# Ending the armed conflict in Colombia

***Year(s****):* *2012 – 2016.*

***Location****: Colombia*

***UN Regional Group****:* *Latin America and the Caribbean.*

***Type of Conflict****:* *Vertical (state-based) Intrastate Conflict with Foreign Involvement.*

***Type of Initiative****: Diplomacy and the mediation of a peace agreement.*

***Main Implementing Organisation(s)****:* *The governments of Cuba, Chile, Germany, Norway, USA, Vatican, and Venezuela, along with the EU, UN, and the Union of South American Nations.*

***Impact****: Lasting.*

***Summary****: The armed conflict in Colombia was finally ended after 52 years by the signing of a peace agreement during negotiations mediated by a host of national governments and intergovernmental organisations.*

The Revolutionary Armed Forces of Colombia (FARC) launched an insurgency against the Government of Colombia in 1964. The ensuing armed conflict raged for over five decades, with a host of guerrilla groups and paramilitary formations developing across the country. By the 1970s, the armed groups were employing the sale of narcotics to fund their activities.[[1]](#endnote-1) By the 1990s, most had transitioned to the political arena, but FARC remained in conflict with the government in Bogotá. On 26 August 2012, negotiations held in Cuba resulted in the creation of a framework for resolving the conflict, formalised in the General Agreement for the Termination of the Conflict and the Construction of a Stable and Lasting Peace.[[2]](#endnote-2) Among its provisions, the General Agreement scheduled further talks, focusing on political participation (2013), illegal drugs (2014), and agrarian development (2014).[[3]](#endnote-3)

Between 2012 and 2016, the peace process was hosted by the Government of Cuba, which served as a guarantor to the accords alongside the Norwegian government. In addition, the governments of Venezuela and Chile served as observers to the negotiations, while the Union of South American Nations, EU, UN, Vatican, and American and German governments appointed special envoys to the peace process. Significant progress was made in 2015, when the former belligerents agreed to establish the Special Jurisdiction for Peace, which provided a mechanism for the investigation and prosecution of crimes related to the conflict.[[4]](#endnote-4) In June 2016, the parties to the conflict agreed to a definitive ceasefire.[[5]](#endnote-5) In September, the former belligerents signed a peace treaty at a public ceremony in Cartagena which was attended by representatives from across the world, including UN Secretary-General Ban Ki-Moon.[[6]](#endnote-6) Just a week later, however, the Colombian people rejected the agreement in a referendum. Rather than return to conflict, a new deal was agreed on 24 November 2016 and ratified by the Colombian parliament on 30 November.[[7]](#endnote-7) For his efforts in bringing peace to the country, Colombian President Juan Manuel Santos was awarded the Nobel Peace Prize in 2016.[[8]](#endnote-8) The international effort to facilitate an end to the fighting helped to bring an end to one of the longest intrastate armed conflicts in the world.

1. UCDP. *Government of Colombia – FARC.* (UCDP, 2020) Available at: <https://ucdp.uu.se/statebased/623> (Accessed 13/12/2020) [↑](#endnote-ref-1)
2. General Agreement for the Termination of the Conflict and the Construction of a Stable and Lasting Peace, 2012. Available at: <https://peacemaker.un.org/colombia-generalaccordendconflict2012> (Accessed 13/12/2020) [↑](#endnote-ref-2)
3. *Participación política: Apertura democrática para construir la paz*, 2013. Available at: <https://peacemaker.un.org/colombia-politicalparticipation2013> (Accessed 13/12/2020); *Solución al Problema de las Drogas Ilícitas*, 2014. Available at: <https://peacemaker.un.org/colombia-drogasilicitas2014> (Accessed 13/12/2020); *Hacia un Nuevo Campo Colombiano: Reforma Rural Integral*, 2014. Available at: <https://peacemaker.un.org/colombia-reformarural2014> (Accessed 13/12/2020) [↑](#endnote-ref-3)
4. Marta Valiñas. “The Colombian Special Jurisdiction for Peace: A Few Issues for Consideration When Investigating and Adjudicating Sexual and Gender-based Crimes.” *Journal of International Criminal Justice*, Vol. 18, No. 2. (2020) p.449 [↑](#endnote-ref-4)
5. Agreement on the Bilateral and Definitive Ceasefire and Cessation of Hostilities, and the Laydown of Weapons between the National Government and the FARC-EP, 2016. Available at: <https://peacemaker.un.org/ceasefire-colombia-2016> (Accessed 13/12/2020) [↑](#endnote-ref-5)
6. BBC. “Colombia peace deal: Historic agreement is signed.” *BBC News.* (2016) Available at: <https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/world-latin-america-37477202> (Accessed 13/12/2020) [↑](#endnote-ref-6)
7. Sibylla Brodzinsky. “Colombia signs historic peace deal with Farc.” *The Guardian.* (2016) Available at: <https://www.theguardian.com/world/2016/nov/24/colombia-signs-historic-peace-deal-with-farc-rebels> (Accessed 13/12/2020); *Acuerdo Final Para La Terminación Del Conflicto y La Construcción De Una Paz Estable y Duradera*, 2016. Available at: <https://peacemaker.un.org/node/2924> (Accessed 13/12/2020) [↑](#endnote-ref-7)
8. The Nobel Prize. *Juan Manuel Santos: Facts.* (Nobel Prize, 2020) Available at: <https://www.nobelprize.org/prizes/peace/2016/santos/lecture/> (Accessed 13/12/2020) [↑](#endnote-ref-8)