

**LOCALIZED ARMED CONFLICTS  
REPORT ON ILLEGAL ARMED GROUPS IN COLOMBIA  
2017-2018**

~BANDERA ~

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## ACRONYM REFERENCE KEY

AGC: *Autodefensas Gaitanistas de Colombia* (Gaitan's Self-Defense Force of Colombia)  
AUC: *Autodefensas Unidas de Colombia* (United Self-Defense Forces of Colombia)  
AUPAC: *Autodefensas Unidas del Pacífico* (United Self-Defense Forces of the Pacific)  
ELN: *Ejército de Liberación Nacional* (National Liberation Army)  
EPL: *Ejército Popular de Liberación* (People's Liberation Army)  
ERPAC: *Ejército Popular Antisubversivo de Colombia* (Popular Antisubversive Army of Colombia)  
ETCR: *Espacio Territorial de Capacitación y Reincorporación* (Territorial Space for Training and Reincorporation)  
FARC-EP: *Fuerzas Armadas Revolucionarias de Colombia - Ejército del Pueblo* (Revolutionary Armed Forces of Colombia - People's Army)  
FOS: *Frente Oliver Sinisterra* (Oliver Sinisterra Front)  
FUP: *Fuerzas Unidas del Pacífico* (United Forces of the Pacific)  
GAD: *Grupos Armados Delincuenciales* (Delinquent Armed Groups)  
GAO: *Grupos Armados Organizados* (Organized Armed Groups)  
GAOR: *Grupos Armados Organizados Residuales* (Residual Organized Armed Groups)  
GSNM: *Grupos de Seguridad del Narcotráfico y Mafias* (Security Groups of Narcotraffickers and Crime Syndicates)  
GUP: *Guerrillas Unidas del Pacífico* (United Guerillas of the Pacific)  
LDNP: *Libertadores del Nordeste Presente* (Liberators of the Present Northeast)  
MRC: *Movimiento Revolucionario Campesino* (Revolutionary Peasant Movement)  
OVA: *Oficina del Valle de Aburrá* (Office of the Aburrá Valley)  
PCC: *Primer Comando Capital* (First Capital Command)  
PNIS: *Programa Nacional Integral de Sustitución de Cultivos* (National Comprehensive Crop Substitution Program)  
RNI: *Rearmados para Negocios Ilegales* (Rearmed for Illegal Business)

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## 1. INTRODUCTION

In 2006, The Institute of Studies for Development and Peace (Indepaz), began a line of research aimed at studying the dynamics of illegal armed groups and their impact on localized Colombian territories. The research was a direct response to the realignments and changes in the armed conflict resulting from the demobilization of the *Autodefensas Unidas de Colombia* (AUC) in that same year.

Indepaz has followed the process through various other milestones which have marked the conditions of the armed conflict, such as the peace agreement with the *Fuerzas Armadas Revolucionarias de Colombia- Ejército del Pueblo* (FARC-EP) and the formal dialogues with the *Ejército de Liberación Nacional* (ELN). Since then, thirteen reports on the presence of narco-paramilitary groups<sup>1</sup> and special analyses of guerrilla structures have been published<sup>2</sup>.

*Localized Armed Conflicts: Report on Illegal Armed Groups in Colombia 2017-2018*, is a new interpretational analysis of the ongoing process of armed conflict in Colombia, based on the changes and the realignment of the forces involved. This analysis includes definitions of new categories of armed actors according to their origins, transformations and violent behaviors as they attempt to achieve territorial and economic gains.

In the first section, elements are presented which support a new understanding of the conflict in Colombia, as well as a recategorization of the groups involved. In the second part, a brief section is presented on the problem of the data related to the number of combatants. In the final section, each of the illegal armed organizational structures, identified between 2017 and 2018, is described.

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<sup>1</sup> Category adopted by Indepaz to define the organizations originating in the AUC and whose main axis of action shifted from the counterinsurgency fight to crime syndicate businesses, mainly drug trafficking.

<sup>2</sup> All reports on narco-paramilitary groups and guerrilla structures are available for consultation in: [www.indepaz.org.co](http://www.indepaz.org.co)

## 2. METHODOLOGY

The research utilizes multiple sources, and these are expanded upon and supplemented with additional materials. First, a systematic review and analysis of information offered in local, regional and nationally syndicated media (newspapers, magazines, web, radio stations, television news) is carried out, which results in the classification of the events related to the conflict. Second, the information provided by official entities, such as the Police, the Navy, the Army, and their multiple branches, as well as the Ombudsman's Office and the Attorney General's Office, are all considered. Third, the data and information available in the reports and documents of NGOs who also monitor the issues of the armed conflict, such as the Popular Research and Education Center (Cinep), the Resource Center for Conflict Analysis (Cerac), the Peace and Reconciliation Foundation, the Ideas for Peace Foundation (FIP), the Integral Peace Observatory (OPI), the National Peace Observatory (ONP), the National Indigenous Organization of Colombia (ONIC) and the Peace and Conflict Observatory of the National University (OPC), among others. Fourth, the information of similar organizations in the different regions; and finally, Indepaz's own fieldwork.

The information is ordered and analyzed in comparative matrices, which avoids double accounting of actions, municipalities and dates. The following elements are considered: threats, assassinations, captures, confinement and intimidation of the population, confrontations, forced disappearances, population displacement, extortion, seizure of weapons and explosives, laboratories to produce illicit drugs, massacres, mobility and recruitment. Each event is compared with other sources to corroborate it. For four years, Indepaz has seen the need to highlight the changes in the information of a qualitative nature that has been obtained from the media and official sources. The acts committed by these groups are being referenced as the actions of simple organized crime groups (or their actions are minimized, as presented by official sources), and are being treated purely as judicial matters (as presented in the media).

It is important to note the challenges in the preparation of this report, given the conflicting versions with which the media, think tanks and official sources have documented the frameworks that have emerged after the disarmament of the FARC-EP. However, it must also be said that currently, as armed groups reorganize, and move between alliances and consolidate or new armed groups appear, the nature and intent of some of these actors is sometimes difficult to determine. In this sense, this report may present some inaccuracies, or the information contained is no longer current.

It is unfortunate, but important to note, that we are not able to rely on the weekly logs from the Observatory of Human Rights of the Vice-Presidency (now the Presidential Council for Human Rights).

***Clarification on the Black Eagles (Águilas Negras):*** As of 2017, they are excluded from the category of narco-paramilitary groups. The activities of this group are analyzed in a different way, which means there is a slight variation on the comparison numbers on the level of this group's activities in affected municipalities. The *Águilas Negras* are not present in the country as

an armed group with permanent organizational structures and known leaders; the name is widely used by different clusters of individuals with the sole purpose of threatening different organizations and their leaders, and with the aim of generating fear with political implications, and with language of the far right.

**Clarification on the mapping process:** The zones indicated in the maps are for illustration purposes only, and they represent municipalities where terror acts were perpetrated by the groups discussed in this study, and therefore they do not represent exact areas of control. The actions, the skirmishes and checkpoints do not correspond to political areas of influence, do not signify the complete control of a municipality, and are presented as specific points or locations (a river, a highway, a rural road, etc.), and / or are presented in a regional view (for example, different areas in municipalities in the north of Antioquia, a few municipalities in the south of Bolivar, and / or south of Cordoba). In this sense, the visual perception of these representations, mainly in the vast municipalities of the Orinoquia region, may be somewhat misleading.

Indepaz would like to thank the organizations and individuals that made the report possible, and we want to make clear that the results and analysis do not discredit the sources in any way.

**Clarification on data from 2018:** It is used for reference data. These data cannot be used for comparisons, because the time frames for the previous years are different since they cover the entire year. This current report corresponds to only the first semester of the year.

### 3. SUMMARY

#### 3.1 Key Ideas

1. The circumstances of the armed conflict have changed, where rather than elements that appear or disappear, there is a shift in the purpose as well as in the logic of the associated violence.
2. The post-peace agreement phase radically changes the circumstances of armed conflicts: we are in transition to the post-conflict, from a national plight of internal armed conflicts, to regional and/or localized confrontations.
3. The understanding of these *localized armed conflicts*, from the point of view of the armed actors, places the confrontations as focal points that are determined by specific interests, which, on a national scale, are not linked to the logic of struggle for political power.
4. The dynamics of the armed groups have transformed. They are led by middle-rank commanders and younger individuals who generally do not act under any political conviction or ideal, a condition which has sharpened the forms of violence in the territories.
5. The main strategies of action are evident: they operate in small armed groups, between five and fifteen individuals, paired with an outsourcing of criminal acts under subcontract from organized crime and/or criminal gangs, or a combination of both.
6. The intervention of international cartels financing illicit business and taking responsibility for the drug traffic from Colombia to other countries, contributes to the formation of new illegal armed groups and revitalizes existing ones, as well as exacerbating some forms of violence.
7. The participation in illegal activities by various agents of the State, including members from State institutions and the police and armed forces, continues to be a fundamental factor for the persistence of crime, and consequently, the armed violence in several regions.
8. There is a change from paramilitarism towards narco-paramilitary and organized crime modalities.
9. Three types of narco-paramilitary groups are identified, defined by their origin and their capabilities: The first type surfaced after the demobilization of the AUC and have a presence at a national level or in multiple regions; the second type of group has the same origin as the previous one, but their influence is limited to regional and municipal levels; and the last group, developed as support units with logistical functions, or criminal purposes at local levels, activities which allowed for the increase of their power and influence, allowing them to compete for territorial control and even to drive out their contracting parties.
10. The downward trend in the number of municipalities identified with activity of narco-paramilitary control continues. This tendency, which began in 2014, is due to the weakening of the narco-paramilitary structures (more recently the AGC), by law enforcement and military actions, and confrontations between illegal groups. In addition, the increase of criminal outsourcing, hinders the identification of the individuals

responsible for the events. It is also important to note, from a methodology perspective, that as of 2017, the *Águilas Negras* (Black Eagles) are excluded from this category, which also means a slight reduction in the number of affected municipalities.

11. Indepaz proposes three categories for the classification of groups post-disarmament of the FARC-EP: Dissidents, Rearmed Groups for Illegal Activities (*Rearmados para Negocios Ilegales – RNI*), and Security Groups Supporting Drug Trafficking and Organized Crime Syndicates (*Grupos de Seguridad del Narcotráfico y Mafias - GSNM*). We ruled out including all these groups under the rubric of dissident groups or repeat offenders, because it ignores the reality of the organizational reconfiguration.
12. It is necessary to reevaluate inexact or ambiguous narratives that: a) consider the FARC-EP post-disarmament organizational structures as homogeneous and declare that there was no disarmament; b) argue that there is continuity of the military-political organization of the FARC-EP; and / or c) conclude that the peace agreement is a failure.
13. There has been a 65% decrease in the number of municipalities that had been affected by the actions of the FARC-EP, compared to municipalities today which indicate acts attributed to the FARC-EP post-disarmament groups.
14. The motives for territorial occupation have changed. There is no intention to take power or to confront the forces of the State. On the contrary, these groups seek to co-opt the authorities for a cover-up and / or collaboration in illegal businesses.
15. All figures related to group membership have biases that are difficult to correct. Details obtained from those who have visited the different conflict areas often rely on their perceptions of leaders or local authorities and are highly subjective.
16. Acknowledging the difficulties in producing figures that approximate as accurately as possible the number of armed members in illegal structures, Indepaz conducted a statistical exercise to present the following data: 3,000 narco-paramilitaries, 2,500 post-FARC-EP, 2,000 ELN and 250 EPL.
17. Of the 2,500 calculated for the FARC-EP post-disarmament groups, it is estimated that 900 would be rearmed (repeat offenders), 300 did not participate in the disarmament process (dissidents) and 1,300 would correspond to new recruitments.
18. For the ELN, there has been a resurgence in some of their traditional areas, such as Chocó, Arauca and the neighboring regions with Boyacá, Casanare and Santander, areas that had different outcomes than those in Norte de Santander, in the area of the Catatumbo.
19. In regions such as the northern Pacific coast, already with a historical presence of armed groups, its inclusion in the conflict areas is due the incursions of drug trafficking groups, the AGC and other dissent groups.
20. The EPL-Pelusos, a group who arguably is not a guerilla organization given its profile of a drug trafficking organization related to the Mexican cartels, acted in thirteen municipalities of three departments, mainly in the Catatumbo region. In the first semester of 2018, it had been identified in nine municipalities. Noteworthy is its appearance in the department of Cauca.

### 3.2 Principal Data

During 2017, acts perpetrated by narco-paramilitary groups were registered in 309 municipalities of 30 departments, indicating a decrease that began five years ago. This is due mainly to three factors: a) the consolidation and withdrawal of large organizations in key territories; b) the activities of the police and armed forces; and c) the outsourcing of criminal activities. Regarding the latter, it is very difficult to attempt to measure the capabilities and territorial scope of these organizations, since responsibilities are attributed to organized crime and / or criminal gangs, which then hides the links of violence with political and economic goals. For the first semester of 2018, 251 municipalities of 29 departments were affected.

**Table 1. Comparison of departments and municipalities with narco-paramilitary activity 2008 - first semester of 2018**

	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018/1
Departments	31	30	32	31	31	30	31	<i>In revision</i>	31	30	29
Municipalities	259	278	360	406	409	409	387		344	309	251

The Gaitanist Self-Defenses of Colombia (*Las Autodefensas Gaitanistas de Colombia - AGC*) represent the greatest activity, appearing in 225 municipalities in 2018 (the previous year it had activity in 247 municipalities). They are followed by *Los Puntilleros*, concentrated in the Orinoquía, and then regional groups, such as *Los Pachenca*, *La Oficina*, *La Constru*, *Los Caparrapos*, among others. Regarding *Los Rastrojos*, it should be noted that it is not the same large group of about three years ago; today they are a much-diminished group in size, and they only offer logistical support to other organized groups. However, they are included in the report because they are still active players in the country's conflict scenario.

**Table 2. Number of departments and municipalities affected by narco-paramilitary group 2017 - first semester 2018**

Groups	Number of departments 2017	Number of municipalities 2017	Number of departments 2018/1	Number of municipalities 2018/1
AGC	27	247	22	225
<i>Los Puntilleros</i>	3	22	2	12
<i>Los Rastrojos</i>	6	21	6	7
<i>La Constru</i>	1	6	1	6
<i>La Oficina</i>	1	13	1	11
<i>La Cordillera</i>	4	14	<i>In process of confirming data</i>	
<i>La Pachenca</i>	4	10	4	6
<i>La Empresa</i>	1	1	1	1

<i>La Pachelly</i>	1	23	1	13
<i>Los Caparrapos</i>	2	9	2	9
<i>Libertadores del Nordeste</i>	<i>No registered activity</i>		1	10
Other groups*	11	19	11	13
* AUPAC, <i>Clan Isaza</i> , <i>Los Botalones</i> , <i>Los Caqueteños</i> , <i>Los Costeños</i> , <i>Los Paracos de Magdalena Medio</i>				

Regarding the organizations that emerged after the peace process with the FARC-EP, these groups were active in 81 municipalities during 2017. In the first semester of 2018, activity was detected in 73 municipalities of 16 departments. The comparison between semesters makes it possible to estimate that, for all of 2018, there will be a figure above that registered in 2017 or of a similar magnitude.

The groups are differentiated in this report according to the analysis of factors of development, capabilities and unique character. Consequently, they are classified as Dissidents (*Disidencias*), Rearmed Groups for Illegal Activities (*Rearmados para Negocios Ilegales - RNI*) and Security Groups Supporting Drug Trafficking and Organized Crime Syndicates (*Grupos de Seguridad del Narcotráfico y Mafias - GSNM*). In the first category we find the Fronts (former FARC-EP groups) First, Seventh and the so-called Acacio Medina; in the RNI, we find Fronts (former FARC-EP groups) 33, 36 and 18, among others; and among the GSNM are the Oliver Sinisterra Front (*Frente Oliver Sinisterra - FOS*) and the United Guerrillas of the Pacific (*Guerrillas Unidas del Pacífico - GUP*). The research has also revealed other groups in the process of formation, in addition to other groups that cannot be clearly identified.

**Table 3. Number of departments and municipalities affected by post-disarmament groups FARC-EP 2017 - first semester 2018**

	2017	2018/1
Departments	14	16
Municipalities	81	73

**Table 4. Number of departments and municipalities affected by post- disarmament group FARC-EP 2017 - first semester 2018**

Group	Number of departments 2017	Number of municipalities 2017	Number of departments 2018	Number of municipalities 2018
<i>Bloque Suroriental</i>	8	21	8	20
<i>GUP</i>	2	9	2	6

<i>FOS</i>	1	7	2	10
<i>MRC</i>	1	7	1	6
<i>Los de Pija</i>	1	6	1	4
<i>Los de Juvenal</i>	1	3	1	5
<i>Comando Conjunto Occidental Nuevo 6° Frente</i>	1	8	1	8
<i>FUP</i>	<i>No registered activity</i>		2	3
<i>Comando Especial Antiparamilitarismo Frente 36</i>	2	11	2	9
<i>Resistencia Guerrilla Nacional</i>	<i>No registered activity</i>		1	6
<i>Rearmados Frente 48</i>	1	5	1	4
<i>Rearmados Frente 33</i>	1	10	2	5
*Other groups	5	23	5	13
<i>*Defensores del Pacífico, Los de Andrés o Carro Loco y El Crespo, Rearmados Frente 10, Rearmados Frente 14, Rearmados Frente 15, Rearmados Frente 40, Rearmados Frente 62</i>				

Regarding the ELN, in the first semester it showed activities in 136 municipalities. During 2017, the number of municipalities reached 159, in 22 departments.

**Table 5. Number of departments and municipalities affected by the ELN 2017- first semester 2018**

	<b>2017</b>	<b>2018/1</b>
Departments	2	17
Municipalities	159	136

The *EPL-Pelusos*, a group who arguably is not a guerilla organization given its profile of a drug trafficking organization related to the Mexican cartels, acted in thirteen municipalities of three departments, mainly in the Catatumbo region. In the first semester of 2018, it had been identified in nine municipalities. Noteworthy is its appearance in the department of Cauca.

**Table 6. Number of departments and municipalities affected by EPL (*Pelusos*) 2017 – first semester of 2018**

	2017	2018/1
Departments	3	3
Municipalities	13	9

In terms of the Black Eagles (*Águilas Negras*), in 2017, their threats were registered in 32 municipalities in ten departments. However, underreporting of the total number of events is evident because it is a group whose structure, leadership and defined operating locations cannot be clearly identified.

**Table 7. Number of departments and municipalities affected by *Águilas Negras* 2017 – first semester of 2018**

	2017	2018/1
Departments	10	11
Municipalities	32	19

#### **4. LOCALIZED ARMED CONFLICTS: A NEW UNDERSTANDING FOR THE DEBATE**

With the processes of demobilization of the AUC and the post-agreement disarmament of the FARC-EP, the situation of armed conflict has been transformed, meaning that rather than groups that appear or disappear, there is a shift in the logic of violent behaviors by armed groups. With Colombia on alert at the national level, there is a well-defined territorial control strategy that has been implemented around infrastructure megaprojects, and which in turn has redefined the conflict zones.

##### ***On the demobilization and disarmament processes***

There are repeated mistakes in these processes. In the case of both the AUC and the FARC-EP, the faulty implementation of the agreements has allowed for the rearmament of certain groups, many of them with the help from connections with former middle-level commanders or rank and file ex-combatants but with special military training<sup>3</sup>. The post-demobilization realities are marked by the inability of the State to take control of former areas of insurgency or paramilitary control, places where sources of illegal income persist; and for the breach of the agreements in terms of security guarantees<sup>4</sup> and minimum conditions<sup>5</sup> for the sustainability of these processes<sup>6</sup>. In addition, the mishandling of specific situations, such as the 117 people who identified themselves as FARC-EP militia members, and who did not receive an appropriate answer to their request to demobilize after they were not acknowledged by the leaders of the old guerrilla movement, also have been a factor. These have become the origin of the criminal cells that today are fighting for control of the Pacific coast of Nariño<sup>7</sup>.

##### **4.1. What Is The New Understanding?**

The understanding of these localized armed conflicts, from the point of view of the armed actors, places the confrontations as focal points that are determined by specific interests, which, on a national level are not logically linked to the struggle for political power. Its dynamics are fueled, mainly, by the hold of organized crime on the State, and by foreign resources funneled via drug trafficking and the illegal collection of revenues and other income by the armed groups.

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<sup>3</sup> See <http://www.elcolombiano.com/colombia/paz-y-derechos-humanos/mandos-medios-amenaza-mortal-a-la-paz-FK5837315>

<sup>4</sup> See <https://www.eltiempo.com/justicia/investigacion/asesinatos-de-exguerrilleros-de-farc-tras-la-firma-de-la-paz-264996>

<sup>5</sup> See <https://cnnespanol.cnn.com/2017/02/08/con-el-94-de-las-farc-movilizadas-las-zonas-de-concentracion-guerrillera-aun-no-están-listas/>

<sup>6</sup> See <http://www.elcolombiano.com/colombia/paz-y-derechos-humanos/zonas-de-reintegracion-de-excombatientes-de-farc-CY8625756>

<sup>7</sup> See <https://verdadabierta.com/grupos-armados-ilegales-de-tumaco-en-un-callejon-sin-salida/>

The dynamics of the armed groups have transformed. They are led by middle-rank commanders and younger individuals<sup>8</sup> who generally do not act under any political conviction or ideal, a condition which has deepened the forms of violence in the territories.

The significance of these key concepts does not imply that paramilitary groups have disappeared, or that the internal armed conflict has ended. The communities in the regions of northern Antioquia and the Pacific Coast describe the continuation of joint actions between members of the Armed Forces and illegal armed groups, and the impossibility to report these activities, due to the complicity of the entities in charge of these matters<sup>9</sup>. At the same time, the internal armed conflict continues, which is localized in the areas in which the ELN is active. This conflict continues to present the characteristics of confrontations which, according to international treaties, are defined as *a non-international armed conflict*<sup>10</sup>, a fact also recognized in different rulings of the Constitutional Court<sup>11</sup> and underscores the interpretation of the political character and strategy of armed insurgency.

## 4.2 Central Elements

**Localization:** The consolidation of economic and political interests, together with the disappearance of forces (AUC and FARC-EP) capable of impacting the establishment and national institutions, have resulted in armed confrontations focusing on territorial gains, which do not respond to a logic of control of strategic points interconnected according to a single objective; on the contrary, it is more about disjointed domains. However, this is an internal dynamic and from the perspective of the actions of illegal armed groups, we understand that criminality is linked to transnational networks or national political and economic goals.

These pockets of conflict are unique because of geographical characteristics, geopolitical interests, income and population, and therefore redefining the objectives of the current illegal armed groups. The condition of internal armed conflict also persists as a focal point.

**Narcotization:** The processes of armed reorganization have resulted in the fragmentation of power, and consequently in the loss of capabilities to control large-scale income. The disappearance of large Colombian drug traffickers and cartels (Medellín, Cali, Norte del Valle, etc.) led to a breakup into smaller cartels, but with an increased capacity for illegal supply and income distribution based on their activities in the supply chain. In this environment many individuals were involved, including paramilitaries, State agents, businessmen, money launderers and guerrillas. Simultaneously, the international cartels began to control the links of the cross-border traffic and the arrival routes to the domestic drug markets in the United States and Europe, and they became the dominant criminal enterprises in this segment of the business. This leads to the current situation, in which Colombian narco-cartels are dependent

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<sup>8</sup> Statements made by residents of the Pacific region of Nariño, Northeast and Bajo Cauca areas of Antioquia. Information collected in field work.

<sup>9</sup> Statements made by residents of the areas of the Pacific coast, the Northeast, Bajo Cauca and Urabá region of Antioquia. Information collected in field work.

<sup>10</sup> See <https://www.icrc.org/es/doc/assets/files/other/opinion-paper-armed-conflict-en.pdf>

<sup>11</sup> See <http://www.corteconstitucional.gov.co/relatoria/2014/C-577-14.htm>

and the number of armed security groups for drug trafficking has increased. This set of circumstances and the resources involved (money and weapons) define the occupation of zones, the formation of new illegal armed groups, and the revitalization of others, and intensifies some forms of violence.

This phenomenon has come with a catch. The *trap of drug trafficking* has captured the attention of public opinion and has directed the formulation of biased public policies, aimed at confrontation in the affected areas and the criminalization of the *campesinos* who cultivate the crops, without paying much attention to the flow of money laundering, or the big business of supplying the illegal operations. In addition, it generates policy neglect on other types of activities, such as illegal mining, theft of land, the influence of organized crime on the State, and money laundering, among other issues; and, finally, responses to structural conflicts are neglected, such as education, economic opportunities, basic services, community security and others<sup>12</sup>.

**Outsourcing:** The strategy of contracting criminal activity at different levels has increased. First, by the linking of political and economic goals with narco-paramilitary groups<sup>13</sup> and secondly, by the subcontracting of criminal gangs and organized crime groups by narco-paramilitaries and FARC-EP post-disarmament organizations.

This model effectively manages to hide responsibility for political and economic goals in the conflict; widens the scope of action of armed groups without the need for troop movements and guarantees logistical support; it establishes regimes of terror on the part of the gangs / criminal combos and organized crime in some territories under names like AGC, *Águilas Negras*, *Rastrojos*, among others. As a result, criminal groups / gangs and organized crime are becoming more powerful, to the point of being able to confront and replace their contracting parties (for example, what happened between *Caparrapos* and *Pachenca*).

**Organized crime hold on the State:** The participation in illegal activities by members of the State institutions<sup>14</sup>, the police and armed forces<sup>15</sup> continues to be a fundamental factor in the persistence of crime, and consequently, of the conflict. These criminal relationships are based on economic benefits and mutual interests; but they do not necessarily mean a partnership to take over the country. This situation is the result, in some cases, of the intimidation of government officials.

**The new command structure:** Leading a large share of the illegal armed groups we find middle-rank and younger commanders, whose training does not reflect political or ideological

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<sup>12</sup> General perception detected in field work by the Conflicts Investigative Unit of Indepaz. The communities of Tumaco and the Catatumbo region reject the centralization of the state's actions of military combat against drug trafficking and the failure to strengthen the government's policies on education, employment, and community security, among others.

<sup>13</sup> See <https://www.bluradio.com/regionales/empresarios-de-asesas-de-asesinatos-de-lideres-de-tierras-fiscalia-188099-ie435>

<sup>14</sup> See <https://www.eltiempo.com/justicia/investigacion/fiscales-capturados-por-casos-de-corrupcion-114250>

<sup>15</sup> See <https://verdadabierta.com/posibles-alianzas-entre-politicos-y-las-autodefensas-gaitanistas-de-colombia-en-el-bajo-cauca-antioqueno/>

objectives. This situation manifests itself in the territories with an exacerbation of violence, and an escalation of human rights violations with disregard to International Humanitarian Law (IHL), such as what happened in May of this year in the Naya region where a humanitarian mission of the Ombudsman's Office was attacked<sup>16</sup>. Consequently, leadership in these situations is based on the aptitude for violent action and persuasion, in order to maintain control of troops, territories and profits.

**Maintaining the practice:** Paramilitary groups continue to collaborate with law enforcement in exchange for complicity or omission regarding illicit activities. This means that the connections that have been reestablished in the post-agreement phase are not due to a national counterinsurgency strategy, but to business conveniences.

The internal armed conflict, the insurgent strategies, the political motivations and the ideas to seize power also persist. All of these are concentrated in zones where the ELN is active.

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<sup>16</sup> See <https://www.elespectador.com/noticias/politica/nunca-antes-habian-atacado-una-mision-humanitaria-defensor-del-pueblo-articulo-790801>

## 5. CATEGORIZATION OF ILLEGAL ARMED ORGANIZATIONS

### 5.1. AUC Post-demobilization Organizations

After the demobilization of the AUC (*Autodefensas Unidas de Colombia*) between 2003 and 2006, an official policy was initiated to deny the existence of paramilitarism. Under this directive, the government of Álvaro Uribe Vélez in 2008 defined the post-demobilization organizations as criminal bands (BACRIM). This action categorized them as organized crime groups, and minimized their real capabilities for affecting public order, their effects on civil society, and their relationship with State entities. During the second Santos administration, in 2016, directives 015 and 016 of the Ministry of Defense were issued, redefining the categorization of BACRIM to GAO (Armed Organized Groups) and GAD (Armed Delinquency Groups), and allowing the use of military force, with all its combat capabilities, but in the framework of IHL<sup>17</sup>. This last directive was supported by Law 1908 of 2018<sup>18</sup>

Indepaz, recognizes these organization as an element of the Paramilitary Complex<sup>19</sup>, thus defining these groups as narco-paramilitares.

**Narco-paramilitaries:** This is a modality of paramilitarism based on business activities, especially drug trafficking and money laundering. Private armed groups for hire carry out functions of public security and, sometimes, of counterinsurgency, counting on the complicity or omission from agents of the State, including law enforcement and the armed forces. They control territories, take over state institutions, exercise private or vigilante justice, take control of assets, resources and profits while systematically practicing corruption through their businesses and those of their allies. They also seek to control the power of the state, and to that end, they sponsor politicians and alliances with governors or with local or national fractions of political parties<sup>20</sup>

Three types of narco-paramilitary groups are identified, defined by their origin and their capabilities: The first group developed after the demobilization of the AUC and have influence at the national level or in multiple regions; the second type has the same origin as the previous one, but their capabilities are limited to regional and municipal levels; and the last, developed as support groups with logistical or criminal functionality at local levels, activities which allowed the increase of their power, and even to contest territorial control and displace their contracting parties. Within the first type are AGC and *Los Puntilleros*. In the second group are *Cordillera*, and *La Constru*, among a few others. The *Pachenca*, *Los Caparrapos* and *Los Pachelly* are part of the last type.

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<sup>17</sup> See <http://www.indepaz.org.co/wp-content/uploads/2016/05/Directive-15-de-2016-rev-2.pdf>

<sup>18</sup> See

<http://es.presidencia.gov.co/normativa/normativa/LEY%201908%20DEL%209%20DE%20JULIO%20DE%202018.pdf>

<sup>19</sup> A multi-alliance between organized armed groups for illegal business, politicians and businessmen of the para-economy, which the complicity in some cases of State agents, including members of the military and the police. Their for-profit model exhibits certain characteristics of traditional law enforcement, but with criminal intent, such as their so-called “social cleansing”, instilling local authoritarian control and taking over entire territories. See <http://www.indepaz.org.co/7385/el-complejo-paramilitar-se-transforma-2/>

<sup>20</sup> See <http://www.indepaz.org.co/wp-content/uploads/2018/09/EL-COMPLEJO-PARAMILITAR.pdf>

## 5.2. Groups of the FARC-EP Post-disarmament

The organizations that were formed after the surrender of weapons by the FARC-EP were immediately generalized under the name of dissidence, a perception that has persisted in the realm of public opinion. On the other hand, Rodrigo Londoño, head of the legitimate political party that emerged from the old FARC guerrilla group, denies any link between the new groups and the ideology they defended during their armed struggle, and considers their actions as criminal<sup>21</sup>. The representative of the Alternative Revolutionary Force of the Common (*Fuerza Revolucionaria Alternativa del Común*), Marcos Calarcá, has backed Londoño's comments<sup>22</sup>.

On behalf of the Government, on October 26, 2017, the Ministry of Defense issued Directive 037<sup>23</sup>, where it defines these groups under the classification of GAOR (Organized Residual Armed Groups), a decision consistent with the strategy implemented since 2016, where Directives 016 and 017 of 2016, gave the necessary tools within the framework of IHL to military forces in order to combat illegal armed organizations.

Indepaz finds the use of these types of generalizations problematic, because they do not allow a detailed understanding of the dynamics of the confrontations, nor of the specific impacts in the affected territories. Consequently, factors related to the moment of their emergence, the nature or purpose of the group, and their capabilities to operate and control territory, are examined.

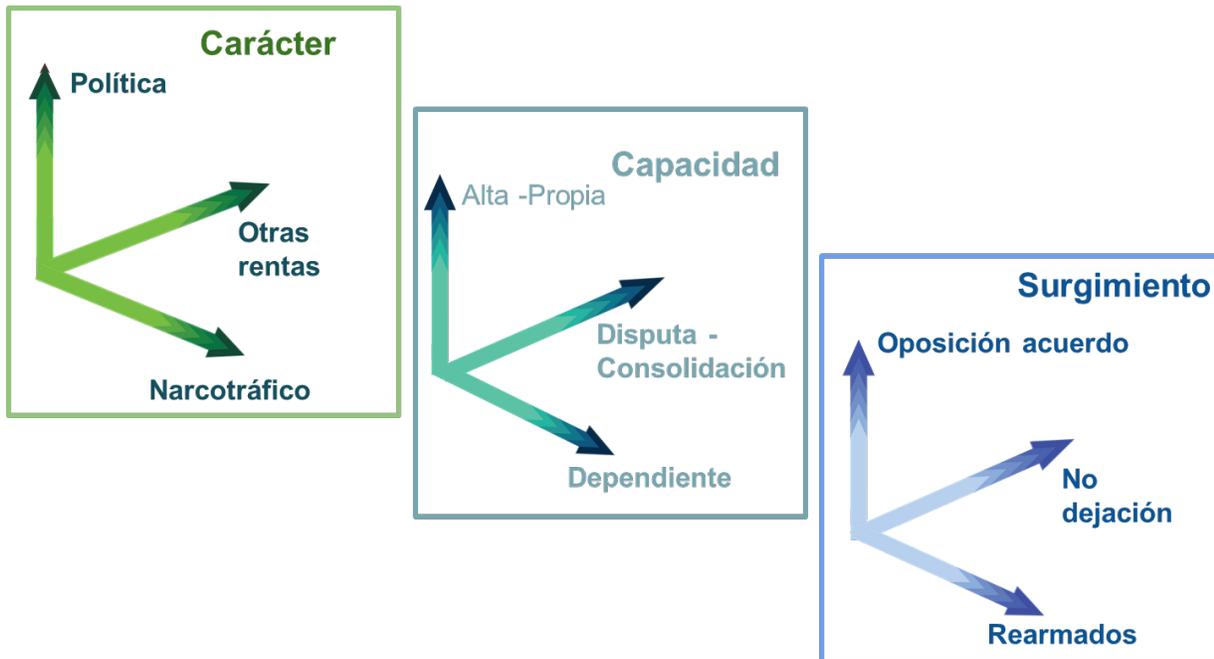
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<sup>21</sup> See <https://cnnespanol.cnn.com/video/colombia-jefe-demobilized-guerrilla-farc-rodigo-londono-timo-chenko-proceso-paz-intv-fernando-ramos/>

<sup>22</sup> See <https://www.eltiempo.com/justicia/cortes/no-hay-disidencias-de-las-farc-en-ningun-lado-del-pais-calarca-58796>

<sup>23</sup> See <http://www.cgfm.mil.co/2017/10/31/mindefensa-expide-nueva-directiva-enfrentar-crimen-residual/>

**Graph 1. Characterization model of FARC-EP post-demobilization organizations**



As a result of the analysis, three categories are proposed for the classification of these groups: Dissidents (*Disidencias*), Rearmed Groups for Illegal Activities (*Rearmados para Negocios Ilegales- RNI*) and Security Groups Supporting Drug Trafficking and Organized Crime Syndicates (*Grupos de Seguridad del Narcotráfico y Mafias - GSNM*)

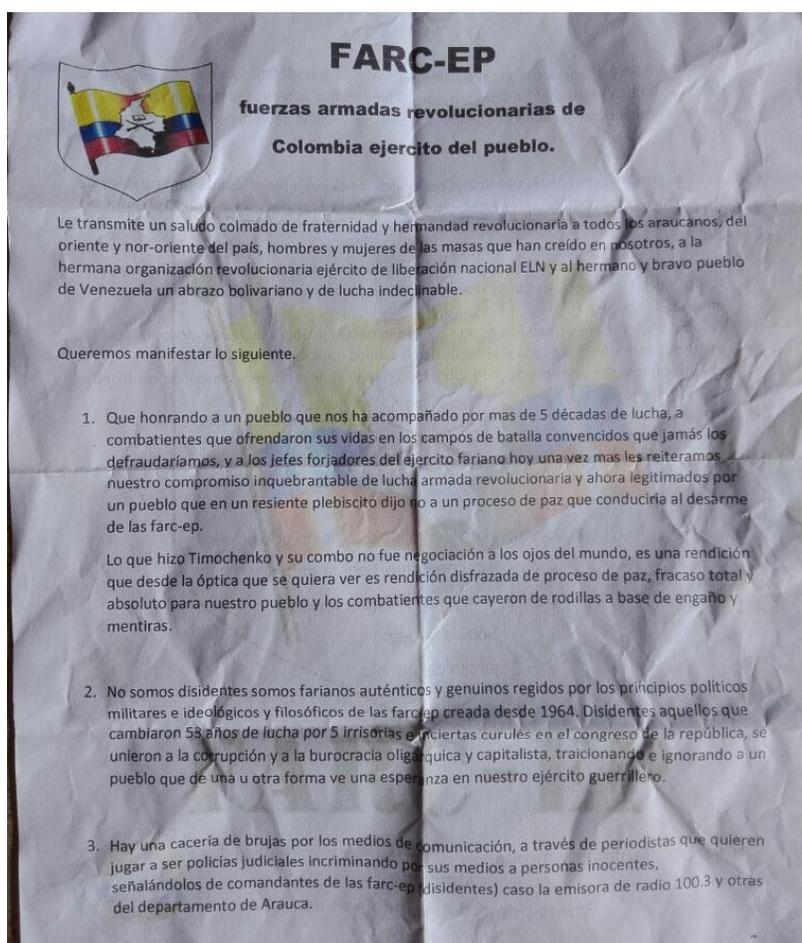
**Dissidents:** These are organized groups that were once a part of the FARC-EP, and arguing disagreements with the Havana Agreement, have remained as armed groups claiming the historical ideological platform of the organization which has now transformed itself into a political party as a result of the Peace Agreement. They have one foot in their guerrilla past and the other in illegal business.

In this category, we find the Southeast Bloc (*Bloque Suroriental*), the result of an alliance between the First Front (*Frente Primero*), Seventh Front (*Frente Séptimo*) and the Acacio Medina Front (*Frente Acacio Medina*). **On their emergence:** Initially, in 2016, the *Frente Primero* declared itself against a negotiation process between the Government and the FARC-EP<sup>24</sup>, and they were later joined by those commanded by alias *Gentil Duarte*. **On their character:** Since then, they have maintained a narrative of continuing to follow their original ideology, arguing that the peace process was a surrender of the FARC-EP. (See image 1) and therefore they reject its implementation, mainly with the provisions related to the voluntary substitution of illicit crops. However, it is not possible to assert without reservation that it is an organization with only political purposes, because it carries out, as an organizational practice, drug trafficking activities and seizure of revenues from the extraction of natural resources.

<sup>24</sup> See <https://www.eltiempo.com/justicia/cortes/fren-pide-nueva-directiva-enfrentar-crimen-residual/te-primero-disidencia-contra-plebiscito-32701>

**On their capabilities:** Having not once suspended operations, they maintain extensive territorial control and control of illegal income, as well as consolidating power with alliances with other Fronts, and preventing the entry of law enforcement and armed forces, as well as the entry of other armed groups that can challenge the control of the zones under their authority.

**Image 1. Pamphlet of the First Front in Arauca (February 2018)**



Source: <https://meridiano70.co/no-somos-disidentes-frente-primero-armando-rios-de-las-farc-en-arauca/>

**Rearmed for Illegal Activity (RNI):** These are armed groups formed for illegal businesses and security services, composed of former combatants who participated in the transition zones, former guerrilla members who were not included in the lists of combatants, and new people recruited for profit.

This category includes groups such as the Special Anti-paramilitaries Command Front 36 (*Comando Especial Antiparamilitarismo Frente 36*), Front 18 (*Frente 18*) or the FUP (*Fuerzas Unidas del Pacifico*), among others. **On their emergence:** They have been developing from the beginning of the peace process up to the present. The rearmament processes have been led by middle-rank officers who left the ETCR (Territorial Spaces for Training and Reincorporation). **On**

**their character:** Although some portray their political character as a renewal of the ideologies of Manuel Marulanda and Jacobo Arenas, in reality they are mainly engaged in illegal business and offering security services, a situation that positions them as economic regulators (prices, investments and activities) and public order enforcers (social concerns). **On their capability:** Given that at some point they were absent from the conflict, their current means of territorial control and income are enabled by situations of confrontation, alliances, co-optation and recruitment, and therefore we are unable to identify absolute or consolidated areas of control.

**Security Groups Supporting Drug Trafficking and Organized Crime Syndicates (GSNM):** These are armed groups that are recruited to protect crops, processing facilities, laboratories, trafficking routes, provide murder-for-hire services, extortion, vigilante justice and various forms of armed control of territories and populations. They depend on local or regional agents of drug trafficking and organized crime groups.

The FOS (Oliver Sinisterra Front) and the GUP (United Guerrillas of the Pacific), among others, are included in this category. **On their emergence:** The origin of these groups is related to former militants who remained in limbo by their exclusion by the FARC-EP on the list of those members who would be part of the process of reintegration into civilian life. Forming groups, these individuals were co-opted by drug traffickers. **On their character:** Their main objective is to guarantee the control and operation of drug trafficking activities until the products leave the country. There is no political or ideological foundation behind their actions, a fact that has heightened the forms of violence in the territories in which they operate. **On their capability:** Their capability depends on the flow of capital and weapons provided by drug trafficking groups.

### 5.3. Guerrillas / insurgents

These are political-military organizations that have risen up in arms against the State with motivations for social, economic and institutional change through an armed struggle. Unlike the previous groups, there is an acknowledgement of their status of rebellion, without minimizing the nature of their practices and behavior contrary to the norms of International Humanitarian Law.

#### **General clarification<sup>25</sup>**

It is important to clarify that these classifications are based on the main attributes of origin, formation, goals and actions, but these categorizations are not absolute. In fact, these organizational structures have varying elements even at the municipal level. Furthermore, it should not be assumed that defining attributes will not alter over time. Experiences with post-demobilization AUC groups show that in the early years of armed reform processes, these attributes vary greatly.

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<sup>25</sup> At Indepaz, we continue our internal discussions in order to continuously improve the understanding of the conflict situation and the characterization of groups. Within our Investigative Unit there are disagreements on some statements.

## 6. THE PROBLEM WITH THE NUMBERS

Attempting to characterize illegal armed organizations is an inherently problematic exercise. How do you measure political characteristics? Which actions were committed in the name of third parties? Alliances or co-optation? **How many of them are there?** On this last question, Indepaz, in several articles and reports, has insisted for several years on the inconsistencies of the official and research centers' figures that refer to the number of combatants that make up the different organizations. How do they count them?

### 6.1. Brief review of certain narco-paramilitary statistics from the Uribe and Santos governments

Table 8, taken from *Narcoparamilitares: sobre definiciones, denominaciones, cifras oficiales y el Clan del Golfo*, shows that despite the large number of casualties and captures, membership in these narco-paramilitary groups doubled. This could be attributed to three factors: a) the totals presented by the Minister of Defense appear contradictory when reviewed sequentially and comparatively, reflecting an institutional breakdown and opening the door to questions on the effectiveness of public policies created to combat these organizations; b) inadequate methodologies used to calculate the number of combatants and/or c) dismissing groups' abilities to regenerate and recruit members.

**Table 8. Comparison of official numbers of Narco-Paramilitary Groups<sup>26</sup>**

	2008	2009	2010	2011
Number of groups	16	6	6	7
Affected departments	17	18	18	17
Affected municipalities	94	159	159	151
Number of members	1,988-2,000	3,749	3,749	4,154
Captures and casualties	1,625	2,450	3,010	3,856

Another type of problem with the official figures is reflected in the statements by the Minister of Defense Luis Carlos Villegas, when he announced in 2017 that the *Clan del Golfo* (Gulf Clan) had been reduced between 2010 and 2017 from 4,000 members to 1,800<sup>27</sup>. However, when reviewing the reports of this same department, which in 2010 was under the direction of Rodrigo Rivera Salazar, it was calculated that membership of this group (called *Urabeños* at that time) was at 1351 participants.

<sup>26</sup> Source: Our own data collection by Juan Carlos Jiménez Suárez. Supported by official figures in *Punto de Encuentro 58* by Indepaz and statements delivered by the Minister of Defense on May 3, 2017.

<sup>27</sup> See <http://www.elespectador.com/noticias/judicial/clan-del-golfo-se-redujo-la-mitad-asegura-el-gobierno-arti-culo-692115>

**Table 9. Comparison of official figures on members of the Gaitanist Self-Defense Groups (Clan del Golfo or Urabeños)<sup>28</sup>**

Year	Minister of Defense	Name	Membership 2010	Membership 2017
2010	Guillermo Rivera	<i>Urabeños</i>	1,351	N/A
2017	Luis Carlos Villegas	<i>Clan de Golfo</i>	4,000	1,800

## 6.2. Figures on the FARC-EP post-disarmament groups

For the characterizations of these groups (developed in the second section of this study) Indepaz tried to establish the approximate number of combatants. However, when comparing fieldwork with a review of official sources, sources in the media and sources from other think tanks, we found drastic differences between the numbers, with variations that in some cases exceed 200%. See examples in Table 10.

**Table 10. Comparison of FARC-EP post-disarmament group membership in 2018<sup>29</sup>**

GROUP	Minimum combat-ready forces	Maximum combat-ready forces
<i>Frente Primero</i>	200	400
<i>Frente Séptimo</i>	300	500
<i>Frente 33</i>	60	300
<i>Frente 36</i>	136	285
<i>Frente Acacio Medina</i>	80	200
<i>Guerillas Unidas del Pacífico</i>	120	500
<i>Frente Oliver Sinisterra</i>	140	500
<i>Frente Fuerza Unida del Pacífico</i>	15	400

The data on membership of these FARC-EP post-disarmament groups are based on biases that are difficult to correct. Individuals who provide the figures based on visits to the affected areas, rely on perceptions of local leaders or local authorities with a high level of subjectivity. In any case, the sources and the inquiries made by Indepaz concur that the armed groups who rearmed after the demobilization cannot be referred to as dissidents because their origin and

<sup>28</sup> Source: Our own data collection by Juan Carlos Jiménez Suárez. Supported by official figures in the magazine *Punto de Encuentro* 58 by Indepaz and statements delivered by the Minister of Defense on May 3, 2017.

<sup>29</sup> Data taken from official reports and public statements by senior officials. Prepared by Indepaz. Sources are found in each group description.

central motivation is personal gain; nor can they be called recidivists, due to the fact that only a fraction of them are deserters from FARC-EP membership lists acknowledged by the commanders of that organization.

Despite all these reservations, it is important to acknowledge that the rearming of groups after the FARC-EP demobilization is a highly significant phenomenon in zones of former FARC-EP presence, and where its war economy, based on income from drug trafficking, had greater weight than that of mining or other large-scale sources. Adjusting figures, it can be estimated that 10% of FARC-EP members who registered their surrender of weapons, have re-armed and have joined in sectarian groups or joined drug trafficking and syndicated crime security groups. This fragmented group can add up together to around 2,500 armed personnel with a presence in 81 municipalities, especially in Nariño, Chocó, northern Antioquia, Cauca, Norte de Santander (Catatumbo region) and Guaviare.

**6.3. Data from Indepaz**

With transparency regarding the difficulties of accurately presenting the membership levels of armed illegal structures, Indepaz carried out a statistical analysis to present a new data set.

The calculations were built based on:

- Figures from official sources, think tanks and media.
- Data obtained with our own field work.
- Number of municipalities and departments with illegal armed action.
- Flow and intensity of the reported actions.
- Comparison between periods defined by milestones which triggered the process of armed territorial restructuring.

The data presented in table 11 correspond to general figures based on the type of armed organizations and numbers can arguably be tripled if the support networks and / or urban militias are considered.

**Table 11. Number of armed members**

Type of organization	Number of armed members
Narco-paramilitaries	3,000
Post-disarmament FARC-EP	2,500
ELN	2,000
EPL	250

Of the 2,500 calculated for the FARC-EP post-disarmament groups, it is estimated that 900 were rearmed, 300 never even initiated the disarmament<sup>30</sup> process and 1,300 were new recruitments.

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<sup>30</sup> See <https://www.elspectador.com/noticias/politica/frente-de-farc-dice-no-entregara-armas-articulo-641831>

## 7. CHARACTERISTICS OF ILLEGAL ARMED ORGANIZATIONS

**Table 12. Departments and municipalities affected by illegal armed groups by category  
2017 - first semester 2018**

Groups	Narco Paramilitaries		Post-Demobilization FARC-EP		ELN		EPL		Aguilas Negras	
	2017	2018/1	2017	2018/1	2017	2018/1	2017	2018/1	2017	2018/1
Departments	30	29	14	16	22	17	3	3	10	11
Municipalities*	309	251	81	73	159	136	13	9	32	19

\*Many of the municipalities show the presence of several groups, who split control of the different areas or zones within the territory based on sources of income, traffic routes and control of the population.

### 7.1. Narco-paramilitary groups

#### 7.1.1. Persistence of incidents in the municipalities<sup>31</sup>

For twelve years, Indepaz has monitored the dynamics of the narco-paramilitary groups: their composition, their actions and the impact on individual municipalities. This ongoing monitoring has helped to detect changing conditions in terms of the identified organized groups and their presence in a given territory, which allows for establishing degrees of impact and the mapping of critical regions, including intermittent activity and the expansion or loss of territorial control.

Map 3 and tables 9 and 10 indicate the ongoing actions of the narco-paramilitary groups. To define the impact of these groups, three levels have been designed based on the factual records obtained between 2008 and 2017.

The municipalities were grouped under the following categories:

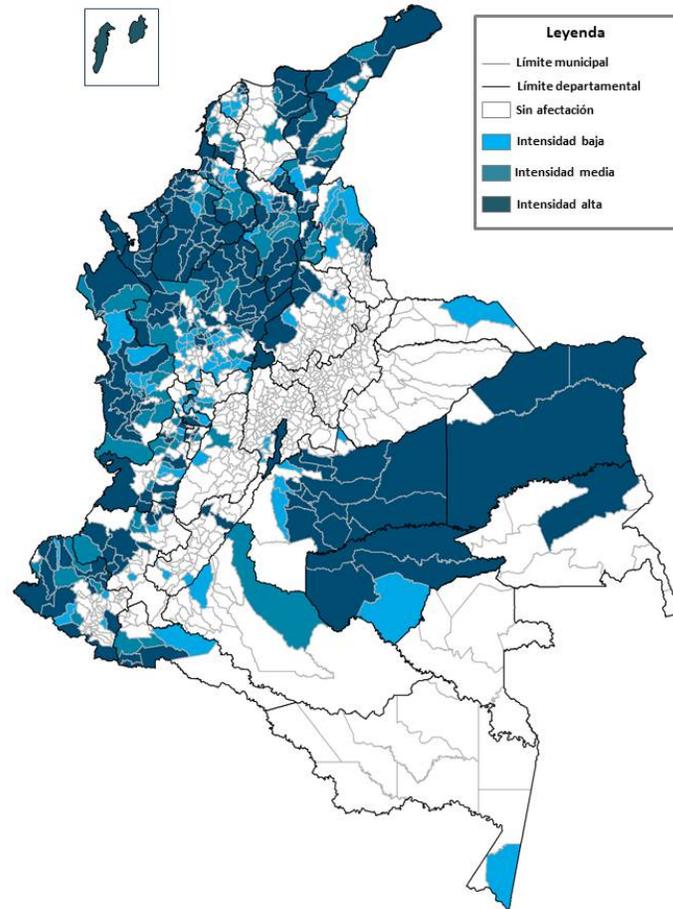
**High intensity:** municipalities that registered activity of narco-paramilitary groups in 2017, and that between 2008 and 2017 did so for seven to ten years.

**Average intensity:** municipalities that registered activity of narco-paramilitary groups in 2017 and that show ongoing activity in recent years and / or that show activity for at least four years between 2008 and 2017.

**Low intensity:** municipalities that registered activity of narco-paramilitary groups in 2017 and / or show activity in the last three years (2015-2017).

<sup>31</sup> This analysis is based on annual data, which includes all of 2017. The data for 2018 only records events up to the month of June.

**Map 1. Continuity of narco-paramilitary actions\*\***



*\*\* English key note to this map: the darkest shading represents the highest intensity of narco-paramilitary activity, while the lighter and white colors represent the lowest to no narco paramilitary activity.*

After a review of data from 694 municipalities that over a period of ten years indicate some form of narco-paramilitary control, 384 were included in tables 13 and 14 as showing continued activity.

Between 2008 and 2017, the narco-paramilitary groups have consolidated their areas of presence, with sustained and continued activities in 198 municipalities of 27 departments. 86 municipalities may be in the process of consolidating control by a group or in active dispute with other armed groups (legal or illegal). As it relates to the last year of analysis (2017), 99 municipalities have reported sporadic activity or are part of territorial expansion projects.

**Table 13. Number of municipalities affected by narco-paramilitary actions classified by intensity. 2008-2017**

Department	Number of municipalities within a department	Low	Medium	High	Total	% high intensity	% of departments affected
		Number of affected municipalities					
Amazonas	2	1	0	0	1	0%	50%
Antioquia	125	26	14	44	84	35%	67%
Arauca	7	1	0	0	1	0%	14%
Atlántico	23	7	0	4	11	17%	48%
Bolívar	45	4	9	12	25	27%	56%
Boyacá	123	0	0	1	1	1%	1%
Caldas	27	7	4	1	12	4%	44%
Caquetá	16	1	1	0	2	0%	13%
Cauca	42	2	4	9	15	21%	36%
Cesar	25	1	7	9	17	36%	68%
Chocó	30	5	10	13	28	43%	93%
Córdoba	30	3	3	20	26	67%	87%
Cundinamarca	116	4	0	1	5	1%	4%
Distrito Capital	1	0	0	1	1	100%	100%
Guainía	1	0	0	1	1	100%	100%
Guaviare	4	1	0	3	4	75%	100%
Huila	37	2	0	1	3	3%	8%
La Guajira	15	2	2	4	8	27%	53%
Magdalena	29	1	2	6	9	21%	31%
Meta	29	4	0	15	19	52%	66%
Nariño	64	4	5	12	21	19%	33%
Norte de Santander	40	4	4	6	14	15%	35%
Putumayo	13	1	2	3	6	23%	46%
Quindío	12	0	1	3	4	25%	33%
Risaralda	14	4	2	2	8	14%	57%
San Andrés y Providencia	1	0	0	1	1	100%	100%
Santander	87	3	0	5	8	6%	9%
Sucre	26	6	7	9	22	35%	85%
Tolima	47	1	1	0	2	0%	4%
Valle del Cauca	42	4	9	9	23	21%	55%
Vichada	4	0	0	3	3	75%	75%
<b>Total impacted municipalities</b>		<b>99</b>	<b>87</b>	<b>198</b>			

Of the 384 municipalities analyzed in map 3 and in tables 13 and 14, 309 correspond to those identified in 2017; and 75 (in red), correspond to those that indicated some sort of continuity,

and that were not included in the last year. For the latter, Indepaz will create a special follow-up report with up-to-date information.

**Table 14. Continuation of narco-paramilitary activity by municipality, 2008-2017**

Department	Low	Medium	High
	Municipality		
Amazonas	Leticia		
Antioquia	Abejorral	Angostura	Amalfi
	Anzá	Anorí	Apartadó
	Armenia Mantequilla	Belmira	Arboletes
	Betulia	Campamento	Barbosa
	Ciudad Bolívar	Girardota	Bello
	Concepción	Ituango	Briceño
	Concordia	La Estrella	Buriticá
	Ebéjico	Murindó	Cáceres
	El Carmen de Viboral	San Andrés de Cuerquia	Cañasgordas
	El Peñol	San Luis	Carepa
	Giraldo	San Pedro de los Milagros	Caucasia
	Guarne	San Roque	Copacabana
	Guatapé	Santafé de Antioquia	Chigorodó
	Heliconia	Urrao	Cisneros
	Jericó		Dabeiba
	La Pintada		El Bragre
	La Unión		Envigado
	Marinilla		Frontino
	Pueblorrico		Itagüí
	San Francisco		Maceo
	San Jerónimo		Medellín
	San Rafael		Mutatá
	San Vicente		Nechí
	Sonsón		Necoclí
	Toledo		Puerto Berrio
	Valparaiso		Puerto Triunfo
			Remedios
			Rionegro
			San Juan de Urabá
			San Pedro de Urabá
			Santa Rosa de Osos

			Segovia
			Sopetrán
			Tarazá
			Turbo
			Uramita
			Valdivia
			Vegachí
			Vigía del Fuerte
			Yalí
			Yarumal
			Yolombó
			Yondó
			Zaragoza
Arauca	Arauca		
Atlántico	Banaroa		Barranquilla
	Luruaco		Galapa
	Manatí		Malambo
	Palmar de Varela		Soledad
	Repelón		
	Sabanalarga		
	Santo Tomás		
Bolívar	Pinillos	Arenal	Achí
	Regidor	Arjona	Altos del Rosario
	San Jacinto del Cauca	Montecristo	Barranco de Loba
	Turbaná	Morales	Cantagallo
		Norosí	Carmen de Bolívar
		Río Viejo	Cartagena
		San Jacinto	Magangué
		San Juan Nepomuceno	San Martín de Loba
		Turbaco	San Pablo
			Santa Rosa del Sur
			Simití
			Tiquisio
Boyacá			Puerto Boyacá
Caldas	Belalcázar	La Dorada	Anserma
	Chinchiná	Manizales	
	Neira	Marmato	
	Risaralda	Riosucio	
	San José		
	Supía		

	Viterbo		
Caquetá	Florencia	San Vicente del Caguán	
Cauca	Almaguer	Guapí	Argelia
	Caldono	Miranda	Balboa
		Morales	Caloto
		Suárez	Corinto
			El Tambo
			Patía (El Bordó)
			Popayán
			Santander de Quilichao
		Timbiquí	
Cesar	Chimichagua	Astrea	Aguachica
		Becerril	Curumaní
		Codazzi	El Copey
		Pueblo Bello	El Paso
		Río de Oro	La Gloria
		San Alberto	La Jagua de Ibirico
		San Martín	Pelaya
			Tamalameque
		Valledupar	
Chocó	Atrato	Belén de Bajirá	Acandí
	Bojayá	El Cantón de San Pablo	Alto Baudó
	Cértegui	El Carmen del Atrato	Bahía Solano
	Medio Atrato	El Carmen del Darién	Bajo Baudó
	Río Quito	Juradó	Condoto
		Litoral del San Juan	Istmina
		Lloró	Medio Baudó
		Nóvita	Medio San Juan
		San José del Palmar	Nuquí
		Tadó	Quibdó
			Ríosucio
			Unguía
		Unión Panamericana	
Córdoba	Cotorra	Cereté	Ayapel
	San Andrés de Sotavento	Chinú	Buenavista
	San Carlos	Ciénaga de Oro	Canalete
			La Apartada
			Lorica
			Los Córdoba
		Montelíbano	

			Montería
			Moñitos
			Planeta Rica
			Puerto Escondido
			Puerto Libertador
			Pueblo Nuevo
			Sahagún
			San Antero
			San Bernardo del Viento
			San José de Uré
			San Pelayo
			Tierralta
			Valencia
Cundinamarca	Fusagásuga		Soacha
	Pandí		
	Silvania		
	Venecia		
Distrito Capital			Bogotá
Guainía			Inírida
Guaviare	Miraflores		Calamar
			El Retorno
			San José del Guaviare
Huila	Isnos		Neiva
	Suaza		
La Guajira	La Jagua del Pilar	Barrancas	Dibulla
	San Juan del Cesar	Manaure	Maicao
			Riohacha
			Uribia
Magdalena	San Sebastián	Sabanas de San Ángel	Aracataca
		Zona Bananera	Ciénaga
			El Banco
			Fundación
			Guamal
		Santa Marta	
Meta	Barranca de Upía		Acacias
	Guamal		El Castillo
	Lejanías		Fuente de Oro
	Mesetas		Granada
			Mapiripán

			Puerto Concordia
			Puerto Gaitán
			Puerto Lleras
			Puerto López
			Puerto Rico
			San Carlos de Guaroa
			San Juan de Arama
			San Martín
			Villavicencio
			Vistahermosa
Nariño	La Tola	Francisco Pizarro	Barbacoas
	Ricaurte	Magüí Payán	Cumbal
	Taminango	Mallama	Cumbitara
	Tangua	Policarpa	El Charco
		Santa Bárbara	El Rosario
			Ipiales
			Leiva
			Mosquera
			Olaya Herrera
			Pasto
			Roberto Payán
		Tumaco	
Norte de Santander	Ábrego	El Tarra	Cúcuta
	Convención	Hacarí	El Zulia
	Teorama	San Calixto	Los Patios
	Tibú	Sardinata	Ocaña
			Puerto Santander
		Villa del Rosario	
Putumayo	Puerto Guzmán	Orito	Puerto Asís
		Puerto Caicedo	San Miguel
			Valle del Gamuez
Quindío		Calarcá	Armenia
			Circasia
			Montenegro
Risaralda	Apía	Belén de Umbría	Dosquebradas
	La Celia	La Virginia	Pereira
	Quinchía		
	Santa Rosa de Cabal		
San Andrés y Providencia			San Andrés y Providencia
Santander	Girón		Barrancabermeja

	Piedecuesta		Bucaramanga
	Puerto Parra		Cimitarra
			Puerto Wilches
			Sabana de Torres
Sucre	Colosó	Caimito	Corozal
	Galeras	El Roble	Coveñas
	Los Palmitos	La Unión	Guarandá
	San Juan de Betulia	Sampués	Majagual
	San Pedro	San Antonio de Palmito	San Marcos
	Sincé	San Benito Abad	San Onofre
		Sucre	Sincelejo
			Tolú
		Toluviejo	
Tolima	Roncesvalles	Ibagué	
Valle del Cauca	Andalucía	Anserma Nuevo	Buenaventura
	Buga	Bolívar	Cali
	Guacarí	La Unión	Cartago
	Obando	La Victoria	El Dovio
		Pradera	Florida
		San Pedro	Jamundí
		Trujillo	Palmira
		Yumbo	Roldanillo
	Zarzal	Tuluá	
Vichada			Cumaribo
			La Primavera
			Puerto Carreño

### 7.1.2. Presence and influence in the territories 2017 and 2018 (first semester)

#### 2017

For this year, the downward trend in the number of municipalities identified with narco-paramilitary influence continues. This situation, which began in 2014, is due to the weakening of the narco-paramilitary organizational structures, recently of the AGC, by the action of law enforcement and confrontations between illegal groups. In addition, there is an increase in outsourced crime, a factor that hinders the identification of the real culprits in these actions. On the other hand, and regarding the methodology, it is important to remember that as of 2017, the Black Eagles were excluded from this category, a fact that creates a slight reduction in the number of affected municipalities.

**Table 15. Comparing departments and municipalities with narco-paramilitary activity 2008-2018 / 1**

	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018/1
Departments	31	30	32	31	31	30	31	In revision	31	30	29
Municipalities	259	278	360	406	409	409	387		344	309	251

The decrease in the number of municipalities with narco-paramilitary activity is not a homogenous trend in all areas of the country. Table 16 shows the different percentage variations of affectation by department<sup>32</sup>.

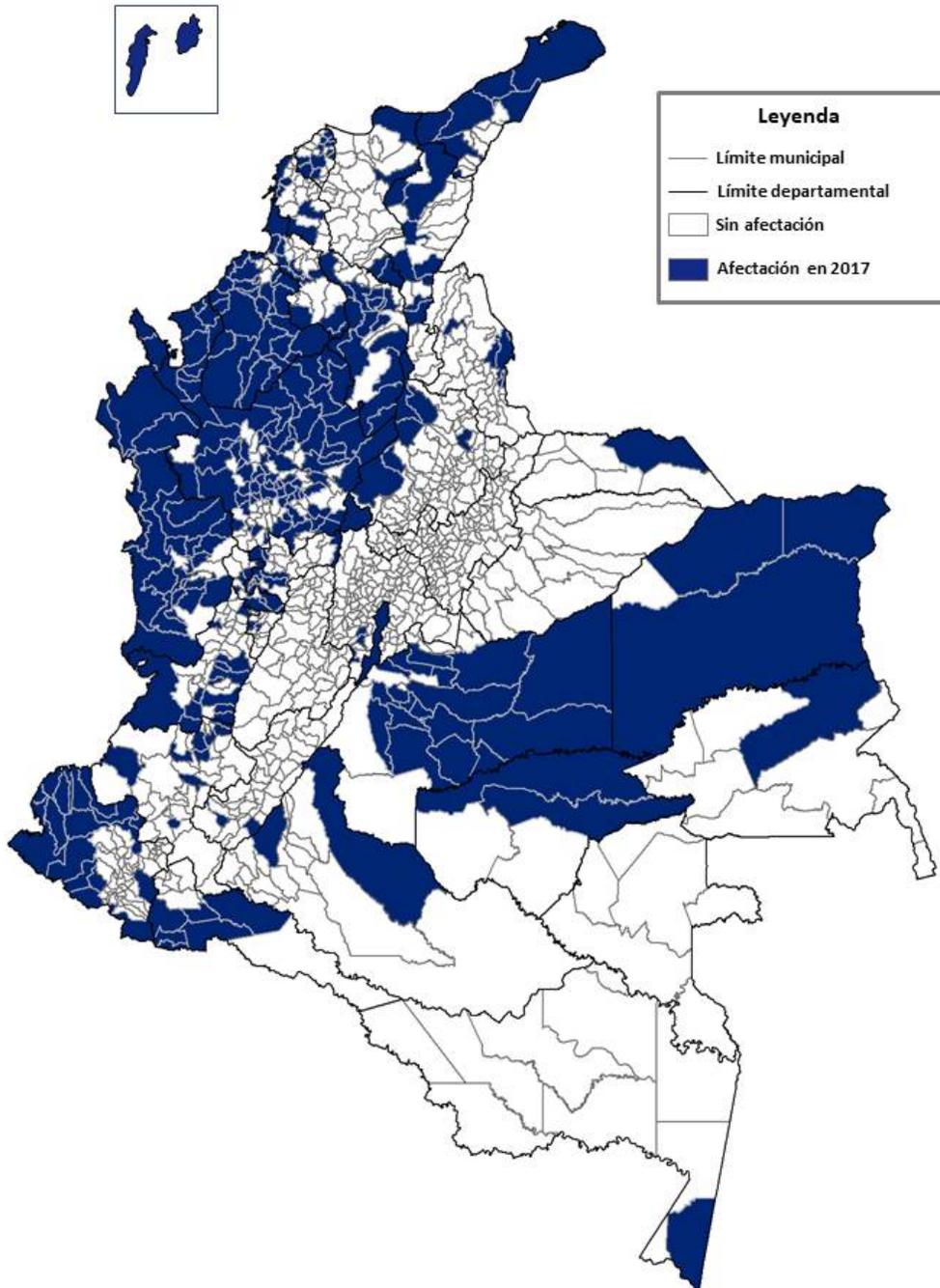
**Table 16. Departments with greater influence of narco-paramilitary activity. Comparison 2016-2017**

Department	Number of municipalities within a department	2016		2017	
		Number of municipalities with narco-paramilitary activity	% Affected	Number of municipalities with narco-paramilitary activity	% Affected
Córdoba	30	24	80%	26	87%
Chocó	30	23	77%	25	83%
Antioquia	125	76	61%	81	65%
Meta	29	20	69%	18	62%
Risaralda	14	2	14%	8	57%
Atlántico	23	8	35%	11	48%
La Guajira	15	5	33%	7	47%
Putumayo	13	6	46%	6	46%
Sucre	26	21	81%	12	46%
Caldas	27	5	19%	12	44%
Bolívar	45	22	49%	19	42%

In five departments acts committed by narco-paramilitary groups have impacted more than 50% of their municipalities. Córdoba and Chocó present the most alarming cases, considering that this percentage exceeds 80%. The comparison between 2016 and 2017 shows a striking increase in the departments of the coffee growing regions of Risaralda and Caldas, due to the remobilization of *La Cordillera* and some actions of the AGC. There are other, less pronounced, increases in Córdoba, Chocó, Atlántico and La Guajira. Sucre shows a significant decrease in the percentage of affected municipalities, decreasing by almost 50%, and in Bolívar there is also a slight reduction.

<sup>32</sup> Activity in the different departments is only a reference for analysis. It must be acknowledged that the reasons for the conflicts, and in this case, narco-paramilitary groups, are not defined by geographic boundaries.

**Map 2. Municipalities affected by narco-paramilitary activity in 2017\*\***



*\*\* English key note to this map: The municipalities affected by Narco-paramilitary activity are shaded in dark blue, whereas the areas of white denote no paramilitary activity.*

**Table 17. Municipalities affected by narco-paramilitary activity in 2017**

<b>Departments</b>	<b>Municipalities</b>
Amazonas	Leticia
Antioquia	Abejorral, Amalfí, Angostura, Anorí, Anzá, Apartadó, Arboletes, Armenia Mantequilla, Barbosa, Bello, Belmira, Betulia, Briceño, Buriticá, Cáceres, Campamento, Cañasgordas, Carepa, Caucasia, Chigorodó, Cisneros, Ciudad Bolívar, Concepción, Concordia, Copacabana, Dabeiba, Ebéjico, Envigado, El Bagre, El Carmen de Viboral, El Peñol, Frontino, Giraldo, Girardota, Guarne, Guatapé, Heliconia, Itagüí, Ituango, Jericó, La Pintada, La Unión, Marinilla, Medellín, Mutatá, Nechí, Necoclí, Pueblorrico, Puerto Berrío, Puerto Triunfo, Remedios, Rionegro, San Andrés de Cuerquia, San Francisco, San Jerónimo, San Juan de Urabá, San Luis, San Pedro de los Milagros, San Pedro de Urabá, San Rafael, San Roque, San Vicente Ferrer, Santa Rosa de Osos, Santa Fe de Antioquia, Segovia, Sonsón, Sopetrán, Tarazá, Toledo, Turbo, Uramita, Urao, Valdivia, Valparaíso, Vegachí, Vigía del Fuerte, Yalí, Yarumal, Yolombó, Yondó, Zaragoza.
Arauca	Arauca
Atlántico	Baranoa, Barranquilla, Galapa, Luruaco, Malambo, Manatí, Palmar de Varela, Repelón, Sabanalarga, Santo Tomás, Soledad
Bolívar	Achí, Altos del Rosario, Barranco de Loba, Cantagallo, Cartagena, El Carmen de Bolívar, Magangué, Montecristo, Morales, Norosí, Pinillos, San Jacinto del Cauca, San Juan Nepomuceno, San Martín de Loba, San Pablo, Simití, Tiquisio, Turbaco, Turbaná
Boyacá	Puerto Boyacá
Caldas	Anserma, Belalcázar, Chinchiná, La Dorada, Manizales, Marmato, Neira, Riosucio, Risaralda, San José, Supía, Viterbo
Caquetá	Florencia, San Vicente del Caguán
Cauca	Almaguer, Caldon, Caloto, Corinto, Miranda, Morales, Popayán, Santander de Quilichao, Timbiquí
Cesar	Chimichagua, Curumaní, El Copey, El Paso, La Gloria, Pelaya, Valledupar
Chocó	Acandí, Alto Baudó, Atrato, Bahía Solano, Bajo Baudó, Bojayá, Cértegui, Condoto, El Carmen de Atrato, El Carmen del Darién, Istmina, Litoral del San Juan, Juradó, Lloró, Medio Atrato, Medio Baudó, Medio San Juan, Nóvita, Nuquí, Quibdó, Río Quito, Riosucio, San José de Palmar, Unguía, Unión Panamericana
Córdoba	Ayapel, Buenavista, Canalete, Cereté, Chinú, Ciénaga de Oro, Cotorra, La Apartada, Loricá, Los Córdoba, Montelíbano, Montería, Moñitos, Planeta Rica, Pueblo Nuevo, Puerto Escondido, Puerto Libertador, Sahagún, San Andrés de Sotavento, San Antero, San Bernardo del Viento, San Carlos, San José de Uré, San Pelayo, Tierralta, Valencia
Cundinamarca	Fusagasugá, Pandí, Sylvania, Venecia
Distrito Capital	Bogotá
Guainía	Inírida
Guaviare	El Retorno, San José del Guaviare
Huila	Isnos, Suaza
La Guajira	Dibulla, La Jagua del Pilar, Maicao, Manaure, Riohacha, San Juan del César, Uribia
Magdalena	El Banco, Fundación, Guamal, Santa Marta

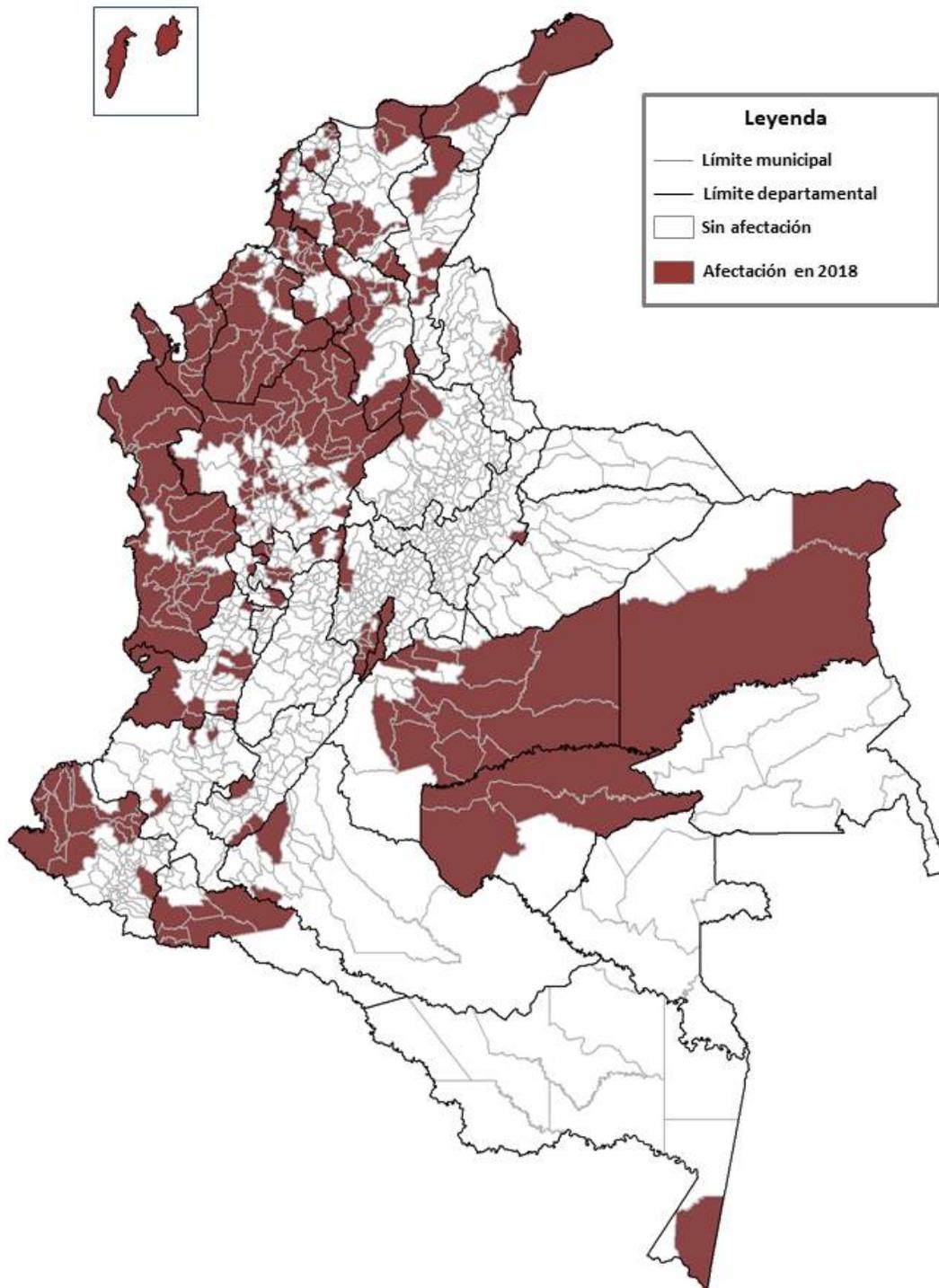
Meta	Acacias, El Castillo, Fuente de oro, Granada, Guamal, Lejanías, Mapiripán, Mesetas, Puerto Concordia, Puerto Gaitán, Puerto Lleras, Puerto López, Puerto Rico, San Carlos de Guaroa, San Juan de Arama, San Martin, Villavicencio, Vista Hermosa
Nariño	Barbacoas, Cumbal, El Charco, El Rosario, Francisco Pizarro, Ipiales, La Tola, Leiva, Magüi Payán, Mallama, Mosquera, Olaya Herrera, Pasto, Ricaurte, Roberto Payán, Santa Bárbara de Iscuadé, Taminango, Tumaco
Norte de Santander	Cúcuta, El Zulia, Los Patios, Puerto Santander, San Calixto, Villa del Rosario
Putumayo	Orito, Puerto Asís, Puerto Caicedo, Puerto Guzmán, San Miguel, Valle del Guamuez
Quindío	Armenia, Montenegro
Risaralda	Apía, Belén de Umbría, Dosquebradas, La Celia, La Virginia, Pereira, Santa Rosa de Cabal, Quinchía
San Andrés y providencia	San Andrés y Providencia
Santander	Barrancabermeja, Cimitarra, Piedecuesta, Puerto Parra, Puerto Wilches, Sabana de Torres
Sucre	Corozal, Coveñas, El Roble, Galeras, Guaranda, Majagual, Sampués, San Marcos, San Onofre, Sincelejo, Tolú, Tolviejo
Valle del Cauca	Buenaventura, Buga, Cali, Cartago, El Dovio, Florida, Guacarí, Jamundí, Palmira, Pradera, San Pedro, Tuluá, Yumbo
Vichada	Cumaribo, La Primavera, Puerto Carreño

## 2018

In the first semester of 2018, 251 municipalities of 29 departments were affected by narco-paramilitary organizations. In the Urabá, Northeast Antioquia, Bajo Cauca and Chocó regions, the most significant narco-paramilitary skirmishes occurred. In the active zones within the department of Antioquia, the AGC have been hit hard by a law enforcement crackdown, which has resulted in the loss of some of their leadership and control over their fighters, triggering the formation of new groups that now dispute their territorial control. In addition, the rearmament of ex-FARC-EP fighters is also a factor in the confrontation, mainly in the Northeast and Bajo Cauca region of Antioquia. In Chocó, the conflict is centered around the clashes between the ELN and the AGC with great humanitarian consequences<sup>33</sup>.

<sup>33</sup> See <http://www.defensoria.gov.co/es/nube/noticias/7096/Defensor-del-Pueblo-verific%C3%B3-situaci%C3%B3n-de-confinamiento-de-comunidades-ind%C3%ADgenas-en-las-selvas-del-Choc%C3%B3-Choc%C3%B3-Defensor%C3%ADa-del-Pueblo-Truand%C3%B3.htm>

**Map 3. Municipalities affected by narco-paramilitary activity in first semester of 2018**



*\*\*English key note to this map: The municipalities affected by Narco-paramilitary activity in the first semester of 2018 are shaded in brown, whereas the areas of white denote no paramilitary activity.*

**Table 18. Municipalities affected by narco-paramilitary activity in the first semester of 2018**

Departments	Municipalities
Amazonas	Leticia
Antioquia	Amalfi, Angostura, Anorí, Anzá, Apartadó, Arboletes, Armenia Mantequilla, Bello, Belmira, Betulia, Briceño, Cáceres, Campamento, Cañasgordas, Carepa, Caucasia, Chigorodó, Cisneros, Ciudad Bolívar, Concordia, Dabeiba, Envigado, El Bagre, El Carmen de Viboral, El Peñol, Giraldo, Guarne, Heliconia, Itagüí, Ituango, La Pintada, Medellín, Mutatá, Nechí, Necoclí, Peque, Pueblorrico, Puerto Berrío, Puerto Triunfo, Remedios, Rionegro, Sabaneta, San Andrés de Cuerquia, San Jerónimo, San Pedro de Urabá, San Rafael, Santa Fe de Antioquia, Segovia, Sopetrán, Tarazá, Toledo, Turbo, Uramita, Valdivia, Valparaíso, Vegachí, Vigía del Fuerte, Yalí, Yarumal, Yolombó, Yondó, Zaragoza,
Atlántico	Barranquilla, Galapa, Malambo, Puerto Colombia, Repelón, Sabanalarga, Soledad
Bolívar	Achí, Arjona, Barranco de Loba, Cantagallo, Cartagena, El Carmen de Bolívar, Magangué, Montecristo, Pinillos, San Jacinto del Cauca, San Martín de Loba, San Pablo, Tiquisio
Boyacá	Paya,
Caldas	La Dorada, Manizales, Marmato, Neira, Riosucio, Samaná, Supía
Caquetá	Florencia, Solita
Cauca	Buenos Aires, Caloto, Patía,
Cesar	Curumaní, Pailitas, Pelaya, Valledupar
Chocó	Acandí, Atrato, Bagadó, Bahía Solano, Bajo Baudó, Bojayá, Cértegui, Condoto, El Carmen de Atrato, El Carmen del Darién, Istmina, Litoral del San Juan, Juradó, Lloró, Medio Atrato, Medio Baudó, Medio San Juan, Nóvita, Nuquí, Quibdó, Río Iró, Río Quito, Riosucio, San José del Palmar, Sipí, Unguía, Unión Panamericana
Córdoba	Ayapel, Buenavista, Canalete, Chinú, Ciénaga de Oro, La Apartada, Lórica, Los Córdoba, Montelíbano, Montería, Moñitos, Planeta Rica, Puerto Escondido, Puerto Libertador, Sahagún, San Andrés de Solvento, San José de Uré, San Pelayo, Tierralta, Valencia
Cundinamarca	Arbeláez, Cabrera, Chaguaní, Fusagasugá, Guaduas, Pandi, Pasca, San Bernardo, Sylvania, Soacha, Venecia
Distrito Capital	Bogotá
Guaviare	Calamar, El Retorno, San José del Guaviare
Huila	Acevedo, La Plata, Suaza
La Guajira	Dibulla, Maicao, Riohacha, Uribia
Magdalena	Ciénaga, El Banco, Guamal, Nueva Granada, Plato, Santa Ana, Santa Bárbara de Pinto, Santa Marta, Tenerife, Zona Bananera
Meta	Acacías, Fuente de Oro, Granada, Guamal, Mapiripán, Mesetas, Puerto Concordia, Puerto Gaitán, Puerto Lleras, Puerto López, Puerto Rico, San Juan de Arama, San Martín, Villavicencio, Vista Hermosa
Nariño	Barbacoas, Cumbitara, El Charco, El Rosario, Francisco Pizarro, La Tola, Leiva, Magüí Payán, Mosquera, Olaya Herrera, Pasto, Policarpa, Roberto Payán, Tumaco
Norte de Santander	Cúcuta, El Zulia, Puerto Santander, Villa del Rosario
Putumayo	Orito, Puerto Asís, Puerto Caicedo, Puerto Guzmán, San Miguel, Valle del Guamuez

Quindío	<i>Information pending verification</i>
Risaralda	Belén de Umbría, Santa Rosa de Cabal, Quinchía
San Andrés y Providencia	San Andrés y Providencia
Santander	Barrancabermeja, Puerto Wilches, Sabana de Torres
Sucre	Corozal, Coveñas, El Roble, Galeras, Guaranda, Majagual, Sampués, San Marcos, San Onofre, Sincelejo, Ovejas, Los Palmitos, San Juan de Betulia, San Pedro, Sincé, Tolú, Tolviejo
Tolima	<i>Information pending verification</i>
Valle del Cauca	Buenaventura, Buga, Cali, Cartago, Florida, Jamundí, Pradera, Tuluá
Vichada	Cumaribo, Puerto Carreño

In the data analyzed, 17 narco-paramilitary organizations were identified<sup>34</sup>. In the following section, an analysis of each group is presented, including characteristics of their origin, operational goals and areas of activity.

### **Gaitanista Self-Defense Forces of Colombia (AGC)**

This group originated in the Urabá region, in the department of Antioquia, from the demobilized Elmer Cárdenas Bloc of the United Self-Defense Forces of Colombia (AUC). Until 2009, its leader was Daniel Rendón Herrera, aka *Don Mario*. After his capture, the Úsuga David brothers took command, with Daniel Antonio Úsuga (*Otoniel* as his alias) as the current leader. Since 2013, and after defeating the *Rastrojos* in territorial disputes, they became the narco-paramilitary organization with the greatest presence in the country, a position they currently hold. They are known by different names: AGC (what they call themselves), *Clan del Golfo* (name given by the Government), the *Urabeños* (because of their place of origin) and *Clan Úsuga* (surname of their leader)<sup>35</sup>. The group's activities are centered around guaranteeing control of illegal revenue streams and vary widely in its area of control. For these purposes, they have a membership that ranges between 3,000<sup>36</sup> and 3,500<sup>37</sup> members. In terms of drug trafficking, the AGC maintain an alliance with the Sinaloa Cartel.

Efforts to dismantle the AGC have been focused on military action under the framework of the Agamemnon operations, and more recently with approaches to a possible agreement to surrender to justice. Since 2017, the government and *Otoniel* have had negotiations to agree on

<sup>34</sup> Five more organizations are being studied.

<sup>35</sup> Source: *Narcoparamilitares: reconfiguración ilegal en los territorios* [Narcoparamilitares: illegal reconfiguration in the territories]. Published by Indepaz and the Heinrich Böll Stiftung Foundation.

<sup>36</sup> Revista Semana, "La historia detrás del sometimiento del Clan del Golfo" [The story behind the submission of the Gulf Clan], September 9, 2017, in <https://www.semana.com/nacion/articulo/clan-del-golfo-sometido-por-fuerza-publica/539515>

<sup>37</sup> RCN Radio, "Estudio revela mapa de grupos delincuenciales que quedan tras firma de paz con la Farc" [Study reveals map of criminal groups that remain after signing peace with the FARC], July 23, 2017, in: <https://www.rcnradio.com/colombia/estudio-revela-mapa-de-grupos-delincuenciales-que-quedan-tras-firma-de-paz-con-la-farc>

the conditions of the surrender of the AGC. In July 2018, President Juan Manuel Santos enacted Law 1908, in which, in addition to urging stronger law enforcement actions against the so-called GAO<sup>38</sup>, the conditions for their surrender to justice were established. As of today, this initiative has not materialized.

Under the Agamemnon I and II<sup>39</sup> military operations there have been strong blows to the organizational structure of the AGC, such as the deaths of alias *Pablito*, and of the second in command of the organization, alias *Gavilán*. These two facts have had consequences in the armed conflict and threatened public order. After the death of *Pablito*, in May of 2017, an armed attack occurred that left at least eleven policemen dead<sup>40</sup>. With the fall of *Gavilán*, some of his lieutenants joined the group *Los Caparrapos*, which led to heavy fighting with the AGC and an escalation in violence in the Bajo Cauca region and in the north of Antioquia.

The presence of the AGC in the Caribbean municipalities is mainly due to the logistical need for ports of entry to support drug and weapons trafficking, as well as to generate revenues from illegal activities related to tourism: sale of recreational drugs to tourists, prostitution, theft, etc. In the case of the municipalities of La Guajira, access routes between Colombia and Venezuela are used to supply gasoline and other types of supplies for cocaine production and arms trafficking, as well as for the exportation of drugs over the Venezuelan border. In this region they face *Los Pachenca*, a situation which has resulted in murders in cities like Cartagena and Barranquilla<sup>41</sup>.

In Antioquia, the AGCs retain a large armed presence and exercise significant territorial control. The dynamics researched in this department are sub-regional in nature, and reach through the municipalities of Córdoba, Sucre, Bolívar, Santander and Chocó. In the area of *Nudo de Paramillo*, a variety of the AGC's operational methods have been identified, including the different mechanisms of drug trafficking (cultivation, production and large-scale sale), as well as illegal land seizures, the participation in illegal infrastructure megaprojects and the appropriation of legal and illegal revenue streams.

In the Urabá region, there is a concentration of cocaine processing laboratories; there, the group's military and territorial control apparatus is the strongest within their organization, and their actions against the civilian population fall mainly on the land claimants or owners.

In Bajo Cauca and northeast Antioquia, as well as in municipalities in the south of Córdoba, Bolívar and Sucre, they have clandestine airstrips for the shipment of drugs, crops for illicit use, they extort payments from cattle ranchers, and they have control over informal and illegal

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<sup>38</sup> In Directive 015 of 2016 from the Ministry of Defense, the name of criminal gangs, (*bandas criminales* - BACRIM) was changed to organized armed groups (GAO).

<sup>39</sup> In the Agamemnon II operation, the strategy includes the use of military forces.

<sup>40</sup> 40 Indepaz, "Informe especial: plan pistola" [Special report: Pistol Plan], June 1, 2017, in: <http://www.indepaz.org.co/informe-especial-plan-pistola/> (Translation note: Plan Pistola relates to cash bounties offered for the murder of police officers).

<sup>41</sup> El Heraldo, "La lucha de las bacrim que se extiende por toda la costa" [The fight of the BACRIM extends throughout the coast], May 7, 2017, in: <https://www.pressreader.com/colombia/el-heraldo-colombia/20170507/281681139788535>

mining activities, as well as interference in infrastructure megaprojects. There they face the ELN and *Los Caparrapos*. In the Aburrá Valley and in Medellín's metropolitan area, the group's presence is strengthened by the outsourcing of illegal activities, including via sponsorship or contract with local bands. This is the case of *Los Pachelly*, one of its main allies, who secure control of the access routes within the department.

In Norte de Santander, the AGC operate under the Marco Fidel Barba Front, whose mission is to establish connections for drug trafficking routes, handling gasoline smuggling for coca-base paste production and securing illegal revenue by extortion. It appears they have established alliances with the *EPL-Pelusos* for the control of crop areas and drug production in the Catatumbo region and have had clashes with the ELN and the strongholds of *Los Rastrojos* for the control of the village of San Faustino, in the municipality of Villa del Rosario, and the access routes to San Antonio del Táchira (Venezuela)<sup>42</sup>.

In Santander, the municipalities of Middle Magdalena region function as an integrating focal point with the departments of Bolívar, Cesar, Magdalena, Norte de Santander and Antioquia. The AGC in this area are focused on drug trafficking, illegal mining and extortion of merchants, farmers and ranchers. In Barrancabermeja they have collection offices, and in this city, the Alfonso Echeverría Front<sup>43</sup> appears to oversee different operations.

In the region of the Orinoquía, the AGC operate through representatives sent by *Otoniel*, with the purpose of coordinating and expanding in the departments of Meta, Guaviare, Casanare and Vichada in areas of former control by the FARC-EP. They may be working on rearranging drug trafficking routes to Venezuela and Brazil and offering security to access routes through agreements with other organizations, such as *Los Puntilleros*, in order to ensure the production and delivery of cocaine. In addition, in this region the group seeks to oversee the delivery of war supplies and materials as well as to enhance the financing of their organization through extortion.

In the Pacific region, the department of Valle can be considered their center of operations. Cali, Palmira and Buga are key locations to direct the group's logistics related to drug trafficking and money laundering. Buenaventura<sup>44</sup>, as a port city and connection between the South Pacific and Chocó, is the main node for the commercialization of drugs and weapons. The group's presence in the department of Cauca is focused on operations and logistical alliances for drug trafficking. No movement of the group has been detected, which is why there is talk of crime outsourcing, which includes threats against the civilian population and officials.

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<sup>42</sup> La Opinión, "La frontera, una zona codiciada por las bandas criminales" [The border, a zone coveted by criminal gangs], January 15, 2018, in: <https://www.laopinion.com.co/frontera/la-frontera-una-zona-codiciada-por-las-bandas-criminales-147264>

<sup>43</sup> Defensoría, "En Barrancabermeja persisten las amenazas a líderes sociales; en todo el país van 186 asesinados según las cifras de la Defensoría" [In Barrancabermeja threats to community leaders persist; 186 murdered throughout the country, according to figures from the Ombudsman], July 13, 2018, in: <http://www.defensoria.gov.co/es/nube/noticias/6468/En-Barrancabermeja-persisten-las->

<sup>44</sup> In the main port city on the Pacific, the AGC have instigated serious confrontations with other organizations such as *La Empresa* and *Los Rastrojos*, which have resulted in situations such as the *casas de pique* (slaughterhouses / torture chambers).

In Nariño, their presence is concentrated in the management of illicit crops, laboratories and drugs and weapons trafficking, the recruitment of minors, illegal mining and extorting members of transport unions. They are accused of attacks against community leaders, in particular those who head the PNIS programs<sup>45</sup>. The group's center of activity is Barbacoas, the point of origin for their expansion into municipalities such as Policarpa, following orders to seek and seize new drug trafficking routes and crop areas.

In Chocó, the control over illegal, informal and artisanal mining, timber exploitation and drug trafficking puts the group in direct confrontation with the ELN, which ultimately leads to the displacement, confinement and other human rights violations of local communities. However, for the mining of gold in the Quito River, there seems to be an agreement between the Cimarron Front (*Frente Cimarrón*) of the ELN and the Roads Front (*Frente Carreteras*) of the AGC<sup>46</sup>.

In the center of the country, in the departments of Huila, Tolima, Boyacá and Cundinamarca, the AGC's actions are focused on controlling operations in the rest of the country. Cities such as Bogotá become favorable places to start the processes of money laundering, while connected urban centers, such as Soacha, become territories for the development of micro-trafficking (drug dealing on smaller scales) and the recruitment of minors. They have also been involved in threats to community leaders and human rights advocates. Some of the practices that have been established are contracts with local gangs to conduct criminal activities.

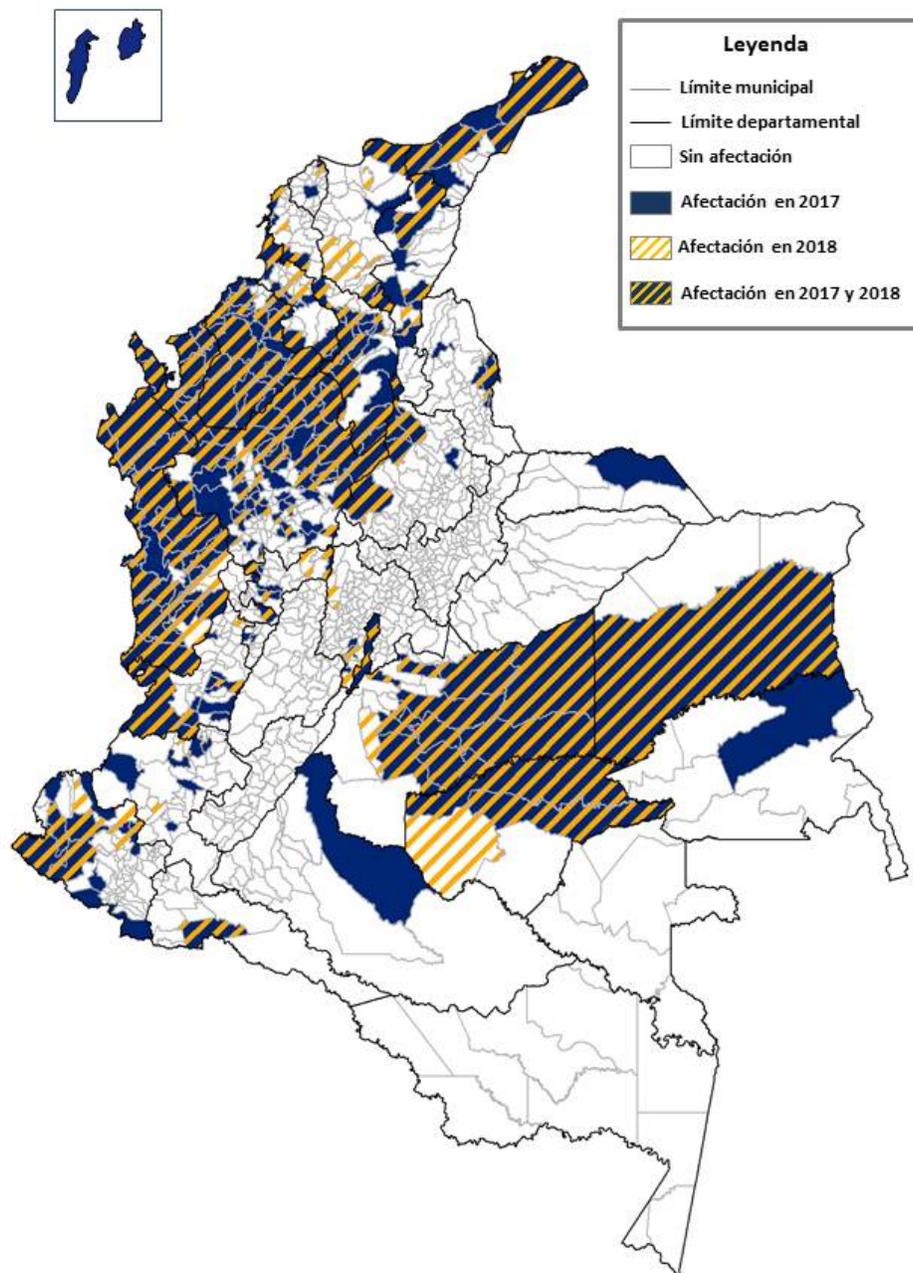
There was no significant presence registered in Huila or Tolima, however there were reports of pamphlets appearing in 2017.

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<sup>45</sup> *Programa Nacional Integral de Sustitución de Cultivos* [National Comprehensive Crop Substitution Program].

<sup>46</sup> Vanguardia, "Destruída operación minera de Eln y Clan del Golfo en Chocó" [Mining operation of ELN and Clan del Golfo in Chocó is destroyed], April 23, 2018, in: <http://www.vanguardia.com/colombia/431020-destroyed-operation-mining-of-eln-y-clan-del-golfo-en-choco>

Map 4. Municipalities with registered AGC activity in 2017 and first semester of 2018



**Table 19. Municipalities affected by AGC activity in 2017**

Department	Municipalities
Antioquia	Amalfi, Angostura, Anorí, Anzá, Apartadó, Arboletes, Armenia Mantequilla, Barbosa, Bello, Betulia, Briceño, Buriticá, Cáceres, Campamento, Cañasgordas, Carepa, Caucaasia, Chigorodó, Cisneros, Ciudad Bolívar, Concepción, Concordia, Dabeiba, Ebéjico, El Bagre, El Carmen de Viboral, El Peñol, Frontino, Giraldo, Heliconia, Itagüí, Ituango, Jericó, La Pintada, La Unión, Medellín, Mutatá, Nechí, Necoclí, Pueblorrico, Puerto Berrio, Puerto Triunfo, Remedios, Rionegro, San Andrés de Cuerquia, San Francisco, San Jerónimo, San Juan de Urabá, San Luis, San Pedro de Urabá, San Roque, San Vicente, Santa Rosa de Osos, Santanfe de Antioquia, Segovia, Sopetrán, Tarazá, Toledo, Turbo, Uramita, Urrao, Valdivia, Valparaíso, Vegachí, Vigía del Fuerte, Yalí, Yarumal, Yolombó, Yondó, Zaragoza
Arauca	Arauca
Atlántico	Barranquilla, Sabanalarga, Soledad
Bolívar	Achí, Altos del Rosario, Barranco de Loba, Cantagallo, Cartagena, El Carmen de Bolívar, Magangué, Montecristo, Morales, Norosí, Pinillos, San Jacinto del Cauca, San Martín de Loba, San Pablo, Simití, Tiquisio, Turbaná
Caldas	Chinchiná, La Dorada, Manizales, Marmato, Neira, Riosucio, Supía
Caquetá	San Vicente del Caguán
Cauca	Almaguer, Caloto, Morales, Popayán, Santander de Quilichao, Timbiquí
Cesar	Chimichagua, Curumaní, El Copey, El Paso, La Gloria, Pelaya, Valledupar
Chocó	Acandí, Alto Baudó, Atrato, Bahía Solano, Bajo Baudó, Bojayá, Cértegui, Condoto, El Camen de Atrato, El Carmen del Darién, Itsmina, Litoral de San Juan, Juradó, Lloró, Medio Atrato, Medio Baudó, Medio San Juan, Nóvita, Nuquí, Quibdó, Río Quito, Riosucio, San José del Palmar, Unguía, Unión Panamericana
Córdoba	Ayapel, Buenavista, Canalete, Cereté, Chinú, Ciénaga de Oro, Cotorra, La Apartada, Lorica, Los Córdoba, Montelíbano, Montería, Moñitos, Planeta Rica, Pueblo Nuevo, Puerto Escondido, Puerto Libertador, Sahagún, San Andrés de Sotavento, San Antero, San Bernardo del Viento, San Carlos, San José de Uré, San Pelayo, Tierralta, Valencia
Cundinamarca	Fusagasugá, Pandi, Silvania, Venecia
Distrito Capital	Bogotá
Guaviare	El Retorno, San José del Guaviare
Guainía	Inírida
La Guajira	La Jagua del Pilar, Maicao, Manaure, Riohacha, San Juan del Cesar, Uribe, Dibulla
Magdalena	El Banco, Fundación, Guamal, Santa Marta
Meta	Fuente de oro, Granada, Guamal, Mapiripán, Puerto Concordia, Puerto Gaitán, Puerto Lleras, Puerto López, Puerto Rico, San Juan de Arama, San Martín, Villavicencio, Vista Hermosa
Nariño	Barbacoas, Cumbal, El Rosario, Ipiales, Leiva, Magüi Payán, Mallama, Mosquera, Roberto Payán, Santa Bárbara de Iscuandé, Taminago, Tumaco
Norte de Santander	Cútuta, El Zulia, Los Patios, Puerto Santander, San Calixto, Villa del Rosario
Putumayo	Puerto Asís
Quindío	Armenia, Montenegro
Risaralda	Santa Rosa de Cabal, Quinchía
San Andrés y Providencia	San Andrés y Providencia

Santander	Barrancabermeja, Cimitarra, Piedecuesta, Puerto Wilches, Sabana de Torres
Sucre	Corozal, Coveñas, El Roble, Galeras, Guaranda, Majagual, Sampués, San Marcos, San Onofre, Sincelajo, Tolú, Tolviejo
Valle del Cauca	Buenaventura, Buga, Cali, El Dovio, Guacarí, Jamundí, Palmira, Pradera, San Pedro, Yumbo
Vichada	Cumaribo

**Table 20. Municipalities affected by AGC activity in the first semester of 2018**

Department	Municipalities
Antioquia	Amalfi, Angostura, Anorí, Anzá, Apartadó, Arboletes, Armenia Mantequilla, Bello, Betulia, Briceño, Buriticá, Cáceres, Campamento, Cañasgordas, Carepa, Caucasia, Chigorodó, Cisneros, Ciudad Bolívar, Concordia, Dabeiba, El Bagre, El Carmen de Viboral, El Peñol, Giraldo, Heliconia, Itagüí, Ituango, La Pintada, Medellín, Mutatá, Nechí, Necoclí, Peque, Pueblorrico, Puerto Berrio, Puerto Triunfo, Remedios, Rionegro, Sabaneta, San Andrés de Cuerquia, San Jerónimo, San Juan de Urabá, San Pedro de Urabá, Santanfe de Antioquia, Segovia, Sopetrán, Tarazá, Toledo, Turbo, Uramita, Valdivia, Valparaíso, Vegachí, Vigía del Fuerte, Yalí, Yarumal, Yolombó, Yondó, Zaragoza
Arauca	Arauca
Atlántico	Barranquilla, Galpa, Malambo, Puerto Colombia, Soledad
Bolívar	Achí, Arjona, Barranco de Loba, Cantagallo, Cartagena, El Carmen de Bolívar, Magangué, Montecristo, Pinillos, San Jacinto del Cauca, San Martín de Loba, San Pablo, Tiquisio
Caldas	La Dorada, Manizales, Marmato, Riosucio, Samaná, Supía
Cauca	Buenos Aires, Caloto, Patía
Cesar	Curumaní, Pailitas, Pelaya, Valledupar
Chocó	Acandí, Atrato, Bagadó, Bahía Solano, Bajo Baudó, Bojayá, Cértegui, Condoto, El Camen de Atrato, El Carmen del Darién, Itsmina, Litoral de San Juan, Juradó, Lloró, Medio Atrato, Medio Baudó, Medio San Juan, Nóvita, Nuquí, Quibdó, Río Iró, Río Quito, Riosucio, San José del Palmar, Sipí, Tadó, Unguía, Unión Panamericana
Córdoba	Ayapel, Buenavista, Canalete, Chinú, Ciénaga de Oro, La Apartada, Loricá, Los Córdoba, Montelíbano, Montería, Moñitos, Planeta Rica, Puerto Escondido, Puerto Libertador, Sahagún, San Andrés de Sotavento, San José de Uré, San Pelayo, Tierralta, Valencia
Cundinamarca	Arbeláez, Cabrera, Chaguaní, Fusagasugá, Guaduas, Pandi, Pasca, San Bernardo, Silvania, Soacha, Venecia
Distrito Capital	Bogotá
Guaviare	Calamar, El Retono, San José del Guaviare
La Guajira	Maicao, Riohacha, Uribia, Dibulla
Magdalena	El Banco, Guamal, Nueva Granada, Plato, Santa Ana, Santa Bárbara de Pinto, Santa Marta
Meta	Fuente de oro, Granada, Guamal, Mesetas, Mapiripán, Puerto Concordia, Puerto Gaitán, Puerto Lleras, Puerto López, Puerto Rico, San Juan de Arama, San Martín, Villavicencio, Vista Hermosa
Nariño	Barbacoas, Cumbitara, El Charco, El Rosario, Leiva, Magüi Payán, Policarpa, Roberto Payán, Tumaco
Norte de Santander	Cúcuta, El Zulia, Puerto Santander, Villa del Rosario
Putumayo	Puerto Asís
Risaralda	Belén de Umbría, Quinchía, Santa Rosa de Cabal

San Andrés y Providencia	San Andrés y Providencia
Santander	Barrancabermeja, Cimitarra, Puerto Wilches, Sabana de Torres
Sucre	Corozal, Coveñas, El Roble, Galeras, Guaranda, Los Palmitos, Majagual, Ovejas, Sampués, San Juan de Betulia, San Marcos, San Onofre, San Pedro, Sincé, Sincelejo, Tolú
Valle del Cauca	Buenaventura, Buga, Cali, Cartago, Jamundí
Vichada	Cumaribo

## Los Puntilleros

This group originated in the Popular Anti-Subversion Army of Colombia (*Ejército Popular Antisubversivo de Colombia - ERPAC*), which in 2010 entered discussions with the government to surrender after the loss of their leader *Cuchillo* (alias). After the failure of these discussions, two organizations emerged: *Libertadores del Vichada* and *Bloque Meta*. In 2016, the government, arguing an alliance between these two groups under the leadership of *Puntilla* (alias), officially named the group *Los Puntilleros*. However, it is to be acknowledged that different operations are ongoing in the names of both the Meta Bloc and Libertadores del Vichada<sup>47</sup>.

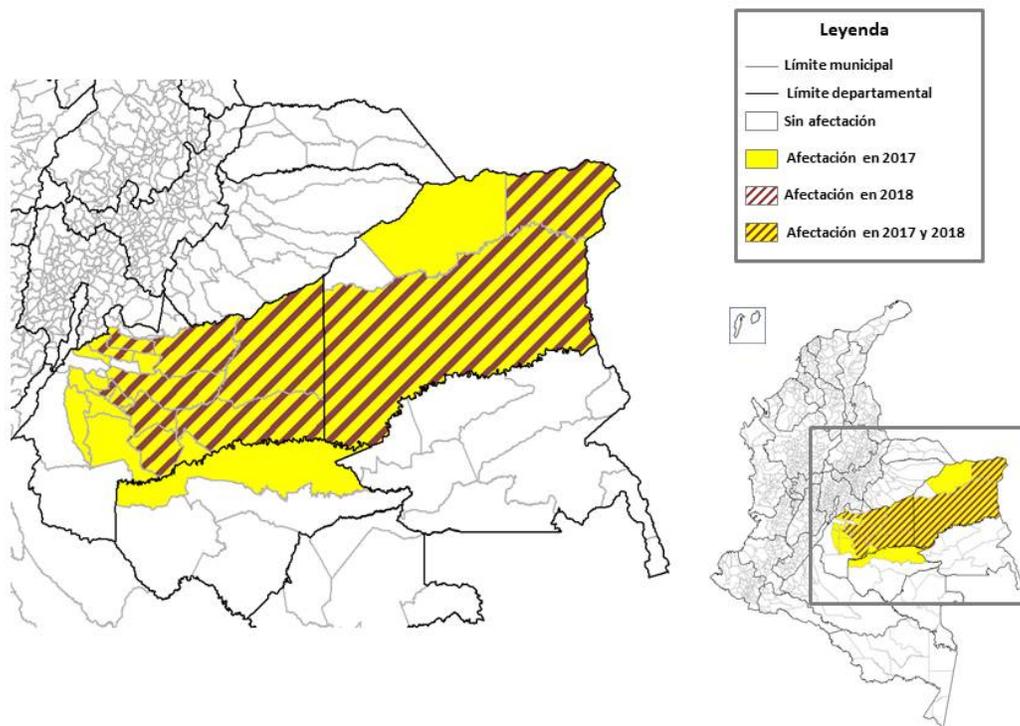
Their operations are centered in the Orinoquía region, mainly in the departments of Casanare, Guaviare, Meta and Vichada, with some presence in Bogotá. The organization has between 70<sup>48</sup> and 300<sup>49</sup> members, and has been linked to killings, forced recruitment, extorting merchants and ranchers, as well as arms trafficking. Regarding drug trafficking, they appear to have agreed to alliances with the AGC and the dissidents of the *Frente Primero*.

<sup>47</sup> Source: Narcoparamilitares: reconfiguración ilegal en los territorios [Narcoparamilitares: illegal reconfiguration in the territories]. Published by Indepaz and the Heinrich Böll Stiftung Foundation

<sup>48</sup> El Espectador 2020, "La guerra civil por el Pacífico: del Naya al Mataje" [The civil war for the Pacific: from Naya to Mataje], September 6, 2018, in: <https://colombia2020.elespectador.com/territorio/la-guerra-civil-por-el-pacifico-del-naya-al-mataje>

<sup>49</sup> El Colombiano, "Aún no caen jefes en lucha contra bacrim" [(Cartel) Bosses are not yet captured in the fight against Bacrim], January 4, 2017, in: <https://www.pressreader.com/colombia/el-colombiano/20170104/281496455959683>

**Map 5. Municipalities affected by Los Puntilleros activity in 2017 and first semester 2018**



**Table 21. Municipalities affected by Los Puntilleros activity in 2017**

Department	Municipalities
Guaviare	San José del Guaviare
Meta	Acacias, El Castillo, Fuente de Oro, Granada, Guamal, Lejanías, Mapiripán, Mesetas, Puerto Concordia, Puerto Gaitán, Puerto Lleras, Puerto López, Puerto Rico, San Carlos de Guaroa, San Juan de Arama, San Martín, Villavicencio, Vista Hermosa
Vichada	Cumaribo, La Primavera, Puerto Carreño

**Table 22. Municipalities affected by Los Puntilleros activity in first semester of 2018**

Department	Municipalities
Meta	Acacias, Fuente de Oro, Granada, Mapiripán, Puerto Gaitán, Puerto Lleras, Puerto López, Puerto Rico, San Martín, Villavicencio
Vichada	Cumaribo, Puerto Carreño

## Los Rastrojos

The group was created as a private army for the drug trafficker Wilber Varela, alias *Jabón* from Norte del Valle. After the demobilization of the AUC, they became the armed wing of the Calle Serna brothers, *Los Comba*, controlling former areas of the cartel and demobilized territories. For several years they were the narco-paramilitary organization with the greatest presence and capability for territorial control in the country. The group's decline was prompted by the removal of the Calle Serna brothers (Javier surrendered to the United States government and Luis was captured in Ecuador), as well as a defeat in the war waged against the AGC, a situation that reached its boiling point in the cartel slaughterhouses of Buenaventura<sup>50</sup>.

Although there are reports of their presence in different parts of the country, they are not currently a viable organization; they are a series of strongholds that preserve this name, with at least 80<sup>51</sup> members, but without any hierarchical structure. However, they are still important in the struggles for territorial control, and illegal rent and income collection from some victims.

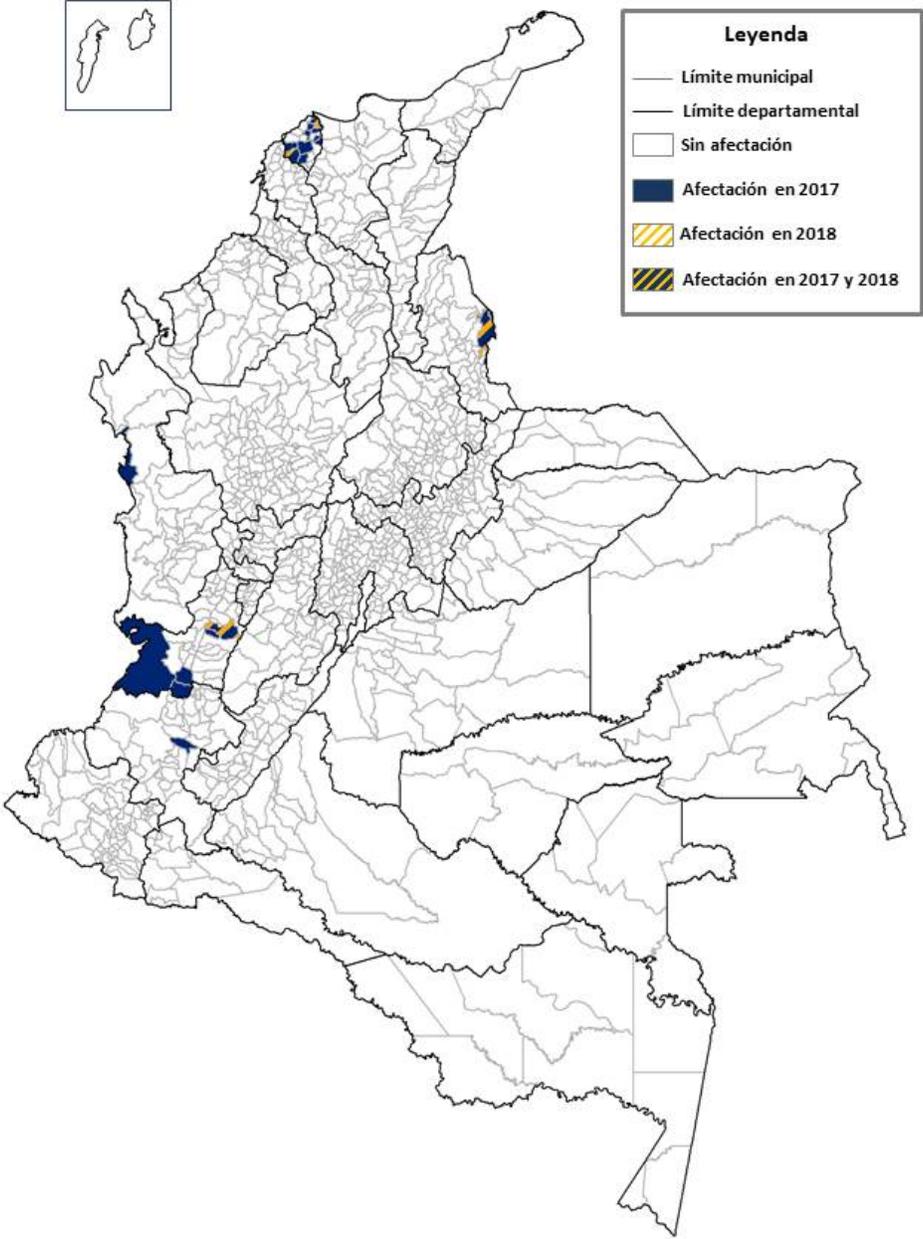
Their activity is centered mainly in Norte de Santander, the area on the border with Venezuela; in the department of Atlántico and in the Pacific Region. Depending on the areas of activity, they are defined by their allies and enemies. For example, in Cali they carry out assassinations, money laundering, micro-trafficking and logistical planning for the AGC; in Tumaco they integrate support networks of the GUP; in Cúcuta they have control over a portion of the smuggling, especially the supplies for drug processing; and in the department of Atlántico, they collect revenues from micro-trafficking, drug trafficking and extortion of merchants.

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<sup>50</sup> Source: *Narcoparamilitares: reconfiguración ilegal en los territorios* [Narcoparamilitares: illegal reconfiguration in the territories]. Published by Indepaz and the Heinrich Böll Stiftung Foundation

<sup>51</sup> El País, "Así son los grupos armados que combate Colombia tras la paz con las FARC" [These are the armed groups that Colombia is fighting after the peace with the FARC], July 22, 2017, in: [https://elpais.com/internacional/2017/07/22/colombia/1500740630\\_359655.html](https://elpais.com/internacional/2017/07/22/colombia/1500740630_359655.html)

Map 6. Municipalities affected by Los Rastrojos activity in 2017 and the first half of 2018



**Table 23. Municipalities affected by Los Rastrojos activity 2017**

Department	Municipalities
Antioquia	<i>Information in process of verification</i>
Atlántico	Baranoa, Galapa, Luruaco, Malambo, Manatí, Palmar de Varela, Repelón, Sabanalarga, Santo Tomás, Soledad
Cauca	Popayán
Chocó	Bahía Solano
Norte de Santander	Cúcuta, Puerto Santander, Villa del Rosario
Valle del Cauca	Buenaventura, Cali, Jamundí, San Pedro, Tuluá

**Table 24. Municipalities affected by Los Rastrojos activity in first semester of 2018**

Department	Municipalities
Atlántico	Barranquilla, Repelón, Soledad
Norte de Santander	Cúcuta, Puerto Santander, Villa del Rosario
Valle del Cauca	Tuluá

## La Constru

This group formed in 2006 after the demobilization of the Putumayo South Front of the Central Bolivar Bloc of the Self-Defense Forces. Initially they were known as part of *Los Rastrojos* and, starting with their dismantling, they began to be known as *La Constru*. This group expanded its number of members with the incorporation of FARC-EP deserters. Their history includes strong alliances with the former Fronts 15, 32 and 48<sup>52</sup> of the FARC-EP.

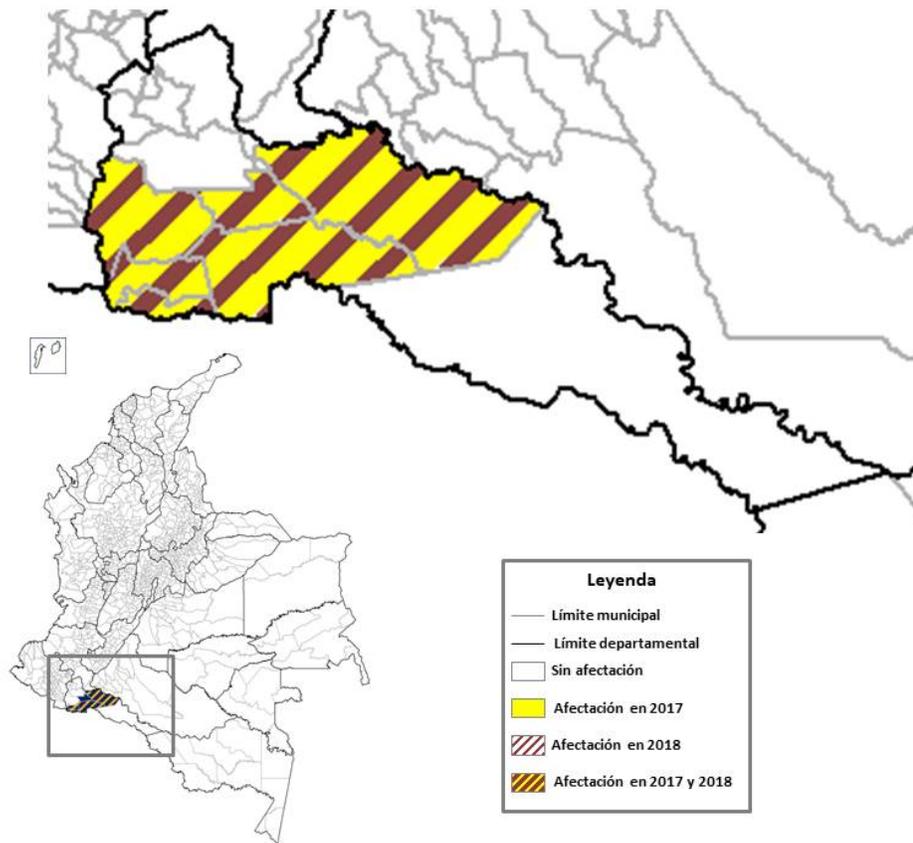
With a force of approximately 60<sup>53</sup> members, they managed to gain a foothold in the department of Putumayo, mainly involved in business related to drug trafficking. Other forms of activity involve torture and even dismemberment, as well as extortions of oil businesses in the regions they occupy, kidnappings, forced disappearances and hired assassinations. They also have a presence in the departments of Huila, Nariño and Valle del Cauca, and notably in border areas with Ecuador, acting as liaisons with Ecuadorian drug traffickers. In addition, they have business ties with *Sinaloa*, a leader of the rearmed Front 48, and with the AGC.

The organization was reported in the same six municipalities of the Putumayo department in 2017 and in the first semester of 2018.

<sup>52</sup> El Tiempo, “El dossier criminal de la banda ‘la Constru’” [The criminal dossier of the group ‘la Constru’], May 30, 2016, in: <https://www.eltiempo.com/archivo/documento/CMS-16607226>

<sup>53</sup> Revista Semana, “Murió el jefe de la Constru, la despiadada banda criminal del sur del país” [The head of *la Constru*, the ruthless criminal gang in the south of the country, has died], March 9, 2018, in: <https://www.semana.com/Item/ArticleAsync/581861?nextId=581870>

**Map 7. Municipalities affected by La Constru's activity in 2017 and in the first half of 2018**



**Table 25. Municipalities affected by La Constru's activity in 2017 and in the first semester 2018**

Department	Municipalities
Putumayo	Orito, Puerto Asís, Puerto Caicedo, Puerto Guzmán, San Miguel, Valle del Gamuez

**Aburrá Valley Office / The Office (*Oficina Del Valle Aburrá – OVA / La Oficina*)**

In the nineties, this narco-paramilitary group was made up of different bands who served Pablo Escobar as enforcers and debt collectors in Envigado, Medellín and other municipalities in the Aburrá Valley. Later, under the command of alias *Don Berna*, The Office becomes part of the AUC, in the Cacique Nutibara Bloc. The sphere of influence of *Don Berna* expanded throughout the department of Antioquia, to the point of taking full control of all criminal activity and joining in alliances with law enforcement and various state institutions, a situation that still exists today.

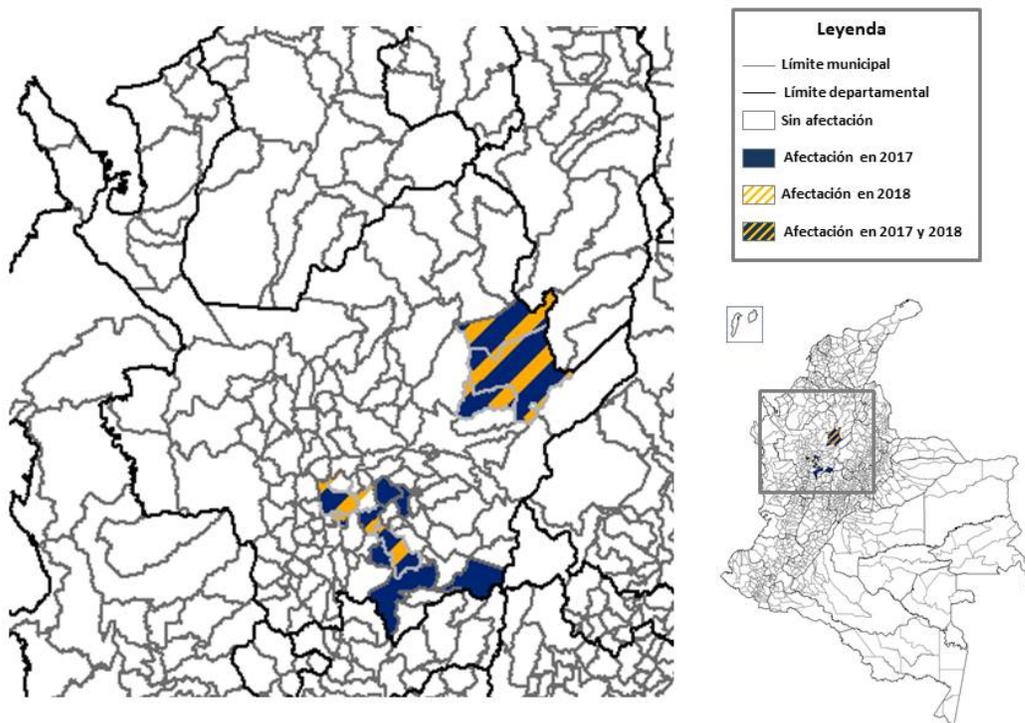
After the capture and subsequent extradition of *Don Berna*, alias *Rogelio* assumed command and later, Maximiliano Bonilla, alias *Valenciano*, who fought for control of the organization with

Ericson Vargas Cardona, alias *Sebastián*. This confrontation led to additional clashes between the different local bands that made up this group. In this clash, which ended in a peace agreement between the parties involved, both the AGC (who managed to seize areas and criminal organizations of the Aburrá Valley, mainly from Medellín) and The Office participated, with The Office gaining access to drug trafficking routes. In recent years The Office was under the command of alias *Tom*, who was captured in 2017.

The makeup of this group resembles a federation, with important criminal gangs participating as members, gangs such as *La Terraza*, who extorts merchants, transporters and agricultural producers. They also have control over illegal transport, prostitution, illegal lotteries, sale of land parcels in disputed territories, illegal financing, recruitment of young people for the sale of drugs in the city, as well as providing security services to businesses and private homes.

Currently they have alliances with the FARC-EP, mainly in Nariño, with the AGC and the *Pachelly*, with whom they produce and regulate the marijuana trade in Antioquia, Bogotá, Pereira and Cali<sup>54</sup>.

**Map 8. Municipalities affected by The Office activity in 2017 and the first semester of 2018**



<sup>54</sup> El Tiempo, “Viaje al corazón de La Oficina, la heredera del Cartel de Medellín” [Journey to the heart of La Oficina, the successor of the Medellín Cartel], August 28, 2018, in: <https://www.eltiempo.com/colombia/medellin/como-funciona-la-oficina-de-envigado-heredera-del-cartel-de-medellin-261046>

**Table 26. Municipalities affected by The Office activity in 2017**

Department	Municipalities
Antioquia	El Carmen de Viboral, El Peñol, Envigado, Guarne, Itagüí, La Unión, Medellín, Remedios, Rionegro, San Vicente, Segovia, Sonsón, Vegachí

**Table 27. Municipalities affected by The Office in the first semester of 2018**

Department	Municipalities
Antioquia	Bello, El Carmen de Viboral, Envigado, Guarne, Itagüí, Medellín, Remedios, Rionegro, Sabaneta, Segovia, Vegachí

## La Cordillera

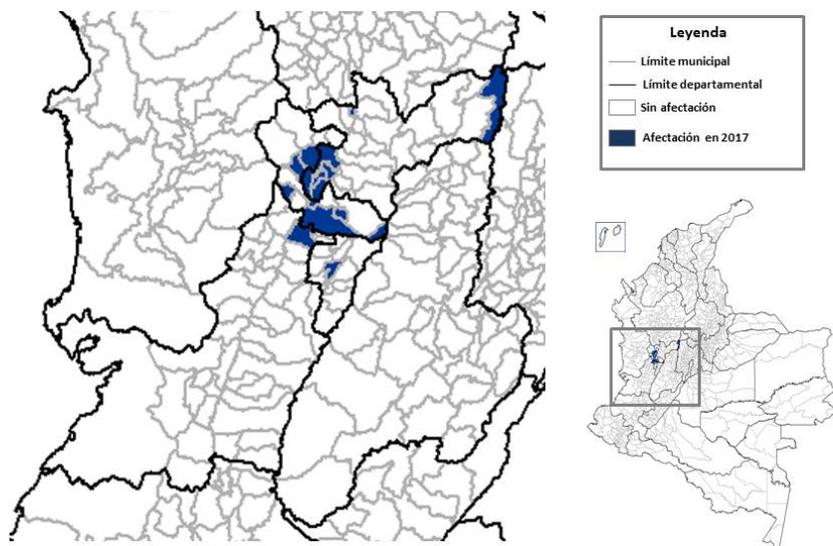
This organization appeared after the demobilization of the Central Bolivar Bloc of the AUC under the command of Carlos Mario Jiménez, alias *Macaco*, who was extradited to the United States in 2008. Until 2011, they were led by alias *Niño Fabián* and during the most recent years they were under the command of alias *El Indio* and alias *Don A*, who led a group of at least 40 men<sup>55</sup>.

Their activity is centered around the outsourcing of the group for the manufacturing, trafficking of firearms or ammunition, extortion, threats, assassinations, predatory lending, trafficking and drug production in Risaralda, especially in the city of Pereira. Their presence extends to municipalities in the north of the department of Valle, Caldas and Quindío. It has been reported that in recent years they have managed to coordinate the shipment of drugs to different countries on the continent of South America<sup>56</sup>. Although this group has received severe blows from law enforcement, its strategy of joining forces with local criminal bands has made it almost impossible to dismantle.

<sup>55</sup> El Colombiano, “El desafío que traen las bandas para 2018” [The challenge that the gangs bring for 2018], January 15, 2018, in: <http://www.elcolombiano.com/colombia/el-desafio-que-traen-las-bandas-para-2018-YG8008054>

<sup>56</sup> Caracol Radio, “Extinción de dominio a 54 bienes de Cordillera” [Forfeiture of ownership of 54 Cordillera properties], June 5, 2018, in: [http://caracol.com.co/emisora/2018/06/06/pereira/1528238801\\_013729.html](http://caracol.com.co/emisora/2018/06/06/pereira/1528238801_013729.html)

**Map 9. Municipalities affected by La Cordillera presence 2017 and first semester of 2018**



**Table 28. Municipalities affected by La Cordillera presence 2017**

Department	Municipalities
Caldas	Anserma, Belalcazar, La Dorada, Marmato, Risaralda, San José, Viterbo
Quindío	<i>Information in process of verification</i>
Risaralda	Apía, Belén de Umbría, Dosquebradas, La Celia, La Virginia, Pereira
Valle del Cauca	Cartago

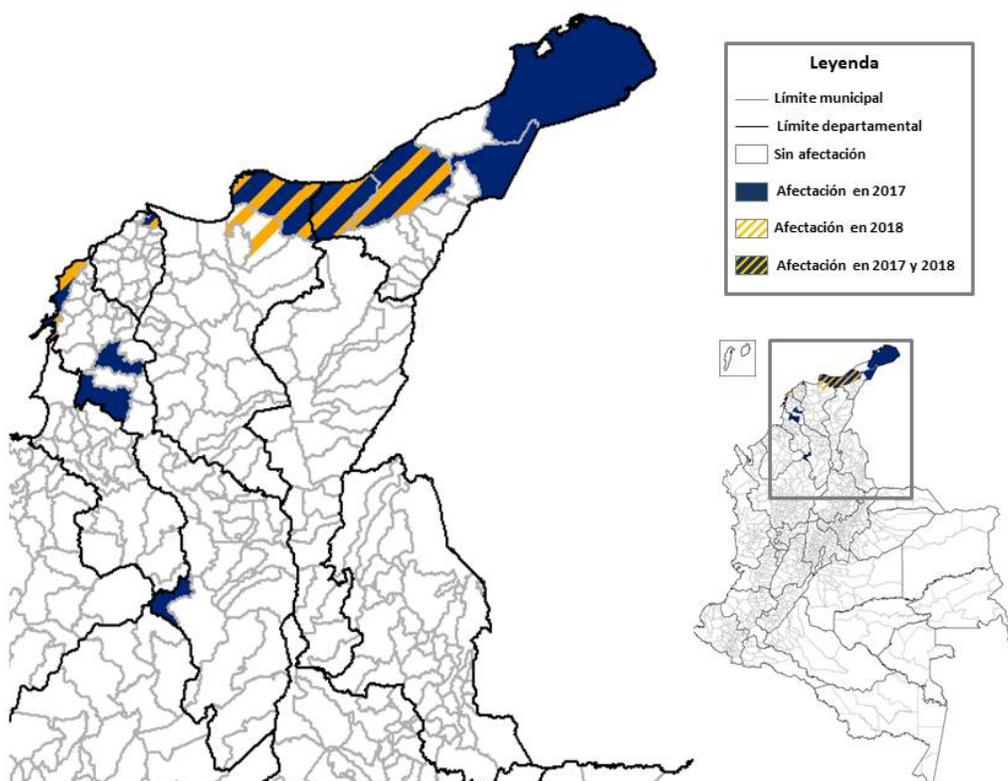
The data for 2018 is being verified, due to their activity in the department of Quindío.

**Los Pachenca**

This group formed in 2013, operating as a support group for the AGC in the department of Magdalena, mainly in the city of Santa Marta. Later, it extended its influence and capability for territorial control to other local municipalities, and then to other departments, such as Bolívar, Atlántico and La Guajira. Between 2016 and 2017, they broke their alliance with the AGC and clashed with that group in a dispute over the jurisdiction of the occupied territories, and the logistics for drug trafficking, as well as the collection of illegal revenues.

Currently, they are commanded by Jesús María Aguirre Gallego, alias *Chucho Mercancía*, who oversees between 150 and 350<sup>57</sup> members, a number that may be higher if one accounts for their support networks dedicated to smaller drug deals and hired assassinations. Their actions are centered around their dominance of the illegal fuel trade, the production and commercialization of cocaine over the entire Sierra Nevada de Santa Marta region. Their control over the port cities of the Colombian Caribbean and access routes that connect to Venezuela are fundamental for this organization. In addition, they receive revenues from extortion and predatory lending. Co-optation of some State agents has been noted with this group.

**Map 10. Municipalities affected by Los Pachenca activity 2017 and first semester of 2018**



**Table 29. Municipalities affected by Los Pachenca activity 2017**

Department	Municipalities
Atlántico	Barranquilla
Bolívar	Cartagena, El Carmen de Bolívar, San Jacinto del Cauca, San Juan Nepomuceno
La Guajira	Dibulla, Maicao, Riohacha, Uribia
Magdalena	Santa Marta

<sup>57</sup> Revista Semana, “La mafia que maneja la Sierra Nevada: Los Pachenca y la Oficina Caribe” [The cartels that run the Sierra Nevada: *Los Pachenca* and the Caribbean Office], September 12, 2018, in: <https://www.semana.com/opinion/articulo/la-mafia-que-maneja-la-sierra-nevada-by-ariel-avila/582788>

**Table 30. Municipalities affected by Los Pachenca activity first semester of 2018**

Department	Municipalities
Atlántico	Barranquilla
Bolívar	Cartagena
La Guajira	Dibulla, Riohacha
Magdalena	Ciénaga, Santa Marta

### **La Empresa (*The Company*)**

Formed in 2006 by former members of the Calima Bloc of the United Self-Defense Forces of Colombia (AUC), as a collection office (enforcers) supporting *Los Rastrojos*, who recruited members of gangs and deserters from the FARC-EP. The group's main objective was to contain the advance of the AGC in Buenaventura. For that purpose, they settled in the neighborhoods of Caldas, Unión de Vivienda, Nuevo Amanecer, Progreso and part of Carlos Holmes<sup>58</sup>, and later they expanded their presence to other areas of the port city.

This organization took center stage with the start of the war between *Los Rastrojos* and the AGC, a situation that exposed the slaughterhouses (*casas de pique*) they controlled and caused the displacement of hundreds of people. After the defeat of *Los Rastrojos*, and the loss of control by the Calle Serna brothers, The Company was weakened and, in 2015, Robert Daniel Quintana, aka *Robert* or *Cholo*, began restructuring the group based primarily on the recruitment of juveniles<sup>59</sup>.

Currently they have a large presence in both legal and illegal economies, the latter centered around the port activity: theft, extortion, contraband, drug trafficking, arms trafficking and handling of machinery for illegal mining. For those reasons, it continues to clash with the AGC.

In 2017 and 2018, their activities were identified only in the municipality of Buenaventura in the department of Valle del Cauca.

### **Los Pachelly**

This group was founded by alias *Abelito*, who expanded his networks in the departments of Pereira and Valle until his capture in 2017. Currently, the group is commanded by Albert Antonio Henao Acevedo, alias *Albert*, together with José Domiciano Carrillo Montoya, aka *Sólido*, their chief financial officer. Their operations are centered in the municipality of Bello, where they control drug trafficking and micro-trafficking (small scale drug sales). In Antioquia, they have expanded into the municipalities of Barbosa, Girardota, Copacabana, San Pedro,

<sup>58</sup> El Espectador, "La historia de 'La Empresa' que aterroriza a Buenaventura" [The story of 'The Company' who terrorizes Buenaventura], April 14, 2017, in: <https://www.elespectador.com/news/judicial/la-historia-de-la-empresa-que-aterroiza-buenaventura-article-689257>

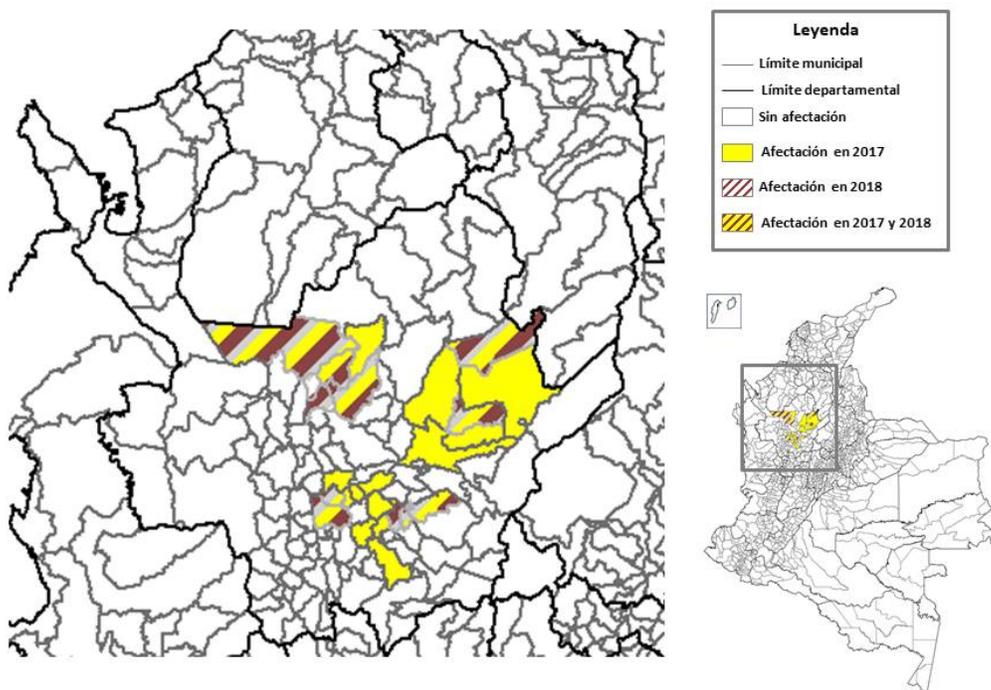
<sup>59</sup> Ibid.

Don Matías San Rafael, Guatapé, El Peñol, San Pedro de Milagros, Remedios, Buriticá Segovia, Vegachí and Ituango; and they have reached the regions of Bajo Cauca and the Northeast of Antioquia, where they manage AGC franchises. In these areas they control illegal gold mining, illicit crops and laboratories for the processing of coca base paste.

In the department of Cauca, in Corinto, they have a logistics infrastructure that allows them to transport large quantities of marijuana to be sold to local bands in Antioquia, who in turn are threatened to make an effective and profitable distribution of it. Among its river access routes for the transport of the drug, are the rivers Medellín, Nechí, Mata and Cauca, which connect them with Risaralda and the Pacific. They also charge extortion and provide private security services.

They export drugs to Panama and the Netherlands, and they have deals with the Sinaloa and Jalisco Nueva Generación cartels.

**Map 11. Municipalities affected by Los Pachelly activity 2017 and first semester of 2018**



**Table 31. Municipalities affected by Los Pachelly activity 2017**

Department	Municipalities
Antioquia	Amalfi, Barbosa, Bello, Briceño, Copacabana, El Carmen de Viboral, El Peñol, Girardota, Guatapé, Ituango, Marinilla, Medellín, Remedios, Rionegro, San Pedro de los Milagros, San Rafael, San Vicente de Ferrer, Segovia, Valdivia, Vegachí, Yarumal, Yalí, Yolombó

**Table 32. Municipalities affected by LosPachelly activity first semester of 2018**

Department	Municipalities
Antioquia	Bello, Briceño, El Peñol, Guatapé, Ituango, Medellín, San Andrés de Cuerquia, San Rafael, Segovia, Toledo, Valdivia, Vegachí, Yarumal

## Los Caparrapos

Their origin is in paramilitary organizations, mainly those commanded by *Cuco Vanoy*. After the demobilization process, they emerged as *Los Paisas*, a group that from 2012 was co-opted by *Los Rastrojos* and the AGC; then they became known as *Los Caparrapos*, a name that had already been used in the late nineties, but now acting as a support organization for the AGC in the municipalities of Bajo Cauca in the Antioquia department. Beginning in 2017, they began to gain relevance when they split from the AGC and instigated attacks against them. There are different reasons that prompted the break, including the death of alias *Gavilán*, as well as the sale of franchises to criminal organizations and drug traffickers<sup>60</sup>.

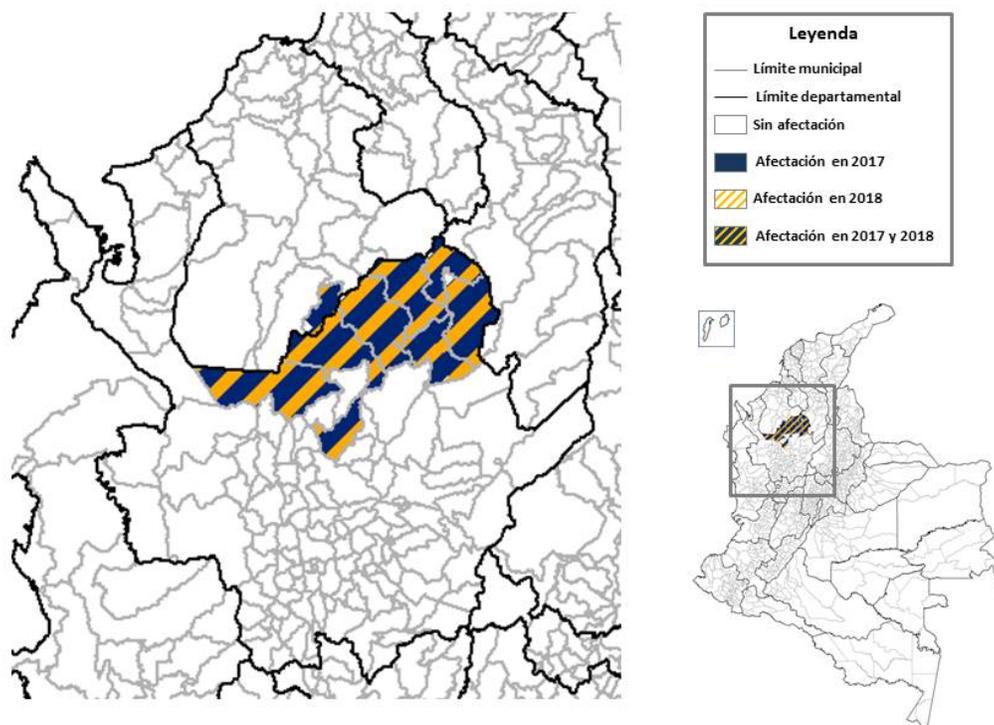
The dispute with the AGC focuses on the control of drug corridors and the collection of illegal revenues, mainly revenues from the informal, legal and illegal mining activities in the municipalities of Tarazá, Yarumal, Cáceres, Caucasia, Nechí, Zaragoza and El Bagre. They are accused of committing forced population displacements, murder of community leaders, as well as threats against the Emberá and Zenú indigenous people, who settled in Bajo Cauca. They operate under the command of alias *Flechas*.

There are indications that this group has alliances with the ELN and the group led by alias *Cabuyo*, in order to extend the group's influence into Córdoba and control areas of Bajo Cauca, and the northeast of Antioquia, as well as to expand the arms and drug trafficking access routes into the Urabá region. Alias *Montero*, a drug trafficker in Bajo Cauca, the Jalisco Nueva Generación Cartel (of Mexico) and Los Triana, a criminal gang that operates in Medellín and other municipalities in the metropolitan area, are also their associates.

Activities of this group were carried out in the same municipalities of the departments of Antioquia and Córdoba in 2017 and in the first semester of 2018.

<sup>60</sup> Análisis Urbano, "Habría sido asesinado Caín, jefe de Los Caparrapos en el Bajo Cauca" [Caín, head of Los Caparrapos in Bajo Cauca, has been killed], February 20, 2018, in: <https://analisisurbano.org/habria-sido-asesinado-cain-jefe-de-los-caparrapos-en-el-bajo-cauca/>

**Map 12. Municipalities affected by Los Caparrapos activity in 2017 and the first semester of 2018**



**Table 33. Municipalities affected by Los Caparrapos activity in 2017 and in the first semester of 2018**

Department	Municipalities
Antioquia	Cáceres, Caucasia, El Bague, Ituango, Nechí, Tarazá, Yarumal, Zaragoza
Córdoba	San José de Uré

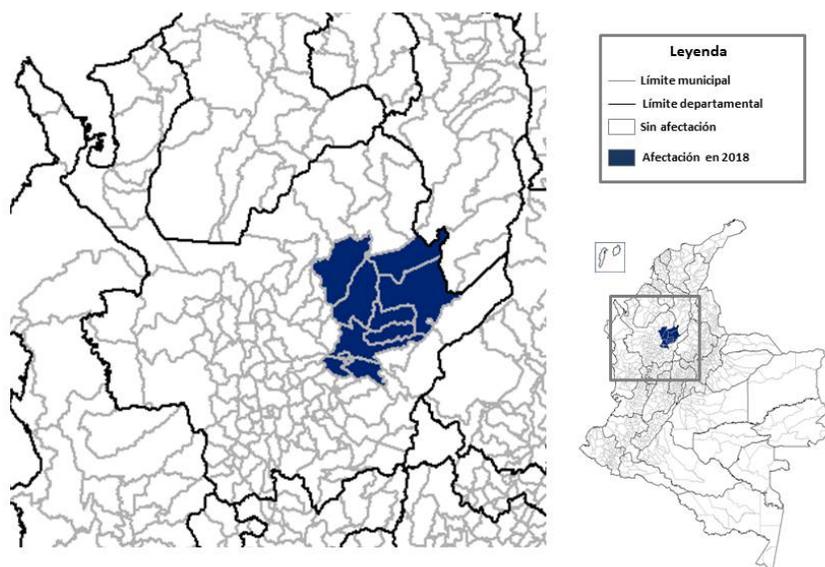
**Libertadores Del Nordeste Presente - LDNP (Liberators of the Present Northeast)**

This group became known in August 2018, when a pamphlet circulated in ten municipalities of northeast Antioquia, which stated the following: "The Libertadores del Nordeste Organization announce their arrival in this region in order to help the civilian population outside of the conflict to not fall victim to it. From this date forward we will undertake a frontal assault against the so called *Gaitanista Autodefensas de Colombia*, AGC, also known as *Clan del Golfo* or

*Urabeños*<sup>61</sup>. Reports indicate that this group is made up of former members of the AUC and that it has operated under different names for several years in the region<sup>62</sup>. This year, they reappeared with a reorganized structure that was coordinated from various prisons and formed with individuals coming from the department of Meta with weapons and military supplies<sup>63</sup>.

The group's operations are centered in Segovia, where they seek control of illegal mining and drug trafficking, as well as in nine other municipalities of Antioquia, in order to take control over the territory owned by the AGC. These actions have caused an increase in the number of homicides in the territory, a direct result of the clashes between these two groups. The LDNP is also accused of threats to journalists in Segovia<sup>64</sup>, as well as intimidating the population with the circulation of pamphlets and the appearance of graffiti.

**Map 13. Municipalities affected by LDNP in the first semester of 2018.**



<sup>61</sup> Análisis Urbano, "Nuevo grupo armado ilegal promete enfrentar a las AGC en el Nordeste antioqueño" [New illegal armed group promises to confront the AGC in the northeast of Antioquia], August 9, 2018, in:

<https://analisisurbano.org/nuevo-grupo-armado-ilegal-promete-enfrentar-a-las-agc-en-el-nordeste-antioqueno/>

<sup>62</sup> La Silla Vacía, "El mapa que traza el aumento de coca en Antioquia" [The map that traces the increase of coca in Antioquia], October 5, 2018, in: <https://lasillavacia.com/silla-paisa/el-mapa-que-traza-el-aumentar-de-coca-en-antioquia-68261>

<sup>63</sup> El Telégrafo, "Libertadores del Nordeste" nuevo grupo armado que apareció en Segovia, Antioquia" [*Libertadores del Nordeste*, a new armed group that appeared in Segovia, Antioquia"], August 15, 2018, in:

<http://eltelegrafo.co/libertadores-del-nordeste-nuevo-grupo-armado-que-aparecio-en-segovia-antioquia>

<sup>64</sup> See <https://www.rcnradio.com/colombia/antioquia/amenazan-periodista-de-segovia-antioquia>

**Table 34. Municipalities affected by LDNP first semester of 2018**

Department	Municipalities
Antioquia	Amalfi, Anorí, Cisneros, Remedios, San Roque, Santo Domingo, Segovia, Vegachí, Yalí, Yolombó

### Other Narco-paramilitaries

In the department of Nariño, a group called AUPAC (*Autodefensas Unidas del Pacífico*) was identified. This group originated from the criminal gang *Renacer*<sup>65</sup> and operated as a liaison to The Office (Antioquia). Their actions were aimed at controlling areas of illicit crops, and control of access routes for drugs and arms trafficking, mainly on the Tapaje and Patía rivers. Also, they rely on the collection of extortion money from merchants, miners and transporters. They were commanded by John Jailer Benítez Mejía, alias *Cusumbo*, who was the leader of *Renacer*, and by a group known as *Los Duques* (del Valle del Cauca) that included an individual with the alias *Fantasma*, who had contacts with the AGC.

Their presence in the department has been reduced by events such as: a) skirmishes with the GUP for the drug trafficking routes. This led them to negotiate deals with them and with the Sinaloa Cartel; b) the death of alias *Cusumbo*; c) the capture of alias *Fantasma*; and d) the 2017 handing over to the authorities of alias *Abel*, leader of a group known as *Los de Abelito*<sup>66</sup>, who was a liaison in Antioquia, Valle del Cauca and Risaralda for the transportation of drugs to these departments from Nariño. Between 2017 and 2018 the group's presence was noted in the municipalities of Tumaco (urban area), El Charco, Mosquera, Francisco Pizarro, Olaya Herrera and La Tola.

In Cali, Valle del Cauca, there is reported activity by an organization called *Los Buenaventureños*, which performs duties for the AGC mainly in the form of recruitment of minors and micro-trafficking of drugs.

In the Amazon, the *Los Caqueteños* group is present. This group operates mainly in the triple border area between Colombia, Peru and Brazil, and with some activity in marijuana trafficking in the departments of Putumayo, Caquetá, Huila, Tolima and Valle del Cauca. Their center of operations is Leticia, the municipality where they collect cocaine from Peru delivered by the *Clan Chuquizuta*. In the border area of Brazil, they share territorial control and business with the *La Familia del Norte* Cartel, in addition to jointly managing drug trafficking routes to Africa.

<sup>65</sup> Criminal gang that operates in Tumaco, El Charco, Mosquera and Satinga (Nariño). Their main commander was *Cusumbo* until he was killed in October 2017, then he was replaced by *Caliche*, who was captured. Affiliated with The Office of Antioquia until 2017, they called themselves AUPAC. However, by 2018 there was no such alliance and they were the gang *Renacer* again. El Espectador, "Capturado "Caliche", jefe de la banda criminal Renacer" ['Caliche' captured, head of the criminal gang Renacer], May 19, 2018 in:

<https://www.elespectador.com/noticias/judicial/capturado-caliche-jefe-de-la-banda-criminal-renacer-articulo-789519>

<sup>66</sup> Family member of Iván Urdinola Grajales, member of the Cali Cartel. Office of the Attorney General of the Nation [Prosecutor's Office exhumed the remains of a victim of the band of Abelito, in Valle del Cauca], January 31, 2018, in: <https://www.fiscalia.gov.co/colombia/seccionales/fiscalia-exhumo-restos-de-una-victima-de-la-banda-los-de-abelito-en-valle-del-cauca/>

In the Middle Magdalena region, we find the *Isaza Clan*, *Los Botalones* and the *Paracas del Magdalena Medio*. The *Isaza Clan*, a group with its origins in the *Autodefensas Campesinas del Magdalena Medio* (Peasant Self-Defense Forces of Middle Magdalena), is composed of former members of local gangs whose main activity is carrying out murders, stealing gasoline and controlling micro-trafficking in urban areas, as well as providing security to foreign cartels in the drug production supply chain. The group's center of action is the municipality of Puerto Triunfo in Antioquia, with some activity reported in municipalities in the departments of Boyacá, Tolima, Risaralda, Bolívar, Cesar, Santander, Caldas and Cundinamarca.

*Los Botalones* were commanded by Arnubio Triana Mahecha<sup>67</sup> alias *Botalón*, former paramilitary leader of the *Autodefensas del Magdalena Medio*, until he was captured in March 2017. We were unable to identify who is currently in charge of the group. The group's areas of activity include the municipalities of Puerto Berrío in Antioquia, Puerto Boyacá in Boyacá and Cimitarra in Santander, the latter being its center of operations. Among the actions they are accused of are extortion, hiring/recruitment of minors, cattle rustling, threats and theft of hydrocarbons for drug processing. It is suspected that this group has monopolized the production of coca base paste, resulting in confrontations with the AGC in the area. There are also some indications about a possible merger of this organization with the *Clan Isaza*.

There is not much information available on the *Paracas del Magdalena Medio*. Research indicates that they have a presence in the Antioquia municipalities of La Unión, El Carmen de Viboral, Sonsón and Abejorral and are engaged in the trafficking of narcotics, extortion and selective assassinations.

On the Caribbean coast we find *Los Costeños*. This organization emerged in 2013 as a result of the weakening of *Los Rastrojos*, and their main presence is in the port cities of Cartagena and Barranquilla where they are engaged in extortion, kidnapping, murder for hire, and the manufacturing, trafficking and transportation of illegal narcotics and weapons. They are suspected of links with the Sinaloa Cartel, for whom they carry out "job orders"<sup>68</sup>, mainly logistical tasks and other violent actions that guarantee the export of their drug.

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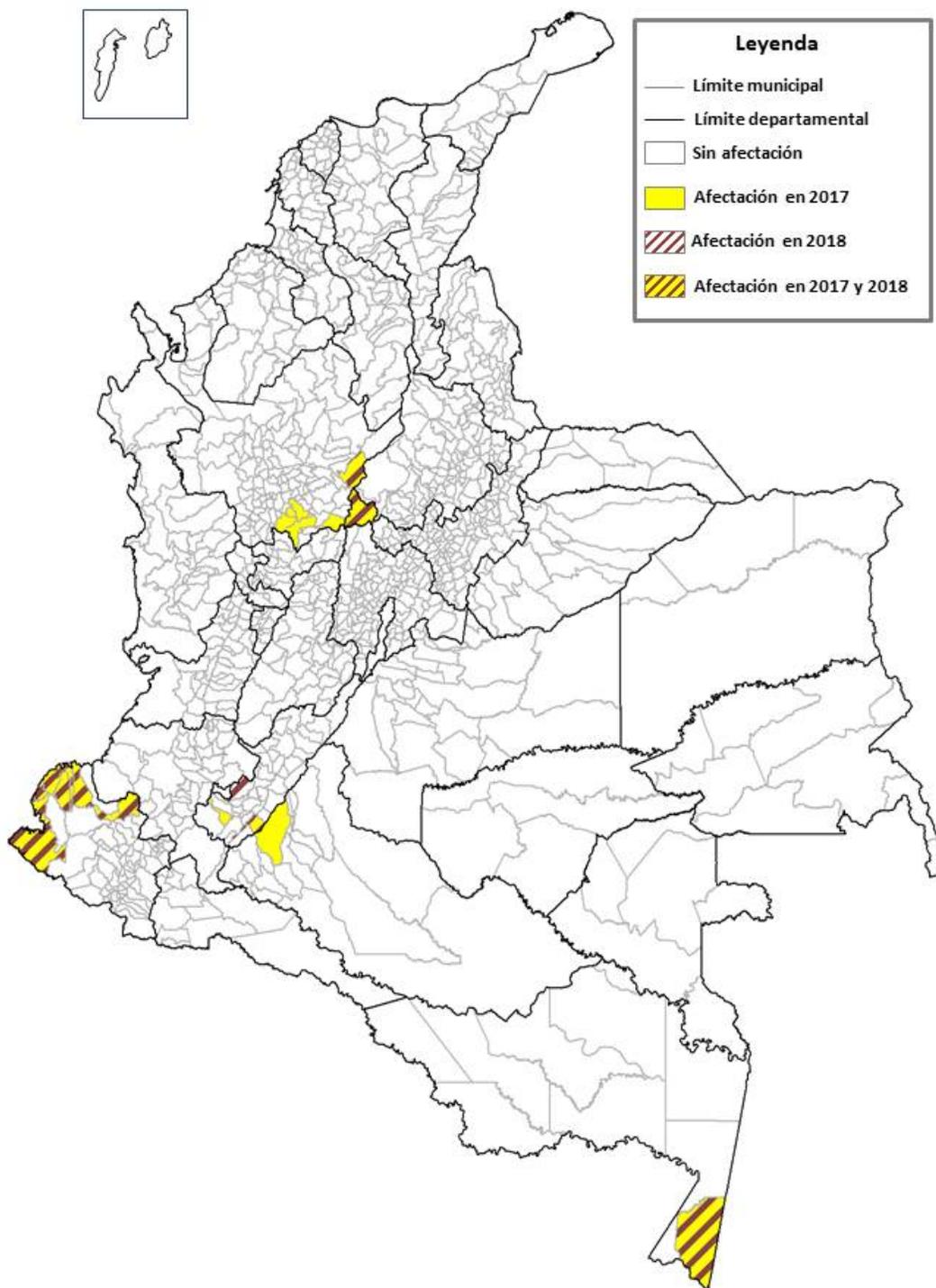
<sup>67</sup> He belonged to the United Self-Defense Forces of Colombia, and in 2003 he submitted to the Justice and Peace Law. He was in prison until 2015, and later formed the group known as *Los Botalones*. El Espectador, "Cayó 'Botalón', exjefe paramilitar beneficiado por la Ley de Justicia y Paz" [*Botalón* has been killed, former paramilitary officer who benefited from the Justice and Peace Law], march 30, 2017, en: <https://www.elespectador.com/noticias/judicial/cayo-botalon-exjefe-paramilitar-beneficiado-por-la-ley-de-justicia-y-paz-articulo-687138>

<sup>68</sup> W Radio, "¿Existe una relación entre el Cartel de Sinaloa y Barranquilla?" [Is there a link between the Sinaloa Cartel and Barranquilla?], April 30, 2018, in: <http://www.wradio.com.co/noticias/actualidad/existe-una-relacion-entre-el-cartel-de-sinaloa-y-barranquilla/20180430/note/3743994.aspx>. Also in El Heraldo [The tentacles of the Sinaloa Cartel in Barranquilla], April 29, 2018, See <https://www.elheraldo.co/judicial/los-tentaculos-del-cartel-de-sinaloa-en-Barranquilla-488156>

**Table 35. Municipalities affected by activity of other narco-paramilitary groups in 2017 and first half of 2018**

<b>Group</b>	<b>Department</b>	<b>Municipalities 2017</b>	<b>Municipalities 2018</b>
AUPAC	Nariño	El Charco, Francisco Pizarro, La Tola, Mosquera, Olaya Herrera, Tumaco	El Charco, Francisco Pizarro, La Tola, Mosquera, Olaya Herrera, Tumaco
<i>Los Costeños</i>	Atlántico	<i>Affected municipalities are in process of confirmation</i>	
<i>Clan Isaza</i>	Antioquia	<i>Affected municipalities are in process of confirmation</i>	
<i>Los Botalones</i>	Antioquia	Puerto Berrío	Puerto Berrío
	Boyacá	Puerto Boyacá	Puerto Boyacá
	Santander	Cimitarra, Puerto Parra	Cimitarra
<i>Los Paracos del Magdalena Medio</i>	Antioquia	Abejorral, El Carmen de Viboral, La Unión, Sonsón	<i>Affected municipalities are in process of confirmation</i>
<i>Los Caqueteños</i>	Amazonas	Leticia	Leticia
	Caquetá	Florencia	<i>Affected municipalities are in process of confirmation</i>
	Huila	Isnos, Suaza	Acevedo, La Plata, Suaza
	Putumayo	<i>Affected municipalities are in process of confirmation</i>	
	Tolima		
	Valle del Cauca		

**Map 14. Municipalities affected by activity of other narco-paramilitary groups in 2017 and first half of 2018**



## 7.2. Post-disarmament FARC-EP groups

Between January 2017 and June 2018, 19 illegal armed groups originating from the FARC-EP guerrilla were identified. In 2017, their actions affected 81 municipalities in 14 departments and during the first semester of 2018 they were detected in 73 municipalities in 16 departments.

These groups differ based on the timing of their appearance, their character and their capability for action, elements used by Indepaz to classify them into three categories: Dissidents, Rearmed for Illegal Businesses (RNI), and Security Groups Supporting Drug Trafficking and Organized Crime Syndicates (GSNM). These groups present a different outlook on the types of territorial occupation, as compared to the FARC-EP, both in quantitative and qualitative terms.

### The quantitative:

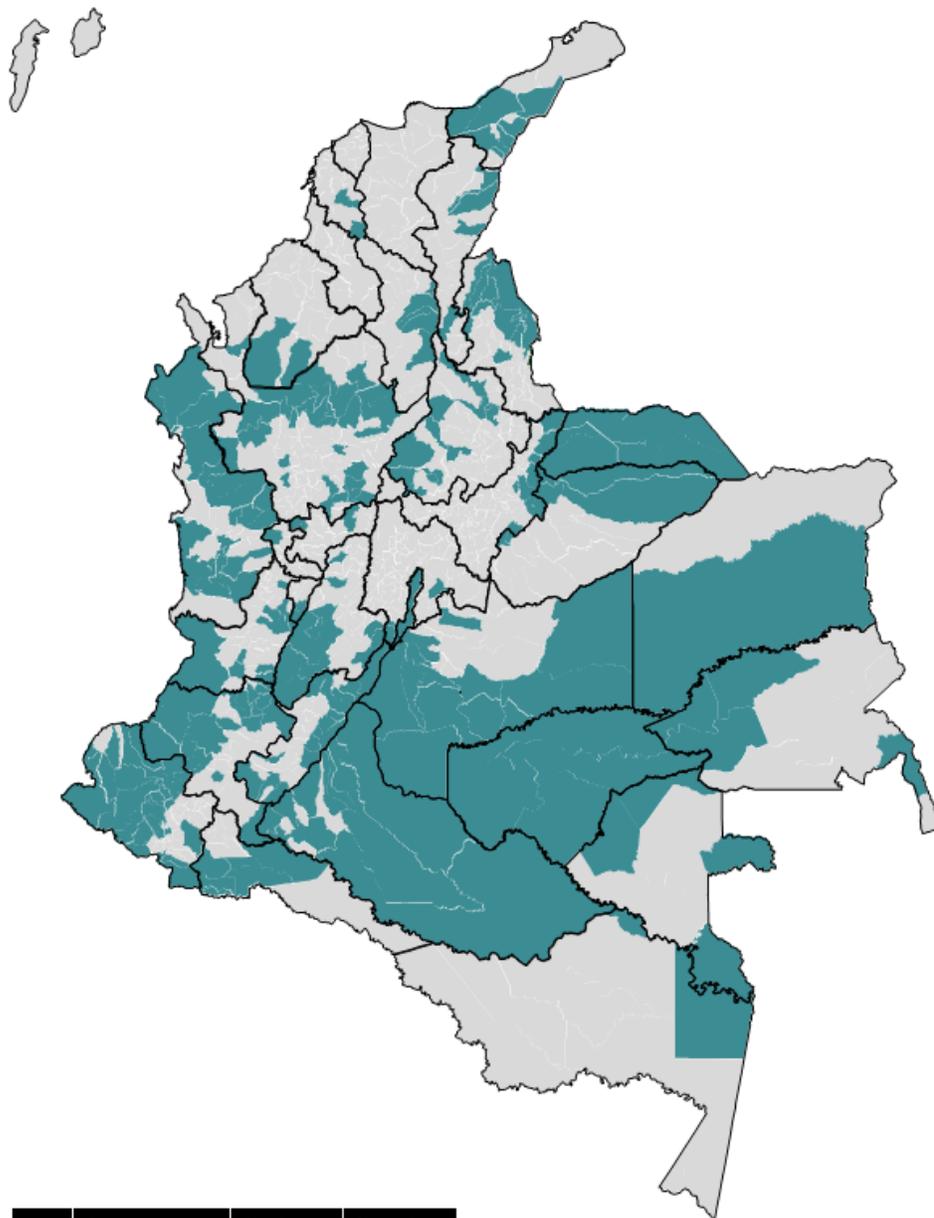
- Indepaz in 2011, the year before the start of the peace talks in Havana, identified the actions of the FARC-EP in 249 municipalities in 31 departments<sup>69</sup>, close to 65% more than municipalities affected in 2017 by the groups that emerged after their disarmament.
- Indepaz estimates that the armed strength of groups that emerged post-disarmament of the FARC-EP, is close to 2,500 members, almost three times lower than the estimates provided by the government in 2017 on their reporting of former FARC-EP combatants still active<sup>70</sup>.

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<sup>69</sup> See <http://www.indepaz.org.co/wp-content/uploads/2018/08/Punto-de-Encuentro-58-Cartografa-del-conflicto-Narcoparamilitares-y-Guerrilla.pdf>

<sup>70</sup> See <https://www.elnuevosiglo.com.co/articulos/05-2017-al-fin-cuantas-de-las-farc-se-demobilizaran>

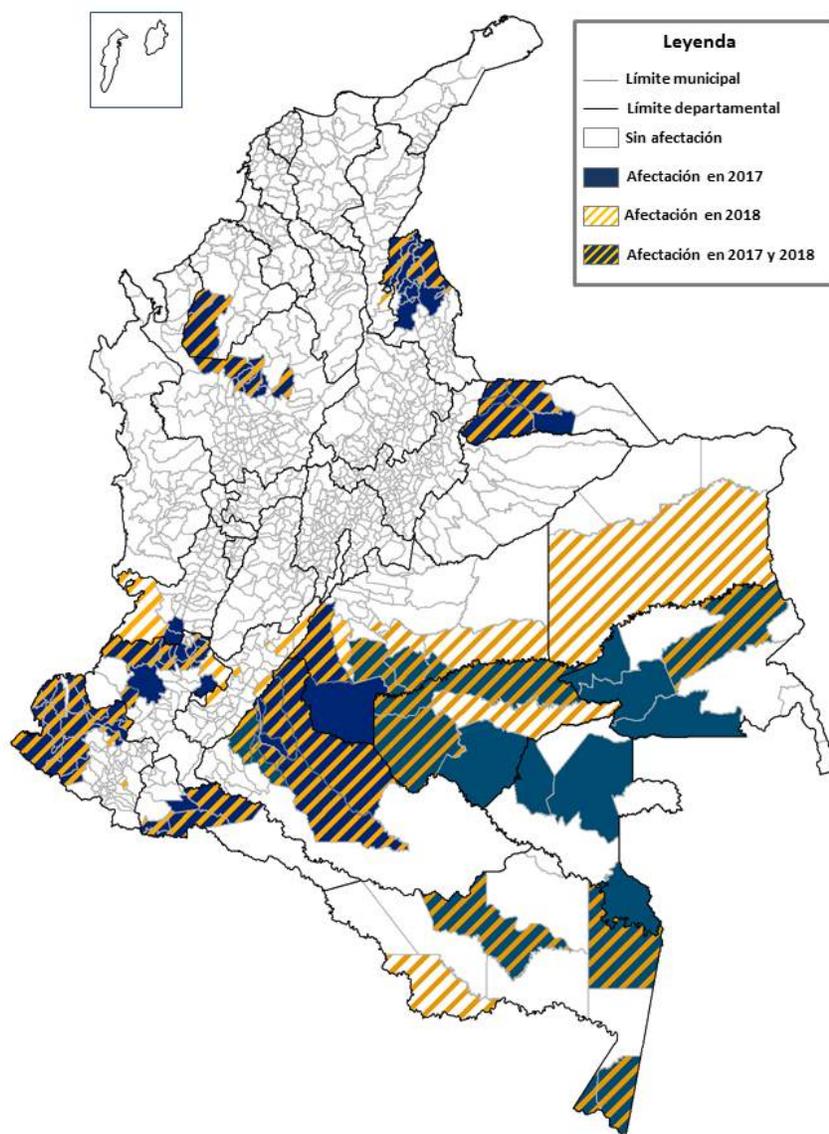
**Map 15. Municipalities with FARC-EP activity in 2011**



Grupo	No. dptos	No. mpios
FARC	31	249

Fuente: Defensoría del Pueblo. Informe de Riesgo Electoral. Elecciones regionales 2011. Julio 2011.

**Map 16. Municipalities with FARC-EP activity in 2017 and first half of 2018.**



**The qualitative:**

- The logic behind territorial occupation has changed. There is no intention to take power or to confront the forces of the State, on the contrary, they would prefer that law enforcement would overlook their activities and / or that they be complicit in their illegal businesses.
- The actions of the FARC-EP post-disarmament organizations are not motivated by political objectives, therefore, even if these groups continue, in some cases, to occupy the same areas, the impact of their actions is not as severe as before.

For the reasons given above, it is important to reevaluate some of the incorrect arguments that: a) assume that the FARC-EP post-disarmament organizations are a homogeneous construct; those who argue that there was no disarmament; b) argue that there is continuity of the military-political organization of the FARC-EP; and / or, c) conclude that the peace agreement is a failure. A more accurate look at the post-disarmament environment, offers the possibility of creating more effective strategies to prevent the negative impact currently affecting certain areas from spreading to new municipalities.

Next, we present an analysis of the characteristics of each of the FARC-EP post-disarmament groups, including figures relating to the approximate number of members (with a minimum / maximum range). These figures clearly show the discrepancies with the data provided by the government, the think tanks and the media.

### 7.2.1. Dissidences

#### Southeast Bloc

Under this name<sup>71</sup> we find a coalition of organizations located in the region of the Orinoquía and Amazonía that declared themselves as dissidences during the negotiation process. This coalition is headed by *Gentil Duarte*, leader of the dissident movement of the Seventh Front, and who has intentions to reorganize the FARC-EP supported by his closest advisors, such as *Rodrigo Cadete*, Néstor Gregorio Vera alias *Iván Mordisco* of the *Frente Primero*, and Gener *García Molina*, alias *John 40* of *Frente Acacio Medina*.

In addition, connections have been identified with the rearmed members of the 33th Front operating in Norte de Santander, with Fronts 10 and 45, in Arauca, as well as Fronts 40 and 62 operating in the department of Meta.

In research conducted by Indepaz, we found no instances of clashes between the above-mentioned dissident organizations, a factor that is related to their consolidation, and the growth of their military and political strength. They appear to be operating under a methodology of task sharing, and mutual respect of territories, alliances and businesses. Attributed to this Bloc, we have identified the following actions: extortion, attacks with explosives, harassment of law enforcement, forced recruitment, illegal mining, illegal crops and drug trafficking, arms trafficking and threats against the civilian population. They have also been accused of several attacks against community leaders and human rights advocates.

The dissidence of the *Frente Primero*<sup>72</sup>, also known as the Armando Ríos Front or *Frente Madre*<sup>73</sup>, have a presence in the departments of Amazonas, Arauca, Caquetá, Guaviare, Meta,

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<sup>71</sup> La Silla Vacía, "Gentil Duarte intenta revivir la guerrilla" [*Gentil Duarte* tries to revive the guerrilla], April 4, 2018, in: April 4 2018, in: <https://lasillavacia.com/silla-sur/gentil-duarte-intenta-revivir-la-guerrilla-65378>

<sup>72</sup> In June 2016, the *Frente Primero* (First Front), commanded by alias *Iván Mordisco*, expressed its discontent with the Peace Agreement through a communiqué, and declared that this Front was not going to demobilize, but would continue with the "guerrilla struggle".

Vaupés, Vichada and Guainía. This group exerts a strong control on the river access routes, mainly on the Vaupés river, that leads towards Brazil, in sectors that offer connecting pathways between the departments of Guaviare and Vaupés; and on the Apaporis and Caquetá rivers, north of the department Amazonas. In 2017, the estimate of their strength was calculated between 60<sup>74</sup> and 450<sup>75</sup>, and for the current year between 200<sup>76</sup> and 400<sup>77</sup> members. Their great strength allows for control in the areas of coca cultivation and the access routes to export the drug out of the country via Venezuela and Brazil. These same routes are used for arms trafficking. It appears that they have safe passage agreements with the Gaitanistas Self-Defense Forces of Colombia (AGC) for the river routes.

The Seventh Front has a presence mainly in the departments of Guaviare, Meta, Caquetá and Putumayo. The last two areas are under the direct command of *Rodrigo Cadete*. Meanwhile, *Gentil Duarte* has control over the cocaine crystal labs in Meta, and the drug trafficking route originating in Guaviare, which ends in Venezuela and Brazil. *Cadete* oversees areas of coca cultivation between Caquetá and Putumayo, with a force between 300<sup>78</sup> and 500<sup>79</sup> members.

The Frente Acacio Medina, with an uncertain number of members, calculated by various sources between 80<sup>80</sup> and 200<sup>81</sup> members, controls the illegal extraction of minerals in Vichada, while in Guainía they have links with a local group called *Los Gorgojos*, for the cultivation and sale of narcotics. *John 40* oversees the delivery of the drug produced in the Llanos to the cartels of Brazil and Venezuela. They also charge a tax for the illegal extraction of coltan and other minerals in the state of Amazonas (Venezuela).

This Bloc also has deals with the AGC and with cartels and networks from Venezuela, as well as with the Sinaloa Cartel and with the Northern Family (*Familia de Norte*), First Central Command (*Primer Comando Central – PCC*) and *Comando Vermelho*, of Brazilian origin. With the latter, cocaine is exchanged for weapons and ammunition.

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<sup>73</sup> The name Frente Madre (Mother Front) is given to this group because of its large organizational structure and its capabilities to recruit and reallocate troops to other Fronts.

<sup>74</sup> Noticias Caracol, “¿Dónde están y cuántos hombres tienen las disidencias de las FARC?” [Where are they and how many men have the dissidence of the FARC], March 12, 2018, in: <https://noticias.caracol.com/camino-a-la-paz/donde-estan-y-cuantos-hombres-tienen-las-disidencias-de-las-farc>

<sup>75</sup> CNN, “¿Qué es la disidencia de las FARC?” [What is the dissidence of the FARC?], May 4, 2018, in: <https://cnnespanol.cnn.com/2017/05/04/que-es-la-disidencia-de-las-farc/>

<sup>76</sup> El País, “Así operan las disidencias de las FARC en Colombia” [This is how the dissidence of the FARC works in Colombia], April 15, 2018, in: [https://elpais.com/internacional/2018/04/12/colombia/1523548514\\_079723.html](https://elpais.com/internacional/2018/04/12/colombia/1523548514_079723.html)

<sup>77</sup> InsightCrime, “Disidencia del Frente Primero” [Dissidents from the First Front], July 10, 2017, in: <https://es.insightcrime.org/colombia-crimen-organizado/disidencia-frente-primero/>

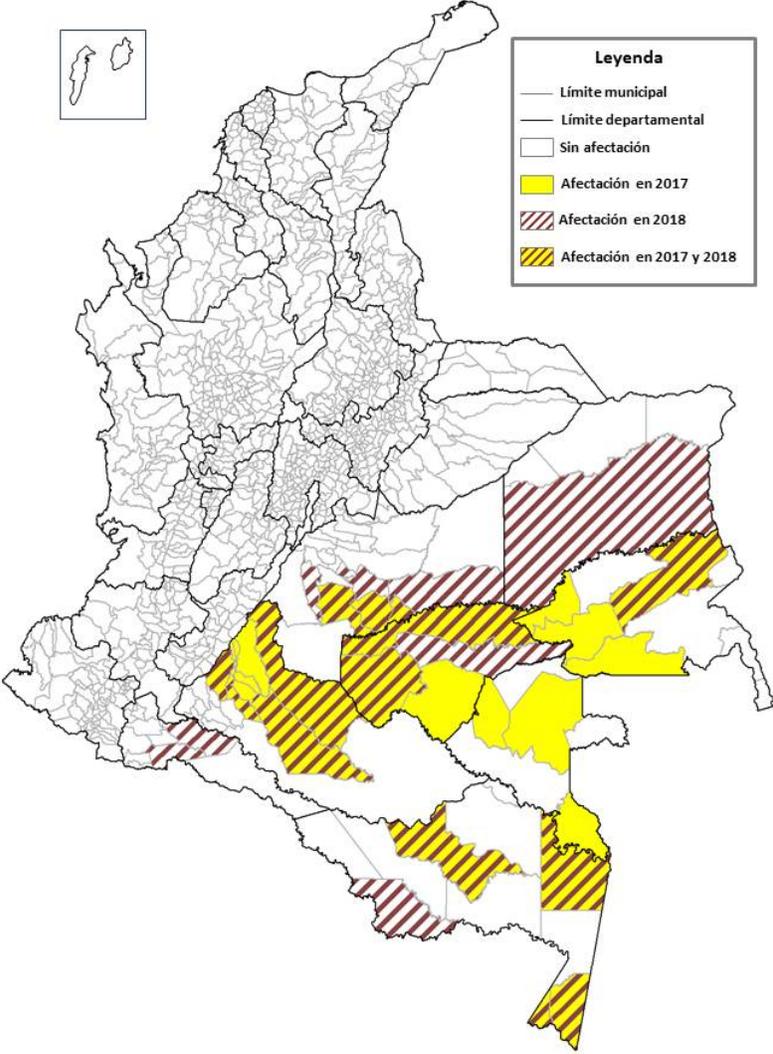
<sup>78</sup> El Colombiano, “El mapa de las disidencias de las Farc” [The Map of Farc Dissidences], April 17, 2018, in: <http://www.elcolombiano.com/colombia/paz-y-derechos-humanos/el-mapa-de-las-disidencias-de-las-farc-GG8558833>

<sup>79</sup> Ibid.

<sup>80</sup> El Colombiano, “Disidencias de FARC forjan alianzas en el Sur del país” [Farc dissidences forge alliances in the south of the country], April 6, 2018, in: <http://www.elcolombiano.com/colombia/disidencias-de-farc-forjan-alianzas-en-el-sur-del-pais-GD8500181>

<sup>81</sup> RCN Noticias, “El extenso prontuario de alias ‘Gentil Duarte’ y ‘Jhon 40’, disidentes de las Farc” [The long criminal record of aliases ‘Gentil Duarte’ and ‘Jhon 40’, dissidents of the Farc], December 24, 2016, in: <https://noticias.canalrcn.com/nacional-dialogos-paz/el-extenso-prontuario-alias-gentil-duarte-y-jhon-40-disidentes-las-farc>

**Map 17. Municipalities affected by Southeast Bloc activity in 2017 and first semester of 2018**



**Table 36. Municipalities affected by Southeast Bloc activity in 2017**

Group	Department	Municipalities
<i>Frente 1</i>	Amazonas	Leticia, Puerto Nariño (Corregimientos departamentales: La Pedrera, Puerto Santander)
	Caquetá	Cartagena del Chairá, El Doncello, El Paujil, Florencia, La Montañita, Puerto Rico, San Vicente del Caguán
	Guainía	Inírida (Corregimientos departamentales: Mapiripana, Morichal Nuevo, Pana)
	Guaviare	Calamar, Miraflores, San José del Guaviare
	Meta	Mapiripán, Mesetas, Puerto Concordia, Puerto Rico, Vista Hermosa
	Putumayo	<i>Affected municipalities are in process of confirmation</i>
	Vaupés	Carurú, Mitú, Taraira
	Vichada	<i>Affected municipalities are in process of confirmation</i>
<i>Frente 7</i>	Caquetá	Cartagena del Chairá, San Vicente del Caguán
	Guaviare	San José del Guaviare
	Meta	Puerto Concordia, Puerto Rico, Vista Hermosa
	Putumayo	<i>Affected municipalities are in process of confirmation</i>
<i>Frente Acacio Medina</i>	Guainía	Inírida
	Vichada	<i>Affected municipalities are in process of confirmation</i>

**Table 37. Municipalities affected by Southeast Bloc activity in first semester of 2018**

Group	Department	Municipalities
<i>Disidencia Frente 1</i>	Amazonas	Leticia, Puerto Nariño (Corregimientos departamentales: El Encanto, La Pedrera, Puerto Santander)
	Caquetá	Florencia, La Montañita
	Guainía	<i>Affected municipalities are in process of confirmation</i>
	Guaviare	Calamar, El Retorno
	Meta	Mapiripán, Mesetas, Puerto Concordia, Puerto Rico, Vista Hermosa
	Putumayo	Puerto Asís, Puerto Guzmán
	Vaupés	<i>Affected municipalities are in process of confirmation</i>
	Vichada	<i>Affected municipalities are in process of confirmation</i>
<i>Disidencia Frente 7</i>	Caquetá	Cartagena del Chairá, San Vicente del Caguán
	Guaviare	San José del Guaviare
	Meta	Fuente de Oro, Puerto Concordia, Puerto Lleras
<i>Disidencia Frente Acacio Medina</i>	Guainía	Inírida
	Vichada	Cumaribo

## 7.2.2 Security Groups Supporting Drug Trafficking and Organized Crime Syndicates

### United Guerrillas of the Pacific (GUP)

This group, initially known as *La Gente del Orden*, was the result of the expulsion of Yeison Segura Mina, alias *Don Y*, from the 29th Front of the FARC-EP. He commanded the group until his assassination in 2016<sup>82</sup>. His men were former members of the urban support network of the Daniel Aldana Mobile Column and of the Mariscal Sucre of the Front 29. After *La Gente del Orden*, they became known as the United Guerrilla of the Pacific (GUP) under the command of Victor David Segura, alias *David*<sup>83</sup>, until September 2018<sup>84</sup> when he died in an operation of the DIJIN and the Anti-narcotics Directorate.

In reviewing the data from research centers as presented in different media, we find that there is a large discrepancy in the reported number of members of the GUP. These reports show figures of between 120<sup>85</sup> and 500<sup>86</sup> members, including urban support groups that operate in neighborhoods of Tumaco. The previous year, one of these groups was commanded by alias *Hugo*, who would be responsible for the slaughterhouses (*casas de pique*) in the neighborhoods of Viento Libre, Panamá and Nuevo Milenio<sup>87</sup>.

Their zones of territorial control are concentrated mainly in the Pacific region of the department of Nariño, specifically in the municipalities of Tumaco, Francisco Pizarro, Magüí Payán, Roberto Payán, Barbacoas, El Charco, Iscuandé, Olaya Herrera and Mosquera. The group's influence in the drug trafficking business extends to Juradó (Chocó), through López de Micay, Buenos Aires and Suárez (Cauca) and into areas of the Alto Naya and the port of Buenaventura (Valle).

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<sup>82</sup> Different versions on this event have been reported. One version reports that he was killed in an operation conducted by the FARC-EP, and another version claims that he was killed in an internal dispute within the organization he commanded. Pacifista, “¿Quién era alias ‘Don Ye’, ¿un guerrillero disidente o un paramilitar disfrazado?” [Who was alias *Don Ye*, a dissident guerrilla fighter or a paramilitary in disguise?], November 21, 2016, in: <http://pacifista.co/quien-era-alias-don-ye-un-guerrillero-disidente-o-un-paramilitar-disfrazado/> and also Noticias Caracol, “en confusos hechos, comandante de FARC fue asesinado por sus propios compañeros” [In confusing circumstances, FARC commander was killed by his own comrades], November 18, 2016, in: <https://noticias.caracoltv.com/colombia/en-confusos-hechos-comandante-de-farc-fue-asesinado-por-sus-propios-companeros>

<sup>83</sup> Brother of Yeison Segura Mina alias *Don Ye*.

<sup>84</sup> He was killed in operations of the military forces in Tumaco. El País, “Abatido alias David, primero al mando de una de las disidencias de las Farc en Tumaco” [Alias David killed, first in command of one of the FARC's dissidences in Tumaco], September 8, 2018, in: <https://www.elpais.com.co/judicial/abatido-alias-david-primero-al-mando-de-una-de-las-disidencias-de-las-farc-en-tumaco.html>

<sup>85</sup> Razon Publica, “Los disidentes de las FARC: ¿Cuántos son? ¿Cómo manejarlos?” [The dissidents of the FARC: How many are there? How to handle them?], June 26, 2017, in: <https://www.razonpublica.com/index.php/conflicto-drogas-y-paz-temas-30/10352-los-disidentes-de-las-farc-cu%C3%A1ntos-son-c%C3%B3mo-manejarlos.html>

<sup>86</sup> El Espectador 2020, “Pie de fuerza aproximado de las disidencias de las Farc en Colombia” [Approximate strength of the FARC's dissidents in Colombia], April 15, 2018, in: <https://colombia2020.elespectador.com/territorio/pie-de-fuerza-aproximado-de-las-disidencias-de-las-farc-en-colombia>

<sup>87</sup> El Tiempo, “La evidencia de las siete casas de pique de Tumaco” [The evidence of the seven cartel slaughterhouses in Tumaco], May 7, 2018, <http://www.eltiempo.com/justicia/delitos/pruebas-de-la-existencia-de-las-casas-de-pique-de-tumaco-213986>

Among their activities we find drug trafficking, a business in which they control areas of illegal crops, production of base paste and cocaine hydrochloride, route management, trafficking and micro-trafficking. To support drug production and sales, they resort to the theft of gasoline from the Trans-Andean Pipeline that crosses the department of Nariño. They also make use of the Sanquianga National Natural Park, in the municipality of Olaya (Nariño), a focal point for the GUP, where they are able to meet with representatives from the Mexican cartels<sup>88</sup> who transport drugs to Central America. For this purpose, they use routes that start through the rivers Tapaje, Iscuandé, Mira, Patía and Satinga.

In the urban area of Tumaco, they carry out illegal activities such as the collection of extortion payments, micro-trafficking, hired assassinations, arms trafficking and the recruitment of young people. They are also accused of several assassinations of community leaders and human rights advocates in Nariño.

The group's financial management is under the control of alias *Contador*, *Conta* or *Mono*<sup>89</sup>, who is the link with the Sinaloa Cartel<sup>90</sup> and The Office (from Antioquia). The relationship with the Mexicans, besides the control of cultivation zones, drug trafficking routes and the urban area of Tumaco, has the GUP engaged in different confrontations with the Oliver Sinisterra Front, commanded by alias *Guacho*. Similarly, they face the Stiven González Front or *Los de Sábalo* (also known as *Resistencia Campesina*), with whom they fight for control of the Patía River and the illegal mining on the Iscuandé River. Finally, the central area of Nariño (Magüí Payán, Roberto Payán, Ricaurte, Cumbitara and Barbacoas) is in contention with the ELN.

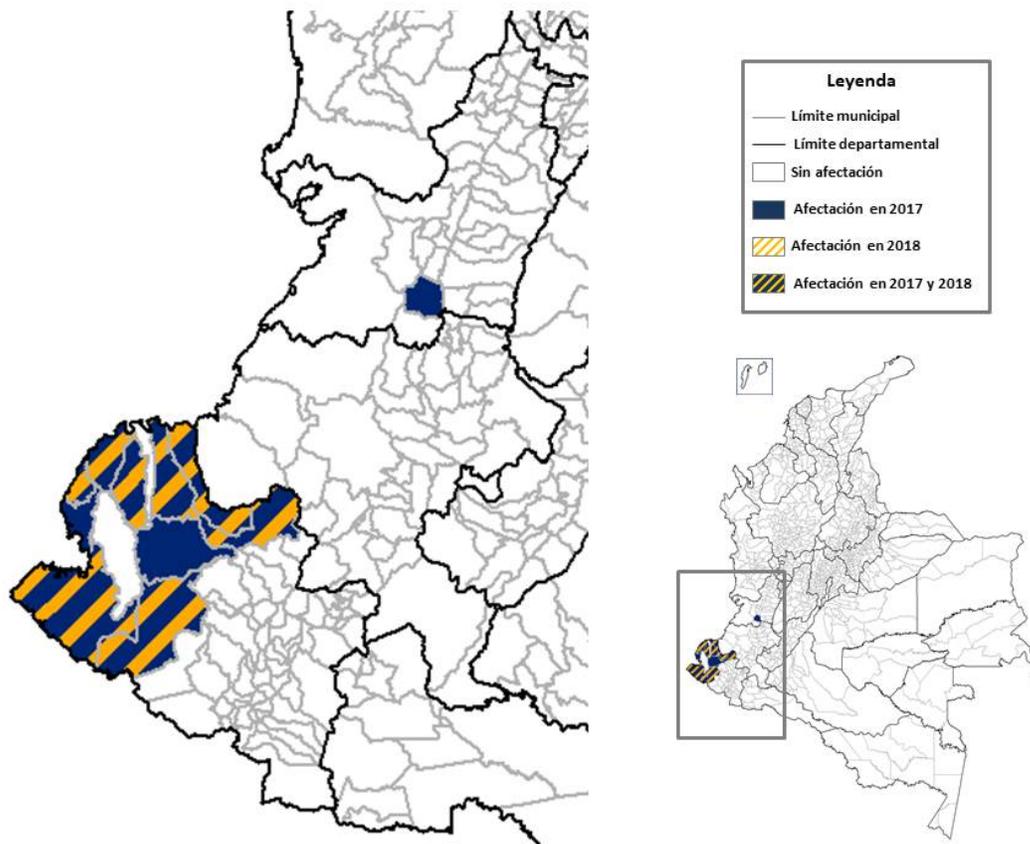
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<sup>88</sup> Revista Semana, "16 capos mexicanos se hacían pasar por turistas en Nariño" [16 Mexican capos posed as tourists in Nariño], June 29, 2018, in: <https://www.semana.com/nacion/articulo/capturados-16-del-cartel-de-sinaloa-en-narino/573437>

<sup>89</sup> According to the Attorney General of the Nation, the individual known as alias *Contador*, who operates in the area of Llorente, Nariño and resides in Cali, went from being the financier of Front 29 and the Column Daniel Aldana of the FARC, to that of the GUP. Alias *Contador* is the main link with the Sinaloa cartel and La Oficina (Antioquia), with whom he held meetings with the purpose of taking control over the crops to alias *Guacho*. El Tiempo, "'Contador', el verdadero poder detrás de los narcos en Tumaco" ['Contador', the real power behind drug dealers in Tumaco], May 20, 2018, in: <https://www.eltiempo.com/justicia/investigacion/alias-contador-es-quien-financiaria-el-narcotrafico-en-tumaco-219704>. Reports obtained by Indepaz's Investigative Unit during a tour of the area, indicate that alias *Contador* operates independently of the GUP. This information is being corroborated.

<sup>90</sup> Named by some media outlets as *Cartel del Pacífico*.

**Map 18. Municipalities affected by GUP activity in 2017 and first semester of 2018**



**Table 38. Municipalities affected by GUP activity in 2017**

Department	Municipalities
Nariño	Barbacoas, El Charco, Francisco Pizarro, Santa Bárbara de Iscuandé, Magüi Payán, Mosquera, Olaya Herrera, Tumaco
Valle del Cauca	Cali

**Table 39. Municipalities affected by GUP activity in first semester of 2018.**

Department	Municipios 2018
Nariño	Barbacoas, El Charco, Santa Bárbara de Iscuandé, Mosquera, Olaya Herrera, Tumaco
Valle del Cauca	<i>Affected municipalities are in process of confirmation</i>

## The Oliver Sinisterra Front (FOS) / United Guerrillas of the South

This group is named after Óscar Armando Sinisterra, alias *Oliver*, who was the commander of the Daniel Aldana Mobile Column of the FARC-EP and was killed in a bombardment in 2015. The FOS was initially created by former members of the FARC-EP who were not included in the negotiation process, under the leadership of Walter Patricio Arizala, alias *Guacho*, and Jefferson Chávez Toro, alias *Cachi*, who expanded their network with members of criminal gangs in the Nariño department.

There is an unknown number of members under the leadership of *Guacho*, their current commander. Reports estimate between 250<sup>91</sup> and 550<sup>92</sup> members, including support networks, with a presence in the municipalities of Tumaco, Barbacoas, El Charco, Mosquera, Ricaurte, Roberto Payán, Francisco Pizarro and Olaya Herrera (Nariño), and San Lorenzo, in the province of Esmeraldas (Ecuador). Their territory hosts a concentration of one of the largest illicit crop developments in the department of Nariño, as well the access routes of the Chagüi, Rosario, Patía, Mataje, San Juan and Mira rivers, keys for drug transport (the latter being the most critical route). In addition, FOS carries out other criminal activity including extortion, arms trafficking, hired assassinations, micro-trafficking and recruitment of young people, who receive payments between one and two million pesos (\$325-645; €282-565)<sup>93</sup>. This group takes credit for the *casas de pique* (slaughterhouses or rooms where they torture or dismember bodies of victims) in Tumaco<sup>94</sup>, in the barrios Obrero and Ciudad 2000<sup>95</sup>; as well as the murder of community leaders such as Jair Cortés<sup>96</sup>.

There are indications that the production levels of coca paste and cocaine hydrochloride, at least up to the beginning of 2018, increased due to an alliance with the Sinaloa Cartel<sup>97</sup>. However, this situation has changed due to the capture of alias *Cachi*, who acted as liaison, and the kidnapping and murder of Ecuadorian journalists, which affected the transport of drugs through strategic corridors, due to the increase activities of law enforcement agencies.

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<sup>91</sup> El Comercio, "Dos grupos disidentes de las Farc controlan el narcotráfico en el límite Ecuador-Colombia" [Two dissident groups of the Farc control drug trafficking in the Ecuador-Colombia border], January 31, 2018, in: <https://www.elcomercio.com/actualidad/sanlorenzo-grupos-farc-drog-frontera.html>

<sup>92</sup> El Colombiano, "Disidencias de Farc forjan alianzas en el sur del país" ("Farc dissidences forge alliances in the south of the country"), April 6, 2018, in: <http://www.elcolombiano.com/colombia/disidencias-de-farc-forjan-alianzas-en-el-sur-del-pais-GD8500181>

<sup>93</sup> BluRadio, "Guacho recluta a jóvenes por millón y medio de pesos en Tumaco" [*Guacho* recruits young people for a million and a half pesos in Tumaco], April 16, 2018, in: <https://www.blu-radio.com/nacion/guacho-recluta-jovenes-por-millon-y-medio-de-pesos-en-tumaco-175462>

<sup>94</sup> According to reports from the attorney general's office in 2017, there are 11 slaughterhouses and torture chambers (*casas de pique*) in Tumaco. La Silla Vacía, "La guerra en Tumaco después de Guacho y David sigue igual" [The war in Tumaco after Guacho and David remains the same], September 30, 2018, in: <https://lasillavacia.com/silla-pacifico/la-guerra-en-tumaco-despues-de-guacho-y-david-sigue-igual-68184>

<sup>95</sup> El Tiempo, "La evidencia de las siete casas de pique de Tumaco", ("The evidence on the seven slaughterhouses (*casas de pique*) in Tumaco"), May 7, 2018, in: <http://www.eltiempo.com/justicia/delitos/pruebas-de-la-existencia-de-las-casas-de-pique-de-tumaco-213986>

<sup>96</sup> El Tiempo, "Colombia y Ecuador cierran cerco sobre alias 'Guacho' en la frontera" [Colombia and Ecuador close on alias *Guacho* at the border] November 7, 2017, in: <https://www.eltiempo.com/justicia/delitos/capturan-al-asesino-del-lider-social-de-tumaco-jose-jair-cortes-148852>

<sup>97</sup> Revista Semana, "Cartel de Sinaloa: el enemigo es el socio Guacho" [Sinaloa Cartel: the enemy is their partner Guacho], May 19, 2018, in: <https://www.semana.com/confidencial/articulo/guacho-ahora-es-enemigo-del-cartel-de-sinaloa/567818>

Currently, the FOS has alliances with *Los Cuinis*, the armed wing of the *Jalisco Nueva Generación* Cartel. Within the framework of this partnership, the Mexicans deliver M4<sup>98</sup> assault rifles and, in return, they receive training for hired assassinations and private security<sup>99</sup>. They have also been modernizing the drug production facilities and processes, as evidenced by the construction of underground laboratories, allowing continuous work and making actions by law enforcement in terms of identification, seizure and destruction very difficult. Noteworthy in this partnership is the work of the Venezuelan José Santisteban, alias *El Cubano*<sup>100</sup>, captured in June of this year, who was also an intermediary in other drug trafficking businesses.

The armed wing of the Oliver Sinisterra Front is the Jaime Martínez Mobile Column<sup>101</sup>, which emerged into public knowledge in 2018. Alias *Guacho* sent from Nariño to the Cauca area one of his trusted men, *El Tigre*, with the purpose of reactivating the group's finances from various illegal activities, with the help of former members of the Miller Perdomo and Daniel Aldana mobile cells. However, *El Tigre* was captured in August of 2018 and, currently, it is not known who has taken over his position.

The most important municipality in Cauca is Buenos Aires, which has become a strategic area, not only for this group, but for others who are fighting over control of the area due to the connections it has with the Naya, San Juan and Patía rivers, and with the municipalities of Algeria and Balboa, which have large, concentrated areas of coca crops. In Suarez there have been attacks against law enforcement.

Similarly, the FOS seeks to control the region of El Naya that links the municipalities of Buenaventura in the department of Valle, and López de Micay and Buenos Aires, in Cauca for the shipment of drugs to Central America, as well as the development of a solid economy from illegal mining and extortion. They have confrontations with other rearmed groups that seek to take over the same area. These encounters are affecting the indigenous, afro-descendant and peasant communities in the area<sup>102</sup>, and who have also been harmed by armed proselytizing and forced recruitment.

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<sup>98</sup> El Comercio, “carteles mexicanos entregan a disidentes armas de alta gama” [Mexican cartels deliver high powered weapons to dissidents], May 24, 2018, in: <https://www.elcomercio-actualidad/carteles-mexico-disidentes-armas-frontera.html>

<sup>99</sup> El Nuevo Siglo, “Cartel mexicano reclutaría a exmilitares de Colombia” [Mexican Cartel may have recruited former members of the Colombian military], May 30, 2018, in: <http://www.elnuevosiglo.com.co/articulos/5-2018-cartel-mexicano-reclutaria-a-exmilitares-de-colombia>

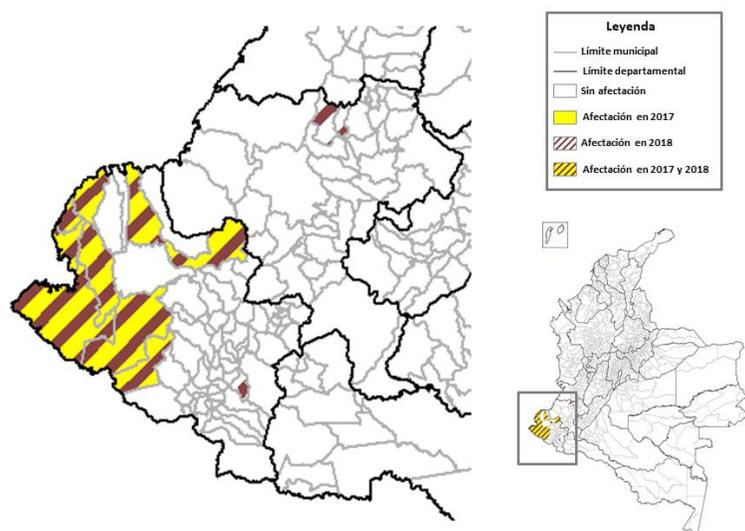
<sup>100</sup> Canal 1, “Capturado alias “El Cubano”, presunto mayor narco venezolano” [Captured alias *El Cubano*, presumed major Venezuelan narco], June 16, 2018, in: <https://canal1.com.co/noticias/capturado-alias-cubano-presunto-mayor-narco-venezolano/>

<sup>101</sup> El Espectador, “El cerco armado en el que están encerrados los pobladores de El Naya” [The armed siege in which the residents of El Naya are imprisoned], June 13, 2018, in: <https://colombia2020.elespectador.com/territorio/el-cerco-armado-en-el-que-estan-encerrados-los-pobladores-de-el-naya>

<sup>102</sup> Ibid.

The group is engaged in confrontations with the ELN and the AGC for control of the municipalities of Barbacoas, Policarpa and Santa Cruz<sup>103</sup>; and with the GUP for control of Tumaco, Sanquianga National Park and the Mira river in Nariño<sup>104</sup>, as well as for El Naya between Cauca and Valle del Cauca. In the same area, the group is also engaged in conflict with the organization known as *Frente Unido del Pacífico*<sup>105</sup>. In Nariño, James Sánchez, alias *Cardona* is a key player for *Guacho*. *Cardona*, who commanded an urban cell of the *Gente del Orden* when *Don Y* lived, later allied with *Guacho*<sup>106</sup>. Currently, it is he who guarantees to *Guacho* the control of free passage of the river Mira and control of the urban area of Tumaco.

**Map 19. Municipalities affected by FOS activity in 2017 and first semester of 2018**



<sup>103</sup> El Nuevo Siglo, "Dos muertos por combates entre disidencias y Eln en Nariño" [Two deaths due to battles between dissidents and the ELN in Nariño], January 8, 2018, in: <https://www.elnuevosiglo.com.co/articulos/01-2018-dos-muertos-por-combates-entre-disidencias-autodefensas-y-eln-en-narino>

<sup>104</sup> El Espectador 2020, "Nariño, sitiado por las disidencias de 'David' y 'Guacho'" [Nariño, besieged by the dissidents of *David* and *Guacho*], April 14, 2018, in: <https://colombia2020.elespectador.com/territorio/narino-sitiado-por-las-disidencias-de-david-y-guacho>

<sup>105</sup> El Espectador 2020, "El cerco armado en el que están encerrados los pobladores de El Naya" [The armed siege in which the residents of El Naya are closed in], June 13, 2018, in: <https://colombia2020.elespectador.com/territorio/el-cerco-armado-en-el-que-estan-encerrados-los-pobladores-de-el-naya>

<sup>106</sup> Pacifista, "Disidencias y carteles mexicanos: la disputa por la coca en Tumaco" [Dissidences and Mexican cartels: the coca dispute in Tumaco], May 7, 2018, in: <http://pacifista.co/disidencias-y-carteles-mexicanos-la-disputa-por-la-coca-en-tumaco/>

**Table 40. Municipalities affected by FOS activity in 2017**

Department	Municipalities
Cauca	<i>Affected municipalities are in process of confirmation</i>
Nariño	Barbacoas, El Charco, Francisco Pizarro, Mosquera, Ricaurte, Roberto Payán, Tumaco

**Table 41. Municipalities affected by FOS activity in first semester of 2018**

Department	Municipalities
Cauca	Buenos Aires, Suárez
Nariño	Barbacoas, El Charco, Francisco Pizarro, Mosquera, Ricaurte, Roberto Payán, Tangua, Tumaco

**Peasant Revolutionary Movement (*Movimiento Revolucionario Campesino - MRC*) / Peasant Resistance (*Resistencia Campesina*) / *Los De Sábalo* / *Frente Stiven González***

The initial development of this group took place in the vicinity of the Territorial Area of Training and Reincorporation (ETCR) of Policarpa, in Nariño. The group is constituted by former members of the mobile cells Mariscal Sucre and Daniel Aldana of the Front 29 of the Farc, and deserters from the ELN and the Gulf Clan. The number of combatants, under the command of Gonzalo Prado, alias *Sábalo* or *El Morocho*, is unknown, with estimates ranging from 80<sup>107</sup> to 150<sup>108</sup> members.

Among their activities we find the control of crops for illicit use, trafficking and micro-trafficking of drugs, extortion, recruitment of minors, hired assassinations and illegal mining. They are also accused of being responsible for forced displacements and the assassination of ex-combatants of the FARC-EP.

They are active in the area known as La Cordillera, in the jurisdiction of the municipalities of Iscuandé, El Charco, Cumbitara, Policarpa, Leiva and El Rosario. After the murder in 2017 of Julio Melquizidec Borja, alias *La Vaca*, leader of the armed group *Los de Vaca*<sup>109</sup>, they extended their activity to the municipalities of Barbacoas, Magüí Payán and Roberto Payán.

<sup>107</sup> La Silla Vacía, “Estas son las disidencias que recibe Duque en el Pacífico” [These are the dissidences that Duque receives in the Pacific], July 3, 2018, in: <https://lasillavacia.com/silla-pacifico/estas-son-las-disidencias-que-recibe-duque-en-el-pacifico-66830>

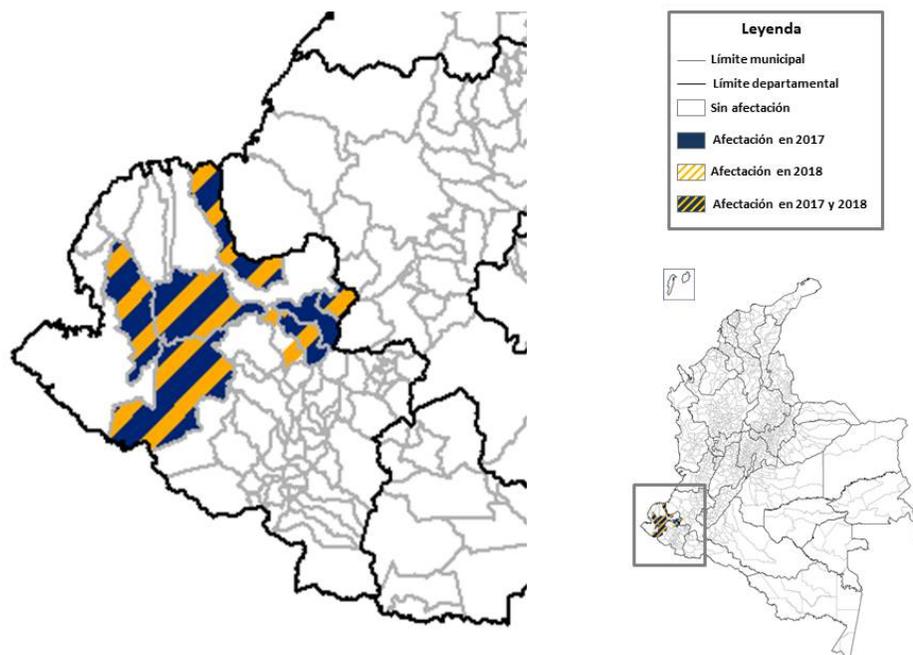
<sup>108</sup> El Espectador2020, “Pie de fuerza aproximado de las disidencias de las Farc en Colombia” [Approximate strength of the Farc dissidents in Colombia], April 15, 2018, in: <https://colombia2020.elespectador.com/territorio/pie-de-fuerza-acerca-de-las-disidencias-de-las-farc-en-colombia>

<sup>109</sup> This group disbanded after the death of its leader. He was apparently killed by those under his command. RCN Radio, “Alias ‘La Vaca’, jefe una disidencia de las FARC, habría sido asesinado por otro disidente” [Alias ‘La Vaca’, a

Near the Iscuandé River, they are fighting for control over illegal mining with a dissident ELN group, known as the *Guevaristas*. They have skirmishes with the GUP over the drugs and weapons trafficking access routes on the Patía river. They are also involved in confrontations over the control of certain areas in the municipalities of Barbacoas, Magüi Payán and Roberto Payán; In these areas, the *Frente Comuneros del Sur* of the ELN, led by *Camilo Pantalóneta*, the FOS and the GUP, are all present.

*Sábalo* has alliances with *Guacho* to confront the GUP, and to trade weapons and drugs. He is also searching for partners to expand towards the department of Cauca, mainly with the group named *Los de Pija*.

**Map 20. Municipalities affected by Revolutionary Peasant Movement activity in 2017 and first semester 2018**



**Table 42. Municipalities affected by Revolutionary Peasant Movement activity in 2017**

Department	Municipalities 2017
Nariño	Barbacoas, El Rosario, Leiva, Magüi Payán, Policarpa, Roberto Payán, Santa Bárbara de Iscuandé

dissident leader of the FARC, may have been murdered by another dissident], August 1, 2017, in: <https://www.rcnradio.com/colombia/pacifico/alias-la-vaca-jefe-una-disidencia-las-farc-habria-asesinado-disidente>

**Table 43. Municipalities affected by Revolutionary Peasant Movement activity in first semester of 2018**

Department	Municipalities 2017
Nariño	Barbacoas, Cumbitara, Leiva, Magüi Payán, Policarpa, Roberto Payán, Santa Bárbara de Iscuandé

## Los De Pija

This group was formed in 2016 by Reinel Natalio García, alias *Pija* or *Ricardo*, after leaving one of the pre-concentration areas of the FARC. The group was under his command until June 2018 when he was captured. He was the leader of Front 29 of the FARC-EP, and later, between 2013 and 2016, he commanded the Jacobo Arenas Mobile Column. He is known for his expert knowledge on drug trafficking routes.

The estimates on the number of members of this group vary widely, in the range of 30<sup>110</sup> to 100<sup>111</sup> members. They are active in the municipalities of Toribío, Morales, Buenos Aires, Suarez, El Tambo and López de Micay, in the department of Cauca. Their operations include the recruitment of indigenous people and the control over their territory, the assassination of community leaders, kidnapping, selective homicides, the manufacture and trafficking of weapons and drugs, and the collection of taxes from illegal coca producers (*cobro de gramaje*).

Control of illicit crops occurs mainly in the municipality of El Tambo, with the highest concentration in the village of Huisitó (where the Munchique National Natural Park is located). The rivers used for drug transport are the Cauca River, San Juan de Micay and Naya.

They had confrontations with the Andrey Peñaranda Front of the EPL until June of 2017<sup>112</sup> when they assassinated the commander of that group, and for that reason alias *Pija* fled to the municipality of El Tambo where he managed to establish alliances with the ELN. Currently, this group faces the organization led by alias *Juvenal* for the control of crop areas and access routes in the municipalities of Corinto, Toribío, Caloto, Suárez and Buenos Aires.

In addition to the alliance with the ELN, *Los de Pija* have business with *Gentil Duarte*<sup>113</sup>, who has sought to expand his area of influence by making connections with the other emerging

<sup>110</sup> La Silla Vacía, “Estas son las disidencias que recibe Duque en el Pacífico” [These are the dissidences that Duque receives in the Pacific], July 3, 2018, in: <https://lasillavacia.com/silla-pacifico/estas-son-las-disidencias-que-recibe-duque-en-el-pacifico-66830>

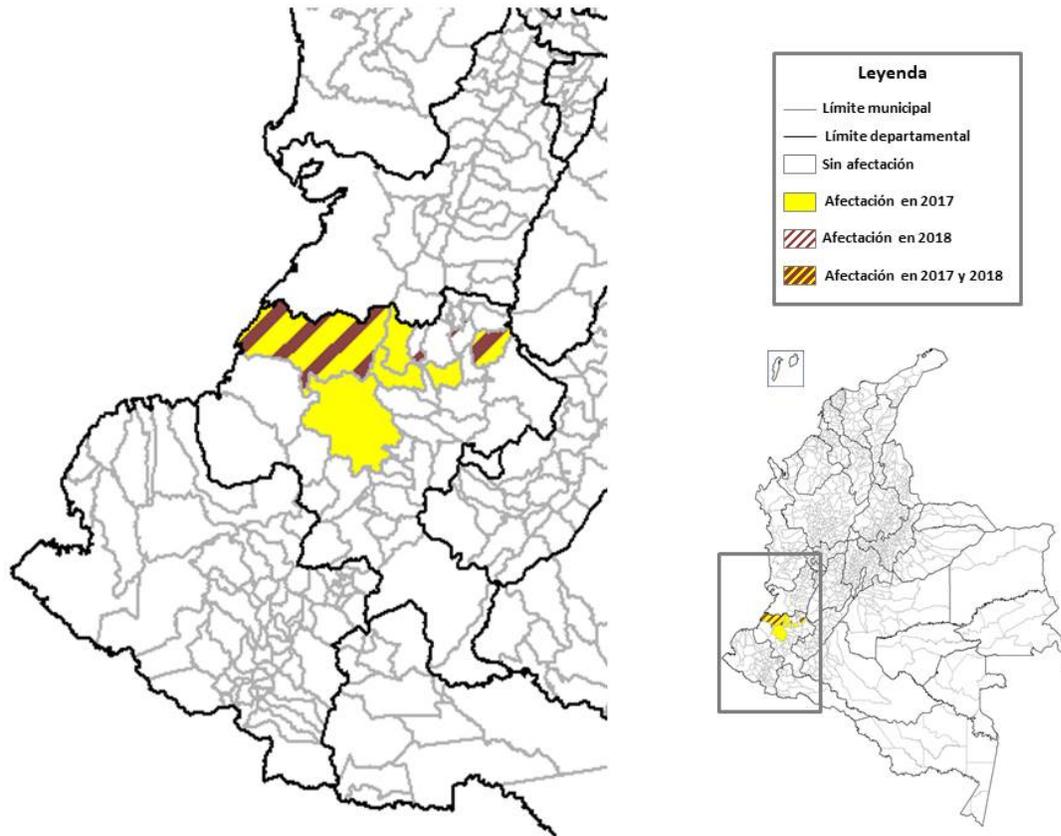
<sup>111</sup> Razon Publica, “Los disidentes de las FARC: ¿Cuántos son? ¿Cómo manejarlos?” [The dissidents of the FARC: How many are there? How to handle them?], June 26, 2017, in: <https://www.razonpublica.com/index.php/conflicto-drogas-y-paz-temas-30/10352-los-disidentes-de-las-farc-cu%C3%A1ntos-son-c%C3%B3mo-manejarlos.html>

<sup>112</sup> El País, “Los siete grupos disidentes de las Farc que amenazan al Pacífico” [The seven dissident Farc groups that threaten the Pacific], October 22, 2017, in: <https://www.elpais.com.co/judicial/los-siete-grupos-disidentes-de-las-farc-que-amenazan-al-pacifico.html>

<sup>113</sup> La Silla Vacía, “Las disidencias que ponen en riesgo el cese en el Norte del Cauca” [The dissidences that put the cease fire at risk in the North of Cauca], October 4, 2017, in: <http://lasillavacia.com/silla-pacifico/las-disidencias-que-ponen-en-riesgo-el-cese-en-el-norte-del-cauca-62860>

organizations in Nariño. And with *Sábalo*, with whom they established an access route on the Patía River that connects the departments of Cauca and Nariño.

**Map 21. Municipalities affected by Los de Pija activity in 2017 and first semester 2018**



**Table 44. Municipalities affected by Los de Pija activity in 2017**

Department	Municipalities 2017
Cauca	Caldono, El Tambo, López de Micay, Morales, Suárez, Toribio

**Table 45. Municipalities affected by Los de Pija activity in first semester of 2018**

Department	Municipalities 2018
Cauca	Buenos Aires, Caloto, López de Micay, Toribio

## Los de Juvenal

This group is headed by Luis Palomino, aka *Juvenal*, who was a member of the FARC-EP guerrilla group in the El Naya region, on the border between Cauca and the department of Valle. From 2001 to 2016 he was the commander of the Mobile Column Miller Perdomo, and later, after entering the peace process and settling around the area of Caldon in Cauca, he decided to leave and form his own group with former members of the Mobile Column Miller Perdomo and the Front 30. Currently they have an approximately 25 members<sup>114</sup>.

Their activities include: collection of extortion payments, kidnappings and management of illegal crops, as well as maintaining illegal trafficking routes in Suarez, Morales, Corinto, Toribío and Buenos Aires (Corregimiento de Timba), the latter municipality being the group's main area of operations because of its connection with El Naya canyon, where they have one of their main routes to transport drugs abroad. Mexican cartels have also appeared in the region in order to control the narcotics supply chain<sup>115</sup>, and this group is fighting them for control of the area.

Skirmishes were reported with *Los de Pija* and the Andrey Peñaranda Front of the EPL for the control of the municipality of Suárez. They have alliances with alias *El Enano* and *El Burro*, commanders of a group that operates in the municipality of Jamundí, Valle.

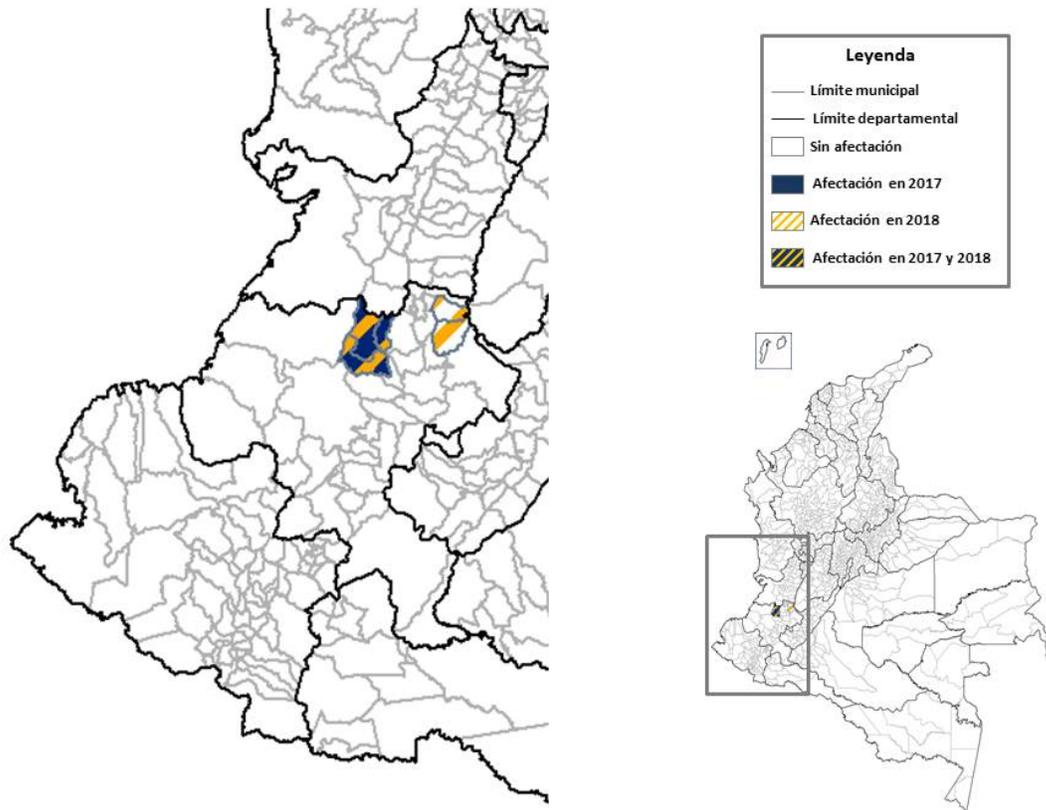
### **Map 22. Municipalities affected by Los de Juvenal activity in 2017 and in the first semester of 2018**

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<sup>114</sup> El Colombiano, "El mapa de las disidencias de las Farc" [The Map of Farc Dissidences], April 17, 2018, in:

<http://www.elcolombiano.com/colombia/paz-y-derechos-humanos/el-mapa-de-las-disidencias-de-las-farc-GG8558833> and La Silla Vacía, "Estas son las disidencias que recibe Duque en el Pacífico" [These are the dissidences that Duque receives in the Pacific], July 3, 2018, in: <https://lasillavacia.com/silla-pacifico/estas-son-las-disidencias-que-recibe-duque-en-el-pacifico-66830>

<sup>115</sup> Semana Rural, "El miedo no se ha ido de El Naya: entre disidencias de las Farc y Bacrim" [Fear has not left El Naya: between dissidents of the FARC and Bacrim], July 19, 2018, in: <https://semanarural.com/web/articulo/el-naya-violencia-en-valle-del-cauca/583>



**Table 46. Municipalities affected by Los de Juvenal activity in 2017**

Department	Municipalities 2017
Cauca	Buenos Aires, Morales, Suárez

**Table 47. Municipalities affected by Los de Juvenal activity in the first semester of 2018**

Department	Municipalities 2018
Cauca	Buenos Aires, Corinto, Morales, Suárez, Toribio

## 7.2.2. Rearmed for Illegal Businesses

### **Homeland Great People's Army / Joint Western Command New Sixth Front (*Patria Grande Ejército del Pueblo / Comando Conjunto Occidental Nuevo Sexto Frente*)**

This group was created by former members of the Sixth Front of the FARC-EP and was led by Samuel Javier Yotengo Yafue, alias *Mordisco*, *Jair* or *El Paisa*, who left the Normalization Transitional Point of Monte Redondo, located in rural areas of the municipalities of Corinto and Miranda. *Mordisco* was captured in May 2018 in Bolívar, department of Cauca, leaving the command to alias *Majin Boo*, who has escalated the violence in the area, according to the local residents.

Different sources estimate that they may have between 15<sup>116</sup> and 200<sup>117</sup> armed members, a range in numbers that does not make much sense. Reports have them located in the municipalities of Miranda, Corinto, Toribío, Caloto, Buenos Aires, Caldono and Morales.

Their activities include taxes on coca-based paste (collected based on weight), illegal mining, kidnapping, drug trafficking, threats through circulated pamphlets, restriction on local movements of the population, illegal roadblocks and harassment of law enforcement. The control over the Cauca, Palo and Quilichao rivers are key in their operations.

In a few occasions, in confrontations with law enforcement, the group has used the name of the ELN. However, in statements to the media, the Office of the Prosecutor has confirmed the existence of an alliance between the two groups, specifically with the Milton Hernández Ortiz Company of the Manuel Vásquez Castaño Front<sup>118</sup>.

The Joint Western Command New Sixth Front was accused of the death of three policemen in Miranda, Cauca, in 2017, as well as the attack on an army post in Caldono, in March 2018. In addition, they are extorting members of the PCP Consortium (road construction) who are building a road between Inzá (Cauca) and La Plata (Huila)<sup>119</sup>.

This year, through a video, they declared themselves to be a dissident group of the Sixth Front, in disagreement with the peace process, and specifically with the State's failure to comply with

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<sup>116</sup> La Silla Vacía, "Estas son las disidencias que recibe Duque en el Pacífico" [These are the dissidences that Duque receives in the Pacific], July 3, 2018, in: <https://lasillavacia.com/silla-pacifico/estas-son-las-disidencias-que-recibe-duque-en-el-pacifico-66830>

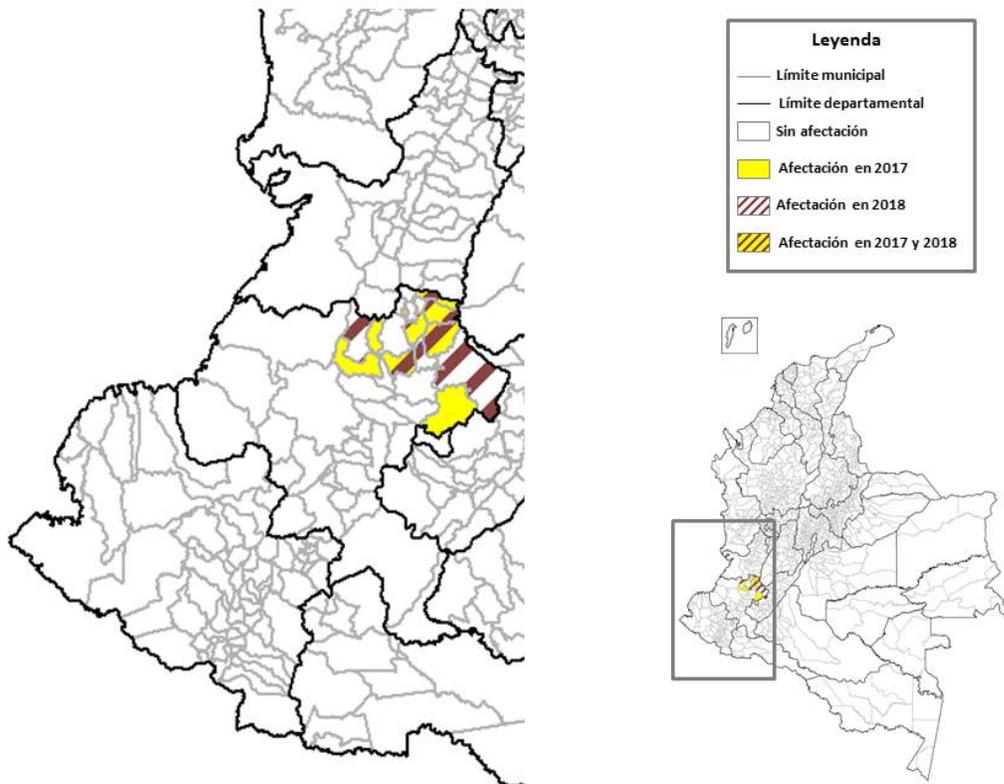
<sup>117</sup> La Voz del río Arauca, "Disidentes de las Farc habrían conformado nueva agrupación, denuncian autoridades en Cauca" [Dissidents of the FARC may have formed a new group, claim authorities in Cauca], June 20, 2017, in: <http://lavozdelrioarauca.com/2017/06/disidentes-las-farc-habrian-conformado-nueva-agrupacion-denuncian-autoridades-cauca/>

<sup>118</sup> La Silla Vacía, "Las disidencias que ponen en riesgo el cese en el Norte del Cauca" [The dissidences that put the cease fire at risk in the North of Cauca], October 4, 2017, in: <http://lasillavacia.com/silla-pacifico/las-disidencias-que-ponen-en-riesgo-el-cese-en-el-norte-del-cauca-62860>

<sup>119</sup> Proclama del Cauca, "Alias Mordisco habría secuestrado a ingeniero en el Cauca" [Alias *Mordisco* may have kidnapped an engineer in Cauca], May 10, 2018, in: <https://www.proclamadelcauca.com/alias-mordisco-habria-secuestrado-a-in-geniero-en-el-cauca/>

the reincorporation program, the release of political prisoners, the restitution of land, and the protection of community leaders.

**Map 23. Municipalities affected by activity of the Joint Western Command New Sixth Front in 2017 and first semester 2018**



**Table 48. Municipalities affected by activity of the Joint Western Command New Sixth Front in 2017**

Department	Municipalities 2017
Cauca	Buenos Aíres, Caldono, Caloto, Corinto, Inzá, Miranda, Morales, Toribio

**Table 49. Municipalities affected by activity of the Joint Western Command New Sixth Front in the first semester of 2018**

Department	Municipalities 2018
Cauca	Caldono, Caloto, Corinto, Jambaló, Miranda, Páez, Suárez, Toribio

### **United Force of the Pacific Front - FARC-EP (Frente Fuerza Unida del Pacifico - FUP)**

This group came to light through a video released in June of 2018: “[...]Today we present ourselves as an active front of the FARC-EP, we are not drug traffickers, [...] nor are we a residual organization. We are an organization that follows the principles and ideals of comrade Manuel Marulanda Vélez [...], that is why today we invite all other active fronts to continue our guerrilla struggle [...]. We invite community organizations to join our efforts in the search for a more dignified Colombia [...]. We respect the norms and laws of the indigenous councils, peasant organizations, community councils, Afro-Colombian self-defense groups (*guardias cimarronas*), and community action boards, likewise we are against the paramilitaries, the criminal gangs and the massive corruption of the State[...].”<sup>120</sup>.

The group is constituted by former members of the Front 30 of the Farc, divided into three Fronts commanded by Julián Martínez, alias *Chumbi*. The figures reported by the media indicate a force of between 20<sup>121</sup> and 400<sup>122</sup> fighters, who operate in the El Naya region, between the municipalities of Buenaventura (Valle) and López de Micay (Cauca), connecting to the Pacific.

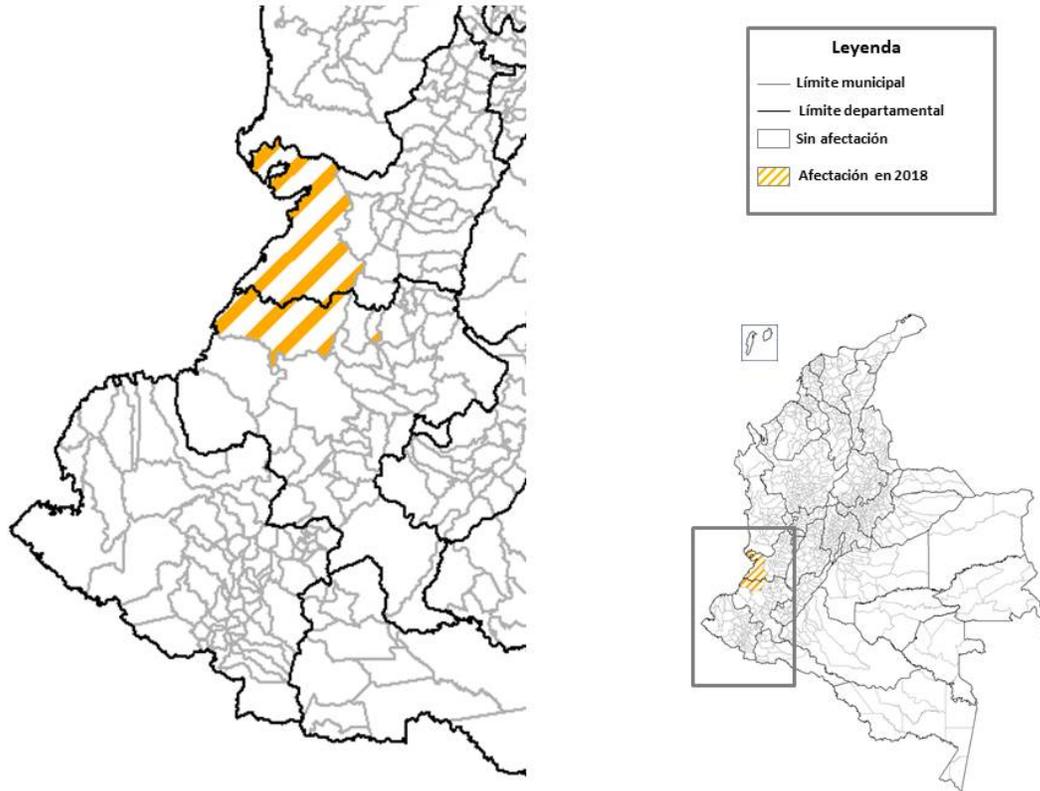
Their actions focus on illegal mining, given that the region has a large concentration of gold, as well as on becoming a strategic point for allowing large areas of illicit crops and the transportation of drugs into and out of the country via the Naya River. They are also accused of committing forced displacements, threats, disappearances, assassinations and the recruitment of minors. They are attributed with the disappearance and subsequent death of four community leaders of El Naya, which caused the displacement of more than 150 people to the urban area of Buenaventura.

<sup>120</sup> Pacifico informa, “Nace nueva organización guerrillera en el Naya ‘Fuerza Unida del Pacifico’” [New guerrilla organization is born in the Naya ‘United Force of the Pacific’], May 29, 2018, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?V=0cpcQLSp7SM>

<sup>121</sup> La Silla Vacía, “Estas son las disidencias que recibe Duque en el Pacífico” [These are the dissidences that Duque receives in the Pacific], July 3, 2018, in: <https://lasillavacia.com/silla-pacifico/estas-son-las-disidencias-que-recibe-duque-en-el-pacifico-66830>

<sup>122</sup> Pacifista, “La ola de violencia en el Pacífico que el Mundial y las elecciones eclipsaron” [Wave of violence in the Pacific overshadowed by the World Cup and the elections], June 25, 2018, in: <http://pacifista.co/la-ola-de-violencia-en-el-pacifico-que-el-mundial-y-las-elecciones-eclipsaron/>

**Map 24. Municipalities affected by FUP activity in the first semester of 2018**



**Table 50. Municipalities affected by FUP activity in the first semester of 2018**

Department	Municipalities 2018
Cauca	Buenos Aires, López de Micay
Valle del Cauca	Buenaventura

**Special Anti-paramilitaries Command Front 36 (*Comando Especial Antiparamilitarismo Frent 36*) / Los De Carnitas and Los De Cabuyo**

This group was formed by an alliance between the groups led by Ramiro Antonio Nieblas, alias *Carnitas*, and Ricardo Abel Ayala Urrego, alias *Cabuyo*. The estimated membership under their command is reported in an uncertain range of 15<sup>123</sup> to 285<sup>124</sup> members. *Carnitas* is a former

<sup>123</sup> Noticias Caracol, "¿Dónde están y cuántos hombres tienen las disidencias de las FARC?" [Where are they and how many men have the dissidence of the FARC], March 12, 2018, in: <https://noticias.caracol.com/camino-a-la-paz/donde-están-y-cuántos-hombres-tienen-las-disidencias-de-las-farc>

member of Front 18 of the Farc, who defected during the process of pre-grouping of guerrilla members in 2016. *Cabuyo* or *Jefferson* was commander of Front 36 of the FARC and participated in the process of surrendering weapons in the area of La Plancha, in Anorí (Antioquia). Months later he left the area in order to reinstate the *Frente Cacique Coyará* of the Farc, who had been active previously in the northwestern part of the country.

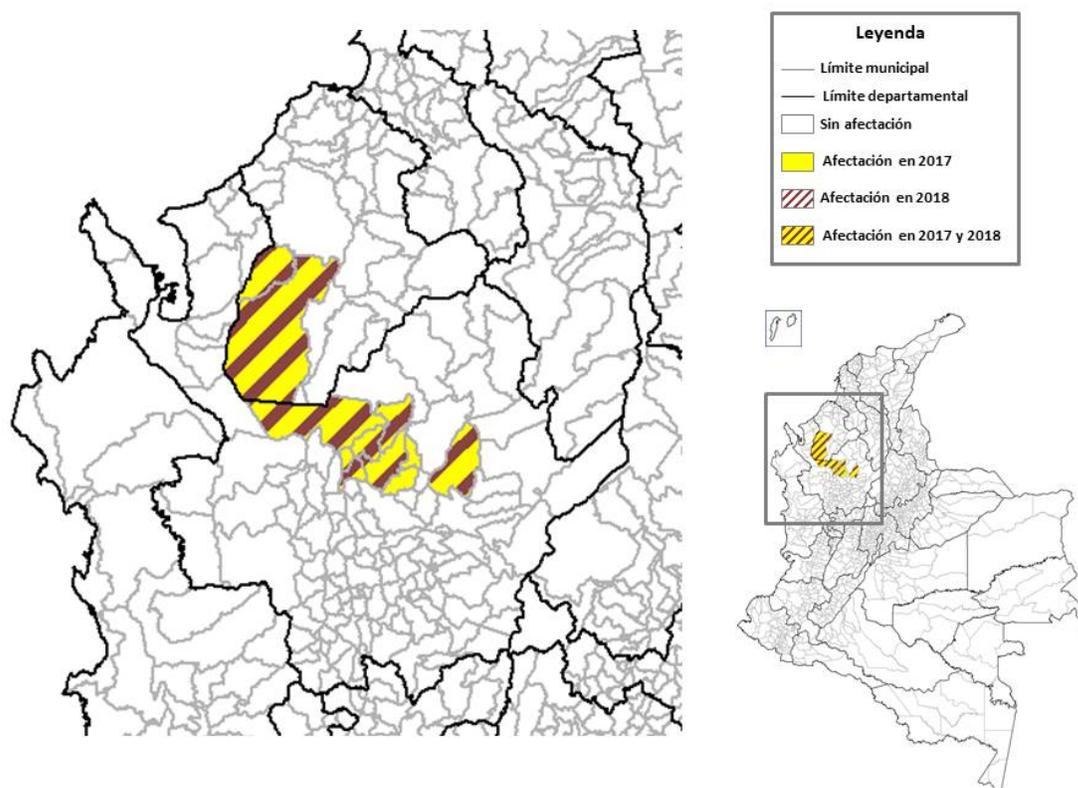
This group has former members of Fronts 5, 18 and 36 of the FARC-EP, and carry out operations in the municipalities of Amalfi, Angostura, Briceño, Campamento, Ituango and San Andrés de Cuerquia, Toledo, Yarumal and Valdivia in Antioquia, and in Tierralta and Valencia, Córdoba. In the Bajo Cauca region they are facing the Gulf Clan, in association with the ELN and *Los Caparrapos*.

Their actions revolve around tax collection for illicit crops, tolls for drug trafficking, percentage commissions for artisanal, informal and illegal mining, and extortion on other economic activities. They have resorted to the planting of antipersonnel (land) mines as a mechanism of territorial control, and they have carried out attacks against national infrastructure and infrastructure megaproject workers, such as Hidroituango, and other road consortiums. In addition, they have been responsible for attacks on community leaders and human rights advocates.

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<sup>124</sup> El Colombiano, “La amenaza de las disidencias” [The threat of the dissents], July 30, 2018, in: <https://www.pressreader.com/colombia/el-colombiano/20180730/281505047023325>

**Map 25. Municipalities affected by activity by the Special Anti-Paramilitaries Command Front 36 in 2017 and first semester 2018**



**Table 51. Municipalities affected by Special Anti-Paramilitaries Command Front 36 in 2017**

Department	Municipalities 2017
Antioquia	Amalfi, Angostura, Briceño, Campamento, Ituango, San Andrés de Cuerquia, Toledo, Yarumal, Valdivia
Córdoba	Tierralta, Valencia

**Table 52. Municipalities affected by Special Anti-Paramilitaries Command Front 36 in first semester of 2018**

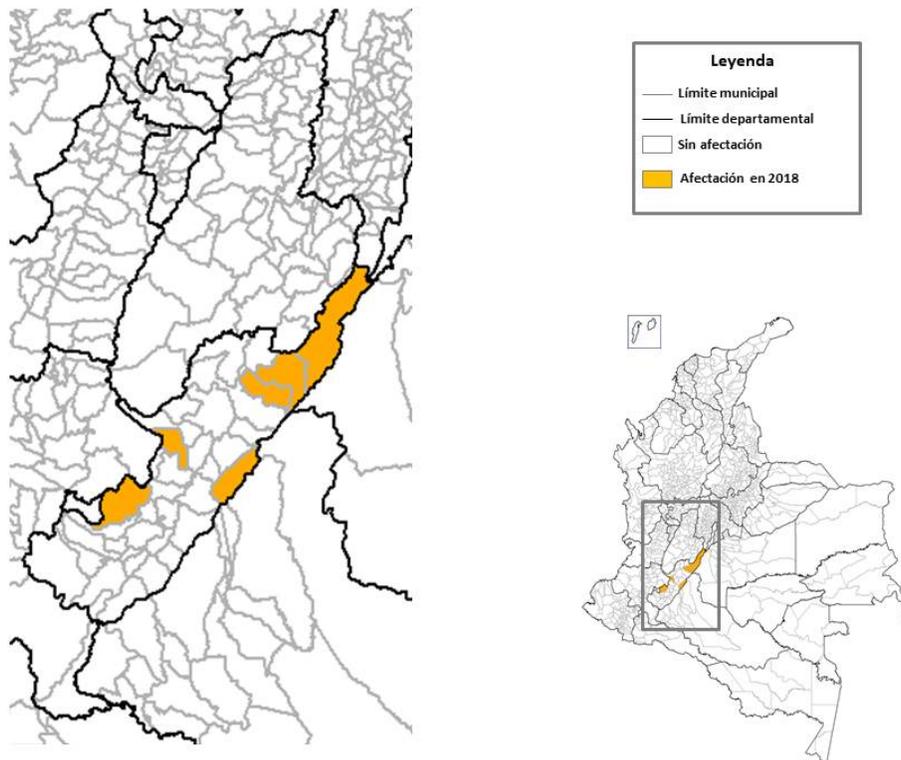
Department	Municipalities 2018
Antioquia	Amalfi, Briceño, Ituango, San Andrés de Cuerquia, Toledo, Yarumal, Valdivia
Córdoba	Tierralta, Valencia

**National Guerrilla Resistance People's Army / Rearmed Front 17 of the FARC  
(Resistencia Guerrillera Nacional Ejército del Pueblo / Rearmados Frente 17 de las FARC)**

This dissident group was formed by José García Torres, alias *Benjamín*, who belonged to the 17th Front Angelino Godoy and was in a regroupment area in Caquetá, where he left with money and other men to create this group. Subsequently, former members of the 3rd Front were added.

The group carries out its activities in the rural areas of the municipalities of Neiva, La Plata, Colombia, Iquira, Tello, Baraya and Algeciras (Huila), where they claim they are organizing as a continuation of the FARC-EP. Included in their actions are threats to indigenous leaders, land expropriations, extortion and arms trafficking to Caquetá. This organization, which has an unknown number of members, has been increasing recruitment efforts and consolidating alliances to increase their strength. One of their contacts is Edgar Mesías Salgado Aragón, alias *Rodrigo Cadete*.

**Map 26. Municipalities affected by National Guerrilla Resistance People's Army activity in the first semester of 2018**



**Table 53. Municipalities affected by National Guerilla Resistance People’s Army in the first semester of 2018**

Department	Municipalities 2018
Huila	Algeciras, Baraya, Colombia, Iquira, La Plata, Tello

#### **48th Rearmed Front (*Rearmados Frente 48*)**

Members of the 48th Front were reported in the municipalities of Puerto Guzmán, Puerto Asís, Puerto Caicedo and San Miguel (Putumayo), and in areas of the Ecuadorian Amazon<sup>125</sup>. However, it was not possible to determine if they act as a unit, or are divided into two different groups, one under the command of alias *Wilder* or *Darwin*, and the other under alias *Sinaloa*. Their actions are centered around the drug trafficking business, illegal mining and extortion, activities that are carried out in coordination with the *La Constru* group.

*Darwin* leads a group of around fifteen<sup>126</sup> men, including some former members of the Teófilo Forero Mobile Column. Their activity is not related to political ideology, and they offer logistic support to drug trafficking groups.

Pedro Oberman Goyes Cortés, *Sinaloa*, is focused on the drug trafficking business; he is even known as the 'new czar' of cocaine in Putumayo. The Balkan Cartel of Eastern Europe is their main buyer<sup>127</sup>. This group is against *Rodrigo Cadete* and *Gentil Duarte* of the Seventh Front, refusing to be part of an alliance with dissidents and rearmed groups, and refusing to pay a percentage of the proceeds from their drug trafficking activities. This dispute is evident in some areas of Putumayo with reports of bodies floating in different rivers of the department<sup>128</sup>.

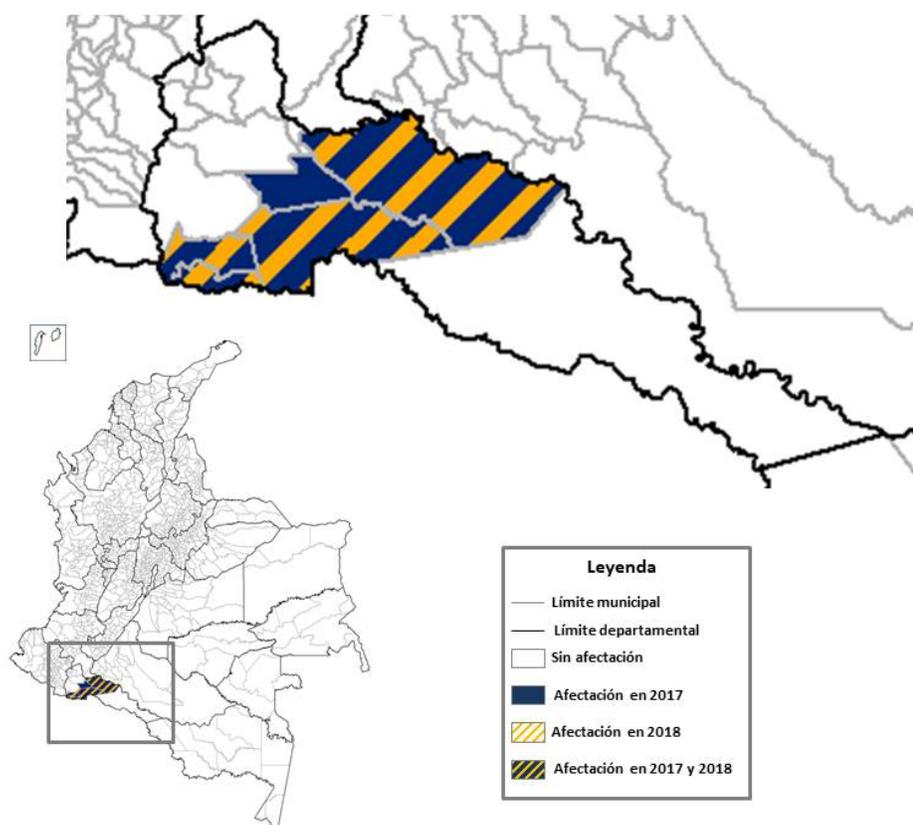
<sup>125</sup> La Opinión, “Ejército Ecuador localiza campamento de disidentes de las Farc” [Ecuador Army locates camp of dissidents of the Farc], March 27, 2018, in: <https://www.laopinion.com.co/colombia/ejercito-ecuador-localiza-campamento-de-disidentes-de-las-farc-151681#OP>

<sup>126</sup> El Espectador 2020, “Pie de fuerza aproximado de las disidencias de las Farc en Colombia” [Approximate strength of the FARC’s dissents in Colombia], April 15, 2018, in: <https://colombia2020.elespectador.com/territorio/pie-de-fuerza-aproximado-de-las-disidencias-de-las-farc-en-colombia>

<sup>127</sup> El Tiempo, “Disidente de Farc es ahora ficha de temido cartel de ‘los Balcanes’” [Farc dissent is now a member of the feared ‘los Balcanes’ cartel], August 20, 2018, in: <https://www.eltiempo.com/justicia/conflicto-y-narcotrafico/disidente-de-farc-es-ahora-ficha-de-temido-cartel-de-los-balcanes-258074>

<sup>128</sup> Ibid.

**Map 26. Municipalities affected by 48th Rearmed Front activity in 2017 and first semester 2018**



**Table 54. Municipalities affected by 48th Rearmed Front activity in 2017.**

Department	Municipalities 2017
Putumayo	Puerto Asís, Puerto Guzmán, Puerto Caicedo, San Miguel, Valle del Gumuez

**Table 55. Municipalities affected by 48th Rearmed Front activity first semester of 2018.**

Department	Municipalities 2018
Putumayo	Puerto Asís, Puerto Guzmán, San Miguel, Valle del Gumuez

### **33rd Rearmed Front (*Rearmados Frente 33*)**

This dissidence is located in Norte de Santander, mainly in the region of Catatumbo, and is constituted by former members of the Front 33 of the FARC-EP that were not part of the

demobilization, along with other individuals that left the Caño Indio area, in Tibú (Norte de Santander). A member of this group is John Velazco, alias *Jhon Milicias* or *John Catatumbo*, who exercises control from Venezuela, where he also has several training centers, along with alias *La Patrullera*, alias *El Chulo* and alias *Villa*<sup>129</sup>, all former leaders of the Front, and who represent the current main command structure. *Villa* joined in January 2018, the time when the dissidence began to form, and he is in command of the Antonio Santos Front, which controls areas of El Tarra to the border of the department of Cesar.

The number of fighters in the group is uncertain, as shown by the wide margin given by the different estimates, between 60<sup>130</sup> and 300<sup>131</sup>. Their actions are concentrated in the Catatumbo region, with a presence in the border areas with Venezuela, and the department of Cesar. They have confrontations with the EPL-Pelusos and the ELN, specifically in the area of Río de Oro, in Tibú, where their coca plantations are located, which create disputes that are also related to money collection from illegal mining and the chain of production / distribution of drugs, mainly supplying the Sinaloa Cartel.

The group's rapid growth and consolidation is due to the support received from *Gentil Duarte* and alias *John 40*, who were leaders of the Seventh and First fronts. The group's appearance has been accompanied by threats via leaflets and the appearance of graffiti in city halls and vehicles. There have been cases of seizure of farms owned by former commanders of the FARC-EP.

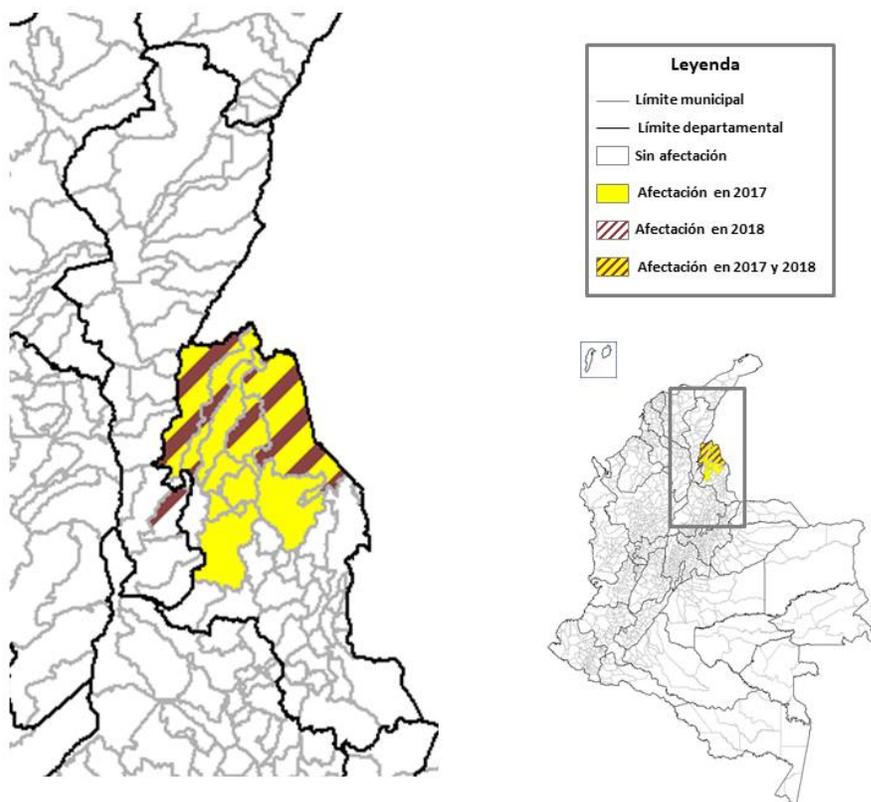
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<sup>129</sup> La Opinión, "'Jhon Milicias', el hombre que lidera la disidencia de las Farc en el Catatumbo" ['Jhon Milicias', the man who leads the Farc dissidences in Catatumbo], September 2, 2018, in: <https://www.laopinion.com.co/judicial/jhon-milicias-el-hombre-que-lidera-la-disidencia-de-las-farc-en-el-catatumbo-161389#OP>

<sup>130</sup> Verdad Abierta, "El sombrío panorama en la región del Catatumbo" [The bleak outlook in the Catatumbo region], August 2, 2018, <https://verdadabierta.com/sombrio-panorama-la-region-del-catatumbo/>

<sup>131</sup> La Opinión, "'Jhon Milicias', el hombre que lidera la disidencia de las Farc en el Catatumbo" ['Jhon Milicias', the man who leads the Farc dissidences in Catatumbo], September 2, 2018, in: <https://www.laopinion.com.co/judicial/jhon-milicias-el-hombre-que-lidera-la-disidencia-de-las-farc-en-el-catatumbo-161389#OP>

**Map 27. Municipalities affected by the 33rd Rearmed Front in 2017 and first semester 2018**



**Table 56. Municipalities affected by the 33rd Rearmed Front in 2017**

Department	Municipalities 2017
Norte de Santander	Ábrego, Convención, El Carmen, El Tarra, Hacarí, La Playa, San Calixto, Sardinata, Teorama, Tibú

**Table 57. Municipalities affected by the 33rd Rearmed Front in first semester of 2018**

Department	Municipalities 2018
Norte de Santander	Convención, El Carmen, El Tarra, Tibú
Cesar	Río de Oro

## Other emerging organizations in process of verification

There are indications of the presence of other emerging organizations originating in the FARC-EP. However, this information has not been corroborated in its entirety or is incomplete.

In Cauca there are reports of the existence of *Heroes del Pacífico* and *Defensores del Pacífico*<sup>132</sup>. It was not possible to confirm whether they are the same group or if these are different names of the same groups already described operating on the Pacific coast of the department.

There is also information about an alias *El Indio*, of whom two different versions are reported: He created a group and acts jointly with the ELN or he joined as a member of this guerrilla group. *El Indio* is accused of the massacre that occurred on July 3 of 2018 in the village of San Juan de Mechengue, jurisdiction of El Tambo, and subsequently leaving the bodies on a road in the municipality of Algeria. In this incident, Jefferson Leandro Sánchez, aka *Andrés Sánchez* or *Carro Loco*, and Ever Alfaris Gómez, alias *Crespo*, were killed along with five other people. It is presumed that the reason for these murders was a dispute over the control of areas of illicit crops and drug trafficking<sup>133</sup>.

Alias *Andrés* or *Carro Loco*<sup>134</sup> and alias *El Crespo*<sup>135</sup> managed an organization of around fifteen<sup>136</sup> people dedicated to controlling illicit crops, arms and drug trafficking. There is no information to determine what happened to this organization after the assassination of its leaders.

In the north of Cauca and in Jamundí (Valle), there is a group comprised of dozens of members, that some media sources estimate at about 120 armed men<sup>137</sup> dedicated to extortion, kidnapping, forced curfews, control of illicit crops, tax collection of coca production (*cobro de gramaje*), and drug trafficking. There is not much information about this group, but two hypotheses are presented. On the one hand, they could be part of two organizations: the Andrey Peñaranda Front of the EPL<sup>138</sup>, once commanded by alias *El Negro Simón*<sup>139</sup>, who was

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<sup>132</sup> This group is made up of around 50 men. El Espectador 2020, “La guerra civil por el Pacífico: del Naya al Mataje” [The civil war for the Pacific: from Naya to Mataje], September 6, 2018, in:

<https://colombia2020.elespectador.com/territorio/la-guerra-civil-por-el-pacifico-del-naya-al-mataje>

<sup>133</sup> Es contundente la participación del ELN: Policía frente a masacre en Argelia, Cauca” [The participation of the ELN is definite: Police on the massacre in Algeria, Cauca], July 4, 2018, in: <https://www.elpais.com.co/judicial/es-contundente-la-participacion-del-eln-policia-frente-a-masacre-en-argelia-cauca.html>

<sup>134</sup> He left the pre-peace agreement concentration zone in Policarpa, Nariño. He belonged to the Eighth Front of the FARC-EP.

<sup>135</sup> He belonged to the mobile column Jacobo Arenas. In the peace process he was trained as a body guard for the FARC-EP party. Later he left the program and joined the group of alias *Andrés*.

<sup>136</sup> La Silla Vacía, “Estas son las disidencias que recibe Duque en el Pacífico” [These are the dissidences that Duque receives in the Pacific], July 3, 2018, in: <https://lasillavacia.com/silla-pacifico/estas-son-las-disidencias-que-recibe-duque-en-el-pacifico-66830>

<sup>137</sup> El País, “Disidentes de las Farc estarían detrás de inseguridad y terror en Jamundí” [Farc dissidents may be behind insecurity and terror in Jamundí], October 15, 2017, in: <https://www.elpais.com.co/judicial/disidentes-de-las-farc-estarian-detras-de-inseguridad-y-terror-en-jamundi.html>

<sup>138</sup> It is not certain that this Front is part of the organizational structure of the People's Liberation Army-EPL

<sup>139</sup> He may have parted from the FARC-EP guerrilla to form his own armed group. He was murdered in 2017 in the vicinity of Cerro Tijeras, located in the municipality of Suárez.

murdered, and now led by alias *Fabio*; or they could be a group under the command of alias *El Enano* and *El Burro*<sup>140</sup>, who operate in coordination with a drug trafficker known by the alias of *El Paisa*<sup>141</sup>. And on the other, they could possibly constitute a single armed organization that is operating under different names. In addition to having a presence in Jamundí, activity has been reported in the municipalities of Suárez, Buenos Aires, Toribío, Caldono, Caloto, Corinto, Miranda, Jambaló and Santander de Quilichao (Cauca).

In the regions of Urabá and Bajo Cauca, north of Antioquia, small groups of between ten and twenty members have been identified, dedicated to activities related to the control of the area, extortion, and other activities related to drug trafficking. These groups were formed under the leadership of former middle-ranked members of the FARC-EP of the 18th and 36th Front, among them: *Diomedes, Aníbal, Saca, Ronald, Barbas, Pájaro, El Tiro, El Feo and Ferney*.

In the department of Bolívar, it was reported that former members of the FARC-EP 37th Front committed crimes in the Montes de María region. This complaint made by the Senator of the Democratic Center, Daniel Cabrales<sup>142</sup>, could not be verified.

Despite the control exercised by the organizations grouped under the Southeast Bloc in the regions of the Orinoquía and the Amazon, activity carried out by small groups originating from the old FARC-EP guerrillas has been reported. However, we cannot confirm their level of independence.

In the department of Arauca, activity from Fronts 10 and 45 has been reported, seemingly under a single command<sup>143</sup> and with the support of *Gentil Duarte*, who apparently is looking to consolidate his presence in the department. They are accused of attacks against ex-combatants of the FARC-EP who continue to participate in the process of reintegration. Also, in this department, and extending to Vichada and Casanare, there are reports of rearmed members of the 16th Front, under the command of alias *Giovanny Chuspas*, who coordinate operations with the Southeast Bloc in the Colombian-Venezuelan border region. In Casanare and Boyacá, former members of the 28th Front are reportedly reorganizing.

In Caquetá, there are reports of activities of rearmed Fronts 3, 15 and 14. Of the first two, there is no evidence of continuous activity or information about their organizations; Front 15<sup>144</sup> would

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<sup>140</sup> Former members of the Manuel Cepeda Vargas urban Front and the Sixth Front of the FARC-EP.

<sup>141</sup> Minor drug trafficker from the department of Valle, operating in the area known as Villa Colombia in the municipality of Jamundí.

<sup>142</sup> El Heraldo, "Disidentes de las FARC-EP siguen manejando 40 mil hectáreas de coca: CD" [Dissidents of the FARC-EP continue to manage 40,000 hectares of coca: CD], January 2, 2017, in:

<https://www.elheraldo.co/colombia/disidentes-de-las-farc-siguen-manejando-40-mil-hectareas-de-coca-cd-316106>

<sup>143</sup> This group is made up of about 25 men. El Espectador2020, "Pie de fuerza aproximado de las disidencias de las Farc en Colombia" [Approximate strength of the FARC's dissidence in Colombia], April 15, 2018, in:

<https://colombia2020.elespectador.com/territorio/pie-de-fuerza-aproximado-de-las-disidencias-de-las-farc-en-colombia>

<sup>144</sup> The group's strength is at least 40 men. El Colombiano, "Disidencias de Farc forjan alianzas en el sur del país" [Farc dissidents forge alliances in the south of the country], April 6, 2018, see infographic in:

<http://www.elcolombiano.com/colombia/disidencias-de-farc-forjan-alianzas-en-el-sur-del-pais-GD8500181>

be under the orders of alias *Jairo 1*<sup>145</sup> and has a presence in the border area with Cauca. The 14th Front, headed by alias *Colacho*, would have between 35<sup>146</sup> and 60<sup>147</sup> members. He is accused of an attack in 2017 on groups of FARC-EP members in the process of disarmament and for the setup of illegal checkpoints in the department.

In the department of Meta, we find rearmed combatants originating in Fronts 40 and 62. The 40th, commanded by Alexander Diaz Mendoza alias *Calarcá*, working in conjunction with the Southeast Bloc, has between 39<sup>148</sup> and 60<sup>149</sup> members. They mainly exercise control over coca crops in the municipalities of La Uribe and Mesetas, and they have a non-aggression pact with the *Los Puntilleros*. They have carried out multiple attacks against law enforcement.

The 62nd Front, also known as *Los Chichelimpios*<sup>150</sup>, are reportedly also under the command of *Rodrigo Cadete*, leader of the Seventh Front. Their presence extends to the departments of Caquetá and Guaviare.

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<sup>145</sup> Captured in October 2018. El Espectador, “Detienen a ‘Jairo 1’, líder de una disidencia de las Farc en el sur del país” [‘Jairo 1’ is captured, leader of a FARC dissident movement in the south of the country], October 15, 2018, in: <https://www.elespectador.com/noticias/judicial/detienen-jairo-1-lider-de-una-disidencia-de-las-farc-en-el-sur-del-pais-articulo-818112>

<sup>146</sup> El Espectador 2020, “Pie de fuerza aproximado de las disidencias de las Farc en Colombia” [Approximate strength of the FARC’s dissents in Colombia], April 15, 2018, in: <https://colombia2020.elespectador.com/territorio/pie-de-fuerza-aproximado-de-las-disidencias-de-las-farc-en-colombia>

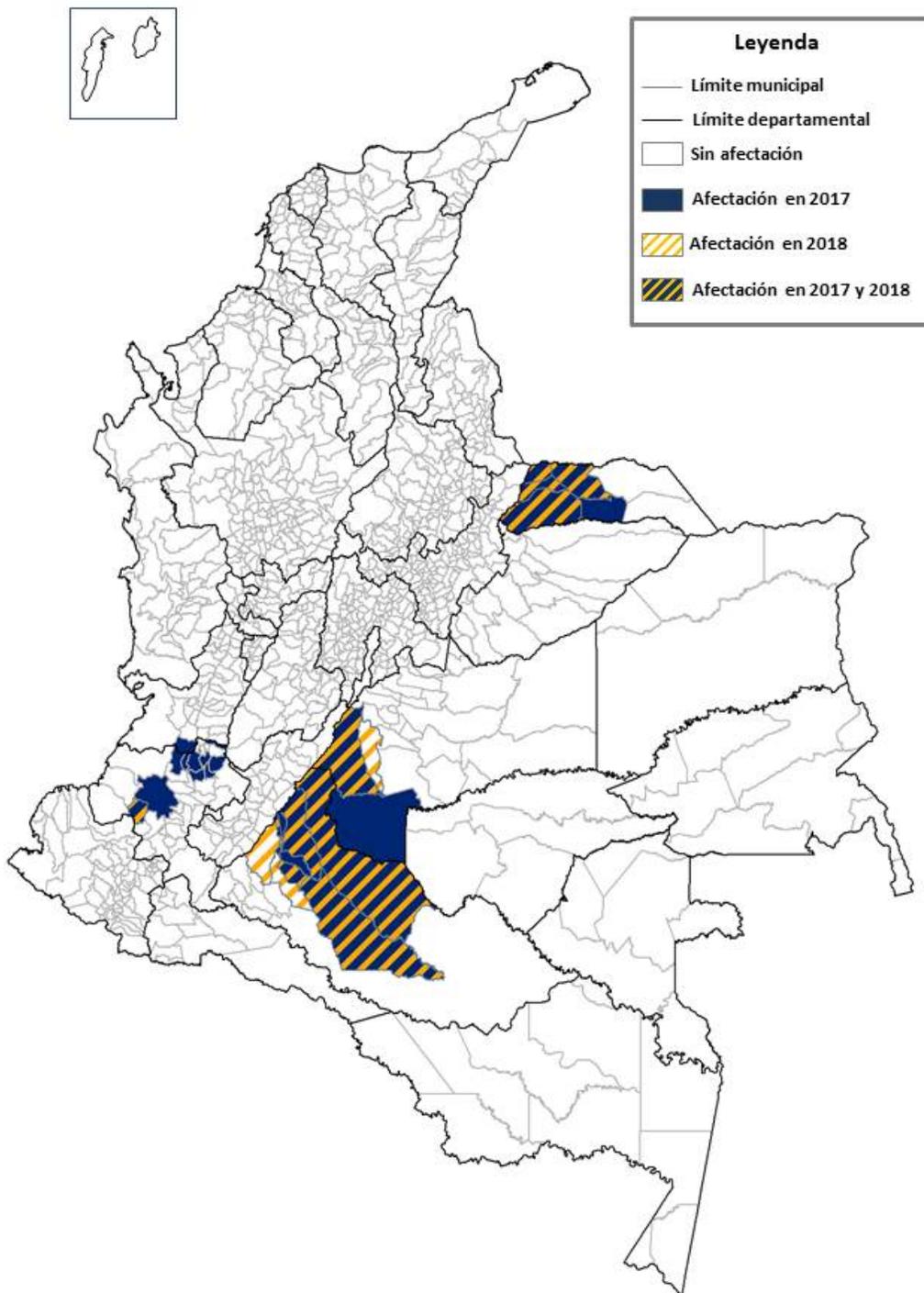
<sup>147</sup> Noticias Caracol, “¿Dónde están y cuántos hombres tienen las disidencias de las FARC?” [Where are they and how many men have the dissidence of the FARC], March 12, 2018, in: <https://noticias.caracoltv.com/camino-a-la-paz/donde-estan-y-cuantos-hombres-tienen-las-disidencias-de-las-farc>

<sup>148</sup> Noticias Caracol, “En estado crítico uno de los seis policías heridos en atentado atribuido a disidencias de las FARC” [In critical condition one of the six police officers injured in an attack attributed to FARC dissidents], January 18, 2018, in: <https://noticias.caracoltv.com/colombia/en-estado-critico-uno-de-los-seis-policias-heridos-en-atentado-atribuido-disidencias-de-las-farc>

<sup>149</sup> El Espectador 2020, “Pie de fuerza aproximado de las disidencias de las Farc en Colombia” [Approximate strength of the FARC’s dissents in Colombia], April 15, 2018, in: <https://colombia2020.elespectador.com/territorio/pie-de-fuerza-aproximado-de-las-disidencias-de-las-farc-en-colombia>

<sup>150</sup> La Nación, “Capturan a ‘los Chiche-limpios’ en Caquetá” [‘Chiche-limpios’ captured in Caquetá], August 6, 2018, in: <https://www.lanacion.com.co/2018/08/06/capturan-a-los-chiche-limpios-en-caqueta/>

**Map 26. Municipalities affected by potential other rearmed groups 2017 and first semester of 2018.**



**Table 58. Municipalities affected by potential other rearmed groups 2017**

Group	Department	Municipalities 2017
<i>Defensores del Pacífico</i>	Cauca	Argelia, El Tambo
<i>Los de Andrés o Carro Loco y El Crespo</i>	Cauca	Argelia, Buenos Aires, Caldone, Caloto, Jambaló, Miranda, Santander de Quilichao, Suárez, Toribio
	Valle del Cauca	Jamundí
<i>Rearmados Frente 10</i>	Arauca	Arauquita, Fortul, Puerto Rondón, Saravena, Tame,
<i>Rearmados Frente 14</i>	Caquetá	Cartagena del Chairá, El Doncello, El Paujil, Puerto Rico, San Vicente del Caguán
<i>Rearmados Frente 40</i>	Meta	La Macarena, La Uribe
<i>Rearmados Frente 62</i>	Caquetá	Cartagena del Chairá, Puerto Rico

**Table 59. Municipalities affected by potential other rearmed groups first semester of 2018**

Group	Department	Municipalities 2018
<i>Defensores del Pacífico</i>	Cauca	<i>Affected municipalities are in process of confirmation</i>
<i>Los de Andrés o Carro Loco y El Crespo</i>	Cauca	Argelia
	Valle del Cauca	<i>Affected municipalities are in process of confirmation</i>
<i>Rearmados Frente 10</i>	Arauca	Arauquita, Fortul, Saravena, Tame,
<i>Rearmados Frente 14</i>	Caquetá	Cartagena del Chairá, El Paujil, Puerto Rico, San Vicente del Caguán
<i>Rearmados Frente 15</i>	Caquetá	Montañita, San Vicente del Caguán
<i>Rearmados Frente 40</i>	Meta	La Uribe, Mesetas
<i>Rearmados Frente 62</i>	Caquetá	Cartagena del Chairá, Florencia, San Vicente del Caguán

### **7.3. National Liberation Army (Ejército De Liberación Nacional - ELN)**

The first of August 2018 ended the sixth cycle of talks between the national government and the ELN guerrillas, just before the beginning of the new Duque administration. The first of the warnings for the two parties, if they plan to continue in the negotiations, is that they are facing a new stage of escalation in the conflict, as a result of the reorganization of forces that have not yet completed their realignment. As far as the ELN is concerned, this guerrilla group has been restructuring its territorial control in the post-agreement phase with the FARC-EP. Indeed, a review of ELN actions in the first semester of this year showed activities in 136 municipalities,

23 less than in 2017, with a force between 1,500 and 2,000 members, with a greater concentration of presence in the Pacific region, and in the Catatumbo region. They are responsible for 21 acts of kidnapping, of which ten people continue to be hostages, and acts of sabotage against the Caño Limón-Coveñas pipeline on 63 occasions, thirteen times more than last year, and nine against the Trans-Andean pipeline. Today, the departments of Arauca, Chocó, Norte de Santander, Cauca and Nariño are the areas that have been most affected by the group's activities and expansion, with an additional warning that ELN militiamen may be arriving on the Atlantic coast<sup>151</sup>.

Under these circumstances, the new Duque Government has committed to review the peace process, as well as the guidelines followed by the prior administration, and has sent a direct message: the talks will only continue if the ELN suspends its "criminal" activities, including kidnapping<sup>152</sup>. This message is echoed to a certain extent by some peace makers, who argue that the ELN actions are not a good message for the country, but, on the other hand, that the government's demands for a unilateral ceasefire and cessation of hostilities, as a pre-condition to resume negotiations, are counterproductive and negate some of the advancements in the peace talks.

This current situation could become more serious than it already is. If in prior occasions bringing the ELN to the table was viewed as a secondary goal in the overall process of conflict resolution, this was because the primary player was the powerful FARC-EP. However, they are *no longer* a factor.

With certainty, what we are witnessing today is a continuation of the realignment of organized forces, which in certain regions of the country is not yet clear, making it is hard to identify who are the groups with real power, and what is the relationship between politics and armed engagement in the post-conflict era. However, tracking some of these developments can offer a few clarifications.

Regarding the ELN, there has been a re-emergence in some of their traditional areas of influence, such as Arauca and the adjoining regions with Boyacá, Casanare and Santander, regions with a different outcome for the group than the situation that has occurred in Norte de Santander, in the Catatumbo area. There, the ELN has found the EPL-Los Pelusos, the Gaitanista Self-defenses (AGC), some strongholds of *Los Rastrojos*, along with other forces from Venezuela. This has resulted in tensions that have led to a humanitarian crisis, caused by the struggle to control the coca business. In some instances, such as in the south of Bolívar and Cesar, there was an orderly transition without any armed conflict, because, according to local sources, they simply took over the illegal sources of income they previously shared with the

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<sup>151</sup> It is worth remembering the attack on a police station (CAI) in February, in the municipality of Soledad, Atlántico. See La FM, "Frente urbano del ELN asume autoría de atentados en Barranquilla" [ELN urban front assumes responsibility for attacks in Barranquilla], January 28, 2018, in: <https://www.lafm.com.co/judicial/frente-urbano-del-eln-assume-autoria-de-atentados-en-barranquilla-autoridades-investigacion-su-veracidad>

<sup>152</sup> El Espectador, "Duque dice que mantiene voluntad de diálogo con la guerrilla del ELN" [Duque says he is willing to maintain a dialogue with the ELN guerrillas], September 22, 2018, in: <https://www.elespectador.com/noticias/politica/duque-dice-que-mantiene-voluntad-de-dialogo-con-la-guerrilla-del-eln-articulo-813841>

FARC-EP. In other regions, such as the Pacific coast, and despite their historical presence, their concerted effort to re-enter these territories put them in direct confrontation with several drug trafficking organizations, the AGC and the FARC-EP post-disarmament groups. These confrontations also produced a reaction from law enforcement, with already well-known consequences for the communities, such as displacement and confinement, threats and assassination of community leaders.

While it is true that the new Duque administration has put their own spin on the conflict resolution model, it could be said without reservation, that the approach of showing effective results will be maintained, as it was in the Uribe Vélez (2002-2010) and Santos (2010-2018) administrations. And, this “results-oriented” line of thinking (a long-standing approach), does not effectively allow for a resolution of this problem, given its focus on key indicators (captured, demobilized, dead) related to neutralizing the conflict. This approach does not allow us to really understand how to realign the different organizational structures of these illegal groups<sup>153</sup>.

And furthermore, if we continue to claim that there is still a link between the neutralization policies and the pacifying of these territories, we ignore the fact that there is no connection between these policies and the dynamics of the conflict, given the new patterns emerging from the consolidation of these armed groups.

A measure of permanence of the ELN in its traditional areas of influence has been the so-called armed stoppages (*paros armados*), in which they demonstrate a capacity to instill fear in several municipalities. At the end of the peace talks with the FARC-EP, the ELN showed its influence, mainly regional in scope. In the first days of February of 2011, a three-day armed stoppage was carried out in the department of Arauca, where the roads and highways were blocked, leaving the region isolated<sup>154</sup>. It happened again seven months later, in September, announced through a pamphlet, and this time in Arauca, Boyacá and Casanare, on the 31st anniversary of the Domingo Laín Sáenz Front and eleventh anniversary of the ABC Martyrs Battalion<sup>155</sup>. At the time, an intelligence report stated that the ELN, despite losing prominence, remained active and strong in several regions of the country, such as Catatumbo, southern Bolívar, Arauca, Nariño and Chocó, and was focused on not losing its main sources of revenue, drug trafficking and mining, as well as strengthening its presence in the cities<sup>156</sup>.

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<sup>153</sup> As mentioned, the ELN may have between 1,500 and 2,000 members, according to the Ministry of Defense. This same agency, that in its report addressed to the Congress five years ago, mentioned that “between August 7, 2010 and May 31, 2013, the (sic) Ministry of Defense affirmed that 8 commanders were neutralized: 2 from fighting Fronts, 5 from Fronts and 1 from the National Directorate, 1,547 neutralized, 489 members of RAT (Networks in Support of Terrorism) captured and demobilized. See Ministerio de Defensa Nacional, Memorias al Congreso 2012-2013, p. 47, in:

<https://www.mindefensa.gov.co/irj/go/km/docs/Mindefensa/Documentos/descargas/Prensa/Documentos/memorias2012-2013.pdf>

<sup>154</sup> Vanguardia, “paro armado en Arauca lleva 3 días” [Armed stoppage in Arauca ongoing for 3 days], February 5, 2011, in: <http://www.vanguardia.com/historico/91413-paro-armado-en-arauca-lleva-3-dias>

<sup>155</sup> Portal Araucano, “Paro armado anunciado por el ELN” [Armed stoppage announced by the ELN], September 12, 2011, in: <https://portalaraucano.com/noticia-arauca-en-alerta-por-amenaza-de-paro-armado-anunciado-por-el-eln-01076>

<sup>156</sup> El Espectador, “ELN: reducido pero activo” [ELN: diminished but still active], September 29, 2011, in: <https://www.elespectador.com/noticias/judicial/eln-reducido-activo-articulo-302750>

Two years later, using the same results-oriented logic, the Ministry of Defense, headed by Juan Carlos Pinzón, declared that "on account of the offensive by the military and law enforcement, the FARC-EP and the ELN are cornered in their traditional strongholds, from where they carry out terrorist actions of a purely defensive nature"<sup>157</sup>. Since this positive report, there have been two other armed stoppages that ceased to be simple regional shows. In September 2016, *los elenos* declared an armed stoppage of 72 hours in some municipalities or districts of six departments to celebrate the anniversary of the Eastern War Front that operates in Arauca, Boyacá, Casanare, Norte de Santander, Santander and Vichada; and in 2018, on February 10, Commander Uriel of the Western War Front, through his Twitter account, announced another armed stoppage planned to last 72 hours, and to be observed throughout the country, giving as the main reason the suspension of the peace talks by the Santos government.

In a report by Indepaz and the Heinrich Böll Foundation published in February of 2018, as well as reports in the media and complaints from Venezuelan authorities and NGOs, it was described how the arrival of Venezuelans and their difficult situation has been exploited by illegal armed groups. They are being recruited into their armed groups and into their illegal income schemes<sup>158</sup>. According to several estimates, it is reported that between 1,500 and 3,000 Venezuelan citizens arrive daily in the country through rural roads and border posts, some of which are approached to be recruited by the ELN. However, there is no reliable data or record that can confirm a massive recruitment of Venezuelans. There are also reports in the Colombian media declaring that the guerrillas are approaching schools in the neighboring country; there, *the elenos* are reportedly promoting among school children a coloring book with messages alluding to their ideology<sup>159</sup>.

However, recruitment is also relevant in territories other than the border with the Bolivarian country. There are reports from regions with high poverty rates, such as Chocó, where the ELN has been recruiting minors<sup>160</sup>, a situation that has been denounced on several occasions by the Ombudsman's Office. Less traumatic are the traditional forms of propaganda, such as the circulation of pamphlets, the display of flags on roads, educational centers and public spaces, graffiti allusive to the organization on walls and road signs, as well as the co-optation of members in university centers in the large cities. Another source of combatants are the former members of the FARC-EP, especially in the Pacific areas. There, according to radio news, with a goal of controlling the access routes for drug production, the ELN has taken on the task of

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<sup>157</sup> Ministerio de Defensa, Memorial al Congreso 2012-2013, pag. 46 [Ministry of Defense, Report to Congress 2012-2013, pg. 46], en:

<https://www.mindefensa.gov.co/irj/go/km/docs/Mindefensa/Documentos/descargas/Prensa/Documentos/memorias2012-2013.pdf>

<sup>158</sup> See, Jiménez, Juan Carlos, Un complejo balance: el ELN en 2017 [A complex balance: the ELN in 2017], in: <https://co.boell.org/es/2018/02/12/un-complejo-balance-el-eln-en-2017>

<sup>159</sup> Caracol Noticias, "ELN estaría incursionando en colegios venezolanos para promover su ideología y reclutar niños" [ELN may be venturing into Venezuelan schools to promote their ideology and recruit children], April 25, 2018, in: <https://noticias.caracoltv.com/mundo/eln-estaria-incursionando-en-colegios-venezolanos-para-promover-su-ideologia-y-reclutar-ninos-ie26636>

<sup>160</sup> El País, ELN habría reclutado 24 menores de edad en el Chocó, afirma la Defensoría del Pueblo" [ELN has recruited 24 minors in Chocó, according to the Ombudsman's Office], August 11, 2011, in: <https://www.elpais.com.co/judicial/eln-habria-reclutado-24-menores-de-edad-en-el-choco-afirma-la-defensoria-del-pueblo.html>

recruiting ex-guerrillas, whose experience would bring salaries between two and ten million pesos<sup>161</sup>. They are in direct competition with the AGC for these recruits.

On the other hand, one of the reasons that allowed the ELN to quickly react, and thus enter into a contest to control zones of the Pacific region without major issues, was the prior non-aggression pact agreed upon with the FARC-EP<sup>162</sup>. However, the same incentive to gain illegal income in these regions, also motivated regional groups of drug traffickers, the powerful AGC, and the dissidence of the FARC-EP. For the communities, the consequences of the arrival of new actors ranged from increased surveillance and threats, including activities by law enforcement, to the traditional consequences of the armed conflict. In Carmen del Darién, San José del Palmar, Bajo Baudó, Juradó, Itzmina, Litoral de San Juan, Bagadó and Riosucio (Chocó), communities have complained about the armed clashes between the ELN, law enforcement and the military, and AGC, which forced them to leave the area. In Almaguer, Sucre, Corinto and Miranda (Cauca), the complaints of the local residents are directed towards harassment and detentions by the ELN, as well as skirmishes between this group and drug trafficking organizations.

The realignment of the forces in the territories now without the FARC-EP, plus the speed to take control of specific areas, has shown that not all these activities are carried out with a goal of political entrenchment or the building of social bases. If these circumstances have brought positive results to the ELN in regions such as Catatumbo or Arauca, the form of population control in the new territories of operation is through the appropriation of revenues and the related work to support these activities<sup>163</sup>. In addition to taking advantage of coca cultivation revenues, the ELN has understood that all illegal mining has many economic components with distinct advantages and has imposed compulsory taxes on the communities that work in this activity, including fines and other types of duties, as well as demanding payments for the entry of backhoes and dredges<sup>164</sup>. This situation has been more dramatic in the departments of Antioquia, southern Bolívar, Cauca, Chocó and Nariño<sup>165</sup>.

The descriptions above are a part of the national landscape, and prompt us to continue to search for new alternatives for the solution to the conflict. A real challenge is what is happening

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<sup>161</sup> BluRadio, "ELN y Clan del Golfo estarían ofreciendo hasta "10 millones a guerrilleros de farc" [ELN and Clan del Golfo may be offering up to 10 million pesos to FARC guerrillas], January 30, 2018, in: <https://www.bluradio.com/nacion/eln-y-clan-del-golfo-estarian-ofreciendo-hasta-10-millones-exguerrilleros-de-farc-167585>

<sup>162</sup> Defensoría del Pueblo, Nota de Seguimiento N° 020-15 Quinta al Informe de Riesgo N° 014-09A.I. Emitido el 17 de junio de 2009, 2015. [Ombudsman's Office, Follow-up Note No. 020-15 Fifth on the Risk Report No. 014-09A.I. Issued on June 17, 2009, 2015].

<sup>163</sup> Defensoría del Pueblo, "Grupos armados ilegales y nuevos escenarios posacuerdo" [Ombudsman's Office, Illegal armed groups and new post-agreement scenarios], October 2017, in: [http://desarrollos.defensoria.gov.co/desarrollo1/ABCD/bases/marc/documentos/textos/Grupos\\_Armados\\_ilegales\\_y\\_nuevos\\_escenarios\\_de\\_riesgo\\_en\\_el\\_posacuerdo.pdf](http://desarrollos.defensoria.gov.co/desarrollo1/ABCD/bases/marc/documentos/textos/Grupos_Armados_ilegales_y_nuevos_escenarios_de_riesgo_en_el_posacuerdo.pdf)

<sup>164</sup> Defensoría del Pueblo, Nota de Seguimiento N° 020-15 Quinta al Informe de Riesgo N° 014-09A.I. Emitido el 17 de junio de 2009, 2015. [Ombudsman's Office, Follow-up Note No. 020-15 Fifth on the Risk Report No. 014-09A.I. Issued on June 17, 2009, 2015].

<sup>165</sup> According to the police, these departments have been prioritized in their fight against armed groups. See Caracol radio, "ELN, Clan del Golfo y disidencias de las Farc están detrás de la minería ilegal: Policía" [ELN, Clan del Golfo and Farc dissidences are behind illegal mining: the Police], May 1, 2018, in: [http://caracol.com.co/radio/2018/10/28/nacional/1540763284\\_595182.html](http://caracol.com.co/radio/2018/10/28/nacional/1540763284_595182.html)

in the Catatumbo region, one of the great power bases of the ELN, where tensions are running high. In mid-March, the EPL-Los Pelusos, allied with the AGC, openly declared war against *los elenos* for the control of drug trafficking. Since the beginning of 2018, the EPL-Los Peluso increased their presence mainly on the border, which led to the first skirmishes. According to OCHA, the first clashes, which occurred in Tibú and Ocaña, initially affected 17,000 people, but the conflict has spread to all municipalities in the region, affecting 100,000 inhabitants<sup>166</sup>.

As if that were not enough, another actor in the fight is a rearmed group with some members of the 33rd Front of the FARC-EP, who exhorted the population to continue their daily tasks and has made public a pamphlet in which they ask for the cessation to fire and to reach a dialogue. However, this announcement has had no effect. The escalation of the conflict has led to the installation of antipersonnel (land) mines in the area, as the ELN seeks to prevent the advance of the Army, and this time it is the EPL that has called for an armed stoppage<sup>167</sup>. The response of the National Government has been to send 5,600 men from the Rapid Deployment Force No. 3, which will be added to the already present Vulcan Task Force and the 30th Brigade. This has resulted in a humanitarian crisis, where there have been "threats, attacks, personal injuries, forced disappearances, recruitment, acts of 'use of the population as human shields', confinements, fighting, ambushes, blockades of roads, planting of antipersonnel mines, attacks on military objectives and damage to civilian goods and property"<sup>168</sup>.

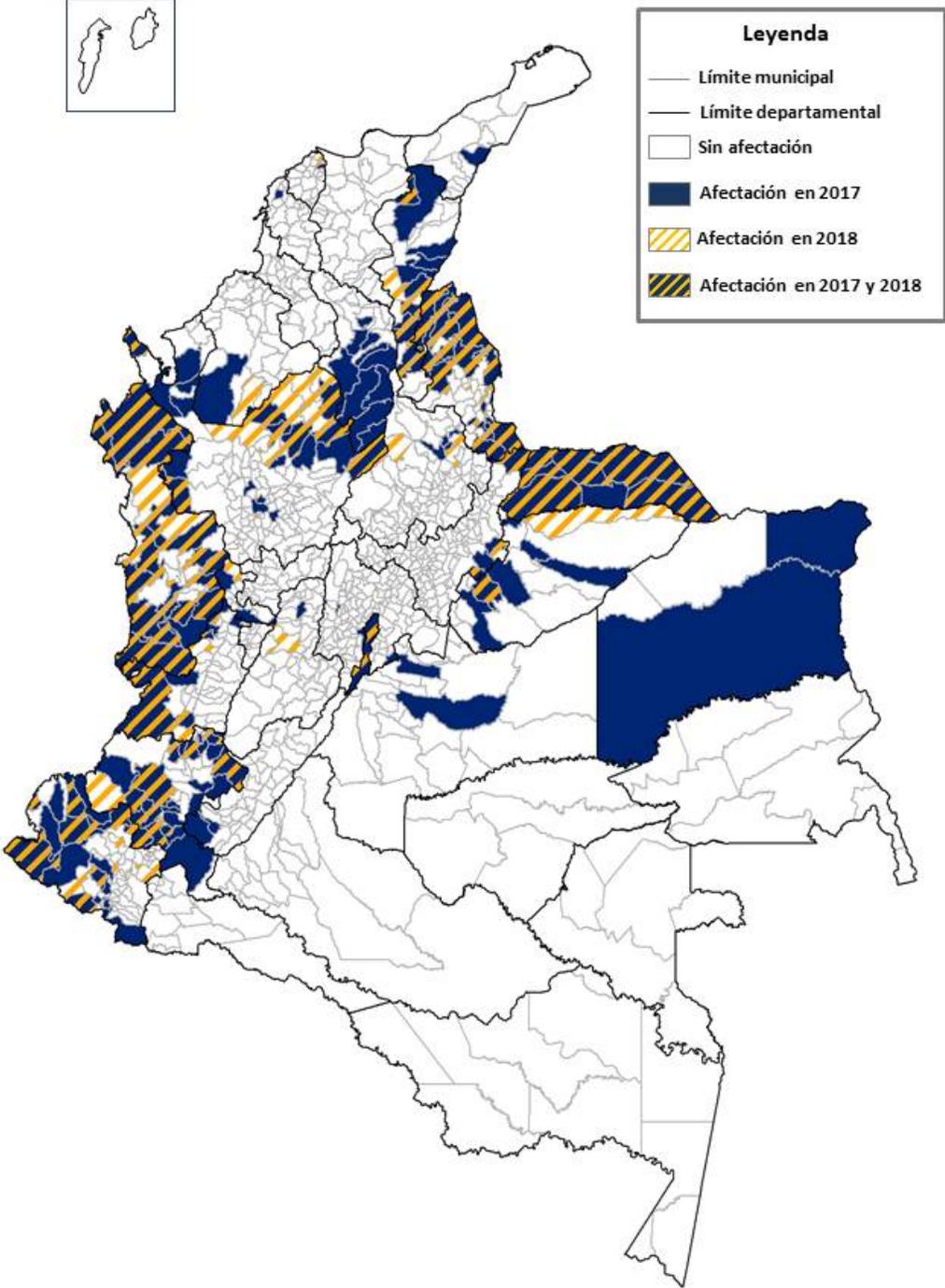
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<sup>166</sup> Semana, "Después del acuerdo de paz, la guerra no descansa" [After the peace agreement, the war does not rest], April 29, 2018, <https://www.semana.com/nacion/articulo/catatumbo-enfrentamientos-entre-eln-y-epl/565229>  
168

<sup>167</sup> El Tiempo, "zozobra en el Catatumbo por panfleto que decreta paro armado del EPL" [Anxiety in Catatumbo caused by pamphlet that decrees armed stoppage by the EPL"], April 15 of 2018, <https://www.eltiempo.com/colombia/otras-ciudades/paro-armado-del-epl-en-el-catatumbo-205542>

<sup>168</sup> Verdad Abierta, "lanzan crisis humanitaria en el Catatumbo" [The start of a humanitarian crisis in the Catatumbo], October 19, 2018, in: <https://verdadabierta.com/lanzan-alerta-tesis-humanitaria-catatumbo/>

Map 27. Municipalities affected by ELN activity in 2017 and first semester 2018



**Table 60. Municipalities affected by ELN activity in 2017**

Department	Municipalities
Antioquia	Amalfí, Angostura, Anorí, Apartadó, Bello, Chigorodó, El Bagre, Medellín, Murindó, Remedios, Rionegro, Segovia, Sopetrán, Tarazá, Turbo, Valdivia, Vigía del Fuerte, Yondó
Arauca	Arauca, Arauquita, Cravo Norte, Fortul, Puerto Rondón, Saravena, Tame
Atlántico	Malambo
Bolívar	Altos del Rosario, Arenal, Cantagallo, Montecristo, Morales, Norosí, San Pablo, Santa Rosa, Santa Rosa del Sur, Simití, Tiquisio
Boyacá	Cubará, Labranzagrande, Pajarito, Pisba
Casanare	Aguazul, Pore, Sámaca, Tauramena, Trinidad, Yopal
Cauca	Almaguer, Argelia, Balboa, Bolívar, Buenos Aires, Caloto, Corinto, El Tambo, Florencia, Guachené, Inzá, La Sierra, La Vega, Mercaderes, Miranda, Páez, Patía (El Bordó), Puracé, Rosas, San Sebastián, Santa Rosa, Santander de Quilichao, Suárez, Timbiquí, Toribío, Totoró,
Cesar	Aguachica, Becerril, Chiriguaná, Curumaní, La Gloria, La Jagua de Ibirico, Pailitas, Pelaya, Pueblo Bello, Río de Oro, Valledupar
Chocó	Acandí, Alto Baudó, Bagadó, Bajo Baudó, Carmen del Darién, Istmina, Juradó, Litoral de San Juan, Lloró, Medio San Juan, Nóvita, Quibdó, Riosucio, San José del Palmar, Sipí, Tado
Córdoba	Tierralta
Cundinamarca	Guayabetal, Soacha, Vianí
Distrito Capital	Bogotá
Huila	Isnos, San Agustín
La Guajira	Barrancas
Meta	San Martín, Villavicencio
Nariño	Barbacoas, Cumbal, El Charco, Guachacal, Ipiales, Leiva, Magüí Payán, Olaya Herrera, Pupiales, Roberto Payán, Samaniego, Santa Bárbara, Santacruz, Tumaco, Túquerres
Norte de Santander	Ábrego, Chinácota, Chitagá, Convención, Cúcuta, El Carmen, El Tarra, Hacarí, La Playa de Belén, Labateca, Ocaña, Pamplona, Sardinata, Teorama, Tibú, Toledo, Villa del Rosario
Risaralda	Pereira, Pueblo Rico
Santander	Bucaramanga, Charta, Floridablanca, Girón
Tolima	Líbano
Valle	Buenaventura, Cali, Calima El Darién, Cartago, El Águila, El Cairo, El Dovio, Versalles
Vichada	Cumaribo, Puerto Carreño

**Table 61. Municipalities affected by ELN activity in first semester 2018**

Department	Municipalities
Antioquia	Anorí, Bello, Cáceres, Campamento, Caucasia, El Bagre, Ituango, La Estrella, Nechí, Segovia, Tarazá, Toledo, Valdivia, Vigía del Fuerte, Yarumal, Yondó, Zaragoza
Arauca	Arauca, Arauquita, Cravo Norte, Fortul, Saravena, Tame

Atlántico	Barranquilla, Malambo, Soledad
Bolívar	Arenal, Cantagallo, Morales, Norosí, Río Viejo, San Pablo, Santa Rosa, Santa Rosa del Sur, Simití, Tiquisio
Boyacá	Cubará, Pajarito, Paya, Pisba
Casanare	Aguazul, Hato Corozal
Cauca	Almaguer, Argelia, Balboa, Bolívar, Buenos Aires, Caloto, Corinto, El Tambo, Florencia, Guapi, Mercaderes, Miranda, Páez, Padilla, Patía (El Bordó), Santander de Quilichao, Suárez, Sucre, Timbío,
Cesar	Aguachica, Chimichagua, Curumaní, La Gloria, Pailitas, Pelaya, Pueblo Bello, Río de Oro,
Chocó	Acaandí, Atrato, Alto Baudó, Bagadó, Bajo Baudó, Bojayá, Carmen del Darién, Istmina, Juradó, Litoral de San Juan, Lloró, Medio Atrato, Medio San Juan, Nóvita, Nuquí, Quibdó, Riosucio, San José del Palmar, Tado
Córdoba	Puerto Libertador, San José de Uré
Distrito Capital	Bogotá
Nariño	Buesaco, Cumbal, El Charco, El Tablón de Gómez, La Cruz, La Florida, Leiva, Linares, Magüí Payán, Policarpa, Ricaurte, Santacruz, Tumaco
Norte de Santander	Ábrego, Bochalema, Chinácota, Chitagá, Convención, Cúcuta, El Carmen, El Tarra, Gramalote, Hacarí, La Playa de Belén, Labateca, Ocaña, Pamplona, San Calixto, Sardinata, Teorama, Tibú, Toledo, Villa del Rosario
Risaralda	Mistrato
Santander	Barrancabermeja, Piedecuesta, Tona
Tolima	Ibagué, Líbano
Valle	Bolívar, Buenaventura, Cali, El Cairo, El Dovio, Jamundí

#### 7.4. People's Liberation Army (EPL) / Los Pelusos

The EPL (*Ejército Popular de Liberación*) [Popular Liberation Army] is an insurgent group that was born in 1967. It managed to control the area of Urabá, Antioquia, Sucre and Córdoba, extending to the Middle Magdalena. In 1990, they initiated dialogues with the Colombian government, which led to their demobilization in 1991. However, 160 of its members<sup>169</sup> decided not to take part in the process and remained in rebellion under the command of Francisco Caraballo. In 2016, through Directive 015 of the Ministry of Defense, the government refused to acknowledge this organization as a guerrilla group and indicated that it is a group whose actions are mainly focused on drug trafficking. They are then referred to as *Los Pelusos* and are classified as an Armed Organized Group<sup>170</sup>. Currently they are known by both names.

The EPL-Pelusos concentrates its presence in Norte de Santander, in the municipalities of El Tarra, Convention, Tibú, Sardinata, Hacarí, La Playa, San Calixto, Teorama and El Carmen, in the Catatumbo region. In the last two years they have extended their influence to the municipalities of Curumaní, Chimichagua and Pailitas (Cesar), and parts of the Serranía del Perijá that connect with La Guajira and Zulia, in Venezuela, a drug trafficking corridor. Its armed

<sup>169</sup> El Tiempo, "Lo que dejó la paz con el Epl, 25 años después" [What peace with the EPL left behind, 25 years later], March 16, 2016, in: <https://www.eltiempo.com/archivo/documento/CMS-16528987>

<sup>170</sup> See Directive 015 of 2016 of the Ministry of National Defense.

force is around 200 members, although different sources have reported between 120<sup>171</sup> to 500<sup>172</sup> members.

Alias *Megateo*, commander until 2015, had establish agreements with the AGC and the ELN to control areas of cultivation, coca processing and routes for the transport of narcotics. This pact was broken in the last year, and in addition the rearmed 33rd Front has appeared on the scene. There is currently a high level of intensity of armed actions between these organizations, in which the EPL-Pelusos continues its alliance with the AGC, and the local population has been confined and displaced several times.

The actions of this group are focused on the control of the cocaine production and supply chain, in which oil as an input for said illegal economy is taken from the main pipes of the Caño Limón Coveñas pipeline<sup>173</sup>. In addition, as part of their ongoing activities, they continue to threaten the civilian population, in addition to extortion, kidnapping, force recruitment, and other contraband operations. There are reports of Venezuelan citizens joining or being recruited into the group, with a salary of one million pesos a month<sup>174</sup>.

Furthermore, in 2017 in Cauca, there are reports of activities carried out by the Andrey Peñaranda Southwest Front of the EPL, which is composed of about 30 men<sup>175</sup> who act in the Corinto, Miranda, Suárez and Toribío areas. Their membership in the EPL has been confirmed by a published letter stating their intention to expand into this department. The communiqué states the following: "we highlight the political work of the communists and revolutionaries in this part of the country, an example for many in the different regions; we salute the efforts of the People's Liberation Army -EPL- to expand its presence at the national level and specifically the formation of the Southwest Front Andrey Peñaranda Ramírez"<sup>176</sup>.

Their operations in the territory were led by alias *El Negro Simón*, who died in June 2017 in the middle of a skirmish with strongholds of the FARC-EP. Now they are commanded by a man known as '*Rojas*'. Their presence in the department of Cauca revolves around coca and marijuana crops, which are sold to groups in Antioquia and the rest of the country; the strategy

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<sup>171</sup> Radio Súper Popayán, "Los pelusos' ya no están solo en el Catatumbo, ahora llegaron al Cauca" [*Los pelusos* are no longer only in the Catatumbo, they have arrived in Cauca], September 4, 2018, in: <http://www.radiosuperpopayan.com/2018/09/04/los-pelusos-ya-no-estan-solo-en-el-catatumbo-ahora-llegaron-al-cauca/>

<sup>172</sup> La Silla Vacía, "Las 10 razones por las que el EPL es un problema que se le creció al Gobierno" [The 10 reasons why the EPL is a growing problem for the Government], February 23 of 2017, in: <https://lasillavacia.com/historia/las-10-razones-por-las-que-el-epl-es-un-problema-que-se-le-crecio-al-gobierno-59861>

<sup>173</sup> El Colombiano, "Caño Limón ha operado 1 de cada 2 días este año" [Caño Limón has operated only every other day this year], August 1, 2017, in: <http://www.elcolombiano.com/colombia/paz-y-derechos-humanos/ataques-al-oleoducto-cano-limon-covenas-YC7004809>

<sup>174</sup> BluRadio, "Denuncian posible reclutamiento de venezolanos por parte de bandas criminales" [Reports on possible recruiting of Venezuelans by criminal gangs], November 11, 2017, in: <https://www.bluradio.com/nacion/denuncian-posible-reclutamiento-de-venezolanos-por-parte-de-bandas-criminales-159668>

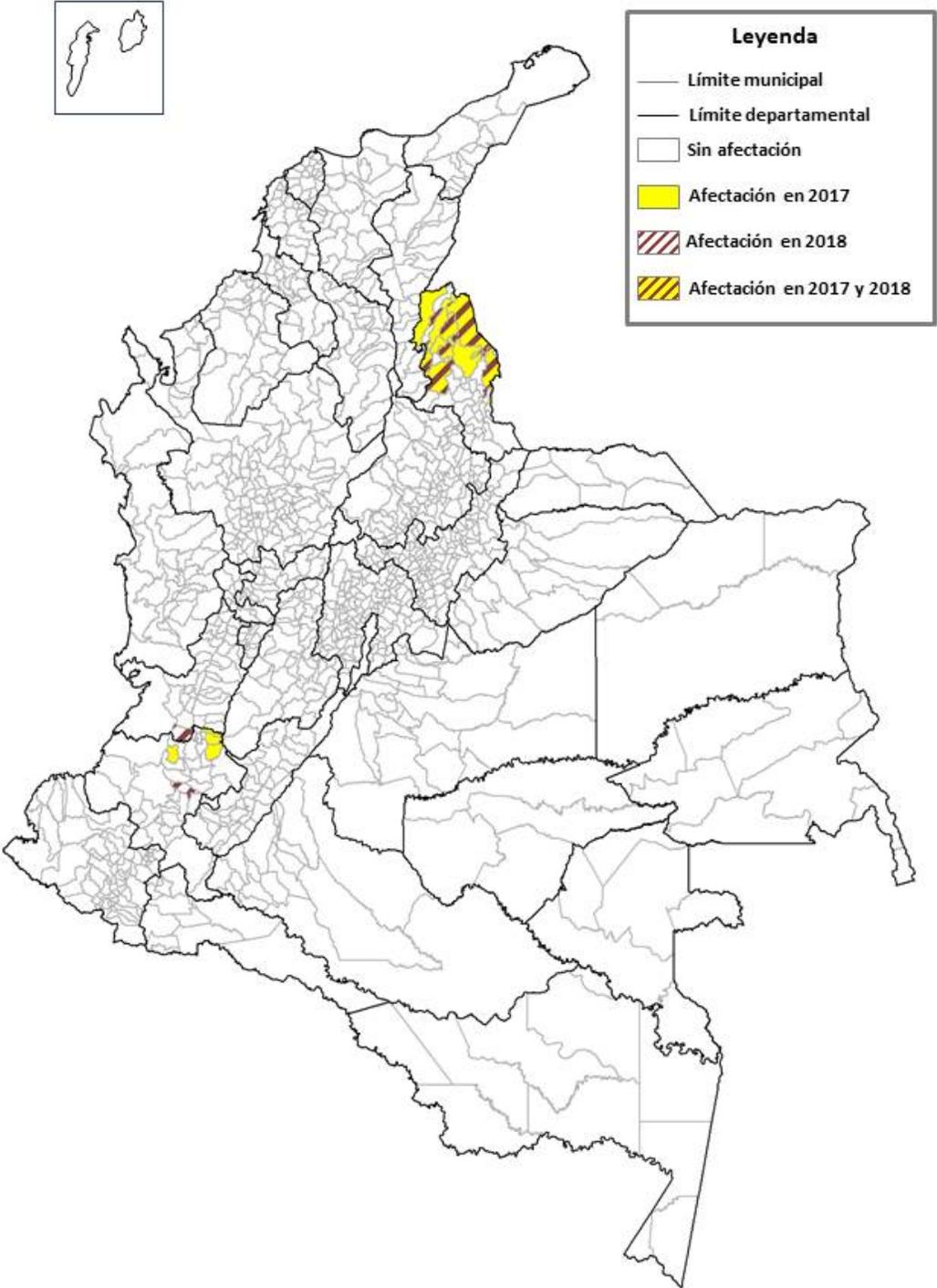
<sup>175</sup> La Silla Vacía, "Estas son las disidencias que recibe Duque en el Pacífico" [These are the dissidences that Duque receives in the Pacific], July 3, 2018, in: <https://lasillavacia.com/silla-pacifico/estas-son-las-disidencias-que-recibe-duque-en-el-pacifico-66830>

<sup>176</sup> Revistas UFPESO, "¿Los pelusos o frente de guerra Libardo Mora Toro – EPL? percepción de Ocaña y llamado a diálogos de paz" [*Los Pelusos* or guerilla front Libardo Mora Toro - EPL? perception of Ocaña and call for peace dialogues], June 25, 2017, in: <http://revistas.ufpso.edu.co/index.php/ringenio/article/viewFile/461/299>

of this group is to use indigenous territories in order to avoid detection of the crops. However, they failed and were expelled from the territory of Toribío by the Nasa community, who did not allow their presence. They are accused of assassinating ex-combatants of the FARC-EP who were in the process of reintegration.

In 2018, activities of this group were reported in Valle del Cauca, especially in the municipality of Jamundí, where they are collecting taxes on coca production (*cobro de gramaje*), planting anti-personnel mines around the coca crops, building laboratories for the processing of coca base, establishing illegal tolls, and threatening businesses in the area. They have also clashed with law enforcement, in addition to attacking the civilian population with gas cylinder bombs.

Map 28. Municipalities affected by EPL Pelusos in 2017 and the first semester of 2018



**Table 62. Municipalities affected by EPL Pelusos in 2017**

<b>Department</b>	<b>Municipalities</b>
Cauca	Corinto, Miranda, Suárez, Toribío
Norte de Santander	Cúcuta, El Carmen, El Tarra, Hacarí, Ocaña, San Calixto, Sardinata, Teorama, Tibú, Villa del Rosario
Valle del Cauca	<i>Information in process of verification</i>

**Table 63. Municipalities affected by EPL Pelusos in the first semester 2018**

<b>Department</b>	<b>Municipalities</b>
Cauca	Popayán
Norte de Santander	Ábrego, Convención, Cúcuta, El Tarra, Hacarí, Ocaña, Tibú
Valle del Cauca	Jamundí