

CONFLICTS

The 2016 Peace Agreement set in motion processes of transformation serving both to create new conflict lines and intensify existing ones. Stark land inequality and the long-running marginalisation of rural, Indigenous, and Afro-Colombian communities endure. In areas the FARC left, armed groups now contest border corridors and illicit economies. Extractive and infrastructure projects tied to global markets fuel new disputes and local resistance. The end of civil war has also brought to the fore struggles for social inclusion on the part of peasants, women, ethnic and LGBTI minorities, as well as ex-combatants. Rising threats to, and indeed killings of, social leaders show how territorial, environmental, and recognition conflicts overlap and how contested the Peace Agreement's inscribed hope remains.



THE THREE PILLARS OF PEACE



PHYSICAL INTEGRITY

Colombia's physical-violence indicators were on the wane until 2022 regardless of source consulted, but security gains remain uneven and fragile. While many urban areas are relatively safe, territories vacated by the FARC have seen competition among residual guerrillas, criminal networks, and paramilitary successors. Targeted killings of community leaders, progressive politicians, and ex-combatants, forced displacement, and confinement persist in these hotspots. Where illicit economies dominate, civilians experience violent coercion rather than public security. Durable safety requires advancing rural reform, substitute economies, and territorial governance, not only state security presence.



HUMAN RIGHTS

Despite a long democratic tradition and international commitments made to safeguarding human rights, conditions on the ground remain difficult. Colombia is especially dangerous for trade unionists, social leaders, journalists, and human rights defenders. Indigenous and Afro-descendant communities are disproportionately targeted, and impunity discourages reporting. Protests have amplified claims for social equality and participation, but state responses ineffectively alternate between dialogue and confrontation. Implementation of the Peace Agreement's human rights provisions is slow and uneven, especially in rural areas – where limited access to justice, weak guarantees on collective and individual rights, clientelism, and restrictions on civic space erode confidence in state institutions.



CONFLICT TRANSFORMATION

Formally, the rule of law and national bodies such as courts, the Attorney General's Office, and houses of justice are central to dispute resolution and rights protection. Yet, surveys continue to reveal little popular trust in them; their presence is also highly irregular, especially in rural areas. Where these institutions are absent or greeted with suspicion, Indigenous authorities and other local governance mechanisms take on a greater role. Armed actors can step in to regulate everyday life where and when the opportunity arises, too. Unmet needs, weak state services, and the reshaping of armed groups in the wake of the Peace Agreement's signing have turned a national war into diverse local conflicts, each with their own mix of state, community, and illegal forms of order.

NOTIONS OF PEACE

For our Survey Results in Colombia scan:



Fieldwork done between 2019-2022