Country Update

Colombia

As of April 18, 2020, there have been 3,105 confirmed COVID-19 cases in Colombia, including 131 deaths, and the number has been increasing steadily. The National Health Institute (Instituto Nacional de Salud, INS) has predicted that even with the containment measures, the virus may lead to as many as 3,000 deaths in Colombia.[1]

The Colombian government has announced a “total quarantine” on March 20, 2020 and will last until April 27, 2020. Citizens were requested to stay home, all non-essential businesses have been closed and public transport stopped. Travel between cities/municipalities is not allowed. Arrivals of international flights and entry of non-citizens have also been banned. Most offices—including those of GNWP partners—have switched to teleworking. The adoption of the Local Development Plans has been delayed because of the COVID-19. There is no new date for it yet.

Impact on women and on peace and security:

- On 30 March 2020, the National Liberation Army (ELN) has declared a unilateral ceasefire starting on 1 April 2020. The ceasefire, described by the group as a “humanitarian gesture” will hold until 1 May 2020.[2]

- There have been concerns on how the quarantine will affect the safety of the human rights defenders, including women, in Colombia. As part of the COVID-19 prevention measures, the government has reduced the protective measures offered by the National Protection Unit to at least some defenders, exposing them to threats.[3] Moreover, the quarantine means that there are “no witnesses on the streets”, making the human rights defenders more vulnerable than ever.[4]


