

FARC-EP Abused 18,677 Children in Colombia

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Introduction

The 2016 peace agreement between the Colombian government and the Revolutionary Armed Forces of Colombia (FARC-EP) created the Special Jurisdiction for Peace (SJP), that investigates serious crimes from the armed conflict.

On January 27, the FARC-EP *acknowledged* before the SJP that it **recruited, tortured, raped, and murdered 18,677 children and adolescents** between 1971-2016, the period covered by the peace agreement.

Investigations confirm systematic child recruitment and abuse, especially in rural and Indigenous¹ areas. Records show 387 investigations, 45 convictions, and five acquittals, revealing a large accountability gap. About 485 children remain missing.

Systematic Recruitment and Abuse

Evidence from the SJP and victims' groups shows that child recruitment in FARC ranks was *organized and sustained*, not isolated.

Recruited children² faced strict discipline, violence, and coercion. Many—especially girls—suffered sexual abuse and forced abortions. Victims identify commanders and combatants as perpetrators, but representatives say the FARC-EP has *not fully* revealed the chain of command responsible.

Justice and Accountability

FARC-EP members admitted abusing thousands of children. Under the Havana peace agreement, the SJP allows restorative sanctions, meaning those who fully acknowledge responsibility may receive reparative measures *instead* of prison. Critics warn this could enable impunity for crimes against minors, adolescents and risk turning the transitional justice process into what they call *“a monument to impunity.”*

Victim Testimonies

More than 2,000 victims have been formally accredited in cases related to child recruitment and abuse. Some individuals who served as medical personnel in guerrilla camps have been accused of participating in forced abortions, though *many deny* involvement.

For survivors, recognition alone is insufficient. They continue to demand the full truth, accountability at all

levels of command, and guarantees that such abuses will never happen again³.

FARC-politics

“FARC politics” refers to interactions between criminal groups, local and national actors—such as officials, politicians, health workers, and community leaders—who may have enabled recruitment, supported forced abortions, or failed to act.

The Communist Party of Colombia is often cited in these networks, along with figures such as Senator *Iván Cepeda*, a Petro ally⁴.

Vice President Francia Márquez is also cited in material attributed to FARC dissident “Calarcá,” alleging she handled funds from criminal groups for Petro's 2022 campaign; authorities confirmed the material's authenticity.

Today, this context centers on the so-called La Picota Pact- renew in 2025, under which Petro offered armed groups and criminal networks leniency and territorial control in exchange for support in the 2022 and 2026 elections.

The International Dimension

The international community has invested heavily in initiatives addressing Colombia's armed conflict. Yet for nearly 25 years, critics argue that many of these efforts have *framed* the FARC-EP primarily as *political actors* while *sidelining* the voices and rights of victims.

Since President Petro took office, international aid for projects—films, books, documentaries, and other media—has increasingly *portrayed* the FARC-EP and other criminal groups in ways many victims view as *romanticized, incomplete, or heroic*.

At the same time, *thousands* of FARC-EP and another armed group have *obtained* asylum or residency abroad since the 1970s, a practice that victims' advocates argue should be *reassessed* considering ongoing accountability and transitional justice processes.

Together, these trends fuel a troubling perception: that the international community has repeatedly failed Colombians while showing undue leniency toward perpetrators as it does around the world⁵.

Bogotá, Colombia 20 March 2026.

¹ Despite this, these areas remain loyal to FARC dissidents today.

² 20250721 Colombia Child Soldiers of the FARC EP; 20251121

Colombia Escalating Child Soldiers Crisis www.360geopolitica.org

³ 20251121 Colombia Escalating Child Soldiers Crisis.

⁴ For the 2026 presidential elections, Petro's bloc fields seven candidates, including Cepeda.

⁵ Trillions of dollars are spent portraying authoritarian regimes as democratic. 20260309 Strategic Impunity at www.360geopolitica.org