

UiO : **Faculty of Law**  
University of Oslo

# In the Name of Peace

Navigating Disarmament and Gender-Based Violence in Post-Conflict Colombia

Candidate number: 8019

Submission deadline: May 15, 2023

Number of words: 19,240



## **Acknowledgements**

A warm thank you to my supervisor, Elsabe Boshoff for her encouragement, support and guidance during my research and writing process. I am also extremely thankful for my fellow students who went through this along with me and who are always of good advice and comfort.

An additional thank you to the inspiring participants to my research who provided me with inputs on their work towards a peaceful and equalitarian Colombia. I wish that their fight for peace, safety, and equality becomes a reality.

Finally, a warm hearted thank you to my family who never failed to support me and to make me feel empowered. I could not have done this without your support.

# Table of Contents

- List of Acronyms and Abbreviations ..... iv
- 1 Introduction ..... 1
- 2 Background and Context..... 2
  - 2.1 Women, Peace and Security Agenda..... 2
  - 2.2 Disarmament, Demobilisation, and Reintegration Programs ..... 4
  - 2.3 Small Arms and Light Weapons ..... 5
  - 2.4 Disarmament and Women ..... 5
  - 2.5 The Colombian Case: A Never-Ending Conflict? ..... 6
- 3 Research Questions ..... 9
- 4 Literature Review..... 10
  - 4.1 Disarmament Following an Armed Conflict ..... 10
  - 4.2 Disarmament and Women ..... 11
  - 4.3 Small Arms and Gender-Based Violence ..... 12
  - 4.4 Colombia..... 14
- 5 Theoretical Framework and Methodology..... 17
  - 5.1 Feminist Peace Research ..... 17
    - 5.1.1 Feminist Peace ..... 17
    - 5.1.2 Continuum of Violence ..... 18
  - 5.2 Methodology Presentation ..... 19
    - 5.2.1 Data Collection: Desktop Research and Interviews..... 19
    - 5.2.2 Limitations ..... 20
    - 5.2.3 Ethical Considerations ..... 22
- 6 Results..... 23
  - 6.1 Factors Impacting Gender-Based Violence ..... 27
    - 6.1.1 Discrepancies Between the Laws and the Reality ..... 27
    - 6.1.2 Precarious Situation of Women ..... 30
    - 6.1.3 Intersectionality as an Additional Burden..... 32
    - 6.1.4 An Exacerbated Masculinity ..... 34
  - 6.2 Factors Impacting Gun Violence ..... 35
    - 6.2.1 Small Arms Ownership..... 35
    - 6.2.2 Broader Political Context..... 39
    - 6.2.3 Power Relations During and After Conflict..... 42
- 7 Discussion ..... 45

7.1	On the Disarmament of the FARC-EP .....	45
7.2	On the Use of Small Arms in Gender-Based Violence .....	46
7.3	On a Change in the Levels of Violence Against Women After the 2016 Peace Agreement	48
7.4	On the Impacts of the 2016 Peace Agreement on the Levels of Gender-Based Violence ...	49
8	Conclusion .....	50
	Table of Reference .....	53
	Appendix.....	62

## List of Acronyms and Abbreviations

CEDAW	Committee on the Elimination of all Forms of Discrimination against Women
DDR	Disarmament, demobilisation and reintegration
ELN	National Liberation Army - <i>Ejército de Liberación Nacional</i>
FARC - EP	Revolutionary Armed Forces of Colombia - People's Army - <i>Fuerzas Armadas Revolucionarias de Colombia—Ejército del Pueblo</i>
GBV	Gender-based violence
ICRC	International Committee of the Red Cross
IPV	Intimate Partner Violence
NGO	Non-governmental organisation
Peace Agreement	Final Agreement for Ending the Conflict and Building a Stable and Lasting Peace
UN	United Nations
UNDDA	United Nations Department for Disarmament Affairs
UNDPO	United Nations Department of Peace Operations
UNGA	United Nations General Assembly
UNSC	United Nations Security Council
UNSG	United Nations Secretary-General
Mission	United Nations Verification Mission in Colombia
WPS	Women, Peace and Security

# 1 Introduction

Colombian history is often linked to violence. The country has never had a strong State, people's identities have always been forged by the political parties. Most social conflicts have found their resolution through violence. Violence in Colombia at the end of the 20<sup>th</sup> century was generalised, throughout the whole population, and the whole territory. It was a blend of political violence, organised violence, and non-organised violence which led to multidimensional violence and it became laborious to pinpoint who is responsible for one specific act of violence. In parallel to this ordinariness of violence, the country has also been an important space for planning exits from these outbreaks of violence. From the 1980s onwards, the government has been trying to negotiate with different armed groups through a case-by-case assessment to try to reach ceasefires to curb the violence. The climax of these negotiations was the 2016 Peace Agreement between the Revolutionary Armed Forces of Colombia - People's Army (FARC-EP) and the government.

Violence against women has been of concern in Colombia during the seven decades of armed conflict and still to this day. In 2018, Eileen Morero, a Colombian actress, posted a video of herself on social media, where she is in tears, her nose is bleeding, and her face is swollen. She accuses her former boyfriend of assaulting her a few months earlier. After she refused to show him her phone, he took her passport and tried to sequester her, before beating her. She decided to post the video online to encourage women to denounce the violence they are subjects of. She also posted a picture of herself in which she hides her eye, symbolising the hiding of a black eye. This gesture was used by anonymous, actresses, politicians, and artists in the country. The vice president at the time reacted in a video, stating that: "there cannot be in Colombia one single woman suffering from violence. We are calling for Eileen Moreno and all the other women victims of violence to denounce them and to reject them (...) and us at the government level we will do everything against these aggressors." But the fight against gender-based violence (GBV) in Colombia still has a long way to go.

This research is aimed at understanding the relationship between gun violence and women within the disarmament, demobilisation and reintegration (DDR) and transitional justice in Colombia.

Part 2 is concerned with the context and background of the research. Part 3 continues with the introduction of the research questions and the aim of the research. Part 4 contains a literature

review, highlighting the gaps in existing research on the subject. Part 5 is concerned with the theoretical framework and methodology. I adopt a feminist peace approach, which leads me to use a qualitative methodology, therefore putting the experience of the individuals at the core of my data. Parts 6 and 7 provide an analysis of reports and interviews and a discussion on the impacts of gun violence on women and the value of the disarmament of the FARC-EP for the protection of women from GBV. Part 8 concludes the research.

## **2 Background and Context**

### **2.1 Women, Peace and Security Agenda**

So-called ‘new wars’ emerged following the end of the Cold War in the 1990s<sup>1</sup>. Unlike ‘conventional wars’ up to this point, these ‘new wars’ are characterised by varied types of actors, both state and non-state actors, and the combats transcend national borders<sup>2</sup>. Moreover, these ‘new wars’ are fought for identity reasons, as opposed to political reasons<sup>3</sup>. Wars are no longer motivated by a larger political goal, but ‘new wars’ are based on politics of identity, where people of a particular identity align their objectives on a common political agenda. More important for us, these wars are especially violent and often targeted against the civilian population<sup>4</sup>. A very powerful example of this has been the Bosnian War, which lasted from 1992 to 1995<sup>5</sup>. Several reports show that important organised and systemic detention and rape of civilian women, mainly by the Bosnian Serb forces, happened in the country. These events motivated the creation of stronger protection of women within the global community<sup>6</sup>. Various United Nations (UN) documents and actions followed which defined and contextualised GBV and violence against women, such as the Declaration and Programme of Action of Vienna<sup>7</sup>, the Declaration on the Elimination of Violence against Women<sup>8</sup>, the creation of International Criminal Courts for former Yugoslavia<sup>9</sup> and Rwanda<sup>10</sup>, and thematic resolutions for the protection

---

<sup>1</sup> Mary Kaldor, *New and Old Wars*, Third edition (Cambridge Malden: Polity, 2012), p. 18.

<sup>2</sup> Ibid.

<sup>3</sup> Ibid.

<sup>4</sup> Ibid.

<sup>5</sup> Ibid, p. 67.

<sup>6</sup> Christine Chinkin, ‘Adoption of 1325 Resolution’, in *The Oxford Handbook of Women, Peace, and Security*, (Oxford University Press, 2019), p. 27.

<sup>7</sup> The World Conference on Human Rights in Vienna. *Declaration and Programme of Action of Vienna* (25 June 1993).

<sup>8</sup> United Nations General Assembly (UNGA), *Declaration on the Elimination of Violence against Women* (20 December 1993).

<sup>9</sup> UNSC. *Resolution 827*. (25 May 1993).

<sup>10</sup> UNSC, *Resolution 955* (8 November 1994).

of civilians in times of war<sup>11</sup>. These developments contributed to creating a favourable environment for the development and acceptance of a resolution on women's experiences in armed conflicts<sup>12</sup>. In parallel, civil society activism had already been advocating for the recognition of women-specific needs and protection of women in a conflict setting for some years. Particularly, several non-governmental organisations (NGOs) founded the NGO working group on women, peace and security<sup>13</sup>. This NGO working group developed the tools, tactics and strategies required, and lobbied for the adoption and implementation of a resolution on the matter.

Following this conjunction between an increased interest of the international community in the protection of women from GBV in an armed conflict environment, and the involvement of civil society, in 2000, the UN Security Council (UNSC) adopted Resolution 1325 which marked the first step in the direction of the creation of an Agenda focusing on Women, Peace and Security (WPS). The resolution requires the global community to ensure the full participation of women in the maintenance and promotion of peace<sup>14</sup>. The WPS Agenda aims at addressing the realities that women and girls face in times of conflict and post-conflict<sup>15</sup>. It builds on four main pillars: the role of women to prevent conflict from occurring, the importance of the participation of women in peace-building processes, the protection of girls and women and their rights during and after the conflict, and the inclusion of their specific needs in the rehabilitation and reintegration processes<sup>16</sup>. Following landmark resolution 1325, nine other resolutions<sup>17</sup> have been adopted each focusing on a specific area of the WPS Agenda.

The core of the Agenda revolves around the idea of gender approach. Namely, the need to incorporate gendered understandings in our research and practice of peace and security. Indeed, women and men do not participate in armed conflict in similar ways, and they have different

---

<sup>11</sup> UNSC, Resolution 1265 (1999); Resolution 1296 (2000); Resolution 1674 (2006).

<sup>12</sup> Chinkin, 'Adoption of 1325 Resolution', p. 34.

<sup>13</sup> Sanam Naraghi Anderlini, 'Civil Society's Leadership in Adopting 1325 Resolution', in *The Oxford Handbook of Women, Peace, and Security*, (Oxford University Press, 2019), p. 44.

<sup>14</sup> UNSC, Resolution 1325, *Women Peace and Security*. S/RES/1325 (2000), para. 1.

<sup>15</sup> Ibid.

<sup>16</sup> Dianne Otto, 'Women, Peace and Security: A Critical Analysis of the Security Council's Vision', *SSRN Scholarly Paper* (Rochester, New-York, 2015), p. 108.

<sup>17</sup> UNSC Resolution 1820 (2008); Resolution 1888 (2009); Resolution 1889 (2009); Resolution 1960 (2010); Resolution 2106 (2013); Resolution 2122 (2013); Resolution 2242 (2015); Resolution 2467 (2019); Resolution 2493 (2019).



perspectives on security<sup>18</sup>. One central request of the WPS Agenda is the necessity to create gender-equal peacebuilding and reconstruction processes succeeding an armed conflict. Peacebuilding enterprises are targeted “to reduce the risk of lapsing or relapsing into conflict by strengthening national capacities at all levels for conflict management, and to lay the foundation for sustainable peace and development”<sup>19</sup>.

## **2.2 Disarmament, Demobilisation, and Reintegration Programs**

DDR measures are central to building peace. The UN defines DDR as a “process that contributes to security and stability in a post-conflict recovery context by removing weapons from the hands of combatants, taking the combatants out of their military structures and helping them to integrate socially and economically into society by finding civilian livelihoods”<sup>20</sup>. DDR processes aim at restabilising fractured States by taking the weapons away from former soldiers and giving them the ability to go back home, away from their fighting sections<sup>21</sup>. The objective is to enable fighters to return to normal life, by granting them access to camps, food, shelter, education, training and even money provided that they give away their arms<sup>22</sup>.

Several actors are part of the DDR process at different levels. Typically, the national actors are the signatories to the peace agreement, national governments, political leaders, and civil society groups. They are the ones framing the DDR processes, and their participation is crucial for the functioning and implementation of the program<sup>23</sup>. The regional and international DDR practitioners are present to provide external support to the shaping of the program. At the international level, it is the UN that is responsible for ensuring a satisfactory implementation of the DDR programs, through UN verification missions, UN Peacekeeping Operation forces, and other UN Peace Operations<sup>24</sup>.

---

<sup>18</sup> Wendy Cukier, James Cairns, ‘Gender, Attitudes and the Regulation of Small Arms: Implications for Action’, in *Sexed Pistols: The Gendered Impacts of Small Arms and Light Weapons*, (New-York: UN University Press, 2009), p. 18.

<sup>19</sup> United Nations Department of Peacekeeping Operations (UNDPO), ‘United Nations Peacekeeping Operations: Principles and Guidelines’ (New-York, 2008), p. 19.

<sup>20</sup> UNDPO, ‘Integrated Disarmament, Demobilization and Reintegration Standards’ (New-York, 2006), p. 6.

<sup>21</sup> Fionnuala Ní Aoláin, Dina Francesca Haynes, Naomi Cahn, ‘Disarmament, Demobilization, and Reintegration (DDR) Programs’, in *On the Frontlines: Gender, War, and the Post-Conflict Process* (Oxford University Press, 2011), p. 131.

<sup>22</sup> Jennifer Pedersen, ‘In the Rain and in the Sun: Women’s Peace Activism in Liberia’, in *Handbook on Gender and War* (Edward Elgar Publishing, 2016), p. 411.

<sup>23</sup> International Peace Academy, ‘A Framework for Lasting Disarmament, Demobilization, and Reintegration of Former Combatants in Crisis Situation’ (New-York, 2002), p. 4.

<sup>24</sup> Ibid.

Disarmament processes aspire to remove weapons from former soldiers' hands as well as from the civilian population and destroy them<sup>25</sup>. By demobilisation, we understand a phase during which the State tries to reduce the military structures and provide the former combatants with resettlement packages<sup>26</sup>. The reintegration period aims at making sure that the fighters have all the keys to reintegrating their communities and staying away from violence<sup>27</sup>. This paper focuses particularly on the disarmament process.

### **2.3 Small Arms and Light Weapons**

Most contemporary armed conflicts have been and are fought with small arms and light weapons<sup>28</sup>. Small arms and light weapons should be understood as “any man portable lethal weapon that expels or launches, is designed to expel or launch, or may be readily converted to expel or launch a shot, bullet or projectile by the action of an explosive, excluding antique small arms and light weapons or their replicas.”<sup>29</sup> Small arms are designed to be used by individuals and can include revolvers, rifles, carabines, and self-loading pistols<sup>30</sup>. These weapons are favoured because they are easily available, cheap, light, and easy to transport, conceal or handle<sup>31</sup>. These characteristics exacerbate the lethality of a conflict, and its duration, and decrease the likelihood of a peaceful resolution<sup>32</sup>.

### **2.4 Disarmament and Women**

Women, both as individuals and as organisations, have been particularly active in their demand for disarmament for many decades now. This advocacy's roots can be found in the link between equality and peace<sup>33</sup>. We can hardly conceive that permanent peace can be established if equal rights and freedoms for women are not ensured. For women who face daily discrimination, war

---

<sup>25</sup> United Nations Secretary-General (UNSG), ‘Administrative and Budgetary Aspects of the Financing of the United Nations Peacekeeping Operations.’ A/C.5/59/31 (2005), para. 1 (a).

<sup>26</sup> Ibid, para 1 (b).

<sup>27</sup> Ibid, para 1 (d).

<sup>28</sup> Noleen Heyzer, ‘Gender, Peace and Disarmament’, Disarmament Forum No. 4 (2004), p. 8.

<sup>29</sup> UN, ‘Report of the United Nations Conference on the Illicit Trade in Small Arms and Light Weapons in All Its Aspects’, A/CONF.192/15 (2001), para 4.

<sup>30</sup> Ibid.

<sup>31</sup> Melissa Gillis, *Disarmament: A Basic Guide* (New-York, 2017), p. 81.

<sup>32</sup> Edwar Mogire, ‘The Humanitarian Impact of Small Arms and Light Weapons and the Threat to Security’, XV Amaldi Conference on Problems of Global Security (2003), p. 6.

<sup>33</sup> United Nations Department for Disarmament Affairs (UNDDA), ‘Conflict, Peace-building, Disarmament, Security: Women's Advocacy for Peace and Disarmament’ (New-York 2001), p. 2.

is present in their everyday life. Moreover, when a government decides to allocate resources to purchase arms, it means that there will be fewer resources available for development and women's rights initiatives. Therefore, peace and equality are directly related, and one cannot be reached without the other.

Another reason why women have been very active in their advocacy for peace and disarmament can be found in the distinct ways in which women experience conflicts in comparison to men. During armed conflicts, women typically support combatants by assuming all the responsibilities at home, but also the responsibilities linked to the war, such as being couriers and carrying war supplies<sup>34</sup>. Furthermore, women are disproportionately affected by the proliferation of weapons in their community both in times of peace and war<sup>35</sup>. As more arms are travelling to or through the country, more weapons are available in their homes<sup>36</sup>.

## **2.5 The Colombian Case: A Never-Ending Conflict?**

The Colombian Conflict was particularly long and violent. It started officially in 1964 with the founding of the main guerrilla organisation in the country, the FARC-EP<sup>37</sup>. However, the conflict is part of a larger history of discord which started with Colombia's fight for independence from Spain in 1819. From 1812 to 1902, the Liberal and Conservative Parties fought at least ten civil wars<sup>38</sup>. The salient point of these fighting periods has been La Violencia (The Violence), namely a 10-year civil war opposing the Conservative Party to the Liberal Party. La Violencia began in 1948 with the assassination of the presidential candidate of the Liberal Party after armed confrontations resumed following the return to power of the Conservative Party<sup>39</sup>. Seeking revenge after the Liberal rule, the Conservatives called for the seizure of the Liberals' agricultural lands. In response to this, the Liberals organised into guerrillas<sup>40</sup>. The two parties then signed a political agreement in 1968, the National Front, in which they agreed to a rotation

---

<sup>34</sup> UNDDA in Collaboration with the Office of the Special Adviser on Gender Issues and the Advancement of Women, 'Gender Perspectives on Small Arms' (New-York 2001), p. 1.

<sup>35</sup> Louise Arimatsu, Rasha Obaid, Anna de Courcy Wheeler, 'Women, Weapons and Disarmament', in *Feminist Conversations on Peace*, 1st ed. (Bristol University Press, 2022), p. 142.

<sup>36</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 140.

<sup>37</sup> Jorge Luis Fabra-Zamora, Andrés Molina-Ochoa, Nancy Doubleday, 'Introduction', in *The Colombian Peace Agreement* (Routledge, 2021), p. 2.

<sup>38</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>39</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>40</sup> *Ibid.*

of power every presidential term between the two parties for the next four terms<sup>41</sup>. This agreement ended the war between the groups, but it did not address the root causes which led to the conflict in the first place, namely inequalities and land distribution. The arrangement also left out outsider political forces such as the Communist Party<sup>42</sup>. Most of the left-wing guerrillas, including the FARC-EP, were founded during the National Front period. These guerrilla groups typically consisted of peasants and former Liberal guerrilla fighters who possessed a Marxist-Leninist ideology, and who managed to establish autonomous territories.<sup>43</sup> In reaction to this, the government attacked these so-called independent republics to regain control<sup>44</sup>. The conflict turned into a proxy war during the Cold War with the communist guerrillas on one side, supported by the Soviet Union and China, and on the other side, the government supported by the United States. Both supporting sides were sending supplies into the country, fuelling the violence even more<sup>45</sup>. According to the Colombian National Center of Historical Memory, as of September 30, 2022, 269,448 people have died because of the conflict since 1958.<sup>46</sup> Disappearances, sexual violence, kidnapping, and internal displacement were common practices<sup>47</sup>.

In the 1980s, under Belisario Betancur's presidency, the FARC-EP refused to put an end to their armed struggle, and the far-right repressed the FARC-EP politicisation by killing more than 4,000 of their members between the late 80s and early 90s<sup>48</sup>. In 2002, the government of Alvaro Uribe refused to engage in talks with the guerrilla groups and instead started peace talks with the paramilitaries, who sought to neutralise the guerrilla forces. This led to the signing of the Justice and Peace Law which aimed at the demobilisation and reintegration of the paramilitary groups' members<sup>49</sup>. However, due to the weakness of the program and lack of accountability and reintegration of the paramilitaries, violence resumed soon after<sup>50</sup>.

---

<sup>41</sup> Ibid.

<sup>42</sup> Ibid, p. 3.

<sup>43</sup> Ibid.

<sup>44</sup> Ibid.

<sup>45</sup> Ibid.

<sup>46</sup> Data from the Observatorio de Memoria y Conflicto (Observatory of Memory and Conflict), Available: <https://micrositios.centrodememoriahistorica.gov.co/observatorio/> (Accessed 12 February 2023).

<sup>47</sup> Fabra-Zamora, Molina-Ochoa, Doubleday, 'Introduction', p. 6.

<sup>48</sup> Francesca Capone, 'An Overview of the DDR Process Established in the Aftermath of the Revised Peace Agreement between the Colombian Government and the FARC: Finally on the Right Track?' *Global Jurist* 17, no. 3 (2017), p. 3.

<sup>49</sup> Ibid, p. 7.

<sup>50</sup> Ibid.

The country has always consisted of many guerrilla groups and right-wing paramilitary groups. For this paper, I will focus on the guerrilla FARC-EP, since it is the one which signed the 2016 Peace Agreement. I will also address the current peace negotiations between the government and another guerrilla group, Ejército de Liberación Nacional (National Liberation Army) (ELN). This would be complex and irrelevant to list all the different illegal armed groups which used to be or still are active in the country. What is important to note is that some groups have signed demobilisation agreements, some have not, some agreements have been respected and some others have not.

After decades of violence and solution-seeking, the ‘Final Agreement for Ending the Conflict and Building a Stable and Lasting Peace’ (Peace Agreement) was signed on November 25, 2016<sup>51</sup>. It comprises six chapters, each focusing on a negotiation point of the agenda: comprehensive rural development<sup>52</sup>, political participation<sup>53</sup>, rules for the termination of the conflict<sup>54</sup>, solutions to drug trafficking<sup>55</sup>, justice and accountability system for the victims<sup>56</sup>, creation of a commission for the implementation and verification of the peace agreement<sup>57</sup>. The FARC-EP members agreed to give up their weapons and go to “Transitional Village Zones for Normalisation” or campsites<sup>58</sup>. Concerning the surrender of arms, the agreement planned to register, identify, monitor, and verify the possession, recollect, store, and remove the weapons at the UN Headquarters and in Colombia<sup>59</sup>.

The outcomes of this agreement are still uncertain. Clear results have been observed with the demobilisation of FARC-EP members and the seizure of their weapons, and the fact that 2017 was the least violent year in the history of the country. Despite this, Colombia still faces political, economic, and social challenges<sup>60</sup>. Iván Duque was the President of Colombia from 2018 to 2022, and his party kept attacking the Peace Agreement. During his presidential term,

---

<sup>51</sup> Ibid, p. 9.

<sup>52</sup> Final Agreement to End the Armed Conflict and Build a Stable and Lasting Peace (2016), (English translation available : <https://www.peaceagreements.org/viewmasterdocument/1845>), pp. 10-33.

<sup>53</sup> Ibid, pp. 34-56.

<sup>54</sup> Ibid, pp. 57-103.

<sup>55</sup> Ibid, pp. 104-131.

<sup>56</sup> Ibid, pp. 132-203.

<sup>57</sup> Ibid, pp. 204-231.

<sup>58</sup> Ibid, p. 5.

<sup>59</sup> Ibid, p. 5.

<sup>60</sup> Fabra-Zamora, Molina-Ochoa, Doubleday, ‘Introduction’, pp. 12-13.

violence regained importance, with the killing of human rights defenders and former FARC-EP fighters<sup>61</sup>. The current President is Gustavo Petro and has been elected in 2022. He has been very vocal about the value of the Peace Agreement and the importance to keep on working for ‘total peace’ between the illegal armed groups and the State<sup>62</sup>. Economic stressors also impact the level of violence, as illegal activities represent economic opportunities for the former fighters who failed to be included in the implementation of the agreement<sup>63</sup>.

The current peace process in Colombia is considered one of the most gender-sensitive<sup>64</sup>. Indeed, the Final Agreement integrates a gender focus in a hundred measures<sup>65</sup>. The negotiation process was very inclusive and the agreement concentrated strongly on women’s experiences of war, especially regarding sexual violence<sup>66</sup>. Undeniably, sexual violence has been used by all parties to the conflict as a weapon of war, and two out of ten displaced women fled to escape sexual violence<sup>67</sup>. Black and indigenous Colombian women have been especially dehumanised and “othered”, and have therefore been especially affected by the violence<sup>68</sup>.

### 3 Research Questions

The main aim of this paper is to increase understanding of the role of disarmament of small arms in the protection of women from GBV, in Colombia’s post-conflict environment.

Small arms can facilitate violence and participate in the circle of violence against women which continues even after the end of an armed conflict. Small arms represent a threat to women because they exacerbate the structural gendered imbalances of power. Therefore, I would expect that when small arms are taken from the soldiers following an armed conflict, women will experience less GBV such as intimate partner violence (IPV) and sexual violence.

---

<sup>61</sup> Ibid, p. 14.

<sup>62</sup> ‘Colombia’s Last Guerrillas Make First Step toward “Total Peace”, *International Crisis Group*, 23 November 2022, <https://www.crisisgroup.org/latin-america-caribbean/andes/colombia/colombias-last-guerrillas-make-first-step-toward-total-peace> (Accessed 12 February 2023).

<sup>63</sup> Fabra-Zamora, Molina-Ochoa, Doubleday, ‘Introduction’, p. 14.

<sup>64</sup> Rakel Oion-Encina, ‘Resolution 1325 in the Agency of Colombian Women in the Peace Process of 2012-2016’, *Journal of International Women’s Studies*, 21, no. 6 (2020), p. 341.

<sup>65</sup> Ibid, p. 339.

<sup>66</sup> Signe Svallfors, ‘Hidden Casualties: The Links between Armed Conflict and Intimate Partner Violence in Colombia’, *Politics & Gender* 19, no. 1 (2023), p. 133.

<sup>67</sup> Paula San Pedro, ‘Sexual Violence in Colombia: Instrument of War’ (Oxfam Briefing Paper, 2009), p. 3.

<sup>68</sup> Julia Carolin Sachse, ‘Women’s Experiences of Violence and Insecurities in Colombia’s Conflict’, in *Violence against Women in and beyond Conflict: The Coloniality of Violence* (London: Routledge, 2022), p. 149.

In response to the background, my main research question is, therefore, the following:

*In which ways did the disarmament of small arms following the 2016 Colombian Peace Agreement impact violence against women?*

And my sub-questions are:

- (a) How successful has the disarmament of small arms in Colombia been?*
- (b) How have small arms been used in intimate partner violence and sexual violence in Colombia?*
- (c) Do participants feel that there was a change in the levels of violence against women since the end of the conflict? Particularly, do they see the disarmament as having played a role in this? What is the reason in their opinion?*

## **4 Literature Review**

### **4.1 Disarmament Following an Armed Conflict**

Researchers on the disarmament following an armed conflict all agree on one idea: if the guns possessed by former combatants are not taken from them following the end of the conflict, their neighbourhoods and homes will become zones of violence, mirroring the warzones they lived in during the past months, years, decades<sup>69</sup>. This follows numerous reports, all claiming that to limit the violence after a conflict termination, guns need to be taken from the former combatants<sup>70</sup>.

The availability of small arms during a transition period from war to peace has proved to be a threat to peace, leading to an increase in armed violence which can then turn into an outbreak of conflict<sup>71</sup>.

---

<sup>69</sup> Wendy Cukier, Alison Kooistra, and Mark Anto, 'Gendered Perspectives on Small Arms Proliferation and Misuse: Effects and Policies', *Bonn International Center for Conversion Brief 24*, (2002), p. 26.

<sup>70</sup> International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC), 'Arms Availability and the Situation of Civilians in Armed Conflict: A Study Presented by the ICRC' (1999).

<sup>71</sup> Joakim Kreutz, Nicholas Marsh, Manuela Torre, 'Regaining State Control: Arms and Violence in Post-Conflict Countries', in *Small Arms, Crime and Conflict: Global Governance and the Threat of Armed Violence*, ed. Owen Greene and Nicholas Marsh, Routledge Studies in Peace and Conflict Resolution. (New York: Routledge, 2012), p. 66.

There are however research gaps in the literature. Indeed, the literature is lacking on the effects of the disarmament which followed an armed conflict. Research also lacks a gendered analysis of disarmament.

## 4.2 Disarmament and Women

It has been highlighted that we need to include a gendered perspective in DDR programs. Women and men are affected in different ways by armed conflicts, therefore, we need to take gender into account in these processes to create the most effective way out of an armed conflict<sup>72</sup>. Moreover, women and men possess different access to resources following an armed conflict, and this needs to be considered when conceiving a DDR program<sup>73</sup>.

Including women in peacebuilding and peacekeeping discussions and programs is central to ensuring a questioning of the social roles traditionally allocated to women and men. These understandings of traditional roles can lead to violent behaviours, typically from men who try to reach masculine expectations<sup>74</sup> (this will be developed further in the theory section below). Because these violent behaviours are similar to the ones employed in armed conflicts, in some cases ‘everyday’ violence can gain importance and can lead to an escalation of violence which can sometimes spark armed conflict violence. To ensure the dismantlement of violent patterns and mentalities of war, we need to address behaviour generally associated with traditional masculinities, such as lack of emotion, dominance, hyper-competitiveness, or glorification of violence<sup>75</sup>. Research shows that to achieve sustainable peace and healing, eradication of a normalised use of violence must be prioritised as well as toxic masculine behaviours<sup>76</sup>. In short, it is not only the former combatants who need to change their habits and beliefs but the entire society. We will come back to this question later in the next chapter.

If the demobilisation process following an armed conflict is crucial to ensure that the armed forces cannot easily start fighting again, disarmament is central to the transitional process from

---

<sup>72</sup> Ní Aoláin, Haynes, Cahn, ‘Disarmament, Demobilization, and Reintegration (DDR) Programs’, p. 133.

<sup>73</sup> Ibid.

<sup>74</sup> Raewyn Connell, *Gender and Power: Society, the Person, and Sexual Politics*, (Stanford University Press, 1987), p. 183.

<sup>75</sup> Ní Aoláin, Haynes, Cahn, ‘Disarmament, Demobilization, and Reintegration (DDR) Programs’, p. 133.

<sup>76</sup> Wenche Iren Hauge, ‘Gender Dimensions of DDR – beyond Victimization and Dehumanization: Tracking the Thematic’, *International Feminist Journal of Politics* 22, no. 2 (2020), p.8.



war to peace. Disarmament is key to the prevention of conflict recurrence<sup>77</sup>. Indeed, if former combatants still have access to their guns, the chances are high that their life and the life of their friends and family will be more violent<sup>78</sup>. The presence of guns in the homes makes interpersonal violence more likely. More specifically, small arms can be regarded as facilitators of violence and can create a circle of insecurity which could lead to greater use of small arms in defensive reasoning<sup>79</sup>. This violence created by the important availability of weapons, can take different forms: street crime, organised crime, or domestic violence<sup>80</sup>.

### 4.3 Small Arms and Gender-Based Violence

Edward Mogire in his study on the impacts of small arms on security, notes that small arms and light weapons have destructive consequences on human, national and international security<sup>81</sup>. They tend to exacerbate the violence both in conflict and peace settings and increase the risks for the civilian population<sup>82</sup>.

Women are especially affected by small arms, because as civilians, they are the main victims of the new wars, and because their access to basic needs is restricted by the threat of small arms<sup>83</sup>. Even if they own only a small share of firearms, they are disproportionately present as victims<sup>84</sup>. Direct consequences of small arms on women include domestic and sexual violence, murder and injury, robbery, human trafficking, displacement, forced marriages and prostitution. Indirect consequences range from having to take the role of household leader if the partner is killed, to the caretaker of injured family members. This implies that women are not able to access a workplace, education, or health services because of the threat of armed violence<sup>85</sup>.

---

<sup>77</sup> David Felipe, Gomez Triana, Ida Rodninggen, Nicholas Marsh, Julia Pallik, 'Negotiating Disarmament – The Gender Dimension: Barriers to the Inclusion of Women in Disarmament Negotiations', (PRIO GPS Policy Brief 2022), p. 1.

<sup>78</sup> Ibid.

<sup>79</sup> Kreutz, Marsh, Torre, 'Regaining State Control', p. 80.

<sup>80</sup> Dylan Mazurana and Linda Eckerbom Cole, 'Women, Girls, and Disarmament, Demobilization and Reintegration (DDR)', in *Women, Girls, and DDR* (Cambridge: Polity, 2017), p. 196.

<sup>81</sup> Mogire, 'The Humanitarian Impact of Small Arms and Light Weapons and the Threat to Security', p. 1.

<sup>82</sup> UNDDA in Collaboration with the Office of the Special Adviser on Gender Issues and the Advancement of Women, 'Gender Perspectives on Small Arms', p. 1.

<sup>83</sup> Mogire, 'The Humanitarian Impact of Small Arms and Light Weapons and the Threat to Security', p. 13.

<sup>84</sup> Cukier, Kooistra, Anto, 'Gendered Perspectives on Small Arms Proliferation and Misuse', p. 25.

<sup>85</sup> Small Arms Survey, 'Converging Agendas: Women, Peace, Security, and Small Arms', in *Small Arms Survey 2014: Women and Guns*, (2014), p. 40.

Women are typically the targets of specific forms of violence due to their gender<sup>86</sup>, and these forms of violence are facilitated by small arms<sup>87</sup>.

Research shows that most types of violence perpetrated against women in times of conflict are facilitated by the presence of small arms and light weapons<sup>88</sup>. For instance, systematic rape is often supplemented by other forms of violence such as beating, assault and killing, which are facilitated by small arms<sup>89</sup>. Those same arms are typically used to threaten the victim-survivor and are sometimes inserted into the victim-survivors' genitals<sup>90</sup>. Even if women are less likely to be killed by small arms in close combat, the same weapons are used as an instrument for GBV in times of conflict, and in times of peace.

Research has also shown that small arms are used in different ways in IPV. Several pieces of research have shown that the ownership of a gun at home is a risk factor for IPV. Guns are used in most intimate partner homicides<sup>91</sup>. Another research comes up with different risk factors for femicides, including access to a gun for the perpetrator, a previous threat with a weapon, and the presence of the perpetrator's stepchild at home<sup>92</sup>. A conclusion can be reached: the presence of a gun at home is more threatening to family members than protecting<sup>93</sup>. Small arms in houses are not used to protect the family members from intruders, it increases the risk of women being threatened and harmed in their own homes<sup>94</sup>. For a woman, the likelihood of being murdered

---

<sup>86</sup> Gender-based violence refers to acts of violence which target people because of their gender identity. Within the category of gender-based violence, we find the sub-category of violence against women. This is defined as "any act of gender-based violence that results in, or is likely to result in, physical, sexual or psychological harm or suffering to women, including threats of such acts, coercion or arbitrary deprivations of liberty, whether occurring in public or private life". Gender-based violence can encompass domestic violence, conflict-related violence, wartime rape and gender discrimination, UNGA, 'Declaration on the Elimination of Violence against Women'. A/RES/48/104 (1993), art. 1.

<sup>87</sup> Maartje Van der Laak, 'Gender Perspectives on Interventions to Reduce the Proliferation and Misuse of Small Arms and Light Weapons (SALW): A Case Study of Women's Efforts in Rwanda', *L'Afrique des Grand Lacs. Annuaire 2003-2004* (2004), p. 60.

<sup>88</sup> Neyzer, 'Gender, Peace and Disarmament', p. 8.

<sup>89</sup> Vanessa Farr, Henri Myrntinen Al Schnabel, Felicity Szesnat, 'Small Arms and Rape as a System of War: A Case Study of the Democratic Republic of the Congo', in *Sexed Pistols: The Gendered Impacts of Small Arms and Light Weapons* (New York: United Nations University Press, 2009), p. 95.

<sup>90</sup> Ibid, p. 96.

<sup>91</sup> Mohayed Mohayed and Rahn Kennedy Bailey 'Intimate Partner Homicide: Firearms Use in Domestic Violence', In *Intimate Partner Violence* (Springer, 2021), p. 114.

<sup>92</sup> Jacquelyn Campbell et al., 'Risk Factors for Femicide in Abusive Relationships: Results From a Multisite Case Control Study', *American Journal of Public Health* 93, no. 7 (2003), p. 1094.

<sup>93</sup> Deborah Azrael and David Hemenway, "'In the Safety of Your Own Home": Results from a National Survey on Gun Use at Home', *Social Science & Medicine* 50, no. 2 (2000), pp. 289-290.

<sup>94</sup> Barbara Frey, 'The Gender Implications of Small Arms and Light Weapons in Conflict Situations', in *The Oxford Handbook of Gender and Conflict*, (Oxford University Press, 2018), p. 370.

by an intimate partner increases as the availability of firearms does<sup>95</sup>. What is very specific to women regarding small arms, is that they experience armed violence from the persons closest to them, a husband, or an intimate male partner for example<sup>96</sup>. On the contrary, men are more likely to be hurt or killed by a stranger or an acquaintance than by someone they are close to<sup>97</sup>.

A further study highlights that exposure to an armed conflict is an important risk factor for IPV<sup>98</sup>. This can be explained by the fact that war, and its violence, leave a mark on interpersonal and especially intimate relationships. The end of a conflict does not erase the brutalising effects of war, for the returning combatants, transitioning from the violence on the battlefield to coming back home can be tough. When the male relatives who have been very often brutalised and traumatised by their experience of the war come back home, violence is brought into the homes<sup>99</sup>. Women face a unique form of violence and the availability of small arms impacts their safety from random criminals and violent intimate partners.

The research field on small arms and GBV focuses primarily on the ownership of small arms in times of peace. With my research, I hope to bring a post-conflict logic to the ownership of small arms and focus on its impacts on violence against women.

#### 4.4 Colombia

Gun carrying and gun violence have become standard in Colombia. A study has shown that approximately 20% of Colombian students from Santa Marta, aged 13 to 17 years old, carried a weapon to school<sup>100</sup>. This carrying of a gun was associated with the male gender, the use of substances, the propensity of starting fights, and planning to commit suicide<sup>101</sup>. A report from Small Arms Survey highlights that criminal violence is more threatening than conflict-related

---

<sup>95</sup> Ibid.

<sup>96</sup> Wendy Cuckier, Amélie Baillargeon, Sarah Eagen, 'A Gendered Perspective on the Misuse and Proliferation of Small Arms/Firearms', in *The Search for Lasting Peace: Critical Perspectives on Gender-Responsive Human Security* (Ashgate, 2014), p. 170.

<sup>97</sup> Ibid.

<sup>98</sup> Gudrun Østby, Michele Leiby, Ragnhild Nordås, 'The Legacy of Wartime Violence on Intimate-Partner Abuse: Microlevel Evidence from Peru, 1980–2009', *International Studies Quarterly*, Volume 63, Issue 1 (2019), p. 9.

<sup>99</sup> Vanessa Farr, 'The Impacts on Women of Proliferating Small Arms and Light Weapons', *Canadian Woman Studies/les cahiers de la femme*, 22(2), (2002), p. 61.

<sup>100</sup> María P. Jiménez-Villamizar, Adalberto Campo-Arias, Carmen C. Caballero-Domínguez, 'Carrying Weapons at School: Prevalence and Associated Factors in Colombian High-school Students', *Psychology in the Schools* 59, no. 11 (2022), p. 2321.

<sup>101</sup> Ibid.

violence in the country<sup>102</sup>. Most homicides in Colombia have been committed with small arms and light weapons<sup>103</sup>.

Even though the gun-related deaths associated with the armed conflict dropped following the Peace Agreement, they remain high<sup>104</sup>. Researchers analysed the effects of the gun-carrying restrictions in Bogotá and Medellín in comparison to other big cities of the country which did not have gun restrictions between 2008 and 2016<sup>105</sup>. They find that the gun-related mortality rates diminished from 37,2% in the two cities with restrictions, against a decrease of 17,6% for the other big cities<sup>106</sup>. They also note that that reduction was mainly for men and that women saw only a 6,3% decrease in their gun-related deaths in residential areas and no change in public areas<sup>107</sup>.

Much research has been done on violence against women in Colombia. Oxfam published a report highlighting that sexual violence was used as a weapon during the armed conflict<sup>108</sup>. Sexual abuse or sexual exploitation has been a common tool used by every side of the conflict. This was used as a weapon of war, a way to demonstrate power before the enemy and to cause them pain in the hope that it will affect their fighting<sup>109</sup>.

Anne-Kathrin Kreft analysed Colombian civil society's perspectives on sexual violence and highlighted three narratives<sup>110</sup>. First, sexual violence is perceived as a gendered violence which finds its roots in patriarchal norms and values<sup>111</sup>. Second, the interviewees thought that conflict-related sexual violence was the logical extension of sexual violence before an armed conflict but amplified by the conflict<sup>112</sup>. Finally, only a few interviewees brought up the idea that sexual

---

<sup>102</sup> Small Arms Survey, 'Colombia's Hydra: The Many Faces of Gun Violence', (Small Arms Survey, 2006), p. 217.

<sup>103</sup> Ibid.

<sup>104</sup> Andres I. Vecino-Ortiz, Deivis N. Guzman-Tordecilla, 'Gun-Carrying Restrictions and Gun-Related Mortality, Colombia: A Difference-in-Difference Design with Fixed Effects', *Bulletin of the World Health Organization* 98, no. 3 (2020), p. 170.

<sup>105</sup> Ibid, p. 171.

<sup>106</sup> Ibid.

<sup>107</sup> Ibid.

<sup>108</sup> Oxfam International, 'Sexual Violence in Colombia: Instrument of War', *Oxfam Briefing Paper* (2009), p. 11.

<sup>109</sup> Ibid.

<sup>110</sup> Anne-Kathrin Kreft, 'Civil Society Perspectives on Sexual Violence in Conflict: Patriarchy and War Strategy in Colombia', *International Affairs* 96, no. 2 (2020).

<sup>111</sup> Ibid, pp. 466-467.

<sup>112</sup> Ibid, p. 471.

violence was used as a weapon of war, but when they did it was more through the idea of women as the “spoils of war”<sup>113</sup>, implying some societal context, as opposed to sexual violence as a weapon of war. The idea of sexual violence used as a weapon of war highlights its extraordinary character and undermines the underlying patriarchal aspects of sexual violence which happens in every setting. The participants in her research wanted to emphasise the deeper reasons why men sexually assault women.

Sexual violence has been one of the main causes of forced displacement during the conflict. Research shows that in a conflict environment, women and their families face threats to life, restricted movement, kidnapping, forced labour, rape, sexual violence, and IPV<sup>114</sup>. In displaced settings, IPV and intrafamilial violence have been very common for Colombian women<sup>115</sup>. Displacement increases the vulnerability of women to face GBV for several reasons. Economic distress, post-traumatic stress, loss of social support, change in the gender roles with women becoming in charge of the household while the men are fighting, loss of employment and loss of a partner<sup>116</sup>.

It has been proven that, in Colombia, a connection between armed conflict and physical and sexual IPV exists<sup>117</sup>. War has a strong immediate impact on IPV rather than a long-term impact on it<sup>118</sup>. The women who experienced a violent conflict in the past five years are 8% more likely to experience emotional IPV and 4% to experience physical violence<sup>119</sup>.

Relevant research on Colombia has been focusing on the use of small arms in IPV and sexual violence. However, research fails to address the usefulness of disarmament in the context of the implementation of a peacebuilding process while using a gendered perspective. I hope to bring a new take on peacebuilding by focusing on the usefulness of disarmament in the protection of women from GBV in Colombia.

---

<sup>113</sup> Ibid. p. 474.

<sup>114</sup> Andrea L. Wirtz et al., ‘Gender-Based Violence in Conflict and Displacement: Qualitative Findings from Displaced Women in Colombia’, *Conflict and Health* 8, no. 1 (2014), p. 6.

<sup>115</sup> Ibid, p. 7.

<sup>116</sup> Ibid, p. 10.

<sup>117</sup> Ibid, p. 14.

<sup>118</sup> Ibid.

<sup>119</sup> Ibid.

## 5 Theoretical Framework and Methodology

### 5.1. Feminist Peace Research

#### 5.1.1 Feminist Peace

Women experience conflict in specific ways, all shaped by social structures and gender norms. These structures and norms are based on the idea that there are two biological sexes and belonging to one of the groups entails possessing corresponding social characteristics and expectations<sup>120</sup>.

The male habitus is shaped by numerous life steps for boys and men to compete with each other throughout their life. These material and symbolic spaces range from boys' schools, youth groups, sports, and prisons to the military and certain professions<sup>121</sup>. This goes back to the notion of toxic masculinity which reflects the idealisation of traditional dominant male identities<sup>122</sup>. Hegemonic masculinities are always constructed in relation to other subordinated masculinities and to women<sup>123</sup>. Following an individual or collective crisis, re-assessing masculine identities can lead to a higher level of domestic violence<sup>124</sup>. For example, following armed conflicts, demobilised fighters, mostly men, go back home and are often unemployed. To re-establish their position of domination in the household, they use violence<sup>125</sup>.

Gender norms and relations of power play a role in the construction of war and violence. This is why gender equality is at the very core of the structural transformation needed to reach sustainable peace. GBV, both in times of conflict and in times of peace, must be understood as a form of political violence and a tool to assert social power, which arises from patriarchal relations<sup>126</sup>.

---

<sup>120</sup> Laura Sjoberg, 'Gender-Based Violence in War', in *Handbook on Gender and War*, (Edward Elgar Publishing, 2016), p. 176.

<sup>121</sup> Cilja Harders, 'Gender Relations, Violence and Conflict Transformation', In *Advancing Conflict Transformation. The Berghof Handbook II*, (Barbara Budrich Publishers, 2011), p. 143.

<sup>122</sup> Raewyn Connell, *Gender and Power: Society, the Person, and Sexual Politics*, (Stanford University Press, 1987), p. 183.

<sup>123</sup> Ibid.

<sup>124</sup> Harders, 'Gender Relations, Violence and Conflict Transformation', p. 133.

<sup>125</sup> Ibid.

<sup>126</sup> Ruth Seifert, 'War and Rape: A Preliminary Analysis', in *The Criminology of War* (Routledge, 2014).

Weapon ownership represents a physical manifestation of power. Men not conforming to expected forms of masculinities tend to embrace guns as an alternative way of performing the expected masculinity if they lack other resources<sup>127</sup>.

### 5.1.2 Continuum of Violence

Critical feminist thinkers question the assertion that conflict-related sexual violence is a product of war. They argue that we cannot focus on sexual violence happening in times of conflict only as a result of war because it would make sexual violence exceptional and occurring only in times of conflict<sup>128</sup>. Instead, they analyse sexual violence in times of war as a continuation of violence which extends throughout different temporal, spatial and cultural settings. The use of sexual violence in times of conflict is no different than the use of sexual violence in times of peace. Therefore, it is not relevant to talk about it as a weapon of war used only in wartime. On the contrary, conflict-related sexual violence should be understood as part of a continuum of violence which transcend the war and peace division<sup>129</sup>.

The term ‘continuum of violence’ is often used to describe and explain GBV, implying that violence spreads from one setting to another, from one experience to another<sup>130</sup>. Women face a continuity of violence in times of peace and in times of war. Feminist peace researchers do not hold a line between the private and the public realm since gendered relations of power are perpetuated in both spheres<sup>131</sup>. The violence that women face in the domestic sphere is reinforced by and translated into a larger political system.

Through this perspective of a continuum of violence, violence has different meanings and effects based on the different experiences, both individual and collective<sup>132</sup>. This theory has been used to highlight the range of behaviours and experiences women face in a gendered

---

<sup>127</sup> Dana Britton, Shannon Jacobsen, Grace Howard, *The Gender of Crime*, Second edition, The Gender Lens Series (Lanham: Rowman & Littlefield, 2018), p. 88-89.

<sup>128</sup> Jelke Boesten, ‘Of Exceptions and Continuities: Theory and Methodology in Research on Conflict-Related Sexual violence’, *International Feminist Journal of Politics* 19: 4 (2017), p. 507.

<sup>129</sup> Kreft, ‘Civil Society Perspectives on Sexual Violence in Conflict’, pp. 460-461.

<sup>130</sup> Punam Yadav, Denise M. Horn, ‘Continuums of Violence: Feminist Peace Research and Gender-Based Violence’, in *Routledge Handbook of Feminist Peace Research* (Routledge, 2021), p. 105.

<sup>131</sup> *Ibid*, p. 106.

<sup>132</sup> Denisa Kostovicova, Vesna Bojicic-Dzelilovic, Marsha Henry, ‘Drawing on the Continuum: A War and Post-War Political Economy of Gender-Based Violence in Bosnia and Herzegovina’, *International Feminist Journal of Politics* 22, no. 2 (2020), p. 252.

structure<sup>133</sup>. Peace is more than just the absence of war; women are at risk even in times of ‘peace’ because of the gendered social structures. War does not simply end with a peace agreement and what we imagine as ‘peacetime’ is a site of violence for women<sup>134</sup>. This then leads to a cascade of violence, in which violence goes from one space to another, from powerless to powerful, and reinforces the gendered relationships of domination from men<sup>135</sup>.

## **5.2 Methodology Presentation**

### **5.2.1 Data Collection: Desktop Research and Interviews**

To be coherent with a feminist peace approach, I adopted a qualitative approach to my question which allowed me to grasp the experience of the Colombians. I chose interviews as my main tool of data collection and desktop research to complete the data I obtained through my interviews.

In feminist research, qualitative analysis, and especially interviews have been favoured<sup>136</sup>. It can capture the experience of interviewees as accurately as possible because the data is not standardised, meaning that the seizing of the differences between the people is better-ensured<sup>137</sup>. Especially, it ensures that the thoughts and feelings of the interviewees are expressed in their own words, without the researchers using their own words to try to depict the experiences of others<sup>138</sup>. Interviews allowed me to engage with the experience and knowledge of the people I interviewed.

To follow the aim of my research, I interviewed members of peace, feminist, and antimilitarist organisations in Colombia. The selection of interviewees was made based on web searching and snowball sampling, as well as through relevant contact persons. The objective was to interview relevant representatives of the fight for peace and equality.

---

<sup>133</sup> Liz Kelly, ‘The Continuum of Sexual Violence’, in *Women, Violence and Social Control*, ed. Jalna Hanmer and Mary Maynard (London: Palgrave Macmillan UK, 1987), p. 48.

<sup>134</sup> Yadav, Horn, ‘Continuums of Violence’, p. 110.

<sup>135</sup> Ibid, p. 106.

<sup>136</sup> Tami Jacoby, ‘From the Trenches: Dilemmas of Feminist IR Fieldwork’, in *Feminist Methodologies for International Relations*, ed. Brooke A. Ackerly, Maria Stern, and Jacqui True, 1st ed. (Cambridge University Press, 2006), p. 161.

<sup>137</sup> Ibid.

<sup>138</sup> Ibid.



I used semi-structured interviews because they allowed me to have some flexibility while still making sure that the same core questions were asked to all the participants to ensure a certain cohesion<sup>139</sup>. The interviews were conducted digitally, through Zoom for time and financial reasons. Due to language limitations, some interviews had to become questionnaires, using Nettskjema, as some participants did not feel confident giving me an interview in English, concerned that they would not be able to use the correct terms in English and be limited by it. Because I do not speak Spanish, I had to have a translator translate the answers from two of my respondents. In total, out of 41 individuals and organisations contacted, I carried out four interviews and obtained written answers from two additional respondents:

Respondent A - From a feminist afro-Colombian organisation

Respondent B - From a Colombian NGO which works to achieve peace in the country

Respondent C - From a Colombian NGO which contributes to reaching sustainable peace in Colombia

Respondent D - From a Colombian legal NGO which protects human rights and victims on the Colombian conflict

Respondent E - From a Colombian peace NGO

Respondent F - From an antimilitarist feminist Colombian organisation

I collected data from reports, especially reports from the UN Verification mission for Colombia which has the responsibility of accompanying the government and other parties in the implementation of key elements of the Peace Agreement, as well as from reports from the Committee on the Elimination of all Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW) on Colombia. I decided to use these reports to complete the data I received through my interviews to confirm and reinforce the information I received from my respondents.

### **5.2.2 Limitations**

The first restraint I reached was a striking lack of quantitative data on small arms and violence against women. Indeed, my first intention for this research was to have mixed-method research. I planned on carrying out a quantitative analysis of ten counties which underwent a civil war, followed by a peace agreement to see if I could find a quantitative correlation between the number of guns during and after the conflict, and the levels of GBV. This analysis would then

---

<sup>139</sup> See Appendix I for example of an interview guide.

have been supplemented by a case study of Colombia using interviews. However, data was non-existent for most of the countries and the period I wanted to focus on. As we will see later in this research, illegal trafficking of weapons is extremely common, which makes it difficult to have correct and representative numbers of guns owned by non-state actors in a country. Quantifying GBV is also a very complex process for multiple reasons. A lot of women who try to press charges are met with scepticism from the police forces. Many women are also too scared to press charges, afraid that their perpetrators would strike again, afraid that they would not be listened to nor believed, and fearful of marginalisation. The notion of violence against women is still a concept that is not recognised by everyone, so even when women are killed by their partner, in too many cases, it is considered a homicide and not a deliberate killing of a woman because she is a woman. It is believed that most acts of violence against women are not recorded, and gender stereotypes play a crucial role in this.

Until I started reaching out to possible interviewees, I did not realise that the language barrier would be this important. Indeed, I do not speak any Spanish and for some people, I reached out to, this was an issue. Some of them did not think their English proficiency was good enough to be interviewed in English. The language limitation did hold back at least two persons who refused to give me an interview, even with the presence of a translator. They even refused to have their written answers translated. This aspect for sure limited my access to people to interview and limited the scope of results as even if four interviews were held in English, all my interlocutors sometimes struggled to express themselves in English.

My first objective was to interview different actors in the DDR process in Colombia as well as women's and peace organisations. However, very quickly I realised that without any contact there, many of my requests were left unanswered. Indeed, the very bureaucratic nature of the international political system was too strong. Moreover, one major international organisation replied to my request explaining that due to their mandate, they could not give interviews. I, therefore, had to lower my expectations of interviewees and focus only on women and peace organisations.

The selection of possible respondents was problematic because I could not pinpoint experts in both disarmament and GBV. During the interview and in the questionnaires, most participants struggled to find a link between the two topics because they felt like they did not have enough

knowledge of the other one. I was the one who had to make the synthesis between the two perspectives in my analysis and discussion.

The timing was also not the best. Since last November, the government is undergoing peace negotiations with the guerrilla ELN. Civil society has been very active in these negotiations as well and some organisations did not have anyone available to give me an interview because this was a very busy period.

Finally, I want to highlight that this analysis is not representative of other post-conflict settings. Indeed, every country has different cultural, historical, social, financial and legal features. My findings are representative of Colombia, but this does not mean that findings would be the same in other states which have undergone armed conflict and a peacebuilding process based on DDR. However, this can give hints as to what could to some extent work in other countries.

### **5.2.3 Ethical Considerations**

The treatment of the interviewees was at the centre of my ethical concerns. Indeed, after obtaining approval from the Norwegian Centre for Research Data, I had to apply my commitment to the confidentiality of my data collection process. I needed to ensure respect, confidentiality, and free and informed consent for the participants.

To be in line with my obligations, I sent an information letter to everyone I contacted with all my research details as well as their rights. I made sure that all the participants filled up the consent form before starting our discussion or before having them answer the questions. At the beginning of the interviews, I explained again what the purpose of my research was as well as how the data will be stored. I then gave them time to reflect on what they told me before using the data for my analysis.

Another challenge in qualitative research is the difference in positionality between the interviewees and the researcher. Indeed, I could understand their testimony in a different way than their intention. Especially with the questionnaire, I did not have the full possibility to understand the meaning of their statements through their unspoken expressions. Furthermore, because I have never experienced war and conflict-related GBV, and because I have never been to Colombia, grasping the realities of the persons who have been through such experiences can be a challenge. All these aspects could have influenced my interpretation of the data I collected. I however tried to be as aware and mindful of these factors during my research and analysis.

## 6 Results

In this section, I will present key findings from several reports concerning the disarmament in Colombia following the 2016 Final Agreement and the living conditions of Colombian women. I then will continue by presenting and analysing the data I collected through my interviews and questionnaires. These last findings provide more context to the data found in the reports, relaying a more complete picture and understanding of the situation in the country.

The 2016 Final Agreement provided for the creation of a special political mission that would be responsible for ensuring the implementation of the agreement by the government. The first UN mission in Colombia was established in 2016 by the Security Council Resolution 2261, for an initial period of 12 months<sup>140</sup>. After this, the UN Verification Mission (Mission) in Colombia took over the mandate, under the Security Council Resolution 2377<sup>141</sup>. One of their responsibilities was the monitoring of the implementation of the laying down of arms of former FARC-EP members. The government and the FARC-EP all agreed on a very precise disarmament procedure. Between June 1<sup>st</sup>-20<sup>th</sup>, 2017, the former FARC-EP forces would have to hand over their arms in the reintegration camps. Moreover, the Mission had to seize arms from caches<sup>142</sup>. It would then store these arms in the camps and extract the containers by August 1<sup>st</sup> to destroy them before September 1<sup>st</sup> 2017<sup>143</sup>. After this date, the government would be responsible for destroying all the remaining arms<sup>144</sup>.

By the end of its duty, the Mission had completed the storage of arms on June 27<sup>th</sup>, 2017<sup>145</sup>. The containers were removed from the camps between July 31<sup>st</sup> and August 15<sup>th</sup><sup>146</sup>. On August 16<sup>th</sup>, the Mission started disabling the collected arms at a central warehouse<sup>147</sup>. In the course of its assignment, the UN was informed by the FARC-EP of more than 1,000 arms caches and removed the arms from and destroyed 750 arms caches<sup>148</sup>. The Mission successfully collected “8,994 arms, 1,765,862 ammunition rounds, 38,255 kg of explosives, 11,015 grenades, 3,528

---

<sup>140</sup> UNSC. Resolution 2261. S/RES/2261 (2016).

<sup>141</sup> UNSC. Resolution 2377. S/RES/2377 (2017).

<sup>142</sup> UNSC. ‘United Nations Verification Mission in Colombia: Report of the Secretary-General, June 2017’ *New York* (2017), para. 3.

<sup>143</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>144</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>145</sup> UNSC. ‘United Nations Verification Mission in Colombia: Report of the Secretary-General, September 2017’ *New York* (2017), para. 15.

<sup>146</sup> *Ibid.*, para. 17.

<sup>147</sup> *Ibid.*, para. 19.

<sup>148</sup> *Ibid.*, para. 22.

antipersonnel mines, 46,288 electric detonation caps, 4,370 mortar rounds and 51,911 metres of detonating cord and fuses”<sup>149</sup>.

Since September 15<sup>th</sup>, 2017, the government is responsible for the collection of remaining weapons from caches<sup>150</sup>. No government reports on their progress are publicly available at the time of writing.

Because the implementation of the Peace Agreement depends on the willingness of the consecutive Colombian governments to implement it, the achievement of the accord is complex. In 2022, newly elected President Gustavo Petro, committed to reaching ‘total peace’ through the full implementation of the Final Agreement, the reduction of inequalities, the governing with and for women, the fight against corruption, and the holding of dialogues with local authorities and communities<sup>151</sup>. The Administration wants all illegal armed forces to express their intention to take part in this process<sup>152</sup>. Nevertheless, since the signing of the Final Agreement, illegal armed groups have undertaken actions to take control over territories and illicit economies in the regions where the State has a very limited presence<sup>153</sup>. To fight this, President Petro resumed negotiations with another guerrilla group, ELN, in hopes to stop the violence and reach a cease-fire.<sup>154</sup>

---

<sup>149</sup> Ibid, para. 23.

<sup>150</sup> Ibid, para. 20.

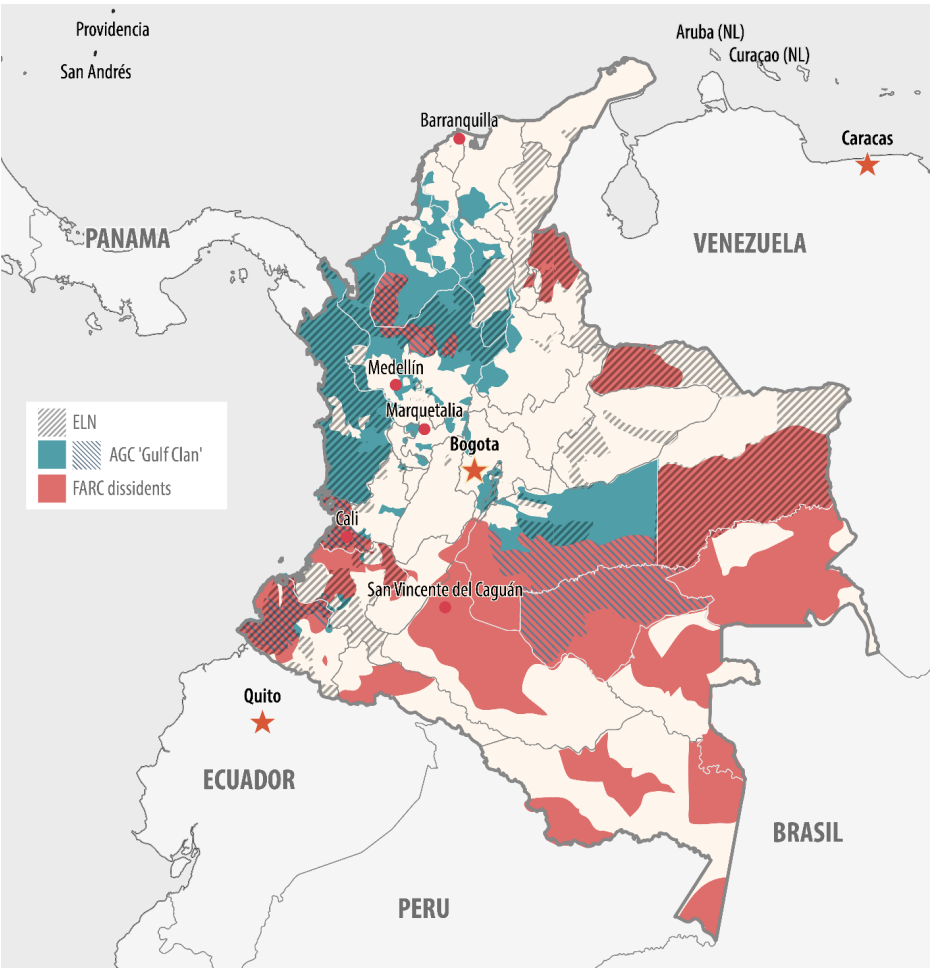
<sup>151</sup> UNSG. ‘United Nations Verification Mission in Colombia: Report of the Secretary General, September 2022’ *New York* (2022), para. 2.

<sup>152</sup> Ibid, para. 4.

<sup>153</sup> Ibid, para. 54.

<sup>154</sup> UNSG. ‘United Nations Verification Mission in Colombia: Report of the Secretary General, December 2022’ *New York* (2022), para. 5.

Figure 1 - Areas of operations of the three major armed groups active in 2018 in Colombia



Source: Isabelle Ioannides. ‘Peace and Security in 2019: Evaluating EU efforts to support peace in Colombia’. (Brussels European Parliamentary Research Service 2019).

Violence targeting civilians, human rights defenders and social leaders is up to now a central issue which threatens the implementation of the Final Agreement<sup>155</sup>. Moreover, violence against former combatants is still ongoing and represents a real threat to their transition into civilian life<sup>156</sup>. The Mission verified 355 killings of former combatants, 110 attempted homicides, and 27 missing between December 2016 and December 2022 in the country<sup>157</sup>. It is unclear who the perpetrators of this violence are. While the Duque government blames dissident groups and drug dealers, the ex-fighters blame governmental actors and paramilitary groups.

<sup>155</sup> Ibid, para. 61.  
<sup>156</sup> UNSG. ‘United Nations Verification Mission in Colombia: Report of the Secretary General, December 2021’ *New York* (2021), para. 52.  
<sup>157</sup> UNSG. ‘United Nations Verification Mission, December 2022’, para. 55.

The Peace Agreement has been slowly implemented but crucial elements have been unevenly implemented<sup>158</sup>. Especially, the gender provisions are the least implemented set of provisions from the agreement. The CEDAW, in its 2019 concluding observations on Colombia, highlights the slow implementation of the gender provisions in comparison to other parts of the agreement<sup>159</sup>. Furthermore, the Mission highlighted in 2022 that even if the government declared progress of 75% of the 51 gender indicators from the Peace Agreement, it is not addressing in a meaningful way more than 100 gender provisions<sup>160</sup>.

Women's rights organisations have been pushing for the implementation of recommendations from the Truth Commission which requires advancement in the creation of protection routes for women and girls and mechanisms to respond to GBV<sup>161</sup>. Colombian women are still facing multiple forms of violence, along with femicide and sexual violence<sup>162</sup>. Violence against women former fighters is also an important matter in the country<sup>163</sup>. Sexual violence and other forms of violence against women are used in areas where reintegration is taking place and in the reintegration communities<sup>164</sup>. Violence against women human rights defenders has also been observed by the Mission as well as other NGOs<sup>165</sup>. Due to the proliferation of illegal groups in certain regions, women and girls are facing higher risks of being subjected to attacks and sexual violence<sup>166</sup>. Intersectionality plays a crucial role in GBV in Colombia since identities and experiences intersect and reinforce violence and discrimination<sup>167</sup>. Indigenous Colombian women, Colombian women of African descent, women living in rural areas, lesbian, bisexual women, transgender women, and women with disabilities, are groups of women who are even more vulnerable to patterns of discrimination and violence based on their intersecting vulnerabilities<sup>168</sup>.

---

<sup>158</sup> Ibid, para. 8.

<sup>159</sup> CEDAW. 'Concluding Observations on the Ninth Periodic Report of Colombia'. New York (2019), para. 10.

<sup>160</sup> UNSG. 'United Nations Verification Mission in Colombia: Report of the Secretary-General, June 2022.' *New York* (2022), para. 82.

<sup>161</sup> UNSG 'United Nations Verification Mission, September 2022', para. 83.

<sup>162</sup> CEDAW. 'Concluding Observations', para. 25.

<sup>163</sup> UNSG. 'United Nations Verification Mission, December 2022', para. 56.

<sup>164</sup> Ibid, para. 84.

<sup>165</sup> CEDAW. 'Concluding Observations', para. 9.

<sup>166</sup> UNSG. 'United Nations Verification Mission, September 2022', para. 82.

<sup>167</sup> CEDAW. 'Concluding Observations', para. 11.

<sup>168</sup> Ibid, para. 12 (b).

To take my analysis further, the respondents to my research identified the following as the most important factors that impact the use of small arms in GBV: discrepancy between the laws and the reality, precarity, intersectionality, masculinity, gun ownership, political context, and power relations. I divided them into two different types of factors, those impacting GBV, and those impacting gun violence.

## **6.1 Factors Impacting Gender-Based Violence**

### **6.1.1 Discrepancies Between the Laws and the Reality**

As expressed by respondent F, from an antimilitarist feminist organisation:

‘The problem in Colombia is not that the rules do not exist, but that they are not internalised or applied by the system.’

Respondents A, from a feminist Afro-Colombian organisation, and respondent B, from a peace organisation, highlighted that Colombia is a good country which has ratified many international treaties and has been very active in creating national laws to protect human rights and fighting gender inequality. For example, in 2015 Colombia established a law which punishes femicide as an autonomous offence in order to tackle violence against women in the country. The law plans a sentence of 20 to 41 years in jail for the perpetrators of femicides without a possibility of reduction. Moreover, in 2008 the issue of GBV was regulated by Law 12/57. Several mechanisms were put in place at different levels to shed light on the issue and sensitise the population on violence against women, but also to educate relevant people such as the police or the judges. There seems to be a political and societal will to create laws and policies which would protect women from GBV. However, as articulated by Respondent A:

‘Colombia has a lot of very robust norms but in everyday life, there are other factors that make it harder to achieve justice, restitution, medical attention or psychological care.’

Elaborating on this, respondent C, from an NGO dedicated to building sustainable peace in Colombia, mentioned that these laws are very often not implemented. She explained:

‘Despite these laws, the reality is that we do not have a lot of people sentenced because the police and the judges do not have enough information and do not know



how to apply the law and think that these crimes are only passionate crimes between couples and nothing more, they do not give the real importance to the crime.’

Respondent A discussed the fact that a lot of policies aiming at fighting GBV are often not used by women. She explained that very often women who are victims of violence do not know where to go to get help and support. Due to the context in the country, some women are too scared to seek justice and assistance. Many armed groups are still operating in some regions and if these groups perpetrate violence against women, it can be scary for the victims to denounce these crimes because they fear they will face repercussions.

She also drew out that women who are victims of violence from the police or the army face the same problem. Denouncing those crimes puts them more at risk because these actors often profit from their institutional power. A report from the NGO Temblores<sup>169</sup>, which works to decrease social inequalities, oppression and impunity against marginalised groups, highlights that in Colombia, police violence is highly unreported. They note that this should be understood as part of a larger local context in which the reporting of violence by a State armed group can expose the victims and their families to retaliation that can range from death threats to homicides<sup>170</sup>. The same report emphasises also how practices of institutional cover-up also work to protect the State armed forces. Because police officers are the agents of the State, testifying against a police officer who has committed an act of violence can be complex<sup>171</sup>. The people who denounce these acts of violence usually find themselves trapped in a very long legal battle against the State, typically more concerned about the honour of its institution and cleaning its name than knowing the truth and offering reparation to the victims<sup>172</sup>.

Elaborating on this, respondent A, highlighted three factors which could explain the gap between the commitment to protect women from GBV and the actual implementation of these engagements:

‘The conflict lasted for almost seven decades, so this is not easy to just get out of it. Another point is that it is also because of the longitude of the conflict, the mentality and the culture got used to it and the people have found ways to live with the conflict

---

<sup>169</sup> Temblores ONG, ‘Bolillo Dios y Patria’. (2021), p. 58.

<sup>170</sup> Ibid.

<sup>171</sup> Ibid, p. 60.

<sup>172</sup> Ibid.

and with the violence. However, this is not just about the people, these policies exist but the people do not know that they exist.’

When asked if the reason for this discrepancy is the lack of money that the government is devoting to the functioning of these policies, she shared that:

‘I would not say the problem is money. The money is there, you can use it but no one knows. Of course, the state should be the one responsible for those crimes in front of the victims. But we are talking about a huge amount of people affected by the conflict. We are talking about the country which has the highest level of internal displacement. The state should be responsible, but it would be very hard. Also, Colombia is still in conflict and justice is still a fresh topic. If you want to push any new public policy or program for former FARC [FARC-EP] fighters, a big part of society is still resistant and does not want to give them benefits.’

The benefits that the respondent talked about are that the Peace Agreement arranged a special court to judge the former FARC-EP soldiers, monthly stipends and 10 seats in the national congress until 2022 for their new political party, FARC (Fuerza Alternativa Revolucionaria del Común, Common Alternative Revolutionary Force in English). These benefits have created major debates within the population. The proof was the rejection of the first referendum for the Peace Agreement by 50,2% of the population because the Peace Agreement was perceived as too lenient with the guerrilla and all the atrocities they committed.

One prominent concern expressed in the interviews is the centrality of gender norms in the country. All respondents mentioned that gender stereotypes in Colombia are extremely strong and impact the lives of women. Respondent C, for example, articulated that:

‘Here in Colombia, we still think that women are weak or do not deserve the same treatment as men. I think it is something that looks like this is in our DNA, but of course, it is not. Some attitudes are completely naturalised.’

This is also supported by respondent E, from a peacebuilding organisation, who states that:

‘Gender stereotypes are quite rooted in tradition. (...) In terms of the distribution of the household and care responsibility, they still fall mostly on women who are mainly in charge of the tasks within the home. It means that women have their participation in the labour market and in other types of sectors limited.’ (Translated from Spanish)

Because gender stereotypes hold such a meaningful role in the minds of Colombians, the issue of GBV is too often not taken seriously. It is typically not recognised by the population as a form of violence, but more as a normal phenomenon. This creates doubt even in some victims’ minds and sometimes pushes them to not press charges because the violence they experienced is ‘common’. Therefore, gender stereotypes create a context where it is hard to receive medical attention, psychological care and justice for victims of GBV as it is a form of violence which has been normalised.

As indicated by the respondents, this discrepancy between the commitment of the government to fight the violence against women through laws and public policies and programs, and the reality for women highlights the complexity of the political, cultural and social situation in the country. Putting in place laws and programs to protect women from GBV is not sufficient, gender stereotypes, gender expectations, and prejudices all need to be addressed and removed. Especially since these preconceptions obstruct the implementation of such policies. Moreover, the population needs to be sensitised to the role of the benefits which were given to former FARC-EP fighters to put an end to the hostilities. Finally, the agents of the State need to be trained to understand the several forms of violence against women and how to receive complaints of such acts. The State also needs to accept that its agents need to be trialled and condemned when they commit such crimes to fight impunity and make sure that the laws and policies are implemented at all levels of society, for all citizens.

### **6.1.2 Precarious Situation of Women**

Another narrative concerns the economic position of Colombian women. All the respondents articulated that Colombia is a poor and unequal country. After the Peace Agreement, when the former fighters went back to civil life, they were faced with economic hardship. They were supposed to build a new and peaceful life, but some of them did not necessarily have the right equipment to face the sharp reality and struggled to find a new meaning in life. One respondent

suggested that the government should have tried to better integrate educational and professional policies in the reintegration process to empower the ex-soldiers in the long term.

Concerning the DDR process for women in the country and the gender perspective of the Peace Agreement, respondent C shared that:

‘This Peace Agreement includes a gender perspective. However, in the implementation, I think they forgot the reality and context. The reality is that most women left their arms, but they have to take care of their families and they cannot so easily take part in the bigger objective, for example by opening a small business to be financially independent or if they want to study or apply for a job. This is more difficult because they have to take care of the children and of old people.’

Because women are traditionally the ones responsible for caring for the elders and the children, they have limited time and opportunity to start new training or studies. This is something that the Peace Agreement did not take into consideration. Some women, at the end of the conflict, had to go back to their family lives and could not exit their role of caretaker:

‘In the particular case of women, what happened is that from the moment they demobilised, they suffered the consequences of traditional roles, and they were expected to assume their traditional roles again such as caring for children or taking care of the housework when those same women were used to other roles during their mobilisation’. (Respondent E) (Translated from Spanish)

Poverty affects certain communities particularly, including women. Respondent D, from a legal NGO protecting the victims of the conflict, when asked about the precariousness women face noted that:

‘Gender-based violence is linked to precariousness and women have been involved in systematic violence in domestic places and through domestic work. We need to look into this and stop leaving this aspect on the side of the conversations and bring it to the centre of the discussions on violence against women.’

Another participant, respondent C, clearly linked GBV to social status and money:

‘Poverty plays a role. It does not mean that in rich houses violence does not happen. It happens as well, but I think that most women who suffer from gender-based violence are poor or they depend economically on men. This means that they cannot leave the relationship because they depend on their partner and can also be emotionally dependent.’

To tackle the issue of GBV we need to talk about the dependency schemes which are put into place by stereotypes. Women who for example are victims of IPV often find themselves stuck in the relationship because they do not have any financial independence and no way out. They feel that they must stay because where else would they go and what would they do? Education and formation are therefore crucial to the empowerment of women and their way out of violent relationships or violent patterns. However, this aspect has been missing from the peacebuilding process in Colombia.

### **6.1.3 Intersectionality as an Additional Burden**

As noted previously in this paper, we cannot focus on women, and the discrimination and violence they face without considering other identities which intersect and create an even bigger burden on them.

In Colombia, the Mestizo population makes up approximately 53% of the population. This is the population which resulted in the mix between the indigenous communities and the Spanish conquerors. The remainder of the population comprises 30% of White people, 10% of African Colombians and 3% of Native South Americans. Just like most minority groups in the world, African Colombians and Native South Americans face marginalisation and discrimination. As respondent A put it:

‘Intersectionality is the reality in Colombia.’

The following interview excerpt powerfully reinforces the importance of considering the different identities of the GBV victims in the case of Colombia:

‘Sexual violence has affected the communities in different manners during the conflict. The most affected groups are first, afro-Colombian women, second,

indigenous women, and third, white women. This is why we talk about sexual and ethnic violence, not just sexual violence. Especially when we talk about the regions where the ethnic communities are living, the Colombian conflict was mainly a rural conflict, and the rural areas are heavily populated by afro indigenous communities and descent communities. This is also why indigenous and Afro-women are the most affected by sexual violence during the conflict. There is also the hyper sexualisation of the afro body, which is based on the colonisation history and the way women were seen as a tool during the colonisation.’ (Respondent A)

In such an instance, respondent D used the term ‘control bodies’ or ‘subordinate bodies’ many times in our conversation. He explained that:

‘The ones the men consider inferior, they try to dominate and the ones they consider bigger they use submission to institutional power. There is a cultural insistence on the reproduction of subordinates, addressing violence and processing the hate in the dialogue and extending this through economic, social and cultural values.’

He then added:

‘Some organised bodies, such as LGBTQ, women, afro Colombian people, have been used as control entities for the masculine domination. We can see this in day-to-day life but especially in the countryside where those groups are used and displaced as victims and are being used by masculine power’.

The different identities of a person intersect and the ones which fit under the label of ‘subordinate’ or ‘inferior’ add burdens on them. Because Colombian society is very diverse, many identities exist, clash with each other, and impact the people in question in their everyday lives. A Colombian woman who is also indigenous and who lives in a rural setting will face different challenges and risks than a white woman living in a big Colombian city. Thus, it is important to consider these identities in every step of a peacebuilding process and in our understanding of the impact of armed violence or everyday violence against women.

#### 6.1.4 An Exacerbated Masculinity

This need to assert power over someone else is directly linked to masculinities. As two respondents expressed:

‘The conflict has been a revealer of our machismo culture and sexism.’ (Respondent A)

‘There is a rather patriarchal model of masculinity in which men have to demonstrate their manhood and masculinity, as well as show that they have authority and control over their partner.’ (Respondent E) (Translated from Spanish)

In such an instance, another interlocutor shared that:

‘Here in Colombia, the conflict has exacerbated the masculinities. Masculinity implies a tendency to dominate and subordinate others and the tendency to follow orders and control. Once again, the people the men consider inferior they will try to dominate and the ones they consider superior they will obey.’ (Respondent D)

This weight of masculinity goes further because society and the government support these masculinities:

‘The masculinity has been defended by the government and the state through social, cultural and economic values and this has led to impunity.’ (Respondent D)

The war has been an enabler for masculinities to be openly expressed without any consequence for those abusing women. This is why the transitional justice process is crucial to giving the victims a form of reparation which recognises their victim status, but also shows perpetrators and potential perpetrators that this is unacceptable and that they will be prosecuted and condemned for those crimes. Respondent D’s tale is one that illustrates this:

‘In our organisation, we represent the victims of painful cases. One is about this high-ranked officer who organised military training to persecute families in the countryside. This led to the rape of a girl, her killing and the killing of another boy. The officer buried them in a pit after cleaning their body to not be identified. We opposed the decision of giving him the benefit and managed to have him sentenced.

The jurisdiction realised that the benefits [the impunity] enabled men to exacerbate their power and masculinity through violence.’

Because of traditional roles, boys and men are celebrated through violence<sup>173</sup>. Men are expected to dominate, destroy and wield power over others. Gun violence and masculinity share a complex relationship, rooted in patriarchy<sup>174</sup>. For men, owning a gun is a good way to assert their dominance, since hegemonic masculinities are often linked to aggressiveness and violent behaviours<sup>175</sup>. Men are also expected to always be in control, to be powerful, and to be strong and independent. Guns are often perceived as an extension of their manhood and a way of not having their masculinity undermined:

‘Weapons are the way masculinity would be exacerbated.’ (Respondent D)

## **6.2 Factors Impacting Gun Violence**

### **6.2.1 Small Arms Ownership**

Many times, the different Colombian governments have tried to implement peace processes with different armed groups. However, all of them have failed to reach their aspirations of complete peace. So, when creating the 2016 Peace Agreement, the different parts of the accord tried to learn from past mistakes. One very important aspect has been the active role played by civil society, women’s organisations, afro Colombian organisations, and farmers organisations in the negotiations but also as beneficiaries of the DDR programs. As articulated by Participant B:

‘Colombia’s DDR process has been one of the most successful in the world. Almost 13,000 women and men delivered their arms. At the moment, 90% of the former FARC [FARC-EP] combatants continue the process, so this was successful.’

Elaborating on this, she added:

‘Some soldiers in the army have had to take care of the former FARC [FARC-EP] in the DDR process and this is a moment when you felt the peace. Yes, we have a

---

<sup>173</sup> Raewyn Connell, *Gender and Power: Society, the Person, and Sexual Politics*, (Stanford University Press, 1987), p. 183.

<sup>174</sup> Ibid.

<sup>175</sup> Britton, Jacobsen, Howard, ‘The Gender of Crime’, pp. 88-89.



lot of dissidents of FARC [FARC-EP] who are organised in rural areas where the cocoa is, but so many ex-combatants resisted and did not join the dissident and did not retake the arms. I really think that this has been a successful process.’

This corroborates the analysis of the UN Verification Mission for Colombia which has been the one responsible for the beginning of the disarmament of the ex-FARC-EP fighters following the signature of the Peace Agreement.

The reality of gun ownership in the country is however very complex. Indeed, interlocutor A shared that:

‘In Colombia, a lot of people own guns’.

Participant C, as well mentioned that it is legal to own a gun in Colombia if you possess a licence, but arms smuggling is a real issue:

‘Owning a gun is legal if you have a card to own it. But most guns in the country are illegal. Colombia receives a lot of foreign arms.’

‘If it is illegal, it does not mean that this is not happening.’

And indeed, Colombia is known to have a lot of weapons and ammunition smuggling. Its geographical position with an important coastline, as well as its placement next to Panama which links South America to Central America, makes it a crucial location for trafficking<sup>176</sup>. Because most of the territory is rural, isolated, and hard for the government to control, the borders of the country are incredibly permeable<sup>177</sup>. Furthermore, the illegal economy of coca in the country makes it very easy to create a black-market economy where all sorts of illegal goods are exported and imported<sup>178</sup>. Guerrilla groups have been buying most of their arms from illegal sellers<sup>179</sup>. If the functioning of these sales is still unexplored, some governmental interceptions

---

<sup>176</sup> Small Arms Survey, ‘Colombia’s Hydra’, p. 222.

<sup>177</sup> Ibid.

<sup>178</sup> Ibid.

<sup>179</sup> Ibid.

tend to show a pattern<sup>180</sup>. The delivery is often made through airdrop or shipped in a safe locality, typically where the government has no control. The shipment is then sent to ‘zone[s] of consolidation’ and finally to the guerrilla front<sup>181</sup>.

So even though the disarmament of former FARC-EP soldiers has been an overall success, illegal arms are extremely common for both personal use and conflict-related use. Guns, whether legal or illegal, are still very present in the country. In 2017, the Small Arms Survey estimated that out of the 4,971,000 firearms in the hands of civilians in Colombia, only 14% of those were registered<sup>182</sup>.

Clearly, the State has not yet managed to set up an effective gun control policy in the country, even with the disarmament process of the FARC-EP. This growing militarisation of Colombian society has an impact on women:

‘The context of the militarisation is significant, as evidenced by the fact that of the 619 femicides in 2055, 55% were committed with a firearm, followed by sharp weapons used in the records. These weapons are commonly used because there is also easy access to them.’ (Respondent F) (Translated from Spanish)

This interlocutor was strongly supporting the fact that guns are often used in IPV and sexual violence. Small arms represent a danger for women, especially when they are in their homes and so easy to get access to.

However, respondents also noted that other types of weapons can also be used to threaten, harm, abuse or kill women and that small arms were not required to commit such violence:

‘In these violence cases, the perpetrators did not need a small gun to hurt other people or women, because at home they have other tools to hurt women, like knives or their own hands.’ (Respondent C)

---

<sup>180</sup> Ibid, pp. 222-223.

<sup>181</sup> Ibid, p. 222.

<sup>182</sup> Small Arms Survey. ‘Global Firearms Holdings’. <https://www.smallarmssurvey.org/database/global-firearms-holdings>.

Now, coming back to the notion of masculinity and the assertion of power, small arms can be a way of showing superiority, strength and power. In the homes, guns are not the only easily available weapon to assert superiority, and harm or kill women. Kitchen knives, doors, belts, hammers, telephones, hands, feet, and words are also frequently used in IPV. This validates the theory according to which GBV must be assessed through a continuum of violence, with weapons ranging from small arms to fists and words.

Moreover, respondent E highlighted that the presence of small arms in society is central to the continuum of violence which women face:

‘I do know about the continuum of gender-based violence. The war and the dynamics of organised crime in Colombia have caused our society to be extremely armed, and these same arms are used against women to violate them.’

With the high armed violence in the country, the population wants to protect itself by obtaining guns. This creates a sort of arms race, and this represents a higher risk for women.

If we talk particularly of the disarmament of the FARC-EP, the following expert should be considered:

‘Small arms were not only used by the FARC [FARC-EP]. In general, they are weapons used by structures or men-at-arms in more urban places and dedicated to drug trafficking, which still persists. Although the context of the conflict-affected women, because they were in contexts of armed confrontation with non-small arms, violence against women with firearms, continues to be constant in Colombia, due to their free use and circulation, but they are also used by drug trafficking structures, which were not part of the peace process.’ (Respondent F) (Translated from Spanish)

Guns are used in violence against women at every step of an armed conflict, from the escalation of violence when more guns are imported (legally or illegally) into the country, to the demobilisation and reintegration process, when the guns are brought back into the communities and the homes.

### 6.2.2 Broader Political Context

Even if Colombia is considered a successful example of an effective DDR program, the implementation of the Peace Agreement does not reach the same results. However, the two are not separate elements. Several former FARC-EP soldiers who entered the DDR process following the Peace Agreement decided to take arms again when they realised that what the government and FARC-EP agreed on did not happen. For the DDR process to reach its objectives in the longer run, all the aspects of the Peace Treaty must be completed.

The implementation of the elements of the Peace Agreement depends on the willingness of the government to invest money in it and create relevant policies. This has been a prominent concern throughout the interviews:

‘One of the things that we did not realise in 2016 and that we realise now is that Colombia is a central state. This is the way the guerrillas have been structured as well. It means that the application of the agreement depends on central powers only. When the right came to power with the Duque government, what they wanted to do was to tear up the peace agreement. What we are facing now is that the implementation of the agreement did not happen. The FARC [FARC-EP] gave up their weapons, but the other points did not happen. Now we are in a critical situation because the Petro government must implement what Duque did not and he needs to build a total peace agreement now, not only with FARC [FARC-EP] but with another group, the ELN.’ (Interlocutor D)

Indeed, the Duque government which came to power (2018-2022) after the signing of the accord, did not possess the implementation of the Peace Agreement as one of their priorities. His government has been trying to weaken the different post-conflict jurisdictions, for instance by cutting their budget. Duque has kept on calling this agreement weak, but for my respondents, he has just kept on trying to weaken it:

‘I think the process has been limited because the previous president and its government have not been interested in implementing the agreement and to change some situations in order to give ex FARC [FARC-EP] a better life.’ (Respondent C)

This narrative that the Duque government has been trying to destroy the peace agreement has been flagged by a report written in collaboration with hundreds of Colombian NGOs<sup>183</sup>. The report highlights that the third year in office of the Duque government was the worst one for democracy and the rule of law. The report points to Duque's refusal to implement the elements of the Peace Agreement as the reason for the resurgence of violence and armed conflict between many illegal armed groups, including FARC-EP dissidents, ELN, and paramilitary groups. Especially, the lack of implementation of the rural reform which is part of the accord is a crucial point. Participant C talked about a sense of oversight of the importance of rural reform:

'I think that something that the Colombian government has forgotten is the rural reform. Most of these ex-FARC [FARC-EP] are also farmers, they have the possibility to work on land and have resources from it. But the previous government did not do enough to retribute land which is due.'

Land restitution is an important aspect of the reintegration of FARC-EP fighters. One of the participants, participant D, told me that the former FARC-EP fighters who refused to give away their arms did it for two main reasons:

'There are two dissident groups from what used to be FARC [FARC-EP]. First, those who from the very beginning of the peace process did not go to the agreement because they were more focused on the economy and drug trafficking. And then the other group which went to the agreement, but when they saw what the government was doing or not doing, they decided to return to war.'

All the respondents were more hopeful that the new government, the Petro government, would be able to focus on peace and the implementation of the Peace Agreement. The Petro government has a double ambition for peacebuilding: to advance the implementation of the elements of the 2016 peace accord with the former FARC-EP, and to reach 'total peace' by signing peace agreements with as many as 26 armed groups in the country.

Nevertheless, this will not be an easy task because, for many people, having peace in a country which has witnessed decades of violence and war is unthinkable. Especially, since it is still a

---

<sup>183</sup> Plataforma Colombiana de Derechos Humanos, Democracia y Desarrollo, Coordinación Colombia Europa Estados Unidos, Alianza de Organizaciones Sociales y Afines, 'Lecciones del Aprendiz: Autoritarismo y Desigualdad - Balance del Tercer año de Gobierno de Iván Duque Márquez'. (2021).

very recent time in history some people are not ready to move on. Elaborating on this, one participant expressed that:

‘I think the actual [current] government has the intention to build peace in the country but it is very hard because there are a lot of groups which are motivated by money. It is more difficult to talk with them about how to have peace. These groups also have their own wars between themselves, so this is a very difficult situation. Society expects to have peace soon but they do not want the groups to get amnesty for the crimes they committed, especially the groups that are only there for the money. FARC [FARC-EP] had some political motivation and a will to change the society but these groups do not have a valid reason in the eyes of the public.’ (Participant C)

The fundamental limitation to reaching peace is that Colombia is still at war. There are still many armed groups who are fighting for the control of illegal economies and for territorial control:

‘Colombia is still in a conflict, but not necessarily with FARC [FARC-EP]. Even if we were to reach total peace, this is still fresh, there are a lot of people who have suffered recently. If you want to push any new public policy or program it is very hard because a big part of society is still resistant and does not want to give the illegal armed groups benefits, because how could they get anything positive from all of this? There is still a lot to do in the dialogue not just to get peace but also to make visible the need to have these programs to reintegrate the illegal soldiers.’ (Participant A)

Indeed, the population is not very eager to grant amnesties and spend money on the reintegration of former guerrilla fighters because they have hurt and tormented so many people through their wars over territories. Nonetheless, the government needs to find some impetus for the armed groups to stop the bloodshed to attain total peace. This is representative of the complexity of reaching a balance between peace, justice, and reintegration in transitional justice processes.

### 6.2.3 Power Relations During and After Conflict

The idea of subordinate entities draws on the way power is exercised in Colombia. In the context of war, bodies have been typically used to assert power over them. Respondent D explained that:

‘There is a construction in our society which led to a subordination practice where men can use the bodies of women and of other subordinate communities with impunity.’

Throughout history, violence against women has been used as a way of showing power and superiority over a body, a community, or a territory. Sexual abuse, in times of conflict or in times of peace is always based on a power imbalance where the perpetrator occupies a dominant position in relation to the victim-survivor. Violence is perceived as a way to control someone else. These forms of violence against women can be understood as a way of maintaining power over them.

Moreover, traditionally, women are brought back to their role as reproducers as well as transmitters of the culture. Abusing a woman is used to symbolically abuse a community as a whole:

‘Sexual violence within the conflict is used to diminish the social fabric. Sexual violence impacts a lot the society because women are seen as a central part of the culture.’ (Respondent A)

Most visibly, all respondents made a link to the use of violence against women as a tool to threaten a community and assert power over a territory:

‘Sexual violence within a conflict is used as a tool of torture and a way of getting territories by showing the community who is in charge.’ (Respondent A)

‘Sexual violence was and is still used as a tool to show dominancy in a territory or to spread fear in a community.’ (Respondent A)

‘The sexual violence against women in Colombia has been used in a war setting as a way of controlling bodies. The control of bodies is the materialisation of power and a strategy of war.’ (Respondent D)

‘Gender violence, and particularly sexual violence, was used as a weapon by illegal groups and even the army to control a territory.’ (Respondent E) (Translated from Spanish)

IPV is a considerable concern in the country since it has very high rates. As explained previously in the paper, it is complicated to quantify it and find data on the subject. However, one participant gave me data on the subject, and the Colombian Femicide Observatory registered between 2018 and 2022 a total of 3,111 femicides. This amounts to two women being murdered by an intimate partner per day on average.

IPV is also used as a way of showing who is the boss in the house. The relationship dynamics such as decision-making power and equity can influence violence and domestic violence is used to assert power and control over the victim.

GBV and sexual violence more specifically are serious problems in Colombia, whether during or after the conflict. The conflict has only been an accelerator of the violence in general and the violence against women:

‘The increase in violence is much more visible before and during the conflict, especially about discrimination, sexism, and violence against women and transgender people. The logic is still that if there is some problem which is deeply rooted in society, it is going to get bigger during the conflict and smaller again after the conflict but this is not going to disappear.’ (Respondent A)

It is ambitious to claim that violence against women has changed since the end of the conflict. The lack of data as well as the complication to listen to the victims and record their complaints encumber the possibility of having strong data which would allow us to reach a conclusion. However, as respondent E reported:

‘The issue of sexual violence in the context of the armed conflict has changed a lot after the process of demobilisation and the peace process. Some things have changed, but the incidence of sexual violence in the country is still very high and



has had some peaks in recent years. However, this is not used as a tool to gain territorial control, but it shows more personal dynamics'. (Translated from Spanish)

She indicates that during the armed conflict, sexual violence was mainly used as a way of asserting power and obtaining power over a group, a community, or a region. Yet, recently, sexual violence has been used principally in personal settings. Women who are sexually abused often know their perpetrators and they are typically part of their close circle of friends or even family.

Carrying a weapon typically gives men the power to dispose of the subordinate bodies. Elaborating on this, one participant, respondent D expressed that:

'We can see how the military uses the weapons provided by the Colombian State to abuse and kidnap girls. The military has weapons and they have the ability to use, dispose and abuse bodies. The use of weapons has built a trend in the history of the saviour, the one who is going to cleanse the evil through the use of weapons. They live this through the capacity and authorisation to obtain bodies through policies. This is made possible through the Colombian state which has arranged for many years the story of the internal enemy that the military can kill and abuse their bodies without anything happening to them.'

Guns represent the materialisation of the right to use violence, at any cost, to obtain victory. All the parts of the conflict have been exploiting guns which has an enabling aspect. Indeed, by giving arms to soldiers, we also allow them to use those guns to kill, harm, scare, threaten, and abuse others.

This is more than the guns themselves; the power and the meaning weapons have are empowering and give the feeling that the ones using them are untouchable. The logic of an internal enemy is also a very distinct aspect of using guns as if it was acceptable to use guns to destroy both mentally and physically the persons who are perceived as the enemy of the Nation to ensure its threatened survival.

Another participant explained:

'There have been many cases where arms have been used to violate women during the conflict. This is not just about the violation, it is about showing power. The use

of arms was used to violate women, especially when it was about showing power and spreading fear. When the armed groups would want to show their power they would use such practice.’ (Respondent A)

The enabling aspect of owning a gun, supplemented by internalised and naturalised gender norms and patriarchy, creates an alarming situation for women both during and after the war.

## **7 Discussion**

This section considers the main research question and sub-questions in light of the results uncovered in the previous sections.

### **7.1 On the Disarmament of the FARC-EP**

The reports, interviews and questionnaires seem to suggest that the disarmament of the FARC-EP as agreed in the 2016 Peace Agreement was an overall success. During its mandate, the Mission has collected 8,994 arms and destroyed 750 arms caches. If data concerning the government takeover of the disarmament was not publicly available, a respondent told me that to this day, almost 13,000 former FARC-EP soldiers had delivered their arms. Many former FARC-EP soldiers, therefore, complied with the prerequisite to give up their arms to receive access to reintegration programs in the different territorial spaces for training, reintegration and reincorporation. However, as highlighted by some respondents, an important number of former FARC-EP fighters became dissidents and took up arms again. As explained by one of my interlocutors, this can be explained by economic factors, but more importantly, by the lack of implementation of the Peace Agreement. This aspect demonstrates some interconnectedness between the application of the Peace Treaty and the functioning of all the elements of the DDR process. One needs to be completed for the other one to be fulfilled, and vice versa. Both sides of the agreement must respect and fulfil their obligations for the two processes to carry on.

Due to this, I would relativise the term ‘success’, because how do we evaluate it as a success? Is it because the majority of the former FARC-EP fighters gave away their guns, or will it be when all these former soldiers will be demobilised and disarmed? The successful aspect of the disarmament of the guerrilla FARC-EP must be nuanced.

Especially, the dialogues with my interlocutors emphasise a major weakness, the destruction of weapons happened only for the ex-FARC-EP fighters. The reality is that the country counts so many different illegal armed groups, guerrillas, and paramilitary groups. The disarmament which was part of the Peace Treaty concerned only one guerrilla group, the FARC-EP. Meanwhile, all the other armed groups kept fighting and kept their arms.

Truly, the main limitation to arms control in the country is the high level of arms trafficking and the importation of important quantities of weapons into the country. Both individuals and organised armed groups benefit from access to those guns. Because illegal economies in Colombia are so flourishing, the possession of small arms is considered necessary. In Colombia, the cultivation and processing of coca leaves which are then used to make cocaine are part of a big market, and the different armed groups thrive in it. They serve as middlemen between the farmers and the traffickers. Illegal armed groups, drug cartels and civilians are all heavily armed.

These findings are coherent with the research which suggests that in the context of a transition period from war to peace, the availability of arms represents a threat to peace. High arms availability typically creates a demand for even more weapons since individuals and groups who feel vulnerable or threatened arm themselves and become a threat to others. Colombia seems to be stuck in such a vicious circle.

In short, the success of the disarmament as planned in the 2016 Peace Agreement must be relativised as not all the former FARC-EP members have demobilised and given up their arms to move back to civilian life. Moreover, the country is highly militarised and over-armed. In Colombia, the high number of arms in the country takes part in sustaining the conflict dynamics and obscuring the aspirations of the Peace Agreement.

## **7.2 On the Use of Small Arms in Gender-Based Violence**

My findings show that the militarisation of and the proliferation of weapons in the country have impacted the population, including women. As a fairly militarised country, Colombia experiences a normalisation of high quantities of small arms in the country. This can then translate into a normalisation of gun violence and violence in general in the country.

This is not a complete surprise that in such an armed country, violence against women and especially IPV reach high rates. Typically, the home is supposed to represent a safe place,

however, militarism overwhelmingly affects Colombian women in their interpersonal sphere. For decades, even centuries, women have been told that men have the right to employ violence against them. This is a view that is still held by many people, whether men or women. Domestic violence is used as a tool for men to show power and have control over someone perceived as inferior, namely women.

The core values of masculinity, such as aggressiveness and violent behaviours, condition men into becoming more violent, which can then cascade into IPV and sexual violence. The ownership of a small arm exacerbates masculinities, putting women in an even more perilous place.

In Colombia, in 2022, 55% of the femicides were committed with a firearm. Because of their easy availability and their presence in the homes, small arms, whether legal or illegal, represent a real threat to women, not just out in the public sphere but also in their personal sphere.

This seems consistent with past research which showed that small arms represent a threat to women since violence against women is facilitated by small arms. Moreover, it corroborates studies which proved that the presence of a gun in the homes is more threatening for women than a beneficial tool.

However, if guns can be facilitators of violence, they are not the mere reason for the violence. As my interviews suggest, guns are not the only type of arms used in domestic violence. If a man feels like he is allowed to be violent against women, a small arm is not necessary to do so. Men will most likely use other weapons or tools to threaten, hurt or murder women.

We cannot declare that the removal of guns from the hands of illegal armed groups and individuals will inevitably lower the rates of IPV, or if instead, other types of weapons would be used to harm or kill women. I cannot claim that the high rates of IPV and femicides in Colombia are explained only or mainly by the proliferation of arms in the country, on the streets, and in the homes.

If my interviews indicate that sexual violence against women has been used as a tool to assert power and to obtain territorial control during the armed conflict and still to this day, the use of small arms in such cases is not so obvious. My data does not allow me to conclude on the question. It seems like there are cases where guns have been used to violate women, but this may not have been a common practice in Colombia.

Former literature has shown that the ownership of guns is linked to masculinity and to the need to show power and have control over subordinate bodies. This is an element that has come up in my interviews as well. As highlighted by my interlocutors, small arms can represent the materialisation of the right to dispose of others, including women. Especially, guns give their owners the feeling of being untouchable and allowed to do whatever they want. Small arms are the enablers of internalised gender stereotypes, which are threatening to women.

### **7.3 On a Change in the Levels of Violence Against Women After the 2016 Peace Agreement**

We have seen that in Colombia, many laws and policies have been created in hopes to lower the GBV rates. However, these attempts were met with challenges, explained by the complex political, social and cultural situation in the country. The seven decades of bloodshed handicapped the will to move forward from the civilian population, especially when moving forward means implementing an agreement which gives the ‘bad guys’ rights and privileges. Furthermore, the state must ensure that no perpetrator of GBV will benefit from impunity, no matter his profession.

Most importantly for my research, for these laws and policies to be effective, a bigger work has to be done to address imbalanced gender relations and to eliminate them. This last element is crucial to understand why we can hardly see any difference in the levels of GBV in the country. Indeed, gender norms play a crucial role in the daily life of women and men. Women are perceived as subordinate to men, responsible for the children and the elders of the family. Their value is based on the traditional roles that women should carry out. If these prejudices are not challenged, women will still face many forms of violence despite the laws and policies.

These gender stereotypes are supplemented by the specific economic and social factors impacting women. Colombia is ethnically and geographically rich. Therefore, the different identities of the women intersect to create an even heavier weight on women and put them more at risk. Moreover, due to gender stereotypes, women’s place in the public sphere is always limited, especially their access to the work market, since they are the ones in charge of homework and caretaking.

The overall insecure and dangerous situation in the country led to an extreme armament of the society. In this over-armed situation, women are in danger due to gender stereotypes and how women are perceived as subordinate entities.

Moreover, because the country is still not at peace, violence in general and violence against women are still very salient. The before/after armed conflict separation is not noticeable enough to evaluate a possible evolution of the levels of GBV for the women of the country.

What the participants in my research have highlighted is that if sexual violence during the war was used as a strategic and tactical tool, it is now being used as part of interpersonal dynamics. Indeed, women who are sexually abused are most of the time violated by someone they know.

Despite this, we can observe a continuum of violence, where if the forms of violence or the reasonings behind it can differ, the levels of violence are constant. As I have presented in my theory, the continuum of violence against women is typically a time continuum but violence occurs also along other continua such as of space, from the battlefield to the bedroom, and of scale, from guns to fists. Gender is manifested in violence through all phases of a conflict: pre-conflict, conflict, peace process and reconstruction. It is hard to distinguish one phase from the others and to analyse it singularly. In the case of Colombia, it would be unreasonable of me to argue that there has or has not been a change in the levels of GBV. Especially because it is impossible to find statistics on the exact numbers of GBV. The violence against women in Colombia has been a continuous concern throughout all steps of the conflict and post-conflict setting.

#### **7.4 On the Impacts of the 2016 Peace Agreement on the Levels of Gender-Based Violence**

This leads me to acknowledge that the 2016 Colombian Peace Treaty, and more specifically its disarmament requirement, did not have the expected impacts on GBV. At the beginning of my research process, I hypothesised that the disarmament of the FARC-EP helped to protect women from GBV. The reason for this expectation was the facilitatory aspect of small arms, as well as the fact that if there are fewer small arms in the country, women will be less at risk of being harmed or killed. However, the desktop and qualitative interviews research that have been conducted since, underscore the complexity of the disarmament process, gender relations, and gun violence in the country.

What I can assert is that the disarmament of small arms following the 2016 Peace Agreement in Colombia did not have a substantial impact on violence against women. According to this research, the lack of evident repercussions can be explained by three elements.

First, as highlighted previously, the success of the disarmament of the FARC-EP as agreed in the Final Agreement is debatable. A considerable number of FARC-EP soldiers dissented and took up arms again, limiting the scope of the disarmament. Moreover, even if they had all been demobilised, it would have concerned a limited part of the population. We must consider the over-armament of the country. Indeed, the country has been flooded by an enormous volume of illegal arms used by all the many illegal armed groups of the country as well as by individuals. Therefore, the small arms taken from the former FARC-EP fighters represent only a small share of the arms in the country.

Second, as my interviews and the reports show, patriarchal thinking holds a prominent place in Colombia. These beliefs are at the core of GBV, and to eliminate violence against women, we need to deconstruct and abolish gender stereotypes. Surely, guns can be a tool to facilitate masculine logic and violence, but the roots of these forms of violence are deeper and need to be addressed. Therefore, we cannot pinpoint guns as the only reason why the rates of IPV are that high in Colombia.

Finally, IPV is an endemic issue in Colombia, and even if more than half of the femicides last year were committed by guns, we cannot assume that if these arms were unavailable, the femicides would not have happened. Despite this, we can see that small arms represent a menace for women, and the higher and higher number of legal and illegal guns in the country is not going to resolve the issue.

## **8 Conclusion**

The 2016 Colombian Peace Agreement has often been presented as the best from a gender perspective. Despite this, seven years later, the very high percentages of GBV, especially IPV in the country are immensely alarming.

The overarching objective of this paper was to understand in which ways the disarmament of small arms decided in the 2016 Final Agreement had an impact on the protection of women

from GBV. In conclusion, I cannot affirm that the disarmament of the FARC impacted the levels of GBV nor that it did not impact it.

The disarmament process which followed the agreement can hardly be considered a success. Some FARC-EP members refused from the beginning of the peace negotiations to demobilise, and some had been disarmed but went back to fighting. The reality is that the country and its population are highly armed, and the trafficking of weapons seems to be a common practice. The disarmament arranged by the Final Agreement has been offset by the growing quantity of small arms flowing through the country.

The militarisation of the country has created an insecure scene for women. The levels of violence against women are still high. IPV seems to be a concern in the country, and guns have been used in more than half of the femicides in 2022. Small arms may play the role of enablers of internalised gender norms which position women as subordinate entities who can be used and abused by men, but it appears that power dynamics between women and men play a central role in the high rates of GBV.

The State has been establishing laws and policies to protect women from GBV. However, because gender stereotypes are entrenched in Colombian minds, the implementation of these measures did not meet the ambition of removing all forms of violence against women, especially domestic violence and femicide which reach monstrous proportions. My interviews suggest that gender expectations play a more important role than the possession of a small arm in GBV. It seems that even complete disarmament of all the armed forces and individuals would not be sufficient to tackle the issue of violence against women. A deeper change is required. A change in the traditional views of gender, gender stereotypes and gender expectations. They threaten the implementations of laws and policies, which are central to raising the awareness of the public on the inadmissibility of GBV. Civil society needs to keep on working towards the abolition of discrimination against women as well as masculine and feminine assumptions.

Overall, the theory of the existence of a continuum of violence which marks women throughout their whole life, in various spaces, at various scales and during various periods, seems to apply to the experience of Colombian women. Whether during or after the conflict, women face violence because they are women. The diverse forms of violence cannot be considered separate



from the others because they are all part of a continuing violence which cannot be delimited to certain periods, spaces, or scales. Colombian women faced brutality before the civil war, and during the conflict, and are still facing it following the Peace Agreement. Peace for women is more than the absence of an armed conflict.

## Table of Reference

Anderlini, Sanam Naraghi. ‘Civil Society’s Leadership in Adopting 1325 Resolution’. In *The Oxford Handbook of Women, Peace, and Security*, edited by Sara E. Davies and Jacqui True, 0. Oxford University Press, 2019. <https://doi.org/10.1093/oxfordhb/9780190638276.013.65>.

Aoláin, Fionnuala Ní, Dina Francesca Haynes, and Naomi Cahn. ‘Disarmament, Demobilization, and Reintegration (DDR) Programs’. In *On the Frontlines: Gender, War, and the Post-Conflict Process*, edited by Fionnuala Ni Aolain, Dina Francesca Haynes, and Naomi Cahn, 0. Oxford University Press, 2011. <https://doi.org/10.1093/acprof:oso/9780195396645.003.0006>.

Azrael, Deborah, and David Hemenway. “‘In the Safety of Your Own Home’: Results from a National Survey on Gun Use at Home’. *Social Science & Medicine* 50, no. 2 (January 2000): 285–91. [https://doi.org/10.1016/S0277-9536\(99\)00283-X](https://doi.org/10.1016/S0277-9536(99)00283-X).

Arimatsu, Louise, Rasha Obaid, and Anna de Courcy Wheeler. ‘Women, Weapons and Disarmament’. In *Feminist Conversations on Peace*, edited by Sarah Smith and Keina Yoshida, 1st ed., 135–48. Bristol University Press, 2022. <https://doi.org/10.2307/j.ctv2rr3hcn.14>.

Boesten, Jelke. ‘Of Exceptions and Continuities: Theory and Methodology in Research on Conflict-Related Sexual violence’, *International Feminist Journal of Politics* 19(4) , 2017.

Britton, Dana M., Shannon K. Jacobsen, and Grace Howard. *The Gender of Crime*. Second edition. The Gender Lens Series. Lanham: Rowman & Littlefield, 2018.

Campbell, Jacquelyn C., Daniel Webster, Jane Koziol-McLain, Carolyn Block, Doris Campbell, Mary Ann Curry, Faye Gary, et al. ‘Risk Factors for Femicide in Abusive Relationships: Results From a Multisite Case Control Study’. *American Journal of Public Health* 93, no. 7 (July 2003): 1089–97. <https://doi.org/10.2105/AJPH.93.7.1089>.

Capone, Francesca. ‘An Overview of the DDR Process Established in the Aftermath of the Revised Peace Agreement between the Colombian Government and the FARC: Finally on the Right Track?’ *Global Jurist* 17, no. 3, 2017.

Chinkin, Christine. 'Adoption of 1325 Resolution'. In *The Oxford Handbook of Women, Peace, and Security*, edited by Sara E. Davies and Jacqui True, 0. Oxford University Press, 2019. <https://doi.org/10.1093/oxfordhb/9780190638276.013.3>.

Connell, Raewyn. *Gender and Power: Society, the Person, and Sexual Politics*. Stanford, Calif: Stanford University Press, 1987.

Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women. *Concluding Observations on the Ninth Periodic Report of Colombia*. New York, 2019.

Cukier, Wendy, Kooistra, Alison, and Anto, Mark. 'Gendered Perspectives on Small Arms Proliferation and Misuse: Effects and Policies'. *Bonn International Center for Conversion Brief* 24 : 25–39, 2002.

Cukier, Wendy and Cairns, James. 'Gender, Attitudes and the Regulation of Small Arms: Implications for Action'. In *Sexed Pistols: The Gendered Impacts of Small Arms and Light Weapons*, edited by Vanessa Farr, Henri Myrntinen, and Albrecht Schnabel. Tokyo ; New York: United Nations University Press, 2009.

Cuckier, Wendy, Baillargeon, Amélie, and Eagen, Sarah. 'A Gendered Perspective on the Misuse and Proliferation of Small Arms/Firearms'. In *The Search for Lasting Peace: Critical Perspectives on Gender-Responsive Human Security*, edited by Rosalind Boyd. Gender in a Global/Local World. Ashgate, 2014.

Data from the Observatorio de Memoria y Conflicto (Observatory of Memory and Conflict), Available: <https://micrositios.centrodememoriahistorica.gov.co/observatorio/> (Accessed 12 February 2023).

Dianne, Otto. 'Women, Peace and Security: A Critical Analysis of the Security Council's Vision'. *SSRN Scholarly Paper*. Rochester, NY, 16 July 2015. <https://papers.ssrn.com/abstract=2631325>.

Edwar Mogire, 'The Humanitarian Impact of Small Arms and Light Weapons and the Threat to Security'. *XV Amaldi Conference on Problems of Global Security*, 2003.

Fabra-Zamora, Jorge Luis, Andrés Molina-Ochoa, and Nancy C. Doubleday. 'Introduction'. In *The Colombian Peace Agreement*. Routledge, 2021.

Farr, Vanessa. 'The Impacts on Women of Prolific Small Arms and Light Weapons'. *Canadian Woman Studies/ les Cahiers de la Femme*, 22(2), 2003.

Farr, Vanessa, Myrntinen Al Schnabel, Henri, and Szesnat, Felicity. 'Small Arms and Rape as a System of War: A Case Study of the Democratic Republic of the Congo'. In *Sexed Pistols: The Gendered Impacts of Small Arms and Light Weapons*, edited by Vanessa Farr, Henri Myrntinen, and Albrecht Schnabel. Tokyo ; New York: United Nations University Press, 2009.

Felipe, David, Gomez, Triana, Rodningen, Ida, Marsh, Nicholas, Pallik, Julia. 'Negotiating Disarmament – The Gender Dimension: Barriers to the Inclusion of Women in Disarmament Negotiations'. *PRIO GPS Policy Brief*, 2022.

*Final Agreement to End the Armed Conflict and Build a Stable and Lasting Peace*, 2016. (English translation available : <https://www.peaceagreements.org/viewmasterdocument/1845>).

Frey, Barbara. 'The Gender Implications of Small Arms and Light Weapons in Conflict Situations'. In *The Oxford Handbook of Gender and Conflict*, edited by Fionnuala Ní Aoláin, Naomi Cahn, Dina Francesca Haynes, and Nahla Valji, 0. Oxford University Press, 2018. <https://doi.org/10.1093/oxfordhb/9780199300983.013.29>.

Gillis, Melissa. *Disarmament: A Basic Guide*. New-York, 2017.

Harders, Cilja. 'Gender Relations, Violence and Conflict Transformation'. In *Advancing Conflict Transformation: The Berghof Handbook II*, edited by Beatrix Austin, Martina Fischer, Hans-Joachim Giessmann. Opladen, Germany: Barbara Budrich Publishers, 2011.

Hauge, Wenche Iren. 'Gender Dimensions of DDR – beyond Victimization and Dehumanization: Tracking the Thematic'. *International Feminist Journal of Politics* 22, no. 2 (14 March 2020): 206–26. <https://doi.org/10.1080/14616742.2019.1673669>.

Heyzer, Noeleen. *Gender, Peace and Disarmament*. Disarmament Forum No. 4, 2004.

Ioannides, Isabelle. *Peace and Security in 2019: Evaluating EU Efforts to Support Peace in Colombia*. Brussels:

International Committee of the Red Cross. *Arms Availability and the Situation of Civilians in Armed Conflict: A Study Presented by the ICRC*. 1999.

International Crisis Group. ‘Colombia’s Last Guerrillas Make First Step toward “Total Peace”’, 23 November 2022. <https://www.crisisgroup.org/latin-america-caribbean/andes/colombia/colombias-last-guerrillas-make-first-step-toward-total-peace>.

International Peace Academy. *A Framework for Lasting Disarmament, Demobilization and Reintegration of Former Combatants in Crisis Situations*. IPA Workshop Report: New-York, 2002.

Jacoby, Tami. ‘From the Trenches: Dilemmas of Feminist IR Fieldwork’. In *Feminist Methodologies for International Relations*, edited by Brooke A. Ackerly, Maria Stern, and Jacqui True, 1st ed., 153–73. Cambridge University Press, 2006. <https://doi.org/10.1017/CBO9780511617690.010>.

Jiménez-Villamizar, Maria, Campo-Arias, Adalberto, Caballero-Domínguez, Carmen. ‘Carrying Weapons at School: Prevalence and Associated Factors in Colombian High-School Students’. *Psychology in the Schools* 59(11), 2022.

Liz, Kelly. ‘The Continuum of Sexual Violence’. In *Women, Violence and Social Control*, edited by Jalna Hanmer and Mary Maynard. London: Palgrave Macmillan UK, 1987.

Kaldor, Mary. *New and Old Wars*. Third edition. Cambridge Malden: Polity, 2012.

Kostovicova, Denisa, Vesna Bojicic-Dzelilovic, and Marsha Henry. ‘Drawing on the Continuum: A War and Post-War Political Economy of Gender-Based Violence in Bosnia and Herzegovina’. *International Feminist Journal of Politics* 22, no. 2 (14 March 2020): 250–72. <https://doi.org/10.1080/14616742.2019.1692686>.

Kreft, Anne-Kathrin. ‘Civil Society Perspectives on Sexual Violence in Conflict: Patriarchy and War Strategy in Colombia’. *International Affairs* 96, no. 2 (1 March 2020): 457–78. <https://doi.org/10.1093/ia/iiz257>.

Kreutz, Joakim, Marsh, Nicholas, and Torre, Manuela. 'Regaining State Control: Arms and Violence in Post-Conflict Countries'. In *Small Arms, Crime and Conflict: Global Governance and the Threat of Armed Violence*, edited by Owen Greene and Nicholas Marsh. Routledge Studies in Peace and Conflict Resolution 15. Abingdon, Oxon ; New York: Routledge, 2012.

Mazurana, Dyan, and Torre, Manuela. 'Women, Girls and Disarmament, Demobilization and Reintegration (DDR)'. In *Women, Girls and DDR*. Cambridge: Polity, 2017.

Mohayed, Mohayed., Bailey, Rahn, Kennedy. 'Intimate Partner Homicide: Firearms Use in Domestic Violence'. In: Bailey R.K. (eds) *Intimate Partner Violence*. Springer, 2021. [https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-030-55864-2\\_15](https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-030-55864-2_15).

Oion-Encina, Rakel. 'Resolution 1325 in the Agency of Colombian Women in the Peace Process of 2012-2016'. *Journal of International Women's Studies*, 21, no. 6 (2020).

Oxfam International. 'Sexual Violence in Colombia : Instrument of War'. *Oxfam Briefing Paper*, 2009.

Pedersen, Jennifer. 'In the Rain and in the Sun: Women's Peace Activism in Liberia'. In *Handbook on Gender and War*, by Simona Sharoni, Julia Welland, Linda Steiner, and Jennifer Pedersen, 400–418. Edward Elgar Publishing, 2016. <https://doi.org/10.4337/9781849808927.00031>.

Plataforma Colombiana de Derechos Humanos, Democracia y Desarrollo, Coordinación Colombia Europa Estados Unidos, Alianza de Organizaciones Sociales y Afines. *Lecciones del Aprendiz: Autoritarismo y Desigualdad - Balance del Tercer año de Gobierno de Iván Duque Márquez*. 2021.

San Pedro, Paula. *Sexual Violence in Colombia: Instrument of War*. Oxfam Briefing Paper, 2009.

Sachseder, Julia Carolin. 'Women's Experiences of Violence and Insecurities in Colombia's Conflict'. In *Violence against Women in and beyond Conflict: The Coloniality of Violence*. London: Routledge, 2022. <https://doi.org/10.4324/9781003148333>.

Seifert, Ruth. 'War and Rape: A Preliminary Analysis'. In *The Criminology of War*. Routledge, 2014.

Sjoberg, Laura. 'Gender-Based Violence in War'. In *Handbook on Gender and War*, by Simona Sharoni, Julia Welland, Linda Steiner, and Jennifer Pedersen, 175–93. Edward Elgar Publishing, 2016. <https://doi.org/10.4337/9781849808927.00018>.

Small Arms Survey. *Colombia's Hydra: The Many Faces of Gun Violence*. Small Arms Survey, 2006.

Small Arms Survey. *Converging Agendas : Women, Peace, Security and Small Arms*. Small Arms Survey 2014: Women and Guns, 2014.

Small Arms Survey. 'Global Firearms Holdings'. <https://www.smallarmssurvey.org/database/global-firearms-holdings>.

Svallfors, Signe. 'Hidden Casualties: The Links between Armed Conflict and Intimate Partner Violence in Colombia'. *Politics & Gender* 19, no. 1 (March 2023): 133–65. <https://doi.org/10.1017/S1743923X2100043X>.

Temblores ONG, *Bolillo Dios y Patria*. 2021.

The World Conference on Human Rights in Vienna. *Vienna Declaration and Programme of Action*, 1993.

United Nations. *Report of the United Nations Conference on Illicit Trade in Small Arms and Light Weapons in All Its Aspects*. New-York, 2001.

United Nations General Assembly. *Declaration on the Elimination of Violence against Women*. Resolution 48/104, 1993.

United Nations Department for Disarmament Affairs. *Conflict, Peace-building, Disarmament, Security: Women's Advocacy for Peace and Disarmament*. New-York, 2001.

United Nations Department for Disarmament Affairs in Collaboration with the Office of the Special Adviser on Gender Issues and Advancement of Women. *Gender Perspectives on Small Arms*. New-York, 2001.

United Nations Department of Peacekeeping Operations. *Integrated Disarmament, Demobilization and Reintegration Standards*. New-York, 2006.

United Nations Department of Peacekeeping Operations. *United Nations Peacekeeping Operations: Principles and Guidelines*. New-York, 2008.

United Nations Secretary-General. *Administrative and Budgetary Aspects of the Financing of the United Nations Peacekeeping Operations. Note by the Secretary-General*. 2005.

United Nations Security Council. *Tribunal (Former Yugoslavia)*. Resolution 827, 1993.

United Nations Security Council. *Establishment of an International Tribunal and Adoption of the Statute of the Tribunal*. Resolution 955, 1994.

United Nations Security Council. *The Protection of Civilians in Armed Conflict*. Resolution 1265, 1999.

United Nations Security Council. *The Protection of Civilians in Armed Conflict*. Resolution 1296, 2000.

United Nations Security Council. *Women Peace and Security*. Resolution 1325, 2000.

United Nations Security Council. *The Protection of Civilians in Armed Conflict*. Resolution 1674, 2006.

United Nations Security Council. *Women and Peace and Security*. Resolution 1820, 2008.

United Nations Security Council. *Women and Peace and Security*. Resolution 1888, 2009.

United Nations Security Council. *Women and Peace and Security*. Resolution 1889, 2009.

United Nations Security Council. *Women and Peace and Security*. Resolution 1960, 2010.



United Nations Security Council. *Women and Peace and Security*. Resolution 2106, 2013.

United Nations Security Council. *Women and Peace and Security*. Resolution 2122, 2013.

United Nations Security Council. *Women and Peace and Security*. Resolution 2242, 2015.

United Nations Security Council. *Resolution 2261*, 2016.

United Nations Security Council. *Resolution 2377*, 2017.

United Nations Security Council. *United Nations Verification Mission in Colombia: Report of the Secretary General, June 2017*. New-York, 2017.

United Nations Security Council. *United Nations Verification Mission in Colombia: Report of the Secretary General, September 2017*. New-York, 2017.

United Nations Security Council. *Women and Peace and Security*. Resolution 2467, 2019.

United Nations Security Council. *Women and Peace and Security*. Resolution 2493, 2019.

United Nations Security Council. *United Nations Verification Mission in Colombia: Report of the Secretary General, December 2021*. New-York, 2021.

United Nations Security Council. *United Nations Verification Mission in Colombia: Report of the Secretary General, June 2022*. New-York, 2022.

United Nations Security Council. *United Nations Verification Mission in Colombia: Report of the Secretary General, September 2022*. New-York, 2022.

United Nations Security Council. *United Nations Verification Mission in Colombia: Report of the Secretary General, December 2022*. New-York, 2022.

Van der Laak, Maartje. 'Gender Perspectives on Interventions to Reduce the Proliferation and Misuse of Small Arms and Light Weapons (SALW): A Case Study of Women's Efforts in Rwanda'. *L'Afrique des Grands Lacs, Annuaire 2003-2004*, 2004.

Vecino-Ortiz, Andres I, and Deivis N Guzman-Tordecilla. 'Gun-Carrying Restrictions and Gun-Related Mortality, Colombia: A Difference-in-Difference Design with Fixed Effects'. *Bulletin of the World Health Organization* 98, no. 3 (1 March 2020): 170–76. <https://doi.org/10.2471/BLT.19.236646>.

Wirtz, Andrea L, Kiemanh Pham, Nancy Glass, Saskia Loochkartt, Teemar Kidane, Decssy Cuspoca, Leonard S Rubenstein, Sonal Singh, and Alexander Vu. 'Gender-Based Violence in Conflict and Displacement: Qualitative Findings from Displaced Women in Colombia'. *Conflict and Health* 8, no. 1 (December 2014): 10. <https://doi.org/10.1186/1752-1505-8-10>.

Yadav, Punam, and Denise M. Horn. 'Continuums of Violence: Feminist Peace Research and Gender-Based Violence'. In *Routledge Handbook of Feminist Peace Research*. Routledge, 2021.

Østby, Gudrun, Leiby, Michele, Nordås Ragnild. 'The Legacy of Wartime Violence on Intimate-Partner Abuse: Microlevel Evidence from Peru, 1980–2009'. *International Studies Quarterly*, Volume 63, Issue 1, 2019.

## Appendix

### Appendix I: Example of an interview guide

- Can you talk a bit about gender norms in Colombia?
  
- How have women been participating in the DDR (demobilisation, disarmament, and reintegration) process (as victims, as actors, as peacebuilding agents...) in the country?
  
- Can you please tell me a bit about gender-based violence in Colombia?
- And about intimate partner violence?
- And about sexual violence?
  
- How have small arms been used in the context of gender-based violence in Colombia?
  
- How would you describe and compare gender-based violence during the conflict and after it?
  
- How do you perceive the implementation of the DDR process following the peace agreement?
  
- How would you evaluate the disarmament of small arms process following the peace agreement?
  
- Have you been able to see a difference between the use of small arms in gender-based violence acts? Why is that so?
  
- Is there anything you would like to add concerning guns and gender-based violence in the country?