

## COLOMBIAN ARMED CONFLICT AND FORCED DEMOBILIZATION. SOCIO-SPATIAL STUDY OF INTERNAL CONFLICT

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**Abstract.** The armed conflict and humanitarian crisis are still on top of the domestic agenda in Colombia. The international community has an increasing presence in Colombia. In terms of non-military solutions to conflict there are public policies whose effort is to ensure the human rights and to assist people affected by the deterioration of the conflict.

On the other hand, the previous government had the idea of a post-conflict country with the thesis that the "end of the end" is a reality, paramilitarism is a thing of the past and the displacement is minimal and affected persons are adequately addressed. Thus, from the partial demobilization of the paramilitaries since the end of 2005 (within the process started with the "Law of Justice and Peace"), the former Colombian government started talking about a post-conflict situation and the military defeat of the guerrillas. The current government has adopted a similar position to inform the international community that Colombia currently has green areas and post-conflict or widespread violence in the country is more likely linked to drug trafficking.

Our hypothesis in this research is that paramilitary demobilization has increasing inconsistencies and that these groups' rearmament and territorial expansion is a fact acknowledged by the authorities. The same applies to the guerrilla groups still operating in most of the country.

In this context, this research makes a socio-spatial analysis of some of the areas called CCAI (Centers and Comprehensive Care Coordination) to describe the behaviour of the internal armed conflict, violence and humanitarian crisis partner, to see whether it is about a true post-conflict.

**Keywords:** *Colombian conflict, paramilitarism, law of justice and peace*

### Introduction

This article is an advance of research, which attempts to show that in areas of consolidation calls for democratic security policy, were deployed 32.7% of all forced displacement during 2010 in Colombia. It reported a total of 280,041 displaced people this year, of which at least 91,499 are from the 14 areas known as CCAI (Centers for Comprehensive Care Coordination) and comprising 7 regions covering 86 municipalities in 17 departments.

In these areas the efforts are to "emphasize the improvement of forced displacement, protection of human rights, reconciliation and overcoming extreme poverty," (Plan Nacional de Consolidación Territorial, 2010). For us, out of the 100 municipalities that had a higher rate of forced displacement, 44 are in these CCAI areas, the Lower Cauca Antioquia showing the biggest concern.

We also try to identify the main cause of violence, as in areas of forced displacement, (as in 2010 in 62 of the 86 municipalities CCAI) there were still operating at least eight

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paramilitary groups (between old and new structures rearmed), while the FARC maintained or reactivated its presence in 30 municipalities and the ELN continued to serve another 4.

Our assumption is that in those areas where there is increased military presence, last year occurred 19 massacres that left 92 people killed, while 176 other people were victims of targeted killings (among which 11 are indigenous, 7 public servants, 4 community leaders, a human rights defender, 1 leader and 1 Afro-Colombian journalist).

For us, it is clear that the state is unable to protect the civilian population in these areas where "powerful economic interests stir" because it demonstrates the dispossession of land as a kind of complement of forced displacement.

### **Development of research**

Some 56 000 families were forced to leave their home in 2010 in Colombia (a total of 280,041 people). Among these, at least 18,300 (more than 32%) come from areas in which they developed the "national territorial consolidation plan," flagship of the government of former president, implemented from 2007 to underline the "end of the end" of the armed conflict in the country.

There are 14 CCAI areas that overlay on 86 natural regions and municipalities in 17 departments of Colombia. These areas are located in Nariño, Cauca, Valle del Cauca, Choco, Rio Caguan, Macarena, Cordillera Central, Bajo Cauca, Córdoba, Montes de María, Sierra Nevada de Santa Marta, Putumayo, Arauca and Catatumbo. In these departments, this focuses on integrated action of the State, which emphasizes "the overcoming of forced displacement, protection of human rights and (the) reconciliation, overcoming extreme poverty and the consolidation of regional conditions development and peace." (Plan Nacional de Consolidación Territorial. 2010).

During 2010, in 62 of the 86 municipalities of CCAI areas continued to operate for at least 8 paramilitary groups, while the guerrillas maintained or reactivated their presence in 34 of these municipalities. In the 86 municipalities in the 19 massacres occurred, with a tragic toll of 92 people killed. 176 more were victims of targeted killings. In addition, 87 civilians were wounded or killed in the context of military operations. 81 other civilians were wounded, maimed or killed in mine accidents. 15 people were kidnapped. Violence is the leading cause of displacement, as well as for the actions and intimidation by armed groups against civilians. This shows the state's inability to protect civilians in the territories subject to consolidation policy.

Land appropriation is a complement to the strategy of forced displacement. According to the National Audit Team of the Monitoring Committee of Public Policy on Forced Displacement (2011), between 1980 and July 2010 at least 6,638,195 hectares in Colombia were subject to theft, by violent actions attributed to illegal armed groups.

The departments where this dispossession occurred coincide with regions that are located in areas CCAI. For the Monitoring Committee, the departments of Antioquia and Choco (in the two areas that are located CCAI: Cauca Antioquia and Chocó) were the epicenter of 1,852,561 hectares stripping. Another area affected by land abandoned, sold or delivered to others necessarily encompasses the departments of Cauca, Nariño, Putumayo, Caquetá and the municipality of Buenaventura in the department of Valle del Cauca, where the Commission considers the spoliation 1,491,892 hectares. Here, the five zones coincide with plunder CCAI: Nariño, Cauca, Valle del Cauca, Putumayo and Rio Caguan. In turn, in the departments of Amazonas, Arauca, Casanare, Guainía, Guaviare, Meta, and Vichada

Vaupés with 1,043,939 hectares of land affected areas coincide with CCAI of Macarena and Arauca.

In the departments of Magdalena, Cesar, Guajira and Norte de Santander, exile and dispossession affected 866,535 hectares. In this region are localized areas of consolidation Sierra Nevada de Santa Marta and Catatumbo. The departments of Atlantico, Bolivar, Sucre and Cordoba were the scene of the dispossession of 749,968 hectares. In the Caribbean region are localized areas of consolidation of Montes de Maria and South of Cordoba. Finally, the departments of Boyacá, Caldas, Cundinamarca, Huila, Quindio, Risaralda, Tolima, Santander and Valle del Cauca (except Bonaventure), were the subject of the dispossession of 633,299 hectares. In this region are located CCAI areas Cordillera Central and Valle del Cauca.

In this scenario of armed conflict, violence and dispossession is added the interest of national and international investment by mining activity taking place in at least 21 municipalities CCAI areas: a quarter of the territory is in the process of consolidation (26 %). These are regions which are ahead of exploitation where exploration or mining exports remain parallel and there are multiple forms of social and political violence and important violations of human rights. For example, where most Montelíbano ferronickel mine in Colombia, which belongs to the South zone of Córdoba CCAI and Tibu, an area for mining and oil belongs to the zone Catatumbo CCAI. Thus, while the fever to accelerate the locomotive of the mining areas of violence and poverty begins to rise amid the unbridled greed of large companies. Eager operators begin to unleash a fever only comparable to that generated at the time of coca destined for cocaine production.

At stake are hundreds of mining in the areas of consolidation, while the state has no capacity for processing. During the government of Alvaro Uribe (until 2009), surface mining permit acres increased from 1.13 to 8.53 million, including concessions on the moors, covering 70 000 hectares at the beginning of the administration of President Uribe. Today, 108,972 acres in 22 of the 34 wilderness that has Colombia are at risk for the concession of 391 mining titles. 80% of these awards were given during the period that allowed Uribe to elapse between approval of the Mining Code in Congress and for presidential approval.

Hundreds of miners have died because of insecurity in the mines, despite business security and investor confidence for large companies that benefit from the concessions. Meanwhile, outlaws stigmatize the small miners, accused of having links with the guerrillas and forced displacement. The mining areas are militarized and paramilitarized: the authorities may protect the large private investment and prevent paramilitary social protest and pressure displacement. "What we have is an official strategy for small miners will leave the field open to big companies," says sociologist and journalist Alfredo Molano (El Espectador, 2001).

The same pattern seems to apply some oil palm cultivation involves some companies associated with forms of violence, looting and forced displacement. 14 of the 86 municipalities CCAI (16% of total building area) where are recorded intensive oil palms planting coincide with the areas of population expulsion. In some areas, the land went from producing food crops to agro fuels, especially oil palm. This is the case of the municipalities of San Onofre (Montes de Maria region), Tibú (Catatumbo area), El Copey, Valledupar, Dibulla Aracataca, Cienaga, Santa Marta Foundation (zone Sierra Nevada de Santa Marta), Tumaco (Nariño area ) and Guapi (Cauca region), among many others. In these areas the forced displacement persists, as well as the presence of armed groups and the development model in large palm oil fields.

In May 2010, an attorney for Human Rights and International Humanitarian Law in charge of the investigation of the theft of land in the river basins and Jiguamiandó Curvaradó (collective territories of Afro descendants) and the invasion of lands in that area of the lower Atrato (Chocó) between 1997 and 2001, ordered the arrest of 24 oil palm growers for the crimes of "competitive displacement in homogeneous and heterogeneous successive and aggravated conspiracy, and invasion of areas of special ecological importance."

Also relevant is the presence of illicit crops in areas CCAI. According to the calculations of the Information System Illicit Crop Monitoring in 62 of the 86 municipalities of CCAI areas, i.e., 72.1% of total CCAI areas were found 32,445 hectares of illicit crops. This indicates that there is concentrated 48% of the total illicit crop, estimated at 68,000 hectares by the source. Although the National Plan of Consolidation has already three years of implementation, there are many doubts about its effectiveness. The fact that displacement persists into question the very concept of social cohesion and casts doubt on the democratic component of safety, even when he says investor confidence. In addition, in areas of Arauca, Cauca, Chocó, Rio Caguan, and Catatumbo blocks are recorded and / or confinement of people.

All this comes seven years after the Constitutional Court ruled that forced displacement is an unconstitutional state of affairs in Colombia and develops a case to ensure the effective enjoyment of rights of persons and affected communities, which have meant some progress in formulating and implementation of public policy by governments, absences and weaknesses in the prevention of the causes of displacement and protection of those affected. This displacement crisis persists when opening a new era of legal recognition of victims of armed conflict and their rights to truth, justice and reparation, including restitution of land taken by blood and fire.

The law of land restitution victims and recently approved by the Colombian Congress is a step in the recognition of victims' rights and a change of direction in relation to what happened in the eight-year rule of former president, but this is another issue that will be considered in further studies.

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