



Language

Colombia has been plagued with armed violence for decades, involving state forces, paramilitary groups usually aligned with the state, right-wing urban militia, narcotraffickers, and various guerrilla groups which were originally leftist but increasingly resorted to forced recruitment, extortion, and kidnapping (although in 2012 the largest guerrilla group – FARC – announced it would end kidnapping civilians for ransom). With the decline in importance of Colombia's role in coca production and trafficking, the country's high homicide rate has also declined in recent years, but politically-motivated killings continue: Amnesty International reporting that 'in 2012, at least 40 human rights defenders and community leaders and 20 trade union members were killed', mostly by state security forces or paramilitary groups acting in collusion with them.

The most reliable estimates for displaced Colombians indicate that some 10% of the population have been displaced, either directly by armed violence or by 'development-induced displacement', that is making way for extractive industries or monoculture (such as African palm or bananas).

Rejection of armed violence in Colombia is often referred to as 'resistencia civil', and has become a strategy for peace involving indigenous peoples, AfroColombians, municipalities, women's groups, and 'peace communities' founded by displaced people since 1997. Such groups generally take a stance based on a popular commitment to nonviolence and on non-cooperation with all the 'armed actors', state, paramilitary or guerrilla, and continue to face harassment – often lethal – from these various forces.

Peace News, no. 2449 [1] (Dec 2002- Feb 2003), had a special section on Colombia, covering peace communities, indigenous and women's campaigns and work of the Peace Brigades International, and *Revista*, (Spring 2003) was titled '[Colombia: Beyond Armed Actors: A Look at Civil Society](#) [2]'.

Peace Brigades International (PBI) has had teams in Colombia since 1994. Its bilingual web page – <http://www.pbi-colombia.org> [3] – is a reliable source of information, reporting the opinions not of its teams but of the people they accompany, and periodically PBI-Colombia produces special reports, such as 'Civilian Peace Initiatives in Colombia', *ColompBIa* ([PBI-Colombia Newsletter no. 19](#) [4], November 2012), pp. 16.

Alther, Gretchen ; Lindsay-Poland, John ; Weintraub, Sarah, [Building from the Inside Out: Peace Initiatives in War-Torn Colombia](#) [5], Philadelphia PA, American Friends Service Committee and Fellowship of Reconciliation USA, 2006, pp. 36

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Links

[1] <http://peacenews.info/node/5361/2449> [2] <http://revista.drclas.harvard.edu/book/colombia-beyond-armed-actors-look-civil-society-spring-2003> [3] <http://www.pbi-colombia.org> [4] http://www.pbi-colombia.org/fileadmin/user_files/projects/colombia/files/colomPBla/121128_boletin_english.pdf [5] <https://civilresistance.info/biblio-item/2006/building-inside-out-peace-initiatives-war-torn-colombia> [6] <https://civilresistance.info/biblio-item/2006/harbingers-hope-peace-initiatives-colombia> [7] <https://civilresistance.info/biblio-item/2004/living-and-resisting-shadow-colombian-conflict-forcibly-displaced-people-seen> [8] <https://civilresistance.info/biblio-item/2004/alternatives-war-colombias-peace-processes> [9] <https://civilresistance.info/biblio-item/2009/colombia-nonviolent-movement-peace-and-global-solidarity> [10] <https://civilresistance.info/biblio-item/2009/people-power-unarmed-resistance-and-global-solidarity> [11] <https://civilresistance.info/section/introduction-nonviolent-action/1-theory-methods-and-examples/1b-strategic-theory-dynamics> [12] <https://civilresistance.info/biblio-item/2007/islands-stream-comparative-analysis-zones-peace-within-colombias-civil-war> [13] <https://civilresistance.info/biblio-item/2007/zones-peace> [14] <https://civilresistance.info/biblio-item/1999/peacebuilding-war-zone-case-colombia-peace-communities>