



## Indigenous women and Colombia's peace process

### Pathways to participation

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## Authors

### CIASE:

Rosa Emilia Salamanca, Lucia Ramirez and Magda Cárdenas

### Conciliation Resources:

Zahbia Yousuf and Sophia Close

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Accord would like to give thanks to:

Alexander Ramsbotham

CIASE (Corporación de Investigación y Acción Social y Económica)

CONAMIC (Consejo Nacional de Mujeres Indígenas de Colombia)

Clare Richards

Felix Colchester

Kristian Herbolzheimer

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Conciliation Resources

Burghley Yard, 106 Burghley Road

London NW5 1AL

[www.c-r.org](http://www.c-r.org)

Telephone +44 (0) 207 359 7728

Email [accord@c-r.org](mailto:accord@c-r.org)

[Facebook.com/ConciliationResources](https://facebook.com/ConciliationResources)

[Twitter.com/CRbuildpeace](https://twitter.com/CRbuildpeace)

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Cover photo: CONAMIC members and participants at Gender Workshop, Cachipay, Colombia, April 2016 © CIASE

# Indigenous women and Colombia's peace process: pathways to participation

This report explores the historic experience of indigenous women in Colombia – a group that is usually absent from political decision-making processes, and is socially and economically marginalised. It looks at their inclusion in the political settlement – the political, economic and social frameworks that determine how power is distributed in a particular society – and how their interests and issues have been recognised and legitimated.

Colombia has a strong and vibrant women's movement, which successfully influenced peace talks between the FARC and the Colombian Government to ensure the inclusion of gender and women's rights in the final peace agreement. This success drew on two decades of experience of advocating for women's rights: accumulating experience and knowledge of international and national legal frameworks – and identifying their relevance to local contexts – as well as building institutional capacity and sophisticated advocacy platforms.

Yet, women in Colombia are diverse and hold varied cultural perspectives. There are challenges for distinct groups of women to achieve their rights, particularly in the context of violence and conflict, in ways that preserve and balance their different identities – for example, campesina, youth, indigenous, Afro-Colombian.

Indigenous as well as Afro-Colombian women have been especially marginalised in Colombia, and have been unable to benefit fully from the broader women's rights movement. The primacy of collective indigenous identities and rights has often precluded them from accessing rights both within their own community and wider Colombian society, including women's rights and citizens rights.

While recognising the gains achieved by the Colombian women's movement to date, this report looks closer at the peace process as a window of opportunity for indigenous women to become active political agents in Colombia's political landscape.

The report is based on two-day discussions held in Cachipay, Colombia in April 2016, which brought together 25 women, including customary leaders, from 10 different indigenous communities across Colombia.<sup>1</sup>

This was one of three gender workshops exploring political settlement beyond elites, alongside workshops in Nepal in 2016 and Bougainville, Papua New Guinea, in 2017. They focused on how diverse groups in conflict-affected contexts understand and experience change in transition processes, in particular regarding access to security, and social and political goods.

An intersectional approach to gender examines the wider social norms and power structures in Colombian society and within indigenous communities, assessing how formal and customary institutions impact indigenous women's access to the political settlement and their participation in shaping it.

Against the backdrop of the 2016 Havana peace negotiations, discussions at the Colombia gender workshop charted how different pathways for change have emerged, including the evolution of women's engagement in the Colombian peace process and the inclusion of gender and ethnic minority issues in negotiations. The report then explores how the peace process is an opportunity for indigenous women to play a key role in peacebuilding and the reconfiguration of the political settlement in Colombia.

1. The indigenous communities represented were: Sikuani community from Vichada department; Yeral community from Guainía; Pastos community from Nariño; Nasa, Misak and Yanakona communities from Cauca; Nasa community from Valle de Cauca; Embera Chami community from Antioquia; Wayúu community from Guajira; and Iku community from the Sierra Nevada de Santa Marta mountain range situated on the border of Magdalena, Cesar and Guajira departments

# COLOMBIA



# Key findings

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- **Colombia's Final Peace Agreement sets an international standard for the inclusion of indigenous women in peace processes.** Women's and indigenous women's organisations lobbied effectively at the Havana peace talks as well as domestically to safeguard their meaningful participation, resulting in the inclusion of gender responsive provisions in the Final Peace Agreement. The addition of an Ethnic Chapter uniquely recognises the specific concerns and rights of indigenous and afro-descendant peoples.
- **But indigenous women in Colombia continue to experience multiple forms of discrimination that restrict their political participation, including in the peace process.** These are driven by formal as well as customary systems, and manifest in political, social, cultural, and economic discrimination, and direct violence (including sexual violence). Armed conflict has exacerbated the effects of this discrimination, and has had a disproportionate impact on indigenous women.
- **International human rights frameworks and other legal protections are important but do not ensure indigenous women's rights.** Securing legal and political recognition of rights has allowed indigenous peoples, especially women, to make demands on the state. However, high levels of impunity for violations and lack of implementation of policies and legislation create the risk that legal mechanisms do not lead to practical change.
- **An inclusive political settlement in Colombia must incorporate both *collective indigenous and individual women's rights*.** To date, formal commitments and policy responses have been unable to achieve this. Multiple strategies, including by indigenous peoples and women's rights activists, are required to transform customary structures and the formal political settlement. Donors and the Colombian government must also find ways to reach beyond male-dominated indigenous structures to engage with indigenous women on issues such as political representation, sexual and reproductive rights and economic security.
- **It is critical to build inclusive dialogue spaces.** The Colombian experience emphasises the importance of creating inclusive coalitions and platforms for dialogue for diverse groups of women to meaningfully participate at all levels of the peace process. Indigenous women have built coalitions with other women's networks, such as peasant and Afro-Colombian women, and also developed their own spaces. They use these to hold conversations within their own communities on how customary institutions and gender norms impact their participation. This has helped stimulate solidarity on common issues, encouraged women to engage in traditionally male spaces, such as national indigenous organisations, and has magnified advocacy.
- **The Final Peace Agreement is a milestone, but building peace requires further efforts.** Indigenous women's participation in the implementation process requires stronger recognition of their existing and different capacities by the Colombian government and international donors, as well as access to funding, technical support to strengthen institutional capabilities, and protection from ongoing security risks faced by activists.

# Power, conflict and peace in Colombia

After five decades of violent conflict and a number of stalled peace efforts, Colombia is going through a period of unprecedented development. Talks from 2012–16 in Havana between the government and the guerrilla group, FARC (*Fuerzas Armadas Revolucionarias de Colombia*: Revolutionary Armed Forces of Colombia) resulted in the signing of an historic peace agreement in September 2016. While the agreement was rejected in a subsequent national plebiscite, further negotiations between the parties modified the most contentious issues and Congress endorsed a revised accord in November the same year. The Final Peace Agreement (the Agreement) has been innovative in many ways, not least because the government and FARC have acknowledged that their forces committed serious human rights violations but have shown a willingness to have cases investigated and prosecuted. The Agreement also includes one of the most ambitious processes of demobilisation and disarmament, with an initial timeframe of only six months. Whilst the transfer of FARC members to 26 Temporary Hamlet Zones for Normalisation was completed swiftly without a single incident, disarmament has suffered some delays because the government has been slow in setting up the required logistical infrastructure.

The success of the plebiscite's 'No' movement and low voter turnout raised questions about how the peace process could meaningfully incorporate the interests of different groups within society, while effectively ending violence and creating the conditions for sustainable peace. There is ongoing uncertainty about the broader social and political implications of the emerging transition in Colombia, in particular the role of women and other identity groups in the implementation of the Agreement.

Contemporary Colombian politics has been shaped by two main political groups – the Conservatives and Liberals – and has been male-dominated. The emergence of armed 'counter elites' in the 1960s – including the revolutionary movements the *Ejército de Liberación Nacional* (ELN: National Liberation Army), M19 (*Movimiento 19 de Abril*) and FARC – reflected the reality that broader political

participation and the benefits of economic modernisation continued to be limited to a few, with restricted land tenure, inequality, social and racial discrimination the norm for most of the population.

Armed conflict exacerbated gender inequality and deepened structural factors of discrimination. Around 30 per cent of Colombians live in poverty, with indigenous populations and Afro-Colombians disproportionately affected. Like indigenous groups, women in Colombia have been subject to historical and structural discrimination including targeted insecurity, exclusion from political decision-making and lack of socio-economic access. While there is evidence that killings, extrajudicial executions and other human rights violations are committed mainly against men, women have disproportionately experienced other types of violence such as economic and sexual violence, and displacement.

The Havana talks provided space for a diverse range of voices: survivors of violence, women (including indigenous women), and sexual and gender minorities. Three thousand survivors participated in discussion forums in Colombia. In an unprecedented process, the government and FARC peace panels received 60 testimonies from conflict survivors over 5 rounds of visits, including 36 women, who offered recommendations, including on conflict-related gender-based violence. A dedicated Gender Sub-Committee was created in 2014 to ensure a gender perspective and women's rights were included in throughout the Agreement.

As peace negotiations progressed in Havana, indigenous women also agitated for peace at local levels, and successfully lobbied to ensure their participation in the 2013 National Summit of Women and Peace, as well as a specific Commission for Indigenous Women in the summit's subsequent manifesto. The increased visibility of indigenous and Afro-Colombian concerns was reflected in the inclusion of the Ethnic Chapter in the Agreement – a set of principles to guide implementation of the Agreement in ways that are supportive of gender, women's and indigenous rights.

# Indigenous women in Colombia: multiple forms of discrimination

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According to 2005 figures from the National Department of Statistics, there are nearly 1.4 million indigenous peoples in Colombia (3.4 per cent of the population), organised into 81 groups, speaking 75 different languages and inhabiting 25 per cent of the national territory. Women constitute approximately 50 per cent of the indigenous population in Colombia and within their communities they hold valued customary roles in the protection and transmission of cultural practices and heritage, such as languages, textiles and craftwork.

Indigenous women face multiple forms of discrimination, both by formal (at national and local levels) and customary (at local and community level) systems and institutions. This ongoing discrimination has prevented indigenous women playing a meaningful role in conflict prevention, political debate and the emerging post-conflict governance and monitoring processes.

Discrimination is grounded in the historical exclusion of indigenous peoples. Indigenous women are members of ethnic minority groups that have struggled to gain political, legal and cultural recognition in Colombia. Formal barriers include institutional impediments to political participation, limited financial resources or capacity building support for indigenous populations, and the lack of a broader political culture that acknowledges and allows indigenous leaders and communities to participate fully in the formal political system. Indigenous communities' access to formal education and economic systems are also impacted, compounding their poverty and limiting their development.

Formal barriers are even higher for indigenous women as a result of informal or customary boundaries within indigenous communities, the vast majority of which are male dominated. Customary rules, attitudes and norms on gender as well as patriarchal structures and institutions contribute layers of discrimination. Workshop

discussions revealed that indigenous peoples often explain these internal discriminations by invoking cultural customs. In some regions, they attribute the introduction of additional patriarchal systems of power in indigenous communities to subjugate and control the population to Spanish colonialism – in particular the Catholic Church. Regardless of origin, the impact of complex discrimination is still evident today.

Indigenous women's involvement in formal decision-making structures at national, state and municipal level is almost zero compared to indigenous men, who are usually heads of customary governments and indigenous organisations. Recently there has been greater openness to women's participation in indigenous fora, but their participation is often limited to gender stereotypical roles and has not led to meaningful decision-making within the indigenous community or Colombian society more broadly.

The limited participation of indigenous women is rarely highlighted within indigenous communities due to the tension between collective cultural rights and individual rights – including gender rights, which are considered by some to be an imposition of international standards. By claiming individual women's rights, some indigenous women often feel they are betraying the collective indigenous cause of self-determination and disrespecting their culture.

Indigenous women's experiences reveal that concepts of gender are influenced by other power factors, such as age, ethnicity and class, which affect individual women and men differently. This complexity is compounded by the geographic, territorial and cultural diversity of indigenous communities in Colombia. Overcoming these various forms of discrimination requires multiple strategies and collective action by indigenous peoples and women's rights activists, to transform indigenous women's positions in Colombian society – both inside and outside their communities.

## Effects of armed conflict on indigenous women

Colombia's history of armed violence further complicates the possibilities for indigenous women to assert their political and socio-economic rights. Indigenous peoples faced multiple threats during the conflict, particularly where their land was the site of direct confrontation between various paramilitary, state and non-state armed actors or where armed groups took physical control of territory and established military bases. Indigenous communities were often accused of collaboration with or membership of particular armed groups. They faced violent threats, as well as the forced disappearance, displacement and targeted killing of prominent members of their communities, including women with leadership roles.

Participants identified that indigenous customs and governance processes were also affected by armed conflict. Pre-existing inter-communal territorial disputes between indigenous peoples, peasants and Afro-Colombians were exacerbated, as was competition between indigenous communities and illegal armed groups for economic interests such as access to natural resources. Disputes were more likely to be resolved through violence than customary non-violent means.

Changes to land use, such as legal and illegal mining and coca cultivation, were often achieved through coercion, exploitation of individuals and forced displacement of communities. Government responses to coca cultivation, such as aerial fumigation, also increased displacement. Land grabs have changed livelihood options due to restricted access to resources, while also causing violence and displacement. In some cases, while both indigenous men and women previously worked as subsistence farmers, men now work for private companies as manual labourers, and women as cooks and cleaners. Neither see these as dignified jobs. The occupation of land by armed groups precluded customary use of territories, triggering further cultural, environmental and economic disjuncture. For indigenous peoples, who seek balance and harmony with nature,

this disruption amounts to the devastation of indigenous cultures. The signing of the peace agreement has not diminished the pressure from illegal armed groups, with continued threats against, and killings of, indigenous peoples and social leaders.

The armed conflict affected indigenous women differently from men in two main ways: they experienced higher levels of sexual violence and internal displacement. In areas where armed actors were present, sexual violence against women and girls was widespread – including rape, forced prostitution, involuntary pregnancies and forced abortions. This often led to the stigmatisation and social rejection of women from their communities. In several cases, women had to abandon their customary lands and move to unfamiliar regions.<sup>2</sup>

Internal displacement greatly increased the insecurity and vulnerability of indigenous women. Displaced indigenous women assume 'survival' roles, which differ from those they play in their own communities such as providers of food. Displacement also ruptures links to indigenous culture, including material and spiritual relationships to land. Cultural heritage is at considerable risk as most indigenous customs, including hunting, harvesting and ceremonies, are practiced on the community's territories.

Unfamiliarity with livelihood options in other regions or in cities is compounded, as most indigenous women are not fluent in Spanish. This often leads to further deprivation, disorientation and discrimination from urban society, making indigenous women vulnerable to the informal labour market or prostitution. The lack of reliable data on displaced indigenous peoples in urban centres results in limited specialised care or services, especially for women who have been displaced as a result of gender based conflict-related violence. These underlying triggers for violence highlight that while Colombia is in a post-Agreement phase, for many it is not a post-conflict context – with women, particularly indigenous women, experiencing a heightened level of vulnerability.

2. For more information about violence against women during the Colombian armed conflict see annual reports of the working group 'Mujer y Conflicto Armado' (Women and Armed Conflict), reports from the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights, and Oxfam International (among others organisations), as well as jurisprudence from the Constitutional Court related to *Auto 092*, 2008.



# Pathways to participation: struggles and successes

## Legal framework for indigenous communities' rights

Reforms to broaden political inclusion in Colombia led to a new constitution in 1991, introducing specific legal recognition and protection of indigenous peoples as a defined cultural group and their rights over specific territories. It strengthened indigenous rights to self-determination and political participation. The 1991 Constitution was a result of agreements among Colombian elites but was shaped by local mobilisation, transnational civil society networking, and use of the law.

During the 1970s and 80s indigenous claims had been asserted through local level social mobilisation and strategies such as land occupations and protests. The 1991 Constitution changed the way indigenous communities claimed their rights. With the legal tools provided by the new Constitution, indigenous peoples entered the national political arena for the first time to claim protection of their legal rights.

New institutions such as the Constituent Assembly of Colombia and the Constitutional Court were used to create a new social pact for indigenous Colombians. For example, before 1991 there were national policies and legislation that allowed landlords and municipalities to take indigenous territories, divide indigenous ancestral domain as well as exploit their natural resources. The new Constituent Assembly abolished legislation that considered indigenous peoples 'immature' in the eyes of the law and prevented them managing their own lives and territories.

The Constitutional Court also strengthened the status of indigenous communities as collective subjects of human rights – including recognising the collective ownership of territories not only as a means of subsistence but as the basis of cultural knowledge and practices. Communities became legally entitled to use natural resources in their territories as they wished; determine policies on education, language, culture and administrative and financial issues; and enjoy



CONAMIC members and participants at Gender Workshop, Cachipay, Colombia, April 2016. © CIASE

greater freedom to establish political and judicial regulations in accordance with indigenous customary governance and justice. Additionally, the government became legally obliged to consult indigenous communities when it took measures affecting their rights or territories.

### Legal protections in practice and the rights of indigenous women

Despite progress in the formal recognition of indigenous communities' rights through legislation and jurisprudence, the impact on indigenous communities' daily life has been limited. For example, in several cases the government has granted licenses to exploit natural resources in indigenous territories without following the standards of consultation established by the Constitutional Court. As reported in the 2016 Annual Report on the Human Rights situation in Colombia, government obligations to consult are frequently presented "as a barrier to progress rather than as a way to promote sustainable development and peace". The lack of implementation, including monitoring, of legal and policy instruments is due to institutional barriers, including high levels of impunity and the absence of a political culture supportive of a progressive agenda for indigenous communities.

Advances in the recognition of collective rights for indigenous communities have not necessarily enhanced the rights of indigenous women. Efforts to draw attention to and remedy the historical marginalisation, abuse and discrimination of indigenous peoples have eclipsed the different types of harm and exclusion faced by specific groups within these communities today.

The debate about women's rights is generally ignored and in some cases prohibited. Indigenous communities often perceive the enhancement of women's rights, in particular sexual and reproductive rights, and political participation within and outside communities, as a threat to their right to self-determination (which allows them to establish regulations in their territories and administer customary justice) and an imposition of western liberalism. Violations of women's rights are often normalised and invisible within and outside their communities, and state authorities have been unable to implement relevant policies on violence against women or to intervene in cases of violations.

For example, indigenous women have not been consulted about the implementation of Law 1257 on violence against women, which establishes that indigenous jurisdiction is responsible for sanctioning cases of domestic violence. In addition, some government bodies have used the collective right of self-determination as an excuse to avoid implementing measures to protect indigenous women's rights or promote their participation in decision-making processes.

One of the main difficulties in documenting human rights violations against indigenous women is the lack of data. Testimonies collected by indigenous organisations<sup>3</sup> suggest that at least 70 per cent of indigenous women have been victims of domestic and community violence as well as sexual violence. These include customary practices such as genital mutilation; *la pelona* (a ritual in which the hair of young girls is torn out when they enter puberty); and child marriage. As these are widely accepted customary traditions, cases are generally not reported to customary authorities or state institutions such as the police or the local attorney general's office. The few women who have reported cases of violence have not received a response from customary or state authorities – often due to the lack of capacity to investigate and prosecute cases, but also because authorities deprioritise them, or are unwilling to act.

Levels of impunity are also high for conflict-related violence. Many survivors choose not to report assaults for fear of retaliation from armed groups, but also because of a lack of confidence in the state. Regional judicial systems are not equipped to ensure comprehensive attention to indigenous women. For example, judiciary personnel often lack knowledge of indigenous beliefs, codes and traditional structures of justice, and many are unfamiliar with women's rights. There is a general shortage of specialised health care and psychological support, as well as interpreters for non-Spanish speakers, all of which limits access to legal systems for indigenous survivors of violence, in particular for women.

3. In-depth interviews conducted by CIASE with 40 indigenous women in the Cauca, Nariño and Sierra Nevada de Santa Marta in 2014.

# Pathways to change

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## From invisible subjects to political actors

Increasing evidence of the high levels of violence and discrimination experienced by indigenous women drew greater attention to the need for their individual rights to be observed alongside collective indigenous rights. From 2006–08 civil society organisations – including CIASE (*La Corporación de Investigación y Acción Social y Económica: Social and Economic Action and Research Corporation*), the Andean Court of Women, CRIC (*Consejo Regional Indígena del Cauca: Regional Indigenous Council of Cauca*), ONIC (*Organización Nacional Indígena de Colombia: National Indigenous Organisation of Colombia*), and OIA (*Organización Indígena de Antioquia: Antioquia's Indigenous Organisation*) – advocated for legal recognition of indigenous women's experiences of conflict, as well as the challenges for these groups to access justice and reparation.

In 2008 the pioneering Constitutional Court 'Auto (Order) 092' acknowledged that sexual violence against women during armed conflict is a common, widespread, systematic and invisible practice. It further recognised that indigenous and Afro-Colombian women face a number of unique gender-related risks. Yet like other formal measures, the ruling has not led to substantial change in how women experience violence and displacement; this is due to institutional factors as well as the complexity of addressing the multiple forms of discrimination they face.

The increased incidence of violence also provoked indigenous women to interrogate the roles they play within their own communities, and develop specific strategies to address these. For example, CONAMIC (*Consejo Nacional de Mujeres Indígenas de Colombia: National Council of Indigenous Women of Colombia*) was established in 2015, emerging from collective activism and networking between indigenous women, as well as between indigenous and non-indigenous women's rights organisations. It began by connecting with the organising spaces of peasant and urban women before gradually defining new forms of organisation specifically for indigenous women. This innovative form of gathering between women from diverse Colombian communities and from different

geographic areas is important for building bridges between different opinions and encouraging solidarity on common issues. It is also encouraging women to participate in spaces normally dominated by men, such as national indigenous organisations.

## Learning with and from international and national movements

The relationship between indigenous and international women's movements has also been important, and has evolved into a two-way learning process. International women's rights and advocacy groups recognise the unique experiences of indigenous women, and the importance of creating ties, and sharing knowledge and learning on alternative approaches, in order to solve the tensions between collective and individual rights. Such discussions have provided opportunity for women to reflect on how their position in and outside of their communities is affected by gender stereotypes.

International, as well as national, support has helped indigenous women to better frame their conflict experiences and explore how the violence and discrimination they face in their daily lives is not 'normal'. Knowledge of how legal and normative frameworks developed from different women's rights movements around the world has also helped counter the notion that they are an "invention" of the West. This has further helped indigenous women balance tensions between the collective demand for territory, culture and autonomy, and their status and position as women in their own communities and within a broader patriarchal society.

The choice to defend their individual rights within the framework of collective rights includes situating their concerns within the broader need to control the exploitation of natural resources; protect their territory and customs; and prevent the forced recruitment of children by illegal armed actors. For CONAMIC, for example, this has involved their familiarisation with international and national frameworks such as United Nations Security Council Resolution (UNSCR) 1325, and highlighting and responding to the multiple forms of discrimination faced by women from minority



CONAMIC members and participants at Gender Workshop, Cachipay, Colombia, April 2016. © CIASE

communities – indigenous and Afro-descendant women. They have done so through participatory community processes, as well as reporting on and raising awareness on their rights locally, nationally and internationally. However, there is still work to be done with indigenous customary authorities to revise customary justice systems to incorporate national and international laws that protect women’s rights.

UNSCR 1325 and its related resolutions have been valuable tools for different women’s organisations in Colombia to promote their rights, particularly in relation to conflict and security. But it has been important to ‘localise’ the framework to reflect and speak to the daily lives of women. CONAMIC and CIASE have developed indicators so that indigenous women can access and benefit from the 1325 global framework in ways relevant to their local context. Examples of indicators include: how many women participate in indigenous autonomous governance structures in indigenous owned reserves? How many indigenous women are visible in the national media services?

As indigenous women mobilised and developed platforms, they also became more involved in discussion around the peace process. They took part in the National Summit of Women, and raised their voices through advocacy, human rights reporting, public protest and activism, to ensure active political participation in the post-Agreement political settlement and implementation of the Agreement.

### **The Final Peace Agreement and the Ethnic Chapter**

Women’s organisations took advantage of the political momentum around the peace negotiations to push for the incorporation of a gender approach in the agreements, and hence secure a place in the design of the post-conflict political settlement. The resulting Agreement has been recognised as a model both for the meaningful and inclusive participation of women and its gender responsive provisions, and for the recognition of the specific concerns of indigenous peoples in the Ethnic Chapter. For example, during the 2016 UN Open Debate on Women, Peace and Security, several states highlighted the Colombian peace process as an effective example of women’s engagement.

The inclusion of gender issues occurred in a number of ways: women's participation and advocacy took place at the 'victim's table' which led to the inclusion of a wider definition of survivors of violence in the Agreement, specifically including women. The creation of a Gender Sub-Commission between Government and FARC also resulted in the inclusion of gender-sensitive and gender-responsive provisions and language throughout the Agreement.

The advocacy of indigenous and Afro-Colombian organisations in the peace process also led to the inclusion of an Ethnic Chapter in the Agreement, which recognises the disproportionate affect of conflict on indigenous communities. It also stipulates that implementation should encompass international and national legal norms and jurisprudence related to the protection of the indigenous and minority rights, for example the 1963 Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination; the 1979 Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women; and the 2007 UN Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples. This ethnic and cultural approach also takes account of guarantees in the 1991 Constitution including rights of self-determination, participation, prior and informed consultation, and collective ownership of territories and natural resources.

While these are hugely significant achievements for women and indigenous communities, the limits in implementation of previous formal commitments is motivation for indigenous and women's rights organisations to develop robust peacebuilding strategies to monitor and build on these developments. This includes ensuring that separate commitments to indigenous communities and women are brought together in meaningful ways to support the rights of indigenous women.

For example, substantive aspects of the Agreement, such as on land, survivors' rights, political participation and access to and control of resources, resonate with indigenous women's priorities. But they identify the underlying "centrality of economic interests, reflective of power and ambition", of the Agreement as a key cause for concern. The forced displacement and illegal acquirement of land for economic exploitation, including resource extraction, is a continued reality. This undermines the economic, livelihood as well as spiritual and cultural connections indigenous peoples have to land.

Implementation of specific provisions that guarantee indigenous rights depends on the meaningful participation of communities themselves. Indigenous women recognise that the first critical step is to promote widespread knowledge of the Agreement among indigenous peoples, and build recognition that indigenous authorities are necessary political partners in the implementation of the Agreement.

For instance CONAMIC have further used UNSCR 1325 to generate a baseline and indicators of change in the peace process that reflects their priorities and experiences in relation to peace and security. They will use these to monitor implementation of the peace agreement and other peace-related developments in indigenous communities. In addition to UNSCR 1325 indicators, CONAMIC is planning to monitor peace developments through:

- a participatory process to identify 'everyday peace indicators'<sup>4</sup>
- collaboration with the formal monitoring mechanism, led by the Kroc Institute, which has identified over 600 measurable provisions in the Agreement.

4. For more on this methodology see: <https://everydaypeaceindicators.org>

# Conclusion

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Colombia is experiencing the challenge of transitioning from war to peace. While the country is moving closer to peace, it cannot be described as post-conflict. The signing of the Final Peace Agreement does not ensure sustainable and inclusive peace, and this is reflected in the continued high levels of economic, social and political inequality, an abundance of armed groups, unresolved local-level grievances, and a high level of political opposition to the peace process. The post-Agreement phase is therefore a critical time to deliver a transformative peace process.

Core to the sustainability of the peace process is the ability of broader society, including indigenous women's organisations, to meaningfully participate in the implementation of the Agreement. Indigenous peoples in Colombia want a state that values indigenous knowledge and includes indigenous women and men, not as beneficiaries but as decision-makers. Colombians now have the chance to review the political settlement and form a multicultural state that includes all citizens.

Human rights and gender rights are dynamic and contextual; indigenous women concurrently hold their own rights as women and collective indigenous rights. Nevertheless there is on-going tension between individual and collective rights that is not resolved in indigenous communities, or within wider Colombian society. The multiple forms of discrimination experienced by indigenous women in Colombia will require differentiated peacebuilding approaches to incorporate and contextualise their specific concerns and interests. Incorporating multiple layers of rights will further necessitate revision of existing legal frameworks and policy instruments concerning indigenous peoples to include a gender approach.

Indigenous women are working in solidarity with local, national and international partners to shape the values and principles of this new multicultural society. Supporting the agency of indigenous women requires recognition by the Colombian government and international donors of their existing and different capacities and knowledge, as well as strategic support – including access to funding and technical support to strengthen institutional capacities. Indigenous women's organisations also need to expand their ability to engage strategic stakeholders such as local governments, grassroots communities and international organisations. Donors and the Colombian government must also find ways to reach beyond traditional, male-dominated indigenous structures to seek engagement with indigenous women on important issues such as political representation, sexual and reproductive rights and economic security.

Lastly, the implementation of the peace agreement is a time of great personal risk. Women and indigenous human rights activists engaged in monitoring and implementing the peace agreement in Colombia face significant threats – according to Justice for Colombia, at least 86 social leaders and human rights defenders were killed in 2016, a trend that continues after the signing of the agreement. There is also currently limited analysis regarding the risks faced by women, women's organisations and ethnic groups affected by the armed conflict; the international community should support measures to protect and enable their engagement at all levels of the peace process.

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## Indigenous women and Colombia's peace process: pathways to participation

This report explores the historic experience of indigenous women in Colombia – a group usually absent from political decision-making processes – and how formal and customary institutions impact their inclusion in Colombia's political settlement.

It charts the emergence of different pathways for change for indigenous women, including the evolution of women's engagement in the Colombian peace process as well as the inclusion of gender and ethnic minority issues in negotiations. The report looks at how the peace process is an opportunity for indigenous women to play a key role in peacebuilding and the reconfiguration of the political settlement in Colombia.

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