

IAFS 4500 - Migration & Refugees
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**How Effective has the Colombian Government Been in Assisting its
Internally Displaced Citizens? - Internal Displacement as a Result of
the Colombian Conflict**

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Introduction

The Colombian government and its security forces have now been involved in a low intensity conflict with various rebel groups and criminal gangs, among others, for more than half a century. In a conflict deeply rooted in the country's history, its main victims have been not the combatants, but rather the country's citizens; as a result, Colombia now has one of the highest numbers of internally displaced peoples (IDPs) in the world.¹ In this paper, I aim to evaluate the Colombian Government's management of its internally displaced population, and how effective it has been in providing assistance to these citizens. I will do so by analyzing and evaluating the actions taken by the government — both directly and by proxy through the work of various organizations — and their effects on internally displaced Colombians.

The circumstances in Colombia lead to a unique case study at the global level, as very few governments have maintained the ability to continue functioning as a state after being involved in such a protracted internal conflict. For this reason, the so-called “Colombian Conflict” has been perceived, rather than a government fighting insurgent criminals and guerrillas, as the Colombian Government's efforts to maintain peace, order, and stability; no one on the international level doubts the state's eventual victory or its continuity, it is rather a matter of when the government will pacify its lands and restore permanent security for its citizens. Because of this, the plight of Colombia's internally displaced citizens has often been ignored, or has become something of a non-issue after the international community moved their outrage to some other displacement situation. While there is a heavy presence of intergovernmental organizations, non-governmental organizations (both national and international), and academic institutions within the country, the international community has made it clear that it is the Colombian government's sole responsibility to not only handle the administration of its IDPs, but also to be the one to define and deliver a just solution for all parties involved. Although the Colombian government, with the support of other actors, has been at the forefront of peacekeeping and crime fighting efforts during the conflict's length, it has also been

¹(IDMC), Internal Displacement Monitoring Centre. *The Last Refuge: Urban Displacement in Colombia*.

involved in a number of corruption and human rights scandals. It is important to consider that although viewed as a singular entity and a unitary actor, the Colombian government is a government like any other, made up of representatives who embody the country's various political ideologies. For this reason, throughout the length of this research paper it is important to remember that not only can a government's policies change from one end of the spectrum to the other, but also that these actors are humans, which come with all their praises, flaws, and nuances, and are not completely rational actors. However, the overall Conflict and competition for political gains has more often than not left the Colombian citizens as victims who have been historically overlooked. Because of this, in this paper I will analyze their current situations hoping that, in recent years, there has been a betterment of their condition.

On the personal level, I was aware of the Colombian situation in an international context, having previous knowledge that multinational corporations such as Coca-Cola^{2 3} and Chiquita Banana⁴ have been accused of funding paramilitaries and death squads to harass and murder workers and villagers in order to get their way. In reality, I was completely unaware of — and rather underestimated — the scale and severity of the IDP situation in Colombia, thinking that it was going to be summarized as a small number of cases related to corporate interests. As I began my research, I found that victims due to displacement were actually a much higher percentage of the population than I had anticipated, and so I started looking for the causes of this displacement. As I read more into the context and conducted more research, I started understanding the bigger picture and how this “Colombian Conflict” contributed to such high displacement numbers. My preliminary findings seemed to show that although the subject of displacement in Colombia has been studied and discussed for decades, no solution proportionate to the scale of the conflict has yet been found; no actor, state, or organization has devised effective ways to either prevent displacements from

² <https://www.pbs.org/frontlineworld/fellows/colombia0106/index.html>

³ Coca-Cola Accused of Funding Colombian Death Squad.” *Telesur*.

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<https://nsarchive.gwu.edu/briefing-book/colombia-chiquita-papers/2017-05-11/chiquita-papers-document-over-800000-payments-colombian-guerrillas>

happening, or to restore justice to these Colombians. I therefore began researching whether this was true or not, what levels of assistance and support (if any) displaced Colombians have been receiving, and whether any of it was effective. In the following pages not only will I detail my findings and the research that led to them, I will also examine and analyze these to evaluate the implications on displaced Colombians. While it is important to note that not all displacement in Colombia has been caused by the Conflict — Colombians have been forced from their homes due to speculative development, climate, and other reasons — and that these victims still have access to these support networks, for the sake of this paper's length I will only be analyzing how the measures taken relate specifically to the Conflict's victims.

Background

Colombia is a state formed through independentist, revolutionary violence, and so it comes as no surprise that violence has been an integral part of the country's history and politics. Between interstate wars, civil wars, and political violence, Colombia has long made unsuccessful attempts to build a peaceful citizenship experience. High degrees of inequality — on all terms — between the capitalist society of the urban centers and the rural, agricultural, and peasant liberal society can be seen as plaguing Colombian society and functioning as grievances and causes of conflict for the majority of its history. Although it is important to understand what led to these grievances being expressed in the forms of political violence, there is simply not enough time or space in this paper to thoroughly analyze how Colombian society became structured this way. However, it is generally accepted that a long history of conflict and high degrees of inequality are the causes that created the conditions necessary for what became known as the Colombian Conflict, the explosion in violence that came with it, and the high numbers of IDPs as a result.

There is no agreed definitive start date for what has become known as the Colombian Conflict: some place it at the formation of the Armed Revolutionary Forces of Colombia (*Fuerzas Armadas Revolucionarias de Colombia*, FARC) in 1964; others place it at the formation of their predecessors, the liberal peasant militia the National Front (*Frente Nacional*); while finally some,

like Jafardo and Estrada, argue that an uninterrupted cycle of political violence and social conflict takes the start date all the way back to the 1920s.^{5 6} Although there is no agreed upon start date for the “Conflict” itself, the decade from 1948-1958 has become known as “La Violencia” (The Violence). During this period, the country’s conservatives and liberals fought a brutal civil war — mainly in the rural provinces — which began with the 1948 assassination of Bogotá mayor and popular liberal presidential candidate Jorge Gaitán. The conservatives, with the help and support of the Colombian government, ended up victorious, but by no means were either the lower-lying causes and conditions resolved, or current and possible future threats neutralized. *La Violencia* has its roots deep in the rampant political, social, and economic inequality which has characterized Colombia since its founding, and only served to exacerbate these differences and grievances; land distribution and economic inequality have been a causal factor for internal conflict since the 19th century and continue to be to this day. Many, like Pecaut and Morano, place the start of the Conflict with the beginning of *La Violencia* due not only to the uninterrupted violence and chronology, but also due to the fact that unresolved grievances from *La Violencia* led to the creation of many of the Conflict’s main actors.⁷

It is important to note that displacement has been ongoing and recurrent throughout the length of these various armed conflicts; affecting innocent people such as Juan Veléz, a peasant farmer from the region of Antioquia, who was forced to leave his home to escape forced recruitment into FARC in the 1960s.⁸ He and countless other Colombians have been victims of the country’s long history of inequality, political violence, and human rights abuses; they have been waiting more than a half-century for a permanent, peaceful resolution which is yet to come. In the meantime, they continue to be classified as IDPs and continue the process to seek peace, justice, and restitution. This

⁵“¿Por qué empezó y qué pasó en la guerra de más de 50 años que desangró a Colombia?” *BBC News Mundo*.

⁶“Las teorías del origen del conflicto armado en Colombia.” *EL HERALDO*.

⁷*Ibid*

⁸*BBC News Mundo*.

process has been long and arduous, involving countless NGOs, IGOs, and government bodies; some successful, others plagued by corruption and inefficiencies.

While high degrees of economic and social inequality led to political confrontations and a sharp rise in political violence in the early 20th century, grievances specifically with regards to unequal land distribution, a lack of reform, and the political and social condition of the country's many peasant farmers (*Campesinos*) led to the original creation of liberal militia groups in the middle of the century. These — in the context of the Cold War — slowly started expressing views more and more contrary to the political establishment's capitalist conservative ideologies. The high degrees of inequality and the lack of political progress and reform led many of these original militia members to adopt marxist communist views, believing that an armed struggle was the only way they would be able to achieve change and social progress for the working classes. These members met in Marquetalia in 1964, and formed what Gonzalo Sanches, historian and director of the National Center for Historic Memory, called “a sort of independent republic, where fifty veterans of *la Violencia* gathered with their families.”⁹ This initial meeting would characterize the birth of FARC, the insurgent group which would grow to become one of the largest threats to Colombia's stability, and some of whose members continue the fight to this day.

It is important to note that this group of militia members were by no means the only group which decided to take up armed conflict during this time, as there were already more than 100 armed groups operating against the Colombian government at the time. Among the revolutionary guerrilla groups which would arise out of this period were also the National Liberation Army (*Ejército de Liberación Nacional*, ELN), the maoist Popular Liberation Army (*Ejército Popular de Liberación*, EPL) and later the 19th of April Movement (M-19). To contrast these forces, and to support the Colombian government in its fight against them, many of the farmers who were suffering attacks decided to form together into self-defense groups, like the original liberal militias, thanks to Colombia's constitutional right to armed self defense. Out of these groups arose various right wing

⁹ *Ibid.*

paramilitaries such as the regional Urban Self-Defense Forces of Córdoba and Urabá (*Autodefensas Campesinas de Córdoba y Urabá*, AUCC) which then transformed into the terroristic, drug trafficking United Self-Defense Forces of Colombia (*Autodefensas Unidas de Colombia*, AUC).¹⁰ These groups were not created all at the same time, to fight the same cause, or in the same geographic locations; they have, however, all contributed to the Conflict and the continued displacement of Colombians through their fight against, and sometimes collaborations with, the Colombian government.

To open a short parenthesis, from the 1980s onwards crime syndicates and drug traffickers began operating in the lucrative international drug trade. Some of the most powerful kingpins and largest criminal cartels in history began to operate during this period, and gained an immense amount of power through their wealth and criminal influence in an incredibly short amount of time. Since their introduction into the scene, the Colombian government has also been long involved in the fight against organized crime, and has classified this fight as participatory to the larger Conflict. This is due to the many intricacies and nuances that surround international states and actors, paramilitary and guerrilla groups, drug traffickers, and the Colombian government; since their explosion in scale and value on the global market, the production and sale of illicit narcotics have become integral to the financial success and the distribution of political power in the Colombian Conflict. Since their involvement in the conflict, many of the actors have chosen to participate in the drug trade, and many more have benefitted from relations with these actors, including corrupt government officials. As drug trafficking continues to this day, and as governmental reports and whole books have been written on the subject,¹¹ it is impossible to comprehensively summarize every single actor's involvement in the drug trade; most of these actors, if not all, are complicit in the prorogation of and profiting from the narcotics trade in Colombia. For the sake of this paper, the topic of drug traffickers and criminal syndicates will be addressed again in the Findings section with regards to its

¹⁰ Hristov, Jasmin. *Blood and Capital: The Paramilitarization of Colombia*.

¹¹ *Ibid*

contributions to displacement. However, further research is recommended and encouraged, as much more is necessary in order to form a complete and nuanced understanding of how drug trafficking relates to the Conflict.

As mentioned earlier, the Colombian Conflict is an extremely large-scale and nuanced case study which fits in a particularly interesting historical context. I have not even fully researched the contributions of international states, actors, and corporations, or begun to explore how the Cold War influenced the combatants' ideologies, strategies, and goals. As anyone can understand, the infinitely complex nature of this case study is due to its inherent humanity; the hundreds of millions of lives affected during this decades-long war all played a role in bringing it to the point it is today. Actions, ranging from morally righteous and selfless all the way to human rights abuses and crimes against humanity, have been occurring throughout the entirety of the conflict and continue to this day.¹² As people are the main actors of this conflict, they bring both good and bad, but it remains impossible to wholly summarize everybody's contributions; for this reason, the paper's Background section is unfortunately limited to a historiographic summary of the Conflict's actors and causality. I will make a brief mention of the current overall situation and who the continued actors are in order to provide the most comprehensive depiction of the Conflict and its outlooks, and how these continue to affect the Colombian people.

The Conflict's landscape can be summarized by the following actors: marxist revolutionaries and left wing guerillas, right wing paramilitary groups, crime syndicates and drug trafficking groups, and the Colombian government. Additionally, there are hundreds of organizations, both IGOs and NGOs operating within the country in order to provide assistance to victims (in the context of this paper, victims of displacement, but the victimology and resources available for them is much more vast and comprehensive.

¹² Coca-Cola Accused of Funding Colombian Death Squad." *Telesur*.

The most influential events in the Colombian Conflict's recent history are those deemed to have had the largest impact on the war itself and the victim's experiences. Among these, in 1997 the United Nations High Commission for Refugees (UNHCR) decided to open a permanent mission in Colombia due to the gravity of the situation, the number of human rights abuses, and the dire necessity for humanitarian aid. In 1999, the UNHCR and the Colombian government signed a "Memorandum of intent regarding the cooperation in addressing the issue of forced displacement."¹³ The UN's work, which often cooperates with and involves other organizations and NGOs, has been instrumental in providing the level of assistance and support victims of displacement have received thus far, and has played an important role in influencing Colombia's politics and culture.

Then, in 2006, the AUC were officially disbanded; as Colombia's largest right-wing paramilitary organization, the main enemies of FARC and the ELN, they were responsible for countless violations of human rights. The AUC has been explicitly tied with Colombia's military, security forces, and officials multiple times,¹⁴ but after their disbandment in 2006 a scandal which became known as *parapolitica* (a portmanteau of paramilitary and politics) rocked Colombian politics. In this scandal, the AUC's deep connections with the Colombian government were uncovered, leading to the investigations and arrests of many former politicians, along with the general public's outcry and calls for justice.¹⁵

Finally, in 2016, FARC signed provisional peace accords with the Colombian government. These represent the culmination of a decades-long peace process and repeated failed attempts at creating it. There have been efforts for a peace agreement with FARC ever since the 1980s but they have never been able to be completed until now. This peace agreement postulates various conditions regarding reintegration, as well as the seeking of truth and justice for all figures involved, and has been deemed satisfactory by both sides. The dissolution of FARC led to the creation of the Carlos

¹³ UNHCR Reporting. "Colombia IDP Footprint 2022."

¹⁴ "THE 'SIXTH DIVISION': Military-Paramilitary Ties and U.S. Policy in Colombia (Human Rights Watch Report, October 2001)."

¹⁵ Tiempo, Casa Editorial El. "De 13 expresidentes del Senado, 12 investigados por 'parapolítica.'" *El Tiempo*.

Patino Front, a dissident group known as Farc-D which continues its fight against the government. The major achievements of the peace agreement were the creation of various post-conflict judiciary bodies and truth commissions, which have allowed the government and Colombian people to begin the process of post-conflict recovery.^{16 17}

Today, the Colombian government continues in its armed conflict against multiple actors; these are mainly various guerilla groups who refuse to give up the fight, along with illicit crime syndicates, the largest of which — but by no means only — being the neo-paramilitary Gulf Clan (*Autodefensas Gaitanistas de Colombia*, AGC).¹⁸ There is now relative security, with no concerns about the country's long-term political stability. It is important to quickly mention that the Colombian government has just finished its most recent round of peace talks with the ELN, the largest of the remnant guerilla groups, and that there is hope for further progress in the peace process.¹⁹ Progress in recent years has led the Colombian government to begin the post-conflict process. This includes, without getting too much into my findings, the typical measures seen taken in the international context: truth and reconciliation commissions, impartial judicial bodies and processes, government bodies and organizations for the restitution and reparation of victims. All of these operate with the assistance of various national and international NGOs and numerous IGOs. The activities these bodies perform range from the reintegration of former combatants into Colombian society to mobile assistance centers and legal processes for displaced Colombians. Hoping to have provided a sufficiently informative, while concise, summation of a period as historiographically fascinating as it is complex and confusing, I will now discuss the state of the current literature available on the topic.

Literature Review

Scholars, government representatives, and advisors have all been faced with the problem of displacement and how to deal with it. Because of this, many have asked my same question before.

¹⁶ *Inicio | Informe Final Comisión de la Verdad.*

¹⁷ *Colombia | International Center for Transitional Justice.*

¹⁸“Gaitanistas - Gulf Clan.” *InSight Crime.*

¹⁹*United Nations Verification Mission in Colombia - Report of the Secretary-General (S/2023/222): 27 December 2022 to 26 March 2023 - Colombia*

What do we do with them? The topic of displacement has been debated ever since the Colombian Episcopal Conference declared it an issue in 1985, with various displacement incidents occurring decades prior right at the beginning of the conflict.²⁰ The research record is extensive, with the earliest paper consulted collecting data as early as 1985.²¹ With the law 387, Colombia codified displaced persons and their status into law as early as 1997.²²

Existing studies provide information about displaced people and their stories; make proscriptions on what to do with them; describe the government's implementation of assistance policies; analyze the effects of these policies, and more. The journal literature available is extensive as well; although it has fallen somewhat out of favor, many institutes and academic journals continue to publish papers, arguments, and reports regarding the situation. Additionally, there is an expansive collection of government reports and findings; these are produced by the government's various bodies in the forms of extensive reports, essays, studies, and publications on the effects of the conflict on civilians, some with specific regards to displacement.²³

The validity and reliability of the data is provided by the fact that it is backed by empirical evidence taken from official government sources or attestable organizations. The data's validity is further confirmed by multiple reliable institutions.²⁴

The literature's major limitation is that conflict and displacement still continue. I would not say there are any shortcomings in the theory or methodology of research, as it is all very reliable and has been compiled through decades to show that current trends are the same and that they agree with data. Roadblocks to progress in the research are protracted economic inequality and fighting which continue to contribute to displacement numbers, creating the inability to effectively deal with the

²⁰Centro de Memoria Histórica. "¡Basta ya! Colombia: memorias de guerra y dignidad." *¡Basta ya! Colombia: memorias de guerra y dignidad*, pg. 71

²¹Zafra Roldán, Gustavo. "Persons Internally Displaced on Account of Violence: A Fundamental Problem in Colombia."

²²For the full text of law 387, refer to: <https://www.refworld.org/pdfid/5a255b374.pdf>

²³"Voxpopuli - ¡Basta ya! Colombia: memorias de guerra y dignidad."

²⁴Fal-Dutra Santos, Ricardo. "Figures Analysis 2021 - Colombia." *International Displacement Monitoring Centre*.

current situation, as well as a lack of access to some displaced populations, leading to ineffective research.

In the literature, authors argue over the most effective policies to implement, what compensation is just and what is appropriate, and over new ways to assist IDPs. What they do agree on is the continued severity of the issue and the remaining necessity to implement policies which will achieve long term stability and solutions to violence and displacement. On the other hand, there are many questions currently still being asked by the literature which have not been answered. How do we stop displacement from happening? How do we carry out reconciliation and reparations? How do we make sure justice is served? These are questions I had to confront in my research and findings. What is currently debated is how to resolve the Conflict in the best and fastest manner, as the literature makes recommendations with that goal in mind. What is also debated is what is objective justice and what is achievable for victims, along with what best ways to assist them; some say leave them to their own devices, while others promise long term legal, economic, and social assistance. The literature I have compiled can be summarized and arranged thematically by the nature and actions of various organizations.

Government literature includes any and all articles, reports, data, and more published by any of the bodies of the Colombian government. This is the most comprehensive and reliable of all the literature available, as it is within the functions of the state and its duty to its citizens to accurately report on the Conflict

Institutional literature is any and all literature published by various organizations. These organizations range from intergovernmental, such as the UNHCR, to non-governmental, such as the HRW or the IDMC. Literature from these sources is extensive and reliable, and includes: reports, data sets, empirical evidence, testimonies, documentaries, and journal articles.

Lastly, academic literature is compiled from a wide array of sources. These include, but are not limited to: journal articles and publications, individual research papers, and commissioned reports. Although not the most resourceful for empirical data, the academic section of the literature

proves to be extensive, reliable, and thorough in examining the different experiences of displaced Colombians.

Theory

With this paper, I aim to discover any ways in which the Colombian government has been of assistance to displaced people, and if this support has actually been effective in restoring to these victims some sort of justice. In order to do this, I began my research with the assumption that the Colombian government had actually done something for these people. There is no formal statement as there is no one way to effectively evaluate the government's performance; what I find satisfactory may not be for someone else and vice versa. In addition, there are no variables to this study, as a general evaluation will be performed. My hypothesis would turn out to be true if people have a low percentage of attendance to these programs, a lack of growth in the number of restitution and reparations processes year-over-year, and testimonies directly attributing a lack of government assistance to their current conditions as displaced persons.

My theory is that while the government has achieved a lot in terms of big picture actions (such as peace accords, creating institutions, insisting on transparency, opening assistance centers and orgs), many Colombians still remain unaffected and in precarious situations as IDPS. I hypothesize that this is due to various reasons, some of which are: conflict is still happening where they live; they lack physical access to these resources; they lack the economic capabilities to begin the processes; or they have been displaced so long to the point where they have made a home elsewhere. In order for me to be able to evaluate this, I will have to find testimonies from people stating exactly that, as well as statistics and data which back my point. What has led me to believe this theory to be true is the fact that Colombians must use these systems if they have access to them, and if they do not, there must be something preventing them from doing so.

Research Designs & Methodology

I have laid out careful designs and parameters for how I will proceed with my research and evaluation. I will look at the work published by as many reliable sources as possible and confront it with the ideas I raised. These sources include, but are not limited to: official bodies of the Colombian government; intergovernmental organizations such as the UNHCR and the IDMC data sets; academic journals and sources discussing the topic, such as the Council on Hemispheric Affairs and the Brookings Institute; and non-governmental organizations operating in the country such as Human Rights Watch. I will see whether IDPs believe the assistance they receive to be sufficient, and I will look for overall trends of displaced people's conditions. After compiling my data, I will utilize my critical thinking skills to form a comprehensive evaluation of the Colombian government's response to their displacement crisis. My research design looks at both the state level and individual level analysis, giving me a well-rounded look at the situation from various perspectives.

Cases are limited by time and reliability issues. As stated earlier, this has been a topic which has long been debated, and the official codification of IDPs in Colombia in 1997 has led to more than a quarter-century of meticulous data being collected. Especially due to political developments and the conditions of post-conflict peace, government bodies have taken on the duty to collect and archive as much data related to the Conflict as possible. As such, priority was given to official government research and data sets, with equal importance given to that of various organizations such as the UNHCR and the IDMC. What acted as an exclusionary condition for my data was how recent it was in terms of time. I have chosen not to take into account any figures I have encountered pre-2020 due to the fact that there is plenty of updated publishing and sources. Because of this, I have only used pre-2020 sources to analyze the individual experience of displaced Colombians, as their testimony serves to provide a useful idea of the conditions of their lived experience. For example, the Colombian government's National Department of Planning contains a set of indicators they view as

determinants of successful government policies; however, these stop in 2018 and so therefore the numbers are unacceptable due to recent developments.²⁵

Because of the nature of my research question, I will be drawing on both individual and aggregate data sets. Data at the individual level of analysis is generally centered around the testimony of displaced persons, but also makes the use of primary sources from humanitarian workers and various key persons. On the other hand, data at the aggregate level will be sourced from official government figures along with those of various accredited organizations in order to gain an understanding of the larger overall trends and whether there has been an improvement. Data will be measured through individual testimonies, observations on situational reports, analysis of statistical sources, content analysis of historical archives and records, and academic opinions. Survey research, fieldwork observations, and statistical sources will be analyzed at the state level in order to discern patterns; while historical records, archives, and testimonies will be analyzed for content in order to identify valuable information.

I will eliminate other hypotheses if I determine Colombian IDPs have sufficient access to these resources and support for them. These hypotheses will be tested by looking at historical evidence and personal testimonies that will either lead me to confirm or reject them. Evidence such as high participation rates, positive testimonies, and positive-outlook trends, along with other metrics for success used by the Colombian government.²⁶ I will now present my data and the evaluations I have taken from it with regards to the standard of living of displaced Colombians.

Findings

I will detail my findings in the following ways: first, I will organize everything I have found that provides assistance to displaced persons. These actions will be presented under the agency or organization, where I will also detail each organization's specific purpose and their accomplishments. After each action listed, I will go on to assess its impact on displaced Colombians and explain my

²⁵“Indicadores de Progreso.” Sinergia, *Departamento Nacional De Planeación*.

²⁶*Ibid*

evaluation with additional data I have gathered. I will then present my findings on overall trends and patterns, along with a collection of individual testimonies I have listened to; I will evaluate these to then determine whether these people believe there has been any progress. All of this data and its analysis will be essential in determining the answer to my overarching question.

As previously mentioned, the Colombian government has repeatedly renewed its commitment to making the handling of its displaced citizens its responsibility. While often under pressure from outside actors, it has made huge amounts of progress in the way it approaches the situation in all legal, economic, political, and humanitarian matters. Most of the work carried out by the government is often at the suggestion or recommendation of others, but the government still takes the responsibility of implementing the necessary measures and creating the necessary bodies. Before getting into the actual actions done for IDPs, I would like to mention that the government, as of March 8th 2023, has concluded its latest round of peace talks with the ELN in Mexico City.²⁷ The continued pursuit of peace and an end to the conflict are integral components to the improvement of the overall displacement situation for multiple reasons; as armed conflict continues to be the greatest driver of displacement,²⁸ it remains an unresolved issue which continues to contribute to the problem and acts as an inhibitor to progress. As I will explore in my findings, many people have been displaced multiple times, and are unable to find a place of permanent residence, due to the fact that violence continues.²⁹ Continued violence not only nullifies the many achievements made at the individual level with regards to displaced citizens; it also acts as an additional and continued drain of the government's resources, which could be used elsewhere in the assistance of the Conflict's victims. Putting an end to violence and restoring peace would not only allow the progress and accomplishments made to not be at risk of being nullified, it would also allow the Colombian government to re-invest its resources in order to expedite the post-conflict peace process. Therefore,

²⁷ *United Nations Verification Mission in Colombia.*

²⁸“Colombia: Large-Group Internal Displacement.” *UNHCR Reporting.*

²⁹ Lennard, Jeremy. ‘FROM AID TO EMPOWERMENT’ *Addressing Urban Displacement in Colombia’s Informal Settlements.*

the Colombian government's actions in seeking to form peace agreements with the Conflict's actors are not only commendable, but are also effective at the larger level of analysis and improve both the state's security and the living conditions for its citizens.

As stated earlier the Colombian government began recognizing its internally displaced citizens, their rights and need for assistance, and the government's responsibility and duties, with 1997's law 387.³⁰ This law, although no longer in effect, was vital in beginning the process of recognizing displaced Colombians as victims of the conflict, and equally important in getting the assistance processes started. In 2011, and the current legal framework, the Colombian congress passed law 1448: Victims and Land Restitution Act.³¹ This law puts in effect various political, legal, social, and economic measures in favor of victims of the conflict. Specifically, it created mechanisms and institutions through which victims of displacement can repatriate their original land. The main government body created by this law responsible for soliciting and administering justice for victims of displacement is the Land Restitution Unit (*Unidad de Restitución de Tierras*, URT), which operates under the Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Development. The URT has created mechanisms to help families who may need assistance in the solicitation and legal processes for whichever reason. As of March 31, 2023, there have been 144,830 legal solicitations for the restitution of land; 128,276 of these solicitations (more than 88%) were administered by the URT.³² 9,803 families decided to go through the solicitation and legal processes individually; of these solicitations, 8,060 judicial sentences delivered more than 11,526 restitution or compensation orders.³³ Out of the estimated 6 million hectares of land forcibly taken from Colombians,³⁴ 578,156 hectares have been either returned or have been sentenced for return to victims of displacement. Although only about 9.6% of the total confiscated territory has been returned, it is important to

³⁰*Content of Law 387*

³¹For the whole content of Law 1448, refer to:

<https://en.unesco.org/creativity/sites/creativity/files/law1448v18jun20.pdf>

³²*Estadísticas de Restitución - URT.*

³³*Ibid*

³⁴“Colombia: Victims Face Reprisals for Reclaiming Land.” *Human Rights Watch*.

consider many factors which contribute to keeping this number low; these include factors such as continued conflict in parts of the country, or the fact that many displaced people have now settled elsewhere.³⁵

Although the creation of the URT demonstrates a legitimate intent by the Colombian government to deliver justice for its displaced citizens, the program and its representatives are not without its flaws. The bureaucracy is extremely slow, as shown by the low percentage of land returned above, with an average of 48,180 hectares returned per year. Because of this, some functionaries decided to start accepting bribes in order to expedite the solicitation and restitution process; this resulted in more than \$10 million U.S. Dollars in bribes being taken by URT functionaries, causing a massive scandal in Colombia.³⁶ This had the result of enforcing an inequitable land restitution process, where petitioners who could afford the bribes were given priority. While this shows that corruption is still ongoing in Colombia, and that it hampers the government's efforts to assist its displaced citizens, the positive side of this scandal is that it occurred under the administration of Colombia's last president, Ivan Duque; this led to promises of government transparency and acceptance of even more scrutiny by the country's current president, Gustavo Petro. More will be detailed about the current administration's policies later on in the findings.

One of the major stipulations of law 1448 was the creation of the National Center for Historic Memory (*Centro Nacional de la Memoria Histórica, CNMH*) whose sole purpose is documenting the history of the conflict and its effects on the Colombian people.³⁷ Through its various publications, reports, documentaries, expositions and activities, the CNMH is responsible for keeping the memory of the Conflict's devastating effects alive in the people of Colombia; this is an essential part of the post-conflict peace process which ensures non-repetition and the full disclosure of the objective truth. One of the CNMH's most important and influential pieces of work was "Basta Ya", a 2013

³⁵ Lennard, Jeremy.

³⁶Zuluaga, Daniela Osorio. "Denuncian presunta corrupción en Restitución de Tierras" *El Colombiano*.

³⁷Centro de Memoria Histórica. "¡Basta ya!"

publication which acts as the most comprehensive report on the Conflict ever written.³⁸ In this report, the CNMH assembled as much information, data, reports, and archives as possible in order to form a complete history of the effects of the conflict in Colombia through various levels of analysis and perspectives. With specific regards to displacement, the report detailed how conflict continues to contribute to displacement, a mention of a 2012 report detailing the murder of 71 leaders in the process of land restitution — which had only begun a year earlier — indicates high pushback to the land restitution programs.³⁹ The report focuses on compiling data for displacement throughout the Conflict’s history.

Additionally, the CNMH occupies itself with the production of various informative documentaries to keep the testimonies of the Conflict’s victims alive. One of these productions, a documentary called “Memorias del Tiempo,” interviewed senior victims of the conflict. This demographic of people is extremely important to answer my research question as they have dealt with the issue of forced displacement the longest; in the government’s Singular Registry for Victims, 1,080,788 are aged 60+.⁴⁰ From this documentary and the interviewee’s testimonies, I was able to identify the fact that there appears to be lots of movement of displaced people before they find a permanent home to settle in.⁴¹ This is corroborated by figures from the International Displacement Monitoring Center, which show that 22.5% of respondents had been living in informal settlements for more than 10 years, and 33% of respondents came from other informal settlements. Of the same studies, 10.3% of respondents relocated to escape further conflict while 51.1% cite a high cost of living as their reason to move.⁴² These figures and testimonies are testament to the long periods of time victims of displacement remain in their condition and as to the reasons behind them, while also showing why they often wait so long for assistance. The IDMC figures and future testimonies will be

³⁸*Ibid*

³⁹*Ibid*, Pg. 189

⁴⁰*Documental - Memorias Del Tiempo*. Centro de Nacional Memoria Historica.

⁴¹ (IDMC), Internal Displacement Monitoring Centre. *The Last Refuge: Urban Displacement in Colombia*.

⁴²*Lennard, Jeremy*.

addressed later in this section, but it is important to recognize the CNMH's vast contributions to the advocacy for displaced people and their memory in the historical record.

As part of one of the stipulations of the 2016 peace accords with FARC, the Colombian government created *La Comision de La Verdad* (Truth Commission).⁴³ The commission was delegated cataloging the extensive list of violence, human rights abuses, and violations committed by every side, and their effects on the Colombian people. In 2022, the commission published their final report "There is Future if there is Truth;"⁴⁴ its main concern is the victims' right to truth, and because of this the report is seen as integral to the post-conflict peace process as it serves to shine light and provide recommendations to achieve a just resolution of differences. Due to the characteristics of truth commissions, the testimonies gathered remain anonymous, but provide various anecdotes of how the conflict, the loss of their loved ones and houses has affected them. The report includes anything from a complete history of the conflict all the way to recommendations for increasing the security of victims and preventing future displacement from occurring.⁴⁵ While the Truth Commission has not been directly involved with the assistance, material, legal, or psychological, it has also played an integral part in the advocacy for victims' rights. As stated before, what is seen as the victims' fundamental right to truth is considered a necessary part of the peace process in order to provide closure. Political advocacy is as necessary, if not a precursor to, fieldwork when assisting marginalized populations.

The Colombian government, with Law 1448, created the Unit For Attention and Integral Reparations to Victims (*Unidad de Las Victimas*). The unit's main purpose is to advocate, promote, and defend the rights of the Conflict's victims.⁴⁶ It operates autonomously under the Department for Social Prosperity and is involved in multiple activities to advocate, defend, and expand the rights of the Conflict's victims while also coordinating and organizing governmental responses. In general,

⁴³"Diálogo social | Informe Final Comisión de la Verdad."

⁴⁴*Hay futuro si hay verdad | Informe Final Comisión de la Verdad.*

⁴⁵"Datos Y Recomendaciones." *Informe Final - Comisión de la Verdad.*

⁴⁶"Reparación Colectiva." *Unidad para las Víctimas.*

this is the main governmental body responsible for providing assistance to victims, including those who have been displaced, and it provides multiple resources to do so. It has also created multiple national databases to keep track of the number of victims and their cases, such as the *Registro Unico de Victimas*, which has proven essential in the cataloging of victims in order to assess the extent of reparations. Lastly it heads the National System for Attention and Integral Reparations to Victims (*Sistema Nacional de Atencion y Reparacion Integral a las Victimas*), a collection of government bodies and associations, both at the state and national level, whose purpose is to promote policies aimed to support the Conflict's victims.⁴⁷ Both the Unit and the National System's work in the promotion of the rights of the victims has been integral in assuring victims actually receive the necessary assistance as effectively as possible.

The work of non-governmental organizations, including intergovernmental ones, has been vital to the policies and the degree of response the Colombian government has used with regards to its displaced citizens. For example, the U.N. has been present in the country for more than a quarter of a century now, and has had a permanent mission there for almost as long. The Colombian government and the U.N. (in the form of the UNHCR) have continued to renew their efforts, as late as 2022 in a memorandum of understanding of future collaboration.⁴⁸ As part of the mission's guidelines, it must publish reports on the situation of Colombian IDPs, its activities, and further reports, every three months.⁴⁹ These reports have been the most essential and effective in providing data regarding displacement and the actions and solution strategies taking regarding the protection, assistance, and empowerment of IDPs. Before presenting the empirical data and its analysis, it is important to recognize the large range of activities the UNHCR carried out in Colombia. These include contributing to: the reinforcement of the capacity and presence of institutions; the implementation of plans and protection processes; as well as the implementation of restorative

⁴⁷ “¿Qué es el Sistema Nacional de Atención y Reparación Integral a las Víctimas -SNARIV-?” *Unidad para las Víctimas*.

⁴⁸ UNHCR Reporting. “Colombia IDP Footprint 2022.”

⁴⁹ *United Nations Verification Mission in Colombia*.

actions and protective environments.⁵⁰ Additionally, one of the UNHCR's most effective accomplishments has been the creation of mobile assistance centers; these centers serve to provide legal support and education to IDPs in order to assist them with the restorative process.⁵¹ A comprehensive list of the UNHCR's activities with regards to IDPs can be found in the appendix figures.

The data the UNHCR has collected with regards to displacement covers a wide range of topics and serves to cover the progress of the mission's implementation. With regards to my research question, it serves as valuable information in order to form an understanding of the current situation of displacement. The UNHCR's reports, and the overall trends in the data, show that displacement continues to be a problem in the country. Between December 2022 and March 2023, figures show that 7,900 people were forcibly displaced.⁵² In the period before that, from January to December of 2022, the UNHCR recorded 161 large-group displacement events; these events affected 68,745 people, of which 26,336 of them were families.⁵³ What this data goes to show is that the nature of ongoing displacement is varied and depends on the event; however, even though large displacement events are recurring, 70% of displacements occur at the individual level.⁵⁴ Although these figures serve to point a picture of how the ongoing displacement crisis continues to affect Colombians and is detrimental to the government's progress, they do not go to discredit the UNHCR and other organizations' work; as I will show below, the activities done by these organizations have proven to be of great importance and benefit to IDPs.

Through the course of its mission in Colombia, the UNHCR has "intervened in solutions processes in 25 out of the 32 departments of the country. [It] has supported over 330 processes, benefitting 112,000 people, some of which continue to count on the UNHCR's support."⁵⁵ These

⁵⁰UNHCR Reporting. "Colombia IDP Footprint 2022."

⁵¹"Colombia: Information and Orientation Centers (Paos) for Refugees, IDPs, Returnees and Migrants." *Global Focus*.

⁵² *United Nations Verification Mission in Colombia*

⁵³"Colombia: Large-Group Internal Displacement." *UNHCR Reporting*.

⁵⁴Centro de Memoria Histórica. "¡Basta ya!" Pg. 74

⁵⁵"Colombia: Solutions to Internal Displacement." *UNHCR*.

figures show a high level of commitment to the assistance of displaced Colombians and, when paired with the UNHCRs activities in the country, demonstrate a clear importance of the organization's presence. This importance not only applies to the level and quality of assistance which displaced citizens are able to receive, it is also extended to the greater context of political progress in protecting and assisting victims. The UNHCR has also taken the responsibility to monitor and track the implementation of various conditions of the peace agreements in order to ensure impartial reporting. Out of this data, information relevant to displacement and assistance shows that U.S. \$4.3 million in assets were used as compensation to more than 2,300 individual victims of FARC. Additionally, U.S. \$1.6 million in cash and U.S. \$3.4 million in assets belonging to FARC have been used to provide collective reparations and compensation.⁵⁶ These figures go to show active reparations and compensatory efforts by the Colombian government on behalf of the Conflict's victims; it is important to note, however, that these funds were not intended specifically for displaced victims and may have benefitted other recipients.

The International Displacement Monitoring Center is another organization which tasks itself with the advocacy of displaced people globally, and as a result has provided essential information, data, and testimonies through their mission in Colombia. IDMC figures show 134,000 internal displacements in 2021, up from 2020's 105,8000, but down from the 139,100 in 2019. This recent increase may be due to the coronavirus emergency in 2020 lowering both the number of events and their reporting. However, when compared to the 224,300 displacements in 2015, a general downward trend in the number of displacements can be identified.⁵⁷ What this shows is a gradual improvement of the displacement situation, and goes to confirm the theory that peace prevents further displacement. Additionally, the IDMC has published a very useful report on urban displacement in Colombia, specifically detailed on the informal settlement outside Bogotá, Altos de Florida, where many IDPs have taken residence.⁵⁸

⁵⁶ *United Nations Verification Mission in Colombia.*

⁵⁷(IDMC), Internal Displacement Monitoring Centre. "Colombia."

⁵⁸*Lennard, Jeremy,*

The report examines the experiences of victims of displacement at the individual level while looking at aggregate statistics for the settlement. In the report, there are testimonies like that of an internally displaced woman in Altos de la Florida, who recalls: “I was displaced twice before I reached the city. We fled from Villavicencio to Chocó in 2005, but the Pacific coast was a very dangerous area because of the conflict. We were displaced again in 2008 and decided to come to Bogotá, but it was impossible to live there because everything was very expensive. In the end we bought a plot of land and built our own house here in 2014.”⁵⁹ Another testimony in the report, this time of a national NGO worker in the same neighborhood, goes to confirm the problem of continuous displacement and the precarious situations it leads to: “I know people in Altos de la Florida who have left their area five times, and families who have been displaced six and seven times.”⁶⁰ A collection of numerous testimonies from this and other sources go to confirm my theory that a permanent solution to displacement has yet to be devised; as a result many IDPs who receive insufficient assistance find themselves in a perpetual state of informality. These findings are supported by further conclusions made by the Brookings institute, which states that “it was also clear that state benefits are insufficient and temporary. Although IDPs have typically been displaced for long periods of time, they receive assistance only for the short term or, at most, the medium term.”⁶¹

The long length of displacement, and the problems associated with it, are further explored in the IDMC’s report. These numbers were already previously mentioned but serve to provide a comprehensive understanding of what displaced people have experienced. In the report, the IDMC found that 22.5% of displaced persons surveyed had been living in some form of informal settlement for the last decade or longer, and that 33% of respondents originate from other informal settlements.⁶² These statistics paint the picture of a perpetual condition of displacement affecting victims, who do have access to resources but are continuously forced to leave their homes. The reasons why they do

⁵⁹*Ibid*

⁶⁰*Ibid*

⁶¹López, Clara Inés et al.

⁶²*Lennard, Jeremy.*

vary, as mentioned earlier many respondents cite either other episodes of violence or costs of living which are too high. These are not the only barriers to a permanent solution for displaced Colombians.

Many displaced individuals who have successfully completed the process of land restitution and have returned to their original homes have discovered that their problems did not end there. To open a short parenthesis, there is a legal movement among landowners who have had their lands sentenced for restitution, as many argue they have come to own the land legally and are now the rightful owners. An incredibly thorough dissertation was provided by the University of Colorado Ph.d. Max Counter, which is recommended for further research.⁶³ Additionally, many of the victims face continued hostility upon restitution, receiving threats of violence in the hopes of getting them to leave again.⁶⁴ This HRW report details the repeated threats, aggression, and violence which returning land owners are confronted with. This data is additionally supplemented by the fact that in the UNHCR's most recent reporting period, there have been 35 documented killings of human rights defenders and organization workers.⁶⁵ This continued threat of violence, along with the lengthy and complex legal process, has caused many IDPs to give up hopes of returning to their lands, leading them to attempt to find new, permanent housing. In their search, many have turned — either voluntarily or through unfortunate circumstances — to informality. This has created a problem for the Colombian government which I will describe below, and for which creative solutions are being proposed.

The issue of informality has risen out of the difficulties the government has had in swiftly implementing its policies. As a result, many displaced people go to the major cities in search of economic gain, but find themselves confined to informal settlements on the outskirts of these cities, struggling with poverty. However, life goes on, and many of these informal settlements have taken on all the aspects of legitimate community, lacking only legality and government recognition in order to

⁶³Counter, Max M. "Land on Trial: Law, Forced Displacement and Land Restitution in Colombia - ProQuest."

⁶⁴"The Risk of Returning Home." *Human Rights Watch*.

⁶⁵ *United Nations Verification Mission in Colombia*.

access services.⁶⁶ Other IDPs find themselves suddenly living in illegality, as they have been conned into purchasing tracts of land through promissory sales agreements. As the sellers hold no legal claim to the land, many displaced people find themselves entering false sales contracts for land titles which do not exist. Such is the case of Yomaira Socarra, a displaced mother who believed she had found some degree of stability after purchasing a tract of land, only to discover the title to be fraudulent.⁶⁷ She, like many other Colombians, now has to struggle with the legal, social, and economic consequences of informality; this is a problem large enough to merit an entire research paper on its own. In an attempt to combat this program the government, through the Victim's Unit and at the recommendation of various humanitarian organizations, has begun the process of legalization and regularization of informal settlements.⁶⁸ This program has had moderate success, as the UNHCR identified "more than 50,000 people [who] have benefited from the legalization of informal settlements."⁶⁹ Although this number may seem low the program has only recently begun; it shows promise in being an effective mechanism for assisting IDPs, doing so by providing them security, permanence, and legality in a place they already occupy. The program has received praise and is expected to yield successful results from many observers.⁷⁰

The overall government's response can be best summarized by the Brookings institute's findings: "Despite its limitations and problems, the state system of support for internally displaced persons is essential to their survival. All of the IDPs with whom the researchers spoke had received some sort of assistance."⁷¹ This assertion is further supported by data which confirms that the overall number of displaced persons has been falling over the last five years.⁷² The work the Colombian government has done, with all its scandals and corruption, has been imperative in ensuring the IDP situation hasn't become one of the worst humanitarian disasters in history. Furthermore, the new

⁶⁶(IDMC), Internal Displacement Monitoring Centre. *The Last Refuge: Urban Displacement in Colombia*.

⁶⁷ *Colombia: Urban Displacement*. UNHCR.

⁶⁸"Colombia: Solutions to Internal Displacement." *UNHCR*.

⁶⁹*Ibid*

⁷⁰ (IDMC), Internal Displacement Monitoring Centre. *The Last Refuge: Urban Displacement in Colombia*.

⁷¹ <https://www.brookings.edu/research/the-effects-of-internal-displacement-on-host-communities/>

⁷²(IDMC), Internal Displacement Monitoring Centre. "Colombia."

president's administration has included the end to illegal economies and the restitution of justice to the Conflict's victims in its government plan, among other promises of reform.⁷³ This is because the new president, Gustavo Petro, is an ex-guerrilla member who has made the implementation of and adherence to the peace accords an integral part of his presidency.⁷⁴

The data I have collected, analyzed, evaluated, and presented shows a tentative picture of Colombian IDPs. It makes me draw the conclusion that the Colombian government is doing what it can in order to best handle the situation, with the help of various organizations. It has not been without its inefficiencies and faults, but it appears to have made semi-permanent solutions out of temporary ones. The changes in policy in the country's long-term history, combined with the positive trends for displacement indicators, seem to point to the effectiveness of the measures implemented by the Colombian government.

I would argue that the Colombian government has performed a commendable job in assisting its displaced citizens, to the point where my hypothesis would be proven wrong. The data I have collected and analyzed shows that displaced Colombians have a high degree of support and access to many assistance networks, and they are also protected with heavy legal frameworks. Not only is this level of support at the individual level more than I had anticipated in my hypothesis, it has also proven more effective than I thought it would, as the participation numbers and success metrics have shown.

While the data shows that displacement continues to happen, it also implies that a betterment of the situation and a possible future solution is in sight. This is leading to the larger conclusion that progress has been made in the methods of supporting displaced peoples throughout the duration of the Conflict, especially in recent years, and that assistance and its expansion continues to this day. The findings paint a positive picture of the overall situation of Colombia's displacement, because as

⁷³Petro, Gustavo. "Programa de Gobierno Gustavo Petro." Sections 5.3-4.

⁷⁴*Ibid*

displacement numbers decline, and so does the number of displaced citizens, I can deduce that more and more people are finding permanent solutions to displacement.^{75 76}

Conclusion

My purpose when starting this paper was to discover whether, in my opinion, Colombians who have been displaced as a result of the Conflict have received support from the government, and if it has been sufficient. I argue that although not perfect, it is evident that the Colombian government has taken an interest in the condition of its displaced citizens and has been doing what it is able to in order to better their living conditions. In order to do this, I looked at macro displacement numbers and individual testimonies to identify country-wide trends and evaluate the effectiveness of the government's response. The findings of my paper are that the Colombian government does not only what it can, but what it feels it must do for IDPs, however it is limited by the continuing armed conflict and economic resources. As a result, displacement continues, and there is a growth in the rate of displacement; however, overall displacement numbers have fallen significantly since the Peace Accords, leading to the conclusion that processes of land restitution and legalization are working as intended. This implies a positive future outlook, especially looking at recent political events. However, due to the trends and the history of the conflict, it is not expected to be resolved anytime soon; as a result, displacement is expected to continue, as is the Colombian government's same response. These findings go against my original hypothesis that Colombian IDPs were not actually receiving assistance, and that most of the actions were unlikely to be effective.

Although I would say I reached a firm conclusion with regards to my original research question, I am left rather wanting by the limitations of this paper and my research. With my research, I would argue I have managed to compile an effective summary of the current assistance networks and support structures which IDPs in Colombia have access to. This is by no means groundbreaking research however, as I have shown in my paper there are entire institutions dedicated to the daily

⁷⁵*Estadísticas de Restitución - URT.*

⁷⁶(IDMC), Internal Displacement Monitoring Centre. "Colombia."

study and support of IDPs in the country; with this paper, I have merely begun to scratch the surface of all the truly remarkable work that is being done to support the Conflict's victims. However, given the time limitations of the assignment and the constrictions due to the paper's length, I would like to give myself and my work a pretty fair assessment. I would argue I have managed to provide a comprehensive framework of: not only the historical context; the causes for displacement; and the work being done for IDPs; but also of how actual displaced Colombians are affected; and if they have benefitted in their quality of life.

This paper does not come without its limitations. As any historical paper, it is lacking — at least in my opinion — sufficient contextual background to really form a complete understanding of the root factors of the Conflict. Additionally, I would say that, as much as the research compiled was attempted to be organized by institutions and their bodies, I retain some levels of confusion as to what roles some organizations play and what activities they carry out. More than taking away from my arguments or findings, it is a matter of personal clarification which irritates me greatly, but one which can be addressed with further investigation into the structure of the Colombian government and its bodies. Finally, the only major limitation which I could think of is that the numbers and figures presented are the most recent ones that I could find, but they are constantly changing, and different institutions have presented with some different numbers. I have tried to present all the findings in as ordered a manner as possible in order to make the chronological following of events make sense to the reader, but I can understand how sometimes the timeline of events and the numbers that are presented may sometimes find themselves to not completely agree upon deeper investigation. However, I have attempted to use only the most reliable and accredited institutions and organizations for my empirical data, in an attempt to have it as accurate as possible.

Although my conclusion was firm, it was by no means definitive. The major remaining problem is that displacement continues to this day; all the consequences that come with it that we have seen throughout this paper are repeated every time a person is forced to leave their home,

beginning the process all over again. Nothing that can be recommended to be done for displaced Colombians that is not already being done.

In the future, I would like to move from the displacement itself to further investigate into the living conditions of IDPs in informal settlements. How does their life look like, how does informality affect their access to government services as IDPs specifically? Finally, what does the process of legalization of informal settlements look like, who are the actors involved, and what are the main contentions towards it? I believe looking deeper into the development of informal settlements into legal municipalities where residents are protected by the law and with access to services can provide helpful information and fresh perspectives into providing solutions for Colombia's displacement crisis. There are no new research strategies I would recommend, as the collection, cataloging, and analysis of data by multiple actors has been more than comprehensive, and the methodology continues to be effective. Lastly, I would like to restate how creating this research paper has not only expanded my knowledge on this topic, it has also greatly increased my interest and my commitment to discover and learn more about victims of displacement in the Colombian Conflict and in a more global context.

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