

## A Community Security Approach as an Instrument of Peace

Despite progress in technical aspects of reintegration, there are serious delays in the full implementation of the peace agreement as discussed by our [previous snapshot](#). Of particular concern are the lack of security guarantees and the increasing violence in areas historically affected by the conflict. A central theme of the Ethnic Chapter of the agreement is the proposal to address the issue of security from a territorial, more participatory and inclusive perspective that goes beyond the traditional state approach based on the deployment of police and military forces. This snapshot reflects on the need to quickly and effectively implement the Ethnic Chapter, which aims to safeguard the territorial and collective rights of indigenous communities and Afro-Colombian peoples.

### Progress and Challenges

Two decrees encompass the requirements set out in [points 2.1.2.1 and 3.4.8 of the Final Agreement](#). Decree 895 of 2017 created the Comprehensive Security System for the Exercise of Politics and Decree 1066 of 2015 defines the Comprehensive Security and Protection Programme for Communities and Organisations across the Country's Territories.

However, these mechanisms are neither being implemented nor translated into measures that guarantee the right to security and wellbeing. This is particularly true in many areas where indigenous peoples, Afro communities, peasants, or those in the process of reincorporation and their families are today coexisting with various armed groups. Since the signing of the agreement in 2016, 229 former combatants of the FARC-EP and 270 indigenous leaders have been murdered. These figures are in addition to [more than 60 massacres committed so far in 2020 alone](#), where those behind the attacks have still not been identified or prosecuted by the judicial authorities.

As a result, a perception of total insecurity prevails. According to some community leaders, the quantitative data generated by Colombia's Public Policy Compliance Monitoring System, [SisConpes](#), and the [Kroc Institute](#), who are in charge of evaluating the implementation of the peace agreement, neither qualitatively reflect advances in



tin security nor account for the government's actions to reduce violence.

This highlights the importance of increasing institutional presence in the territories. Nonetheless, this presence should not be limited to the military and police forces. It should include the rapid and effective action of civil and judicial institutions in investigating crimes and dismantling violent structures.

Although the current violence does not follow the same logic as the armed conflict, it continues to affect the civilian population indiscriminately, including former combatants of the FARC-EP and indigenous communities in the territories where the process of reincorporation is taking place. For this reason, in addition to the political and socio-economic reforms contained in the peace agreement, actions and structural changes are required in security approaches and compliance with existing regulatory frameworks. Even more important is to approach security "from below"; that is, from a more humane and even ancestral community perspective.

## **An Alternative Perspective**

Currently, the Technical Unit for Reincorporation (UTR), the Agency for Normalisation and Reincorporation (ARN), and the FARC component of the National Council for Reincorporation (CNR) are working on the special program of harmonisation for reincorporation. This was one of the commitments expressed within the framework of the agreement, which aims to provide routes and means for ex-combatants who identify themselves as being of ethnic origin to return to their communities.

According to the framework, guarantees must be in place to strengthen the security systems of ethnic groups recognised at the national and international levels, such as the Cimarrona Guard and the Indigenous Guard. In the particular case of the indigenous guards, these are not police structures, but rather humanitarian, collective, and voluntary mechanisms of civil resistance. Their approach to defending the territories and those who inhabit them is rooted in an ancestral worldview; one that recognises human beings as part of their environment and in which there is a profound respect for the land and life.



Reincorporation represents an opportunity to promote these systems. In the case of the department of Nariño, the government and the ARN signed a joint agreement that includes five priority municipalities (Cumbal, El Charco, Ipiales, Pasto and Tumaco), where urgent measures are required to counteract the growing levels of violence. Included in the security component of this agreement is the strengthening of the indigenous guards of the communities present in these territories.

The indigenous guards are currently promoting the campaign [#SoyGuardiaindigena](#) (I am an indigenous guard). Their aim is for the state and society to understand that security conceived from the defence of life and nature for the common good, contributes to the construction of peace in Colombia.

***Embrace Dialogue urges the Colombian government to implement the Ethnic Chapter of the peace agreement and its respective regulations. In particular we emphasise the need for the effective implementation of the Comprehensive Security System and the strengthening of the security mechanisms of ethnic peoples. Furthermore, we call for the development of actions that go beyond increasing the presence of the police and armed forces, to guarantee the security and protection of indigenous peoples in the process of reincorporation, leaders and communities.***

