

The fragmentation of the conflict in Colombia

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The fragmentation of the conflict in Colombia refers to the evolution of the armed conflict in the country, which has shifted from being a confrontation primarily between left-wing paramilitaries (such as the FARC and the ELN) and the state, to becoming a complex network of armed actors and dynamics. Over time, new factions have emerged, such as criminal gangs (BACRIM), drug traffickers, and dissidents from paramilitary groups, both left-wing and right-wing, deepening the fragmentation of the conflict.

This fragmentation has not only led to a multiplicity of actors but has also diversified the objectives and methods of fighting. While some groups, like the FARC dissidents or the Clan del Golfo, are deeply tied to drug trafficking, other actors focus on different illicit activities, such as organized crime, with the complicity of former left-wing or right-wing paramilitaries. This situation has made it difficult to build lasting peace, creating new security challenges in various regions of the country.

In this context, the 2018 presidential elections marked a milestone in Colombian politics. Iván Duque, with 53.98% of the vote, assumed the presidency, while Gustavo Petro, who obtained 41.8%, began his term as a senator. Since then, Petro and his followers have faced accusations of strengthening ties with illegal armed actors, including groups like the FARC dissidents and the ELN. Between 2018 and 2022, controversies regarding Petro's relations with these groups intensified. His allies were accused of participating in the escalation of violence that preceded the 2021 social outbreak. Additionally, some media reported possible contacts with international governments, such as that of Nicolás Maduro, raising concerns about internal political stability and foreign influence on the country.

One of the most controversial elements of his government has been the implementation of "Total Peace," a negotiation process with various illegal armed groups, including the FARC dissidents, the ELN, and other factions of organized crime. Although the initial goal was to reduce violence, the process has been criticized for allowing the consolidation of these groups instead of their disarmament, creating a perception of impunity in several regions of the country.

Since his arrival in the presidency in 2022, Petro has further polarized Colombian society. Along with his vice president, Francia Márquez, he has taken a confrontational stance toward the opposition, increasing social tensions. Furthermore, his approach of delegitimizing key institutions such as Congress, the judiciary, and the electoral system has put democratic stability at risk.

The country is also facing a severe territorial control crisis, with more than 65% of the territory under the influence of illegal armed groups that are Petro's partners in Total Peace. This situation has been exacerbated by the growing participation of international actors, such as the Venezuelan Armed Forces and groups like Hezbollah, involved in illegal activities like drug trafficking and arms smuggling in strategic areas such as Catatumbo. Catatumbo, rich in natural resources, has historically been a conflict-prone area, and now it has become a focal point for international actors seeking to exploit its wealth. The presence of armed groups, combined with the illegal exploitation of resources, has intensified violence and destabilization in the region.

Regarding international politics, it has been noted that both Petro and Maduro have used the conflict in areas like Catatumbo to divert attention from internal issues in their respective countries. In Venezuela, allegations of electoral fraud and political tensions continue to affect Nicolás Maduro's government, while

Petro faces criticism for corruption scandals and despotism. "The government of zero results."

"Total Peace has been presented as a reconciliation process, but many have interpreted it as a strategy that hinders the restoration of order and security in the country, favoring those who seek to perpetuate violence and maintain territorial control. Instead of consolidating peace, it has further fragmented the conflict, leaving Colombia in a constant state of alert and danger.

Since 2018, Petro and his allies (including former mayors of cities like Bogotá) have spent unimaginable fortunes to secure the war, territorial control, and gain power. Once in power, Petro has promoted chaos in public administration, corruption, and violence as a political tool. His only goal is to perpetuate himself in power.

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