



**House Foreign Affairs Committee
Tom Lantos Human Rights Commission**

**Virtual Briefing
on
Colombia: Challenges for Peace and Human Rights
Wednesday, July 23, 2025 –2:00 p.m. ET
Zoom**

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1. Brief introduction to the Kroc Institute and its role in Colombia:

Thank you for the opportunity to participate in this important briefing. I am honored to be representing the Kroc Institute for International Peace Studies which is part of the Keough School of Global Affairs at the University of Notre Dame.

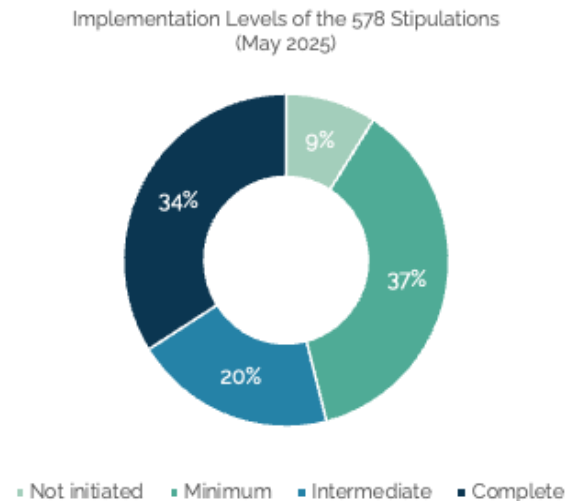
Our mandate to monitor peace accord implementation in Colombia originates from section 6.3.2 of the 2016 Peace Accord itself, which tasked the Kroc Institute with designing a methodology to monitor the implementation of commitments and to provide technical support to both the Commission for Monitoring, Promotion and Verification (CSIVI) and the International Verification Component.

In Colombia, our research team tracks, validates, and codes data on a daily basis. We engage with national and local authorities, civil society actors, and international partners, providing evidence-based analysis to promote more effective implementation.

2. Key quantitative findings:

Since December 2016, the team has analyzed the status of the 578 commitments contained in the Final Peace Accord. As of May 2025:

- 34% of commitments were fully implemented
- 20% were at an intermediate stage
- 37% remained at a minimal level
- 9% had not yet begun implementation



According to our methodology, this means that nearly half of all commitments (46%) face serious challenges to being fully implemented within the 15-year horizon set by Colombia's official implementation framework (PMI).

Over time, we've seen progress. For instance, the percentage of fully implemented commitments doubled from 17% in 2017 to 34% in May 2025. However, the transition from minimal or intermediate progress to full implementation has been slower than expected. In particular, rural reform, political participation, and the drug policy have lagged behind.

3. Key qualitative findings:

After eight and a half years of implementation, evidence from our research suggests three key qualitative trends that offer a broader perspective on both progress and ongoing challenges:

First, the FARC-EP has transitioned into a political party, and the vast majority of accredited former combatants remain committed to the reincorporation process. Out of the 12,477 individuals who laid down their weapons and were accredited for reintegration, 9,521, are still actively engaged in the process. Only around 2,500 have left the reintegration process. However, this does not necessarily imply that they have returned to armed activity.

Second, over these eight years, the Colombian executive branch has taken on the responsibility of laying the normative, institutional, and budgetary foundations required for implementation. As a result, approximately 90% of the Accord's commitments have been formally initiated. However, many of these commitments have not yet progressed to intermediate or full levels of implementation. This is due to a combination of factors: unmet targets in specific programs, political transitions, institutional fragmentation, and, notably, the COVID-19 pandemic, which for nearly 18 months reoriented national priorities and significantly impacted the functioning of state institutions.

Finally, the implementation of commitments related to peaceful coexistence and reconciliation remains particularly difficult. While the Accord offers a long-term roadmap for reconciliation, certain provisions are specifically aimed at rebuilding trust, respect, and nonviolence in Colombian society, many of which are still pending. Recent events in the country, such as the assassination attempt against Senator Miguel Uribe, serve as a reminder on how unresolved tensions and structural violence continue to test Colombia's capacity to heal and reconcile.

4. Technical recommendations to guide U.S. support:

The full implementation of the Final Peace Accord is not only crucial for Colombia, it also matters for the United States. A stable and peaceful Colombia contributes to regional security, curbs irregular migration, and creates more opportunities for legal trade and investment. Since 2016, the U.S. Government has provided essential technical and financial support and accompaniment to the peace accord implementation process. We see

three areas where continued U.S. support could have a strategic and measurable impact for both countries.

First: Targeted U.S. support for key commitments in the Peace Accord. Implementation of the Accord improves living conditions in rural Colombia, helping to reduce irregular migration. More than 31,000 conflict victims now live outside the country, including nearly 6,000 in the United States. While migration declined after the 2016 Accord, numbers have started to rise again since 2022. Fully implementing Point 1 on rural reform is essential to reversing this trend and creating real alternatives to displacement. At the same time, supporting the Accord's drug policy commitments is critical. Cocaine production rose by 53% in 2023. The Accord includes tools to strengthen control of chemical precursors and foster collaboration between governments. These mechanisms can help prevent diversion into illicit markets, reinforce the rule of law, and provide greater legal certainty for international companies. Continued U.S. assistance to the Attorney General's Office in the investigation of drug-related crimes is also vital to reducing impunity in key areas.

Second: Diplomatic engagement and technical cooperation. U.S. cooperation has been instrumental in building state capacity, strengthening civil society, and supporting rural development. These are not short-term fixes, they lay the foundation for a more self-sufficient, democratic, and peaceful Colombia. Peace accord implementation also improves agricultural productivity, creates legal jobs, and opens new trade opportunities between Colombia and the United States.

Third: Monitoring and independent verification support. The Accord includes strong transparency mechanisms, many of which are monitored by our research program. These tools promote accountability, reduce corruption, and help protect international investment.

In conclusion, the Peace Accord offers a clear roadmap for advancing peace, stability, and opportunity in Colombia. Continued U.S. engagement, grounded in partnership and shared values, can play a meaningful role in supporting its full and lasting implementation.