political reintegration process is to stimulate the political participation of former combatants and equip them with the tools to become an active part of the decision-making process<sup>402</sup>. If we make up the balance after three years of reintegration, we see that significant steps have been taken to make this a reality. Candidates of the FARC Party and other politically active former FARC combatants having been increasingly provided with protection schemes and have actively participated in the election since the start of the reintegration process. Furthermore, elections have been consistently less violent and more inclusive each year since the start of the reintegration process, with fewer assassinations of political candidates and higher participation rates. While stigmatization of the FARC Party, violence against former combatants in politics and delays in funding continued between 2017 and 2019, these problems were significantly smaller than before the reintegration progress and did not keep former FARC combatants from participating in politics. Therefore, on the whole, the reintegration process has been rather successful in bringing closer the desired outcome of engaging former FARC combatants in the decision-making process.

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<sup>399</sup> United Nations. "United Nations Verification Mission in Colombia Report of the Secretary-General." *United Nations Mission in Colombia*, (December 26, 2019): 2

<sup>400</sup> United Nations. "Report of the Secretary-General on the United Nations Verification Mission in Colombia." *United Nations Mission in Colombia*, (April 2, 2018): 4

<sup>401</sup> Ibid.

<sup>402</sup> Kingma 2000, 28. Mentioned in: Bowd, Richard, and Alpaslan Özerdem. "How to Assess Social Reintegration of Ex-Combatants." *Journal of Intervention and Statebuilding* 7, no. 4 (2013): 456-457

## *Social Reintegration*

To assess the social reintegration process, the analysis has focused on the provision of protection to communities, transitional justice mechanisms and reconciliation between former combatants and communities affected by the conflict. Protection is needed to make sure that the reunification of former combatants and victims can take place in a secure environment, while the transitional justice mechanisms and reconciliation activities are crucial to address the grievances of victims and restore the deteriorated relationship between former FARC combatants and communities.

### 1. Protection to former FARC combatants and affected communities

Pacifying the country in the wake of the final peace agreement was one of the main priorities of the reintegration process. Significant efforts were made to expand protection measures and provide a secure environment to communities and former FARC combatants between 2017 and 2019. The number of annual protection schemes increased exponentially, from 104 in 2017 to over 300 in 2019, with a total of 440 implemented protection schemes by the end of 2019. Many of the bodyguards that were deployed in these protection schemes were former combatants that finished the training program of the National Protection Unit. In 2017, over 600 former FARC combatants completed this training and became active as bodyguards. In the two following years, another 1,174 bodyguards were hired for the close protection of high-risk individuals<sup>403</sup>. In addition, 350 soldiers and 30 police officers were stationed around each territorial area to ensure the safety of former FARC combatants engaged in the reintegration program<sup>404</sup>.

Despite these significant and expanding protection measures, violence against former FARC combatants and community members relentlessly continued. The assassination rates had already been highly problematic in 2017 with 31 murdered former FARC combatants and 121 killed social leaders, but overall violence only further increased with 77 former combatants and 86 social community leaders killed in 2019<sup>405</sup>. Shortly after the third anniversary of the signing of the final peace agreement in 2019, a total of 173 former combatants and 303 social leaders

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<sup>403</sup> United Nations. "United Nations Verification Mission in Colombia Report of the Secretary-General." *United Nations Mission in Colombia*, (December 26, 2019): 9

<sup>404</sup> United Nations. "Report of the Secretary-General on the United Nations Mission in Colombia." *United Nations Mission in Colombia*, September 26, (2017): 2

<sup>405</sup> United Nations. "United Nations Verification Mission in Colombia Report of the Secretary-General." *United Nations Mission in Colombia*, (December 26, 2019): 10



had been killed; a trend seemingly unaffected by installed protection schemes. Most of the subjects of this violence were people that protected their lands or were involved in land restitution schemes, people involved in drug crops eradication programs, local leaders and former FARC combatants. Within these categories, women, children, ethnic minorities and indigenous groups were disproportionately struck by the violence. The source of violent threat remained the same over the years. Perpetrators of violence were predominantly members of armed illegal groups such as the ELN, Clan del Golfo or dissident factions of the FARC that competed for the power vacuum and illegal economies that the FARC had left behind upon entering in the reintegration process. The areas that suffered most under the continued violence were Norte de Santander, Valle del Cauca, Caquetá and Antioquia, which were previously characterized by their weak state presence, a strong presence of the drug trade and previous prominence of the FARC.

## 2. Providing justice and stimulating reconciliation

Significant progress was made on the functioning of transitional justice mechanisms and national reconciliations. Since the approval of the Comprehensive System for Truth, Justice, Reparation and Non-Repetition on 14 November 2017, its three components have significantly expanded their capacity and have been effectively functioning. The Special Jurisdiction the body in charge of processing the cases of alleged crimes perpetrated during the conflict, was opened in March 2018 and by the end of 2019, over 12,000 former combatants had been registered at the body, over 6,000 cases had been submitted, 60,000 victims had been accredited and significant progress had been made on 7 cases emblematic for the conflict<sup>406</sup>. The Truth Commission opened its doors early in 2018. By the end of 2019, it had received over 900 dispositions from victims on crimes committed during the conflict and established 22 ‘houses of truth’ around the country to facilitate the disposition of testimonies and encourage the participation of victims<sup>407</sup>. Moreover, the Truth Commission organized numerous reconciliation activities in the territorial areas for training and reintegration through which victims and former combatants entered into a dialogue between 2018 and 2019. The Unit for the Search for Persons Deemed Missing was established in August 2018 and by December 2019

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<sup>406</sup> United Nations. “United Nations Verification Mission in Colombia Report of the Secretary-General.” *United Nations Mission in Colombia*, (December 26, 2019): 5

<sup>407</sup> United Nations. “United Nations Verification Mission in Colombia Report of the Secretary-General.” *United Nations Mission in Colombia*, (October 1, 2019): 4

more than 80 people had been hired to start investigating disappearances and 12 regional forums had been established around the country to gather more information on disappeared social leaders and former combatants<sup>408</sup>. Furthermore, the Catholic Church, the UN and the High Commissioner for Peace set up numerous big reconciliation programs to bring victims and former FARC combatants closer between 2017 and 2019<sup>409</sup>.

Notwithstanding these positive signs, notable threats to the social reintegration process remain. The most worrying development is the continuing violence against former FARC combatants and social leaders despite protection measures. This continued violence has also fueled polarization between the FARC party and the Colombian state as both parties increasingly claim that the other did not honor the peace agreement<sup>410</sup>. On the one hand, the state claims that former FARC combatants have not surrendered all of their assets while on the other hand, the FARC party holds that the state is not taking sufficient protection measures to protect former combatants and communities<sup>411</sup>.

### 3. Success

The desired outcome of social reintegration is to address the grievances of victims and create willingness in affected communities to accept former combatants<sup>412</sup>. After three years of the reintegration process, big steps were taken to achieve this objective. By the end of 2019, all three bodies of the Comprehensive Justice System were working efficiently in collaboration with affected communities and had processed thousands of cases, benefitted tens of thousands of victims and engaged 92 percent of the accredited former combatants. On top of that, reconciliation activities made a difference. The vast majority of former combatants remained engaged in the reintegration program while communities were increasingly willing to receive them<sup>413</sup>. A national survey confirmed these positive developments, as all 10,708 participants

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<sup>408</sup> United Nations. "United Nations Verification Mission in Colombia Report of the Secretary-General." *United Nations Mission in Colombia*, (December 26, 2019): 5

<sup>409</sup> United Nations. "United Nations Verification Mission in Colombia Report of the Secretary-General." *United Nations Mission in Colombia*, (December 26, 2019): 5

<sup>410</sup> United Nations. "United Nations Verification Mission in Colombia Report of the Secretary-General." *United Nations Mission in Colombia*, (October 1, 2019): 1

<sup>411</sup> United Nations. "United Nations Verification Mission in Colombia Report of the Secretary-General." *United Nations Mission in Colombia*, (December 26, 2019): 3

<sup>412</sup> Bowd, Richard, and Alpaslan Özerdem. "How to Assess Social Reintegration of Ex-Combatants." *Journal of Intervention and Statebuilding* 7, no. 4 (2013): 459

<sup>413</sup> United Nations. "United Nations Verification Mission in Colombia Report of the Secretary-General." *United Nations Mission in Colombia*, (December 26, 2019): 15

expressed their continued commitment to the reintegration process<sup>414</sup>. If we consider all these factors, the reintegration process has been relatively successful in addressing the grievances of victims and fostering reconciliation between affected communities and victims. However, note that the inefficiency of protection measures remains highly problematic. The persisting violence destabilizes the reintegration environment and sparks polarization, thereby jeopardizing the fragile reconciliation advances that have been made so far.

## **6.2 Alternative Explanations**

As we have seen, the reintegration process has resulted in both considerable achievements and persistent shortcomings. The peace agreement with the FARC was the blueprint for the reintegration of former FARC combatants and guided the process. Therefore, it would not be farfetched to assume that it played a significant role in the achievements and shortcomings of the reintegration of former FARC combatants. Crisis-induced learning, in turn, shaped the peace agreement. Accordingly, the successes and shortcomings of the peace agreement can be linked to the effectiveness of crisis-induced learning. However, it may be possible that other factors besides the peace agreement and crisis-induced learning caused successes and shortcomings of the reintegration process. Therefore, this section briefly goes over the achievements and persisting obstacles to the economic, political and social reintegration of former FARC combatants and debates whether these outcomes were a result of the peace agreement or caused by other factors.

### *Economic Reintegration*

Both the progress and limitations of the accreditation process can be primarily accredited to the peace agreement. The Office of the High Commissioner was the sole government body that reviewed the legal situation of former FARC combatants and had been put in charge of that task after the signing of the peace agreement. The delays in accrediting former FARC combatants were mainly due to a shortage of staff at the Commissioner's Office. However, while it cannot be directly linked to the peace agreement, the increasing dispersion of former FARC combatants around the country also presented a challenge to the accreditation process. After the legal period

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<sup>414</sup> United Nations. "United Nations Verification Mission in Colombia Report of the Secretary-General." *United Nations Mission in Colombia*, (June 27, 2019): 5

for the territorial areas had ended, many former combatants moved to other parts of the country where more income-generating opportunities were present or for other reasons, making the identification of accreditation candidates and notification of their legal status more complicated.

The same accounts for the successes and shortcomings of education. The peace agreement was directly responsible for the progress made on education, as the Arando la Educación program from the Ministry of Education was by far the biggest provider of education to former combatants. Admittedly, much of the funding for this program came from the Norwegian government and private universities also educated former FARC combatants, but the reintegration provisions of the peace agreement had actively encouraged the engagement of the international community and the private sector in the Colombian peace process and can therefore still be mainly held responsible. However, just as in the case of accreditation, a part of the shortcomings for education can be accredited to the changing geography of reintegration making it harder for former FARC combatants to access education in remote areas.

Most productive projects were approved by the National Reintegration Council or created individually by former FARC combatants that used their reintegration allowance. Many of the already existing productive organizations that employed former FARC combatants opened their doors to them through projects established in the peace agreement. The main shortcoming of economic reintegration, the lack of available land for productive projects, can also be ascribed chiefly to the peace agreement. The National Land Agency, the body established in the peace agreement for the allocation of land, made slow progress providing plots to former FARC combatants. If we consider these factors, both the achievements and shortcomings in the creation of productive projects can be attributed to the reintegration provisions of the peace agreement. However, the fact that 40 percent of former FARC combatants had still not been engaged in income-generating activities by the end of 2019 might have been caused by continuing stigmatization against former FARC combatants by employers. Whether this is the case, would require further investigation.

### *Political Reintegration*

The causal relationship between the provisions of the peace agreement and the progress made on the protection and participation of former FARC combatants requires more nuance. Concerning the protection of the FARC party, former combatants in politics or political candidates in general, a clear line can be drawn between the start of the reintegration process

and violent incidents reported before and during elections. All elections since the signing of the peace agreement have been significantly more peaceful than elections before the agreement. Despite this trend, the peaceful nature of these elections could also have been influenced by developments related to armed illegal groups. During the congressional elections of March 2018, the Colombian state and the ELN had agreed on a “unilateral halt to all violence” from 9 to 13 March which could have contributed to the exceptionally peaceful elections<sup>415</sup>. However, the presidential elections of 2018 and the departmental elections of 2019 did not include such truces with the ELN or other armed illegal groups while consistently experiencing less violence. This gives us reason to believe that the relatively peaceful nature of the elections can be accredited to the peace agreement.

The participation of former FARC combatants paints a different picture. The FARC party and politically active former FARC combatants experienced delays in funding and a lack of technical support on various occasions. However, despite these obstacles, former FARC combatants participated actively and consistently in elections since the signing of the final peace agreement. Therefore, it could be more accurate to state that the strong political participation of former FARC combatants came to be *despite* shortcomings of the reintegration provisions, and not necessarily because of them.

### *Social Reintegration*

Both the achievements and shortcomings of the social reintegration process may be primarily attributed to the peace agreement. The three components of transitional justice mechanisms had been created through the peace agreement and its effective strategy to encourage the participation of former combatants and involve victims in the provision of justice may be held responsible for this positive outcome. Initially, there were worries that regime change after the presidential elections would increase tensions again or drop support for the peace agreement<sup>416</sup>. However, when President Duque came to office, he continued the line of Santos and consistently affirmed his commitment to the peace agreement. Therefore, we can assume that reconciliation or the lack thereof was most likely not caused by changes in the political climate.

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<sup>415</sup> United Nations. “Report of the Secretary-General on the United Nations Verification Mission in Colombia.” *United Nations Mission in Colombia*, (April 2, 2018): 13

<sup>416</sup> United Nations. “United Nations Verification Mission in Colombia Report of the Secretary-General.” *United Nations Mission in Colombia*, (December 26, 2018): 8

The successes and shortcomings of protecting former combatants and communities are also chiefly linked to the peace agreement. Even though the strategy of the peace agreement was not as efficient in providing protection as in establishing functioning transitional justice mechanisms, the agreement had explicitly included measures to protect the regions most affected by the conflict, groups disproportionately vulnerable to violence and to prevent other armed illegal groups from taking the FARC's place. Therefore, the peace agreement's ineffective approach in realizing these objectives is rather a shortcoming of the agreement, than the result of an alternative factor.

## **VII. Conclusion**

By the end of 2019, three years after the start of the reintegration process, serious progress was made on the reintegration of former FARC combatants. The vast majority of former FARC combatants remained committed to the reintegration process and were engaged in income-generating initiatives, productive projects, or preparing for the job market through education or vocational training. The elections between 2017 and 2019 were consistently among the most peaceful and inclusive in decades and actively engaged former FARC combatants. Transitional justice mechanisms made significant progress in engaging former FARC combatants and providing justice to victims. Moreover, affected communities were increasingly willing to receive former FARC combatants.

If we make up the balance after three years, the reintegration process has brought the desired outcome of national reconciliation and peaceful livelihoods considerably closer. The peace agreement of 2016 was the primary responsible actor for this outcome through its provisions on educational programs, protection schemes, vocational training, reconciliation activities and the Comprehensive Justice System. Crisis-induced learning, in turn, was the mechanism that shaped the peace agreement. Throughout the peace negotiations with the FARC, President Santos systematically learned from the pitfalls of the AUC's failed reintegration process and the rejection of the initial peace agreement in the 2016 referendum. This way, crisis-induced learning significantly shaped the provisions of the final peace agreement. If we consider that the peace agreement has brought the desired outcome of reintegration considerably closer, and that the peace agreement itself was a product of crisis-induced learning, we can conclude that crisis-induced learning contributed significantly to the successful reintegration of former FARC combatants.

It is essential to underline that formidable challenges to the reintegration of former FARC combatants remain, such as the evolving geography of reintegration, increasing polarization and continued violence against former FARC combatants and social leaders. Improved protection measures will be vital for the long-term success of the reintegration process, as the persisting violence exacerbates other shortcomings and polarizes public opinion on the peace process. Notwithstanding these obstacles, the notable advances in the reintegration of former FARC combatants are promising signs that Colombia has finally found a way to consolidate peace.

The findings presented in this thesis have contributed to the academic literature on crisis-induced learning, the reintegration of former combatants and the Colombian conflict. The thesis has used data from the UN Mission in Colombia to carry out a unique analysis of the reintegration process of former FARC combatants which can be useful for policymakers, NGO's and state actors involved in the process. Limitations of this study have been the scarcity of data on the reconciliation aspect of social reintegration and the ongoing nature of the reintegration process. More fieldwork on the perceptions of former FARC combatants and affected communities would be needed to corroborate the state of reconciliation and gauge the long-term impact of the reintegration process. Furthermore, it is important to note that factors beyond crisis-induced learning and the final peace agreement also had an impact the performance of the reintegration process, such as the increasing dispersion of former combatants around Colombia.



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