

## The FARC's Progress Before the JEP

Over the last few months, the leaders of the FARC Party (Common Alternative Revolutionary Force) have publicly admitted their responsibility for crimes they committed during the armed conflict. In early October, in a letter directed to the Special Jurisdiction for Peace (JEP), they admitted to the murders of the conservative leader Álvaro Gómez Hurtado and five others. This followed a letter released in September 2020, within which the FARC both acknowledged their responsibility for kidnappings that they had carried out and asked for forgiveness from the victims. In August, the FARC also began giving testimony about the recruitment of minors. In this snapshot, we look at the progress made by the FARC Party in offering truth and acknowledging its responsibilities before the JEP.

### Macrocase 001: Kidnapping

For Case 001, more than 300 ex-combatants of the FARC-EP have appeared before the JEP's Chamber for Recognition, and given their individual and collective statements related to kidnappings they carried out. Upholding the principle of keeping victims' rights central to the JEP's practices, more than 2400 victims have been recognised as part of this case by the Chamber of Recognition, and more than 900 have responded to the version of events presented by the ex-combatants.

In their comments, victims demand more than a simple acknowledgement of responsibility, instead seeking both a more comprehensive truth and recognition of the suffering caused to them. In September, on the basis of these observations and of the evidence gathered to date, the JEP called ten former commanders of the FARC-EP to voluntarily give their accounts. These are individuals named as relevant actors and whom the Chamber of Recognition considers can provide relevant information to satisfy victims' demand for the truth.

In this context, and after Ingrid Betancourt's testimony before the Truth Commission on her experience of being kidnapped for seven years, eight members of the FARC-EP



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Secretariat published [a letter](#) expressing their remorse for the kidnappings. The letter was the first time the FARC Party have used the word “kidnapping” (secuestro) instead of “retention” (retenciones), and they have committed to providing the truth about this practice. The change of language, acknowledgement of the kidnappings and recognition of the suffering caused, are all important steps. This was a specific demand made by the victims and gives momentum to progressing Case 001.

## Macrocase 007: Child Recruitment

This macrocase investigates the recruitment and use of minors, as well as other crimes such as the victimisation of Afro-descendant and indigenous peoples, sexual violence, torture, executions and forced displacement. Opened in March 2019, it is divided into two sub-cases: “FARC-EP” and “State Forces”.

To date, 108 individuals have been recognised as victims within this case and 38 ex-combatants have been called to give their statements. 13 of these have already given their voluntary statements before the Chamber of Recognition, including Rodrigo Londoño - former leader of the FARC-EP - and other commanders of the former guerrilla group. The JEP estimates there to be in excess of 27,000 victims for this macrocase. The report by the National Centre for Historical Memory, '[Una Guerra sin Edad](#)' (A War Without Age), calculates the FARC-EP as responsible for 54% of child and adolescent recruitment between 1960 and 2016.

Within this case, the JEP has decided to publish the voluntary statements given by ex-combatants, at their own request. According to the published statements, the former leaders accept that the FARC-EP recruited minors, but neither that there was a policy to recruit children under the age of 15, nor a practice of forced recruitment.

## Other Cases

At the beginning of October, following the FARC's letter claiming responsibility, the JEP called Rodrigo Londoño and Julián Gallo, president and senator of the FARC Party



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respectively, to give voluntary statements on events surrounding the murders of Álvaro Gómez Hurtado, the congressman Pablo Emilio Guarí, two ex-combatants (José Fedor Rey and Hernando Pizarro León-Gómez), General Fernando Landazábal Reyes, and the peace advisor Jesús Antonio Bejarano. Even though no open cases exist in which these events can be investigated, the confession to these murders by the FARC Party and their testimony before the JEP contribute to explaining crimes committed in the context of the armed conflict. In the case of Gómez Hurtado, the events of his death have remained unclear despite being investigated in the ordinary justice system for over 25 years.

For all cases, the accounts given by those appearing before the JEP are verified against information contained in the reports that serve as a basis for the relevant case, the accounts of others, and any other evidence. As presented in our [Transitional Justice Snapshot 7](#), if individuals fail to offer the complete truth to victims and/or fail to admit their role in events, they can be subject to sanctions of up to 20 years in prison.

***Embrace Dialogue welcomes the commitment of the former FARC-EP guerrilla to offer truth and assume responsibility before the JEP and their victims. We invite Colombian society to recognise the unprecedented steps made in the justice process, thanks to the JEP, and value this important contribution to reconciliation.***



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