



POLICY RECOMMENDATIONS: THE PEACE ACCORD

RURAL REFORM AND THE DRUG CHAPTER

Social leaders are crucial for guaranteeing that the 2016 peace accords are fulfilled so that Colombia is more peaceful, politically inclusive, and egalitarian.

President Iván Duque’s government has undermined peace by exhibiting limited political will to advance its implementation, cutting needed funding and supporting legislative actions that would weaken core aspects of the accord, and weakening transitional justice.

Specifically, several aspects of the peace accords—essential to the work of social leaders—are under sustained pressure. It’s critical that the international community pressure the Colombian government to strengthen them.

The Colombian government can support the grassroots work of social leaders by implementing the following key provisions of the peace accords:

THE RURAL REFORM CHAPTER

The peace accord is meant to be implemented in an integral fashion, whereby all the chapters and provisions are interconnected with each other. That said, it is important to highlight why the rural reform chapter is key to a sustainable peace.



ADDRESSING DEEP-ROOTED INEQUALITIES

Land distribution in Latin America is the most unequal in the world—and Colombia is the worst country for land distribution in the continent fueling armed conflict, violence and displacement. The rural reform chapter of the peace accords laid out concrete steps for addressing this long-standing challenge.

In a country riddled with deep inequalities, the rural reform chapter called for the creation of economic development plans created in consultation with impacted communities.

With the participation of civil society, the government created a rural de-

velopment scheme, called PDETs, that formalized land titles and facilitated sustainable development in 170 municipalities.

A LACK OF SUPPORT FROM THE DUQUE ADMINISTRATION

President Iván Duque's government isn't spending the funds it's supposed to on implementing the rural reform chapter.

According to [an August 2020 report](#) by Colombia's Congress, the total 2020 budget for implementing the peace accord was USD\$2.8 billion (COP\$10.7 trillion); 75 percent of this money was supposed to go towards rural reform-related programs. While this money was officially allocated, the government is not executing this portion of the budget efficiently.

This is particularly the case when it comes to the rural development schemes, known as the PDETs, created by the accords. **[According to Colombia's Congress](#), the Duque administration is only spending 1.5 percent of what the PDETs need.**

BUDGET CUTS

The government cut the budget for agencies essential for land reform—that is, for allowing rural and ethnic communities to better access formal land titles.

The peace accord created the National Land Agency (Agencia Nacional de Tierras) in order to help make land ownership in Colombia more equal, in part by creating a new land registry system. Since taking office, **Duque cut its budget by 12.7 percent**, according to [an August 2020 report](#) by Colombia's Congress.

The Rural Development Agency was created in 2015, alongside several Santos-era initiatives, in order to help push rural development. Since taking office, **Duque cut its budget by 35.4 percent**, according to [an August 2020 report](#) by Colombia's Congress.

POLICIES FAVORABLE TO AGRI-BUSINESSES

The Duque administration's Ministry of Agriculture is [pushing a law](#) that would make it easier for agro-industry to [earn concessions](#) to take over unregistered land.

This is counter-productive given the urgent need for land reform in Colombia—the peace accords call for the creation of a “Land Fund” that would see

land redistributed to campesinos. Currently, the fund has received less than 7 percent of the 3 million hectares it is supposed to disburse by 2028; much of those hectares consist of unregistered property.

THE DRUG CHAPTER

While the rural reform chapter in the peace accords attempts to tackle the underlying issues of land reform and lack of state presence that drove the conflict, the drug policy chapter aims to address the pressing issue of the cocaine trade—and violence it begets—in Colombia.

FAMILIES GIVE UP PLANTING COCA—BUT ARE LEFT VULNERABLE

One of the key components of the drug policy chapter was the implementation of a crop substitution plan. Through this initiative, families who voluntarily eradicate coca fields receive two years worth of monetary support intended to help them transition to legitimate crops. To date, nearly 100,000 families have voluntarily eradicated their coca crops—nearly 100 percent of them do not replant coca.

However, a two-year term of financial support is not enough to help families weather systemic challenges of poverty and lack of services without comprehensive state presence and the implementation of key rural reform chapter provisions like PDETs. What's more, payments to thousands of families are delayed, leaving them in vulnerable situations without much financial help.

Nor is the Duque administration robustly supporting this section of the peace accord. According to a [2020 report](#) by Colombia's Congress, the budget meant to support implementing the peace deal chapter on drug crops saw a **14 percent cut between the 2020 and 2021 fiscal years.**

SOCIAL LEADERS AT RISK

Hundreds of social leaders, understanding the perils that the cocaine trade unleashes on communities, have worked tirelessly to convince families in their neighborhoods to sign up for the crop substitution plan. Yet, because their efforts directly attack the supply chain of cocaine trafficking groups, they are systematically threatened and killed.

If the Colombian government continues to lag in its efforts to fully implement the voluntary coca substitution program, not only will the cocaine trade continue to flourish in Colombia, so will the killing of social leaders fighting to reclaim their communities from under the influence of cocaine traffickers.