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THE ARMED CONFLICT AND PEACEBUILDING IN COLOMBIA

The study analyzes the processes that have contributed to the configuration of Colombia's internal armed conflict and to the different peace proposals promoted by national governments for the last 40 years. It explores the causes and consequences of the armed conflict and the implications of building a culture of peace for the Colombian people. This is achieved through a review of the theoretical, contextual, and historical primary and secondary sources relevant to these two thematic axes. Finally, proposals to be undertaken under bilateral agreements for the end of the armed conflict and for a fair and lasting peace are outlined.

Key words: *internal armed conflict, political negotiation, peace agreement, post-conflict, total peace.*

Original article

INTRODUCTION. The Colombian internal or non-international armed conflict¹ is the focus of this article rather than acts of violence; however, this aspect also finds mention because an armed conflict, by definition, entails much violence. This distinction has been established because for addressing violence in Colombia, we must start with the origins of the nation-state at the beginning of the 19th century, after the declaration of independence from Spanish rule, which took place from 1810 to 1819, breaking away from three centuries of colonial rule. However, this gave rise to multiple civil wars throughout the 19th century. Therefore, a focus on violence would excessively broaden the scope of this article; hence, it explores the configuration of the peace processes proposed from mid-20th century up till the present time, when an ideologically leftist government gained power by democratic means and made a proposal for building “total peace.”

After 52 years of armed conflict and 4 years of political negotiation, the Colombian govern-

ment signed an agreement with the self-styled Revolutionary Armed Forces of Colombia – People's Army (hereinafter FARC-EP), the continent's oldest guerrilla, in 2016, during President Juan Manuel Santos' second term (2014–2018). This agreement succeeded in officially demobilizing 13,193 men and women who took up arms against the state and FARC-EP transitioned to a political party with voting representation in the Congress of the Republic. However, the full realization of this process was paused or slowed during President Iván Duque's four-year term (2018–2022). According to the Institute for Development and Peace Studies (2022), this resulted in an upsurge of violence after the assassination of 1,355 leaders and human rights defenders and the death of 340 veterans who had signed the peace agreement; 345 massacres happened across the country, among other consequences, thereby contributing to a fraction of people resuming war and violent attacks, now as *peace dissidents*.

The peace process that the Colombian state has undertaken with the FARC-EP is not the only one of its kind. Peace or demobilization activities for liberal armed groups who had confronted conservative groups took place during the 1950s. Since 1981, efforts were made to reach lasting peace with left-wing insurgent armed groups like

¹ As per the definition provided by the International Committee of the Red Cross // International Committee of the Red Cross. URL: <https://www.icrc.org/spa/assets/files/other/opinion-paper-armed-conflict-es.pdf> (accessed 30 October 2022).

the April 19 Movement guerrilla and factions of other guerrilla groups such as the National Liberation Army and the Popular Liberation Army, the Workers Revolutionary Party of Colombia (PRT, for its Spanish acronym), and the Quintín Lame Movement. This contributed to the framing and enactment of a new political constitution in 1991, alongside the Citizens' Movement (mostly comprising young people), known as *Séptima papeleta*, leading to the establishment of peace as a fundamental right. Nonetheless, the post-conflict context was even worse than war, even with the paramilitary demobilization of 2005 – a context that focused on the impacts of war, including military events, victims, and the judicialization of political leaders who were involved with paramilitary groups, among others. Therefore, the topic of armed conflict and the post-conflict scenario in terms of peace is relevant, specifically in terms of differentiating the meaning, scope, challenges, and possibilities for Colombian society, implying the involvement of various players, including academia.

This national dialog on the post-conflict scenario and peace building is paramount to break Colombian society away from the war discourse and imaginaries and focus on the prospects for lasting peace – of a culture of peace as a real possibility.

PURPOSE AND OBJECTIVES OF THE RESEARCH. This article will first conduct a historical review of the Colombian non-international armed conflict, introducing the reader to its origin, development, and consequences. Also, the main drivers of the armed conflict in Colombia will be assessed, reviewing the different peace scenarios arranged by the Colombian state during the last 40 years. This provides a glimpse to the possibilities and challenges posed in building total peace – as announced by the new government, as well as the implementation of a peace agreement signed with the FARC-EP, the negotiation with all illegal armed groups, not only the current guerrillas.

METHODOLOGY. A historiographical method was adopted for collecting and analyzing primary and secondary document sources, both official and from the civil society and scholars. These sources present the sociopolitical context in which illegal armed groups and the peace processes adopted by the Colombian state have emerged through four decades for highlighting its sequentiality and the factors that have disadvantaged the attainment of peace despite it being a national goal.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Historical Review of Colombian Non-International Armed Conflicts

The origin and causes of today's Colombian internal armed conflict give rise to varied stances, as reflected by the 14 documents produced by the Historical Commission on the Conflict and Its Victims¹ (Comisión Histórica del Conflicto y sus Víctimas). This has been set up within the framework of the negotiations between the Colombian State and the FARC-EP in Havana (Cuba), in a document titled *Contribution to the Understanding of the Colombian Armed Conflict*, which includes different positions and views of the origins and causes of the armed conflict that the country has witnessed over 52 years. As pointed out by Daniel Pécaut in this document, “even with events regarded as significant historical ruptures, such as great revolutions and major wars, that force us to consider, without any doubt or hesitation, that there is a ‘before’ and ‘after,’ the discussion on the origins or the multiple causes is never-ending” (Comisión Histórica del Conflicto y sus Víctimas, 2015, p. 8).

This was the singular peace agreement signed and enforced without major setbacks. Since beyond achieving an equal distribution of bureaucracy and the national budget between the two traditional political parties, there have been almost no changes in the socioeconomic reality of the Colombian population.

The Origin of the Colombian Guerrillas

The exclusionary character of this pact provides the context and causes for the rise of subversive groups in Colombia because it allowed no possibility for other political expressions, in addition to the effects of the precarious economic and social situation suffered by a high percentage of the Colombian population. During the period referred to as *La Violencia* (the Violence) in Colombian historiography, liberal guerrillas and illegal armed groups confronted conservative armed groups, such as the *Pájaros* and *Chulavitas*, in a fratricidal war. It resulted in multiple “ruthless events like massacres, dismemberments, burning of towns, filling the country with thirst for revenge, grievances and humiliations that are very difficult to forget” (Comisión de la Verdad, 2022, p. 56) between 1946 and 1957. However, as part of the peacemaking proposals, first proposed by

¹ Made up by 14 public figures, including academics, historians, sociologists, among others, namely: Eduardo Pizarro Leongómez; Víctor Manuel Moncayo Cruz; Sergio de Zubiría Samper; Gustavo Duncan; Jairo Estrada Alvarez; Darío Fajardo M; Javier Giraldo Moreno, S.J; Jorge Giraldo Ramírez; Francisco Gutiérrez Sanín; Alfredo Molano Bravo; Daniel Pécaut; Vicente Torrijos R.; Renán Vega Cantor, and María Emma Wills Obregón.

General Rojas Pinilla and then by Alberto Lleras Camargo (the first National Front president), the liberal guerrillas signed an amnesty petition to join civic life. These are processes that failed to achieve the final goal of peace, essentially because of the continuation of violence against those who had been demobilized. As María Victoria Uribe (1991: par. 9) asserts, “Once amnesties were granted to liberal guerrillas, armed groups of conservatives were formed, such as the *Patriotas* and *Contrachusmeros*, which were responsible for preventing the return of amnestied guerrillas to their towns and parcels of land.” In particular, some of their leaders, like Guadalupe Salcedo and Charro Negro, were murdered, in addition to the military attack ordered by Guillermo León Valencia’s government (1962–1966) on the rural areas of Marquetalia, Rio Chiquito, Guayabero, and El Pato in 1964. The aim was to put an end to what the conservative political leaders had defined as *independent republics*, where a group of demobilized peasants from the liberal guerrillas had settled down to get back to their civil life. This resulted in what is currently known as the Revolutionary Armed Forces of Colombia, People’s Army (FARC-EP), a guerrilla that is mostly rural in origin.

As part of the social unrest experienced in the country during the National Front era (from 1958 to 1974), different forms of social protest prevailed, including civic strikes; stoppages; rallies; and land occupation by students, workers, and rural residents. This crisis was mostly in response to various social problems related to increased rates of public services, unemployment, education, health, and property, among others, which according to Archila (1997, p. 192), added up to “3031, with an average of 178 per year, something like a demonstration every other day”. Other insurgent groups like the ELN emerged in the national context. Although its origin dates back to the FARC-EP (1964), it is not only composed of rural residents but also of “young students, most of them members of the Youth Liberal Revolutionary Movement (MRL)” (Vargas, 2014), as well as some priests like Father Gregorio Manuel Pérez Martínez (of Spanish origin) and Father Camilo Torres Restrepo, who joined the group in 1965 but died shortly after during a fight in Patio Cemento (San Vicente de Chucurí).

This panorama became more complex, on the one hand, due to the presence and impact of the April 19 Movement (M19), a mostly urban insurgent group, “founded during the elections of April 19, 1970, when General Gustavo Rojas Pinilla was defeated in the polls by Misael Pastrana, in an election marked by the shade of fraud” (El Espectador, 2016).

The Origins of Paramilitary Groups

These groups, whose aim was to serve as counterinsurgency spots in different regions of the national territory (Magdalena Medio, Urabá, Córdoba, Antioquia, and the Eastern Plains), mostly in rural areas, were economically supported by landowners, farmers, business owners, and drug traffickers, as well as some servicepeople by providing the groups training, guns, or complicity in their acts. Although their actions were allegedly aimed at counteracting the presence and action of armed insurgency, several reports and judicial investigations have confirmed that “the armed counterinsurgency served to dismantle social and popular movements and physically exterminate most of their leadership since the second half of the 1980s” (Comisión Histórica del Conflicto y sus Víctimas, 2015, p. 310). This was also seen in the genocide suffered by the Patriotic Union, a left-wing party founded in 1984, as part of the peace agreements between Belisario Betancourt’s government and the FARC-EP in 1982, when most of its members were murdered and survivors were forced into exile or made to give away their documents, receiving death threats if they failed to do so. Thus, according to the Historical Commission on the Conflict and Its Victims, “the growth of paramilitary groups could be sustained with the support of four types of agents: a) insubordination of legal rural elites, who felt unprotected by the state against kidnapping and extortion; b) the leading role of illegal elites, especially the illicit drug mafia; c) the involvement of large sectors of the political class; and d) the engagement of members of state security agencies” (Comisión Histórica del Conflicto y sus Víctimas, 2015, p. 65).

Drug Trafficking and the Armed Conflict

In addition to the presence and influence of insurgent and paramilitary groups, another factor also worsened the armed conflict – drug trafficking, a phenomenon that surreptitiously burst into the Colombian reality in the 1970s. The national government and society paid little importance to this activity at the beginning, without considering its consequences in the long term. According to the Historical Commission on the Conflict and Its Victims, Colombia entered “the transnational corporate economy of illicit drugs, first through marijuana cultivation in the second half of the 1970s, followed by cocaine production from the 1980s onward” (Comisión Histórica del Conflicto y sus Víctimas, 2015, p. 12).

During the 1980s, in light of the military coups and the implementation of extradition to the US, drug cartels – specifically, the boss of the Medellín Cartel, Pablo Escobar – waged an all-out war against the Colombian state, murdering judges,

police officers, political leaders, journalists, and public officers. They attacked entities such as the DAS, which has since disappeared, and the headquarters of the *El Espectador* newspaper, with car bombs and explosives, among other methods. This first phase of the war on drugs ended in 1993, after Gonzalo Rodríguez Gacha's and Pablo Escobar's deaths, in 1989 and 1993, respectively, and the capture and extradition of the Rodríguez Orejuela brothers and the Ochoa Clan. However, the drug trafficking trade seems to continue unabated; it did not fade away as a business strategy. The proliferation of cartels smaller than those in the 1980s is based on the cooptation of different armed groups or their factions, besides the recycling of subjects who have been demobilized from armed groups to form criminal gangs that control the cocaine production route and commercialization. These, while the armed conflict goes on, nowadays refusing to disappear, and aimed at transforming into a situation of violence led by the Bacrim, driven by drug trafficking. This affects not only rural areas but also urban zones because drug micro-trafficking has gradually become one of the leading issues in most cities of the country.

Scenarios of peace approached by the Colombian state during the non-international armed conflicts

Since mid-20th century, Colombia has developed several remedies for armed violence and building a peaceful society with varied results. These range from amnesties and pardons, bipartisan agreements, and political negotiation processes that have developed in the last four decades with different armed actors whose belligerent status has been recognized, tacitly or explicitly.

President Gustavo Rojas Pinilla granted the first amnesty to Liberal guerrillas, as already mentioned, after taking power in a coup d'état in 1953. His intention was to stop the partisan violence that had plagued the country since the assassination of Liberal party leader Jorge Eliecer Gaitán. This amnesty was granted for political crimes, understood according to Decree 1823 of 1954 as "all those committed by Colombians whose motive was to attack the government, or that could be explained by overreaching in the support or adherence to it, or by political aversion or sectarianism" which had been "committed prior to January 1st of the present year," that is, 1954.

In addition to the clean slate for the military and guerrillas involved in the armed confrontation between liberals and conservatives, impunity favored those who encouraged the armed confrontation, such as liberal and conservative political leaders, priests, bishops, and landowners. Some of them even got political or economic ben-

efits from the war because it has also been a tradition to make visible the perpetrators of the violent acts – recognized as the direct material authors of such matters – but to make invisible intellectual authors, who also turn out to be the real beneficiaries of the chaos generated by violence.

The same pact through which the leaders of the liberal and conservative parties created the National Front was understood as a proposal with which they explicitly intended to lay the foundations to achieve peace, besides putting a stop to what they called dictatorship in clear reference to the government of General Rojas Pinilla. This orientation is repeatedly found in several sections of the text of the Pact of Sitges signed on July 20, 1957, by Laureano Gómez and Alberto Lleras Camargo in the city of Sitges (Spain): "We Colombians need, above all, a policy of peace, better yet, a policy that produces peace (...) everything that is proposed for the consideration of the parties has no other goal than to achieve peace for Colombia and to secure it lastingly, making it the first objective of the two traditional forces of republican opinion" (Pacto de Sitges, 1957).

Among the benefits that this two-party system of political power sharing in the Colombian state would bring, it was predicted that "with it, it is possible to glimpse new days of national greatness, of perfect justice and of the fertile and calm peace that equity engenders" (Pacto de Sitges, 1957). However, it was a pact that left out other political expressions and camouflaged oblivion as impunity for crimes committed during the era of Violence, since the only attack that was carried out was against General Rojas Pinilla for "corruption and misuse of power" (Valencia, 2010). Finally, a pact that focused its efforts more on the bureaucratic distribution of power than on resolving social gaps "fell short in perfecting democracy and, above all, in achieving the ideal of modern society that it proclaimed" (Archila, 1997, p. 10).

When in power, Alberto Lleras Camargo, the first president of the National Front, proposed individual and collective amnesties to all those who surrendered their weapons and demobilized, thus seeking to stop the wave of violence that was unleashed despite the amnesty granted to liberal guerrillas during the government of Rojas Pinilla. Although it had reduced the violence, it did not disappear for the following two reasons. i) The communist and other liberal-oriented guerrillas remained on the scene because they had retreated to several rural areas that had proposed a cessation of armed hostilities but kept their weapons to defend themselves from any attack, given their distrust of the governments in power. ii) The phenomenon of banditry that emerged in 1954

because of, among other causes, the failure of the reinsertion of amnestied ex-combatants into civilian life because they were neither given sufficient opportunities to rebuild their life projects nor the security they required, especially when considering that the so-called *Pájaros* and *Chulavitas* continued to operate and unleash a persecution that ended with the death of many demobilized combatants. This contributed to survivors reenlisting and reintegrating armed groups or the hiring of their services as assassins by “the upper and middle strata of local society, i.e., tyrants, party leaders, landowners, farmers and merchants who supported them to defend their properties, to homogenize villages, to pressure the purchase or sale of land, to buy coffee and other products at a lower price” (Betancour, 1990, p. 62).

Almost 20 years later, in 1981, and within the framework of the counterinsurgency struggle that had been taking place in the country since the mid-1960s, President Julio César Turbay Ayala (1978–1982) granted an amnesty through Law 37 of 1981 for all “Colombians, authors, or participants in acts that constitute rebellion, sedition or insurrection, and crimes related to the above, committed prior to the entry into force of this Law. The amnesty does not include cases in which the crimes of rebellion, sedition, or insurrection are related to kidnapping, extortion, homicide committed outside combat, arson, poisoning of water sources or deposits, and, in general, acts of ferocity or barbarism” (Art. 1, Law 37, 1981).

As soon as Belisario Betancur came to power in 1982, he enacted Law 35 of 1982, “by which an amnesty is decreed and standards regarding the peace restoration and preservation are set out.” Besides, he established a peace commission composed of Margarita Vidal, Alberto Rojas Puyo, and John Agudelo on the governmental side and Alfonso Cano, Manuel Marulanda Vélez, Jaime Guarcas, Raúl Reyes, and Jacobo Arenas on the FARC-EP’s side. This helped achieve the signing of the Uribe Accord, a document containing a bilateral ceasefire between the government and the FARC-EP for a year, among other aspects. During this timeframe, the guerrilla would return to civilian life, beginning through the establishment and exercise of a political movement called the Patriotic Union.

Further, within this general framework of the peace process implemented by Belisario Betancur’s government, other dialogs were established and agreements were made with the M19, Workers Self-defense Movement (ADO, for its Spanish acronym), and Popular Liberation Army (EPL) guerrillas. This led to truces and ceasefires, as well as a social investment to solve the social problems

that affected the Colombian people, besides opening up to the political participation of several social sectors.

Although no peace process promoted by Belisario Betancur could be fulfilled during his term, when Virgilio Barco took office in the 1986–1990 period, he resumed negotiations with M19 and the EPL, reaching a political agreement with the first, aimed at its full demobilization. This could be achieved on March 9, 1990, in the town of Corinto (Cauca); the return to civil life meant the transformation of the group into the M19 Democratic Alliance political movement. No agreement at all could be reached with the EPL.

The consensus established with the M19 focused on “the administration of justice, drug trafficking, electoral reform, public investments in conflict areas and, of course, peace, public order and the normalization of citizens’ lives” (Naciones Unidas, 1990), to cite just a few specifics of the Political Agreement. The M19 set out that “as of today, all armed fronts have been demobilized, and its members have returned to the country’s institutional life. Likewise, it confirmed that all weapons, munitions, and war equipment have been handed in to the Socialist International Committee designated for this purpose” (Item No. 8, Agreement Between the Colombian state and M19, 1990). Further, it was agreed that “effective today, pardon will be granted by the national government to M19 members, initiating the agreed social rehabilitation and productive programs” (Item No. 8, Agreement Between the Colombian state and M19, 1990).

During César Gaviria’s presidential term (1990–1994), a national constituent assembly was held, and the new 1991 Constitution was developed, with the participation of 19 demobilized members of the M19 group, with the representation of women, indigenous people, and Afro-descendant communities, among others. As established in its text, “peace is a compulsory right and duty” (Art. 22, Political Constitution of Colombia 1991).

As the President, César Gaviria continued along the path opened by Belisario Betancur of political negotiation processes with armed groups. Under Betancur’s government, the Workers Revolutionary Party (PRT), the Popular Liberation Army (EPL), and two of its dissenting groups (the Francisco Garnica Front and the Ernesto Rojas Commandos), the Quintín Lame Movement, the Socialist Renewal Current (CSR) – an ELN dissenting group, and the Medellín Popular Militia were demobilized. Overall, as per Nullvalue (1994), “during President Gaviria’s term, a total of 3,749 guerrillas were demobilized,” in addition to 1,146 mobilized individuals

from other groups. Through Decree 1686 of 1991, this process also led to the lifting of the siege imposed since 1984, as a result of the disturbance of public order. However, the new context legally required “different peace initiatives for rebel groups that had shown their will to reintegrate to civilian life” (Decree 213, 1991).

The government signed agreements with the abovementioned armed groups, which in general terms envisaged pardon for political crimes and related offenses, subject to the demobilization of the armed structure, weapon surrender and the explicit manifestation of their will to withdraw from armed combat and return to civilian life. Several commitments were undertaken by the Colombian state, associated with the former combatants’ full integration into civil society, including their connection with health services, psychosocial care programs, employment or productive projects, education, housing, property, security, and political involvement. The remaining commitments were focused on social investment, mostly in the areas of influence of these groups, as well as the funding of actions driven by former combatants to disseminate the content of the agreements and promote peacebuilding and reconciliation sceneries and processes, among others¹.

Subsequently, the national government sought dialog channels, both with the FARC-EP and the ELN, and these efforts failed to succeed for other reasons; for instance, the proposals made by the guerrillas to carry out dialogs were ignored by both the government and sectors of Colombian society. The FARC-EP was seeking the dispossession of a vast territory of the department of Meta, whereas the ELN focused on the undertaking of a National Convention with the active involvement of civil society.

During Andrés Pastrana’s 1998–2002 presidential term, a new negotiation chapter began with the two major Colombian guerrillas: the FARC-EP and ELN. They first undertook the peace process in El Caguán, being at the negotiating table for approximately 1 year and 5 months (August 7, 1999, to February 20, 2002), and even establishing a thematic agenda. Nonetheless, reaching a final agreement was impossible because of the lack of political will from both parties, expressed through the increase in armed confrontation and the strengthening of the military component.

The government was far from enjoying better luck with the ELN. As focus was placed on negotiations with the FARC-EP, increased attention was

not paid to this process, which, in addition to the military actions of this organization, ended up blurring the intentions of sitting down to negotiate. Thus, finally, during Pastrana’s presidency, despite the stir caused by the peace negotiations, the results only showed the path to war. This is the reason why the proposal made by presidential candidate Álvaro Uribe Vélez for his 2002–2006 term helped him win the presidency of the republic. He was committed to putting an end to subversion, finally achieving the demobilization of the United Self-Defense Forces of Colombia (AUC) during his two presidential terms, until 2010. This could be achieved through a political negotiation process that – according to the Institute for Development and Peace Studies (10. Instituto de Estudios para el Desarrollo y la Paz, 2013), which cites information from the Office of the High Commissioner for Peace – led to the “demobilization of 31,671 combatants and the surrender of 18,051 weapons throughout the 38 demobilization processes conducted during Uribe Vélez’s presidential terms.”

As for insurgency, President Álvaro Uribe Vélez geared toward a frontal assault strategy in parallel with epistolary conversations or confidential meetings, both with the FARC-EP and the ELN, during both of his terms in office, not going beyond exploratory actions whose goal was to look for the conditions aimed at a negotiation process that never crystallized (El Tiempo, 2010).

This long rummage through negotiation processes of the internal armed conflict reached the point of signing a final agreement to end war by the Colombian state and the FARC-EP after a four-year political negotiation with Juan Manuel Santos’s government. This negotiation officially ended on October 16, 2012, during his first presidential term (2010–2014). Despite all types of vicissitudes, including the opposition of a large sector driven by the discourse and actions of former President Álvaro Uribe Vélez and the skepticism of the vast majority of Colombian society resulting from the repeated failures of the previous negotiation processes with this guerrilla, the first peace agreement was signed in Cartagena on September 26, 2016. This put an end to 52 years of armed confrontation with this guerrilla. However, the Agreement was subjected to a plebiscite in which people were consulted on their approval. The victory of the “NO” side with a narrow difference through this citizen participation mechanism forced the government to renegotiate, taking the objections and requirements established by opposing forces into account. Finally, a new document including the reform of several points was agreed to and signed on November 24 of the same

¹ These commitments were made explicit in the Agreements or Political Agreement signed between the demobilized armed groups and the government in power.

year in Bogotá. It was ratified by the House of Representatives and the Senate on November 29 and 30.

The Final Agreement to End the Armed Conflict and Build a Stable and Lasting Peace, *Acuerdo de Paz de la Habana* [Peace Agreement of Havana, hereafter] includes most of the topics considered in previous peace treaties, particularly issues related to insurgent groups reintegrated into society in the 1990s. It formulates the victims' right to know the truth, obtain justice, and receive total compensation and guarantees of non-repetition and also addresses the drug trafficking issue that has been dealt with since the paramilitary demobilization in 2005. Similarly, the public agenda, again includes topics such as the overall development of Colombia's agricultural activities, closure of historical gaps between urban and rural populations, political participation, not only by FARC-EPs ex-combatants, but also by different political forces, aimed at overcoming bipartisanship of politics and enhancing democracy and dismantling and "fighting against the criminal organizations responsible for murdering and slaughtering" (*Acuerdo de Paz de la Habana*, 2016, p. 8). All these, serve the economic and political interests of drug traffickers, landowners, businessmen, or warlords and various groups that obtained revenue from a war that should end if the desire is to build a "stable and lasting peace", as the Agreement declares, and provides the solution to the illicit drugs issue, that is, a comprehensive approach to illicit crop cultivation, drug dealing, and drug abuse topics.

A key point to be considered on this agreement is the creation of the *Comisión para el Esclarecimiento de la Verdad, la Convivencia y la No Repetición* [Commission for the Clarification of Truth, Coexistence, and Non-repetition], which was temporarily responsible for contributing to better understand "the truth of what had happened and make violations and offenses public and providing a full explanation to the community about how complex the conflict is. It also promoted the identification of the victims and accountability of those who took part directly or indirectly in the armed conflict" (*Acuerdo de Paz de la Habana*, 2016, p. 129). This requirement was fulfilled by a final report titled *Hay futuro si hay verdad* [There Is Future If There Is Truth].

Its importance lies in unveiling not only the actual perpetrators of the victimization events but also the brains behind it, thus exposing the identity and interests of many participants in the conflict whose blame for crimes and offenses, by action or inaction, was forgotten with impunity. Likewise, the community should assume part of the responsibility because, in such a long-term con-

flict, the borders of legality, illegality, justice, and crime are traversed. This generated a relationship interweaving multiple layers of time and space, allowing the execution of violent actions that ended people's lives and caused property dispossession, forced disappearances, and kidnapping. As the Agreement states, it all resulted in "unparalleled suffering and damage to our people throughout history" (*Acuerdo de Paz de la Habana*, 2016, p. 114) in the context of the armed conflict.

When Iván Duque came into office (2018–2022), the lack of interest and willingness from the state to fill in the blanks left by the demobilized FARC ex-combatants was evident. Duque showed two different sides: externally, he showed himself as a strong advocate for the peace process. However, within the country, he signaled a change from what had been established using the *Paz con Legalidad* [Legal Peace] message, which was a designation that was different from the one stated in the Agreement. From the beginning of his administration, he expressed serious doubts about the *Justicia Especial para la Paz* [Special Justice for Peace], a transitional justice mechanism created to legally deal with guerrillas, soldiers, and citizens that participated directly in the war. Throughout his administration, he disregarded and hid the labor of national and international bodies that worked toward ending the conflict. He even failed to attend the presentation of the Truth Commission's final report on June 28, 2022 (Comisión de la Verdad, 2022).

Gustavo Petro Urrego, an economist and politician who militated in the M19 when he was young, became president of the republic on August 7, 2022. He proposed the development of a national dialog called *Paz Total* [Total Peace], aiming to end the armed conflict once and for all and overcome the structural elements that had supported it. The proposal optimally includes the implementation of the Peace Agreement with FARC-EPs and political negotiations with the ELN guerrilla, other unlawful, armed groups, and all social sectors to achieve a nationwide agreement that sets the stage for building a complete and lasting peace. Hope is alive that this understanding will spread across all social sectors, including those that had underpinned their political and economic power in the war. Finally, "peace should be an integral set of long-term actions, rather than strategies guided by the heat of the moment" (Cabrera-Suárez, 2016).

CONCLUSIONS. The history of Colombia as a nation-state has been marked by internal armed conflict from 1810 until today, leading different governments to make political deals in the interest of peace. From the mid-20th century until today,

because of the agreement between liberals and conservatives created by the National Front, eight¹ peace treaties have been signed by the Colombian state and insurgents, paramilitary groups, and urban militia. Most of these commitments contained political, economic, and social change initiatives pretending to overcome structural causes related to social inequity and expansion of democracy by ensuring engagement for leftist parties and other political groups different from bipartisanship.

Despite the national peacemaking efforts and negotiation processes that could not be agreed upon, the purpose of ensuring permanent peace has been hard to achieve, partly because the structural reforms settled were not fully developed if ever implemented. Socioeconomic inequalities, exclusion and injustice are factors that generate deep resentment in a population that supports the lack of basic attention by the State and in which it maintains a neoliberal model that increasingly deepens the differences between the population.

In the Colombian armed conflict, in addition to political, social and economic violence, another

series of factors converge that must be taken into account in the implementation of solutions to achieve a lasting peace. A retrospective look at the development of the conflict is unavoidable to analyze the historical context and face the future.

In Article 22 of Colombia's present Constitution, peace is considered a mandatory, essential right – as the ultimate legal foundation of every political negotiation process in search of achieving peace. From this perspective, stopping the war is a pressing need. Not only will it help heal the emotional scars of victims and ex-combatants, but also remove the smokescreen that the armed conflict has transformed into for years. Even worse problems such as social injustice, drug trafficking, and political and administrative corruption have been hiding behind armed conflict, contributing to the moral and material impoverishment of Colombian society. Therefore, stopping armed conflict is necessary for building peace that exceeds the power of rifles, supported by social justice and debate for dealing with conflicts.

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¹ Different views have been expressed regarding this number. Some authors confirm the existence of seven to eleven peace processes, but the aim of specifically talking of eight is to refer to the processes that have come to an end, materialized in documents written as political accords or agreements. Their content serves to find proposals to overcome what is considered to be the structural causes of armed conflict.

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ВООРУЖЕННЫЙ КОНФЛИКТ И МИРОТВОРЧЕСТВО В КОЛУМБИИ

В исследовании проанализированы процессы, которые способствовали конфигурации внутреннего вооруженного конфликта в Колумбии, и мирные предложения, продвигаемые национальным правительством за последние сорок лет. Исследованы причины и последствия вооруженного конфликта, а также последствия развития культуры мира для колумбийского народа. Это было достигнуто путем обзора теоретических, контекстуальных и исторических первичных и вторичных источников, касающихся этих двух тематических осей. В заключении изложены предложения, которые должны быть осуществлены в рамках двусторонних соглашений для завершения вооруженного конфликта и достижения справедливого и длительного мира.

Ключевые слова: *внутренний вооруженный конфликт, политические переговоры, мирное соглашение, постконфликт, тотальный мир.*

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ЗБРОЙНИЙ КОНФЛІКТ І МИРОТВОРЧІСТЬ У КОЛУМБІЇ

У дослідженні проаналізовано процеси та динаміку, які сприяли формуванню конфігурації внутрішнього збройного конфлікту в Колумбії, а також мирні пропозиції, які

просувалися національним урядом протягом останніх сорока років, щоб зрозуміти не лише виміри збройного конфлікту з точки зору причин та наслідків, але й наслідки розбудови культури миру для колумбійського народу. Зусилля уряду, спрямовані на припинення внутрішньої війни, виявилися недостатніми для того, щоб закінчити конфлікт, в якому збігаються численні фактори, що породжують насильство. Пошуки тривалого миру ускладнюються появою нових незаконних угруповань, які прагнуть зайняти місця, залишені тими, хто скористався домовленостями. Ці нові дійові особи мотивовані в деяких випадках наркоторгівлею та бажанням легких грошей, що призводить до вбивств громадських лідерів, порушення прав людини цивільного населення та відбирання земельних ділянок. Наведено досягнуто шляхом огляду теоретичних, контекстуальних та історичних первинних і вторинних джерел, що стосуються цих двох тематичних осей. Досліджено запропоновану конфігурацію мирних процесів із середини ХХ ст. і до сьогодні, коли уряд лівої ідеології прийшов до влади шляхом демократії та запропонував побудову «тотального миру». Національний діалог з усіма суспільними секторами щодо постконфліктного періоду та побудови миру має важливе значення, його не можна відкладати, якщо колумбійське суспільство хоче відірватися від дискурсу та уявлень війни та зосередитися на аналізі можливостей досягнення тривалого миру, культури миру як реальності.

Ключові слова: внутрішній збройний конфлікт, політичні переговори, мирна угода, постконфлікт, тотальний мир.

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