



The HUMAN COSTS of the COLOMBIAN CONFLICT

These are the human costs of the Colombian conflict. This is why a peace accord must be reached. This is why the voices of the victims of all armed actors—of the guerrillas, of the paramilitaries and successor groups, of the government’s armed forces—must be heard at the peace table.

This is why the United States should support a just, true and lasting peace in Colombia.

A HUGE NUMBER OF VICTIMS, COMPARABLE TO OTHER MAJOR CONFLICTS

Over **218,000** people killed. More than **80%** were **civilians**.



177,307 civilians

40,787 combatants

Over **5.7 million** people internally displaced.



Syria:
6.5 million



Colombia:
5.7 million



Democratic Republic
of Congo: 2.9 million



Sudan:
2.4 million

More than **25,000** people disappeared.



At least 25,000 people were forcibly disappeared in Colombia. The total may be far more.



Some 30,000 people were forcibly disappeared during Argentina’s dirty war.

**ATTACKS ON VICTIMS COME FROM ALL QUARTERS:
GUERRILLAS, PARAMILITARIES, GOVERNMENT ARMED FORCES**

More than **27,000** people have been **kidnapped**, mainly by guerrillas.



Guerrillas kidnapped 25,482; Paramilitary groups kidnapped 2,541

More than **11,700** people **killed** in **1,982** massacres largely perpetrated by paramilitary groups.

Number of massacres committed by each group



Paramilitaries: 1166



Guerrillas: 343



Government's armed forces: 158



Unidentified armed groups: 295



Paramilitaries with other groups: 20

4,200 civilians **killed**, allegedly by government forces, many just to increase the army's body count.



The civilian justice system is investigating over 4,200 such extrajudicial killings.

The military system is investigating unknown numbers of additional cases.

Countless **Women** suffered **sexual violence**. No one knows how many.



(Estimate by the Campaign against Rape and other Sexual Violence)

10,610 people killed or wounded by **landmines**.



Guerrillas were largely responsible for laying landmines.



Almost **3,000** union members **assassinated**.



Paramilitaries were largely responsible.

THE CONFLICT RAGES AS PEACE IS BEING NEGOTIATED

- ▶ Over **256,000** people **newly displaced** in 2012.
- ▶ More than **16,800** people displaced in **mass displacements** in 2013. Of those, 73 percent were Afro-Colombian or indigenous.
- ▶ **359** people wounded or killed by **landmines** in 2013.
- ▶ **169** people were registered as forcibly **disappeared** in 2013. Of those, 10 were found dead; 36 were found alive; 123 remain missing.
- ▶ **26** union members **assassinated** in 2013.
- ▶ **78** human rights defenders **assassinated** in 2013.

By Lisa Haugaard

Sources

Many of the statistics used here are from *Basta Ya: Colombia, memorias de guerra y dignidad*, the July 2013 report of Colombia's National Historical Memory Center (Centro Nacional de Memoria Histórica, CMH), which is a Colombian governmental body charged with collecting testimony and data on human rights violations in the context of the conflict. Originally set up in the aftermath of the 2005 paramilitary demobilization, its mission was broadened by the 2011 Victims' and Land Restitution Law. Its statistical analysis primarily draws from the government's Unified Registry of Victims and other governmental sources.

The CMH statistics are not the final word on the impact of the war. Certain statistics seem underestimated, such as sexual violence, and the statistics do not adequately cover extrajudicial executions allegedly committed by members of Colombia's armed forces. However, the statistics give a chilling sense of the human toll of Colombia's conflict. <http://www.centrodememoriahistorica.gov.co/micrositios/informeGeneral/estadisticas.html>

- 1. People killed during the conflict.** The figures of those killed from 1958 through 2012 and the estimated percentage of those who are civilians are from the CMH. The CMH used the number of those civilians killed from the government's Unified Victims' Registry, which begins in 1985; and added its count of civilians killed from 1958-1984 and combatants killed from 1958-2012.
- 2. Internally displaced.** In Colombia, people are displaced by threats from and conflict among all armed actors (paramilitaries and successor groups, guerrillas and the government's armed forces). Internally displaced persons are predominantly woman and children and disproportionately Afro-Colombian and indigenous. The figure for persons internally displaced in Colombia's from 1985 through 2012 is from the CMH. The Colombian government's Unified Victims' Registry cites 5,185,406 people internally displaced as of December 1, 2013, and the nongovernmental Consultancy on Human Rights and Displacement (CODHES) registers 5,701,996 as of May 31, 2013. The comparative global figures are from the Internal Displacement Monitoring Centre, *Global Overview 2014: People Internally Displaced by Violence and Conflict*, <http://www.internal-displacement.org/assets/publications/2014/201405-global-overview-2014-en.pdf>.
- 3. Forced disappearances.** The figure of 25,007 forced disappearances from 1985 through 2012 is cited by the CMH and drawn from the Unified Victims' Registry. The Colombian government's National Registry of Missing Persons (*Registro Nacional de Desaparecidos*) registers over 81,000 missing persons, out of which it estimates over 19,500 cases meet the definition of forced disappearances; associations of families of the disappeared and human rights experts suggest that many more could be forced disappearances. By comparison, estimates for forced disappearances during Argentina's dirty war range from 8,960 registered in the *Nunca Mas* report by the National Commission on Disappeared Persons (CONADEP), http://www.desaparecidos.org/nuncamas/web/english/library/nevagain/nevagain_209.htm, to 30,000 generally estimated by Argentina's Mothers of the Plaza de Mayo and other human rights groups.
- 4. Extrajudicial executions.** Human Rights Watch's *World Report 2014* notes that, "as of June 2013, the Human Rights Unit of the Attorney General's Office had been assigned investigations into 2,278 cases of alleged unlawful killings by state agents involving nearly 4,000 victims, and had obtained convictions for 189 cases." <http://www.hrw.org/world-report/2014/country-chapters/colombia?page=2> In early 2014 the Attorney General's office stated it is investigating cases involving 4200 victims. Many additional cases are being pursued in the regional offices of the Attorney General's offices and unknown numbers of other cases remain in the military justice system.
- 5. Kidnappings.** Figures for kidnappings in the context of the armed conflict from 1970 to 2010 are from the CMH. This number excludes kidnappings by criminal groups unrelated to the armed conflict.
- 6. Massacres.** These statistics are from the CMH.
- 7. Rape and other forms of sexual violence.** These crimes are largely unreported. While the CMH cites the figure from the Unified Victims' Registry of 1,754 victims of sexual violence from 1985 through 2012, an extremely low figure, a survey by the Campaign on Rape and Other Violence conducted a survey of women between ages 15 and 44 living in 407 municipalities under conflict during 2001-2009 and identified that 17.58 percent of the sample of women surveyed had experienced some form of sexual violence. The study then estimated that over 489,000 women in those municipalities had likely experienced some form of sexual violence. <http://www.usofficeoncolombia.org/uploads/application-pdf/2011-03-23-Report-English.pdf>
- 8. Landmines.** These figures from 1990 through 2013 are from the Presidential Program on Integral Attention against Anti-Personnel Mines (*Programa Presidencial de Atencion Integral contra Minas Anti-personal*). <http://www.accioncontraminas.gov.co/Paginas/victimimas.aspx>
- 9. Assassination of union members.** The figures are from the nongovernmental National Labor School (Escuela Nacional Sindical); the total is from 1986 through 2013.
- 10. The conflict continues.** The nongovernmental group CODHES cites 256,590 people newly displaced in 2012. The government recognized 171,841 newly displaced persons. However, according to the Internal Displacement Monitoring Centre, "the government's reporting was significantly delayed by its transition from a database exclusive to IDPs to a comprehensive victims' registry, and the switch also explains some of the discrepancy between the two numbers. The government figure will undoubtedly increase once it has addresses a large backlog of IDPs who have up to four years to register following their displacement." (<http://www.internal-displacement.org/8025708F004CE90B/%28httpCountrySummaries%29/10FC2E0B838F2723C1257C6200348331?OpenDocument&count=10000>). Figures on mass displacements for 2013 and breakdown of those affecting ethnic minorities are from the UN Office of Humanitarian Affairs, 14 August 2013, cited in IDMC report, above. The 2013 figures on forcible disappearances are from the Colombian government's National Forensic Institute (*Instituto Nacional de Medicina Legal y Ciencias Forenses*), from the SIRDEC database. Figures on union members assassinated are from the National Labor School (<http://www.ens.org.co/index.shtml?apc=Na--1;-;-&x=20168317>), and figures on human rights defenders assassinated are from the nongovernmental program We are Defenders (*Somos Defensores*). <http://www.somosdefensores.org/index.php/extensions/ultimas-noticias/421-informe-siaddhh-2013-d-de-defensa>

