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**ANALYSIS OF POST-CONFLICT
RECONSTRUCTION POLICIES WITH A
GENDER PERSPECTIVE. CASE: COLOMBIA
2016 - 2021**

Previous work prior to obtaining the Bachelor's Degree in
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To my mother, Monica, who has been my inspiration
and has given me her unconditional love and support,
and to my father.

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follow; thank you for being there for me at every stage.
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Analysis of post-conflict reconstruction policies with a gender perspective. Case: Colombia 2016 – 2021

ABSTRACT

This study seeks to understand how armed conflicts and wars affect women differently, focusing on the case of the Colombian internal armed conflict. It analyses the impact of gender-based violence during the armed conflict and evaluates the post-conflict reconstruction policies, with a gender perspective, implemented in Colombia after the signing of the Peace Agreement in 2016. Three main objectives were pursued: to recognize some of the specific forms of violence that affected women during the conflict; to evaluate the reconstruction policies that seek to address their needs in terms of security, justice and participation; and to analyze the role of women as agents of change in the reconstruction and pacification of the country. Through this approach, the work aims to contribute to the development of more equitable public policies and to give greater visibility to the transformative role of women in the consolidation of a lasting peace in Colombia.

Keywords: armed conflict, gender approach, gender based violence, peace agreement, post-conflict reconstruction policies.

Análisis de políticas de reconstrucción post-conflicto con perspectiva de género. Caso Colombia 2016 – 2021

RESUMEN

El presente estudio busca entender cómo los conflictos armados y las guerras afectan de manera diferenciada a las mujeres, haciendo énfasis en el caso del conflicto armado interno colombiano. Se analizó el impacto de la violencia de género durante el conflicto armado y se evaluaron las políticas de reconstrucción postconflicto con perspectiva de género implementadas en Colombia, tras la firma del Acuerdo de Paz de 2016. Se abordaron tres objetivos principales: reconocer algunas formas específicas de violencia que afectaron a las mujeres durante el conflicto, evaluar las políticas de reconstrucción que buscan atender sus necesidades en seguridad, justicia y participación, y analizar el papel de las mujeres como agentes de cambio en la reconstrucción y pacificación del país. Con este enfoque, el trabajo pretende aportar al desarrollo de políticas públicas más equitativas y dar mayor visibilidad al papel transformador de las mujeres en la consolidación de una paz duradera en Colombia.

Palabras clave: acuerdo de paz, conflicto armado, enfoque de género, políticas de reconstrucción postconflicto, violencia de género.

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ANALYSIS OF POST-CONFLICT RECONSTRUCTION POLICIES WITH A GENDER PERSPECTIVE. CASE: COLOMBIA 2016 - 2021

CHAPTER 1 THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

First, this work will define the key concepts and the theoretical approach underpinning the research. We present concepts on armed conflict and the gender-based violence that is exacerbated in armed conflicts, as well as transitional justice and post-conflict reconstruction with a gender perspective and the role of women in peace processes.

1.1 Armed conflict and its impact from a gender perspective.

Throughout history, there have been several armed conflicts that have transformed societies and economies that have been affected in different ways, both directly and indirectly. To recognize the effects of these conflicts, it's important to understand armed conflicts as those that have unleashed direct violence. For which, the control capacity of the National Police has been surpassed and insufficient, forcing the Armed Forces to confront this violence. They are mainly the result of a clash of interests over government and/or territory, in which armed force is used between two parties, one of which belongs to the state government, resulting in more than 25 deaths (Mouly, 2022).

However, it is also important to recognize that the effects are different according to the type of armed conflict, since, as Pozo (2024) points out, there are three types of armed conflicts: internal, internationalized internal, or international. An internal armed conflict is the confrontation between armed actors operating within the same state. An internationalized internal armed conflict is the one in which one of the parties involved is foreign. In addition, in order for it to be considered internationalized, the armed groups must have their military bases in neighboring countries, through a pact with those States, and launch their attacks from those countries.

Additionally, just as the effects of armed conflicts differ according to the type of conflict, they also vary in how they affect men and women. For this reason, to identify the specific effects of these dynamics on women and other vulnerable groups, it is important to analyze them from a gender perspective, which, as Sosa (2021) explains, is a tool that aims to show that the differences between women and men are not only determined by biological

factors, but also by the social stereotypes historically assigned to human beings. It is understood as a methodology that identifies, questions and evaluates discrimination, inequality, and exclusion of women, to implement favorable actions respect to gender factors, creating conditions of change to advance in the construction of equality in this scope. Gender vision is important in contexts of armed conflict, where inequalities are exacerbated. Gender violence is analyzed and conceptualized as a structural, social, political, and relational phenomenon, that represents a violation against human rights, which although has mainly affected women, has not excluded people with diverse gender identities, attacking their basic human rights (Jaramillo & Canaval, 2020)

Among these inequalities, women also often are provided by fewer financial resources when they are injured, or their property is damaged. They are more likely to be discriminated because of disabilities and may have additional difficulties in accessing health care when injured, when they can only be examined by female health personnel or need male custody, and in most cases have less representation in decision-making for the provision of humanitarian aid.

1.2 Peace and post-conflict public policies

With regard to the particular challenges faced by women, the gender approach is important for the development of public policies on peace, which are the instruments that seek to specify the human rights and the creation of useful law, allowing to take one more step to identify human rights within the internal armed conflict and violations, having a broader vision understanding them from the human yearning to cover their basic needs according to human dignity (Cortés, 2016). Additionally, according to the Government, Human Rights, and Peace Administration of Colombia (2023), public policies on peace are the tools promoted by the Government for well-being, coexistence, and good living. These policies are finally reflected in the Peace Agreement, which is the agreement between two or more parts of a conflict, with the aim of ending it and establishing the conditions for building and maintaining peace. As such, it is a written document containing the agreed points and is signed by delegates of the parts, negotiators and mediators. These elements are part of the peace process, as an effort to achieve an agreement to end the violence and to implement it through negotiations that could require the mediation of third parts. Thus, the

Agreement is one of the stages of the peace process, perhaps the final stage. After it, the stages of implementation and compliance of the agreement take place (Fisas, 2015).

However, peace is not achieved just with the negotiation and signing of the agreement; it is only the beginning of a complicated and caring process that will allow society to put an end to the armed conflict, which is called post-conflict. According to Acevedo and Rojas (2016), it refers to the stage that begins when a conflict has been overcome either through negotiation, military victory, or another way, understanding the post-conflict as a stage that doesn't end with the conflict, but begins the search for a true lasting and stable peace that avoids relapse into conflict. In the post-conflict stage, aspects planned during the peace process are developed, such as the reconstruction of physical structures damaged in the conflict, rehabilitation, comprehensive reparation for victims, the role of the military forces in the conflict, and inter alia.

In the post-conflict process, it is important the development of transitional justice, which refers to the way societies answer to years of serious and massive human rights transgressions, and presents innumerable dilemmas for law, politics, and social science, although each context is different. Both societies and involved parties must find answers about how and when to achieve a peaceful, fair, and inclusive future recognizing and repairing the crimes of the past and achieving agreements among citizens and leaders that violence and abuses cannot be repeated, and where victims have meaningful participation in cooperation with all sectors of society. It includes multiple ways of compensation to victims whether economic, pensions, restitution of property or civil and political rights, access to education and health, and recognition and remembrance of the victims as well as the abuses they suffered (International Center for Transitional Justice, 2025)

However, many times these procedures do not consider violence against women, which according to Valiña (2016) is a way of discrimination that blocks the full exercise of human rights, specifically of women. In addition, the United Nations General Assembly Declaration on the Elimination of Violence against Women highlights the particular vulnerability of certain women, such as women in armed conflict situations. Women's rights are part of the regulatory body of international human rights law and international humanitarian law and are evaluated under the same standards to define their scope and establish who is responsible for assuring that they are guaranteed. They have the same characteristics as human rights because they are universal, inalienable, indivisible, and interdependent. Because of their universality, they must be applied in conditions of equality

and without discrimination; therefore, States are responsible for respecting them, refraining from behaviors that violate them, protecting and guaranteeing them, as well as preventing and punishing their violation while establishing mechanisms to reestablish violated rights.

Armed conflict generates violence against women not just because discriminatory behaviors already present in society are exacerbated, but also because particular behaviors are directed against them. These behaviors affect women victims of direct violence, that is, mothers, partners or relatives of victims, female combatants, those involved in demobilization processes, and those participating, or who should participate in the conflict resolution. Additionally, women who are victims of human rights violations face a further discrimination through inequality in accessing to judicial mechanisms, both in the establishment of responsibilities and in damage reparations and rights restoration. Therefore, the state's response must be strengthened because many cases of violence within the conflict context remain in impunity, whether because women do not report them due to fear of stigmatization and reprisals, lack of knowledge on how to proceed, or lack of trust in the state's response. In other cases, authorities deem investigations unnecessary or believe the investigations fail to get the expected results (Valiña, 2016).

Armed conflict also affects women who actively participate in combatant groups and face discrimination in these structures. Although it is challenging to document their situation, women seeking demobilization face obstacles that are not always considered in reintegration programs. Their specific needs and risks require a differentiated approach in the design and implementation of these processes. Ensuring women's participation in conflict resolution is essential to achieving a sound and lasting peace.

Among the challenges already mentioned, as Echeverri (2015) points out, one of the main issues is gender stigma, because Colombian society tends to judge women that participated in armed conflict more harshly due to traditional gender roles and the expectations surrounding female behavior that stem from them. This stigma is also reflected in public indifference, when people do not recognize the value of women's contributions to peacebuilding as argued by Rojas Quintero et al. (2023) who also highlights the challenge that implies the caregiving responsibilities attributed to women, which limit their ability to participate in reintegration programs and secure employment. Added to this is a labor market that excludes them due to their lack of experience, all of which hinders their economic reintegration.

As Boutron & Gómez (2017) explain, a significant challenge is the greater vulnerability of female ex-combatants to gender-based violence, including domestic and sexual violence, as well as forced recruitment by armed groups, at the hands of those who suffer these kinds of violence that cause trauma and hinder their reintegration. Additionally, the lack of security in areas where women are reintegrating restricts their access to reintegration and support programs, which is also a consequence of the underrepresentation of female ex-combatants in decision-making and leadership spaces, which limits their ability to influence policies and programs relevant to them. Considering these challenges, economic reintegration programs must adopt a gender-focused approach to address women's specific needs. This includes providing childcare services, skill training that accounts for their family responsibilities, and psychosocial support to help them overcome conflict-related traumas.

Negotiation and peacebuilding processes must incorporate women's experiences, expectations, needs, and proposals, as they represent at least half of the affected population. Resolution 1325, adopted in 2000 by the United Nations Security Council, addresses women's concerns in contexts of armed conflict. It emphasizes the importance of their participation in conflict resolution, as well as the need to ensure protection to women and girls from human rights violations. It also highlights the necessity of addressing their needs in processes of reparation and demobilization. Furthermore, it calls on states to eliminate impunity and judge those responsible for crimes committed against women and girls in conflict situations (Valiña, 2006).

Also, as Andrade et al. (2017) explain, armed conflict reinforces exclusion and violence against women, especially those who are displaced and belong to Indigenous or Afro-descendant communities, as they face a triple vulnerability due to their gender, social status, and membership in historically marginalized groups. Gender-based violence is also instrumentalized to maintain patriarchal order, instilling fear and ensuring impunity. Furthermore, violent discourse and social control practices suppress their possibilities for liberation, confining them to a subordinate role within the conflict and subjecting them to extreme violence that dehumanizes women. The denial of women's participation in peace processes and decision-making represents a form of symbolic violence that perpetuates patriarchy within power structures. War, as the ultimate expression of this discrimination, delegitimizes women not only as victims but also as potential agents of change and mediators in social reconstruction. Gender-based violence during conflict not only impacts women

directly but also perpetuates patterns of domination and control that sustain long-term discrimination.

War has evolved into the use of more technical and creative methods of violence, disproportionately affecting the most vulnerable. Globally, technological advancements bring benefits but also facilitate destruction, leading to an ethical contradiction. In wartime contexts, violence is often legitimized as a means of social change, contributing to the impunity of heinous crimes. Displaced women face multiple vulnerabilities that go beyond the loss of territory. Beyond uprooting, war causes family separation, mental health impacts, and greater social exclusion. In many cases, women are instrumentalized as weapons of war, subjected to sexual violence, forced recruitment, and exploitation. Furthermore, the perception of women as a burden affects their psychological and physical well-being, intensifying their marginalization (Salazar et al., 2017). In armed conflict, women's bodies are instrumentalized, becoming objects of control and violence. Their sexuality is regulated by armed groups through forced abortions, sexual slavery, and restrictions on reproduction, consolidating their roles as weapons of war and reproducers of war ideologies. This systematic violence is not just physical; it also limits their political and social participation and prevents them from acting as agents of change in conflict resolution. Gender violence operates through four interconnected dimensions: territorial-material, which limits the access to resources and well-being; social-community, which destroys bonds and historical memory; political-ideological, which limits participation and justifies abuses; and corporal-mental, which causes lasting effects on their identity and well-being. These dimensions show how women victimization in war answers to patterns that perpetuate their exclusion. For the post-conflict, it is crucial to recognize these dimensions not only as forms of oppression but also as fundamental axes for designing reparation and justice strategies with a gender perspective (Salazar et al., 2017).

The terminology used in this chapter highlights how gender-based violence during war affects post-conflict reconstruction and underscores the need for inclusive policies. Based on this framework, it will be possible to assess the implementation and effectiveness of such policies within the context of the Colombian conflict, identifying progress, challenges, and opportunities to strengthen justice and gender equity in the post-conflict phase.

CHAPTER 2

STATE OF THE ART

Next, this work will present and analyze the recent research on gender-based violence in conflict contexts, post-conflict reconstruction policies with a gender-focused approach, and their importance. Through the collection and analysis of information, theoretical approaches will be identified, and the Colombian case study will be developed, contributing to the understanding of these topics.

2.1 Differential impact of armed conflicts on women

First, it must be considered that, throughout history, women have been targeted by violence in both internal and international armed conflicts. Unfortunately, this violence has been constantly rendered invisible, to the point of being perceived as a collateral effect of war. It was only since the 1990s, with the cases of the former Yugoslavia and Rwanda brought to the International Criminal Tribunal, that gender-based violence in armed conflicts, particularly sexual violence, began to be recognized as a systematically used war strategy. This marked the emergence of a field of study on gender-based violence in armed conflicts, driven by the concern of various international organizations, mainly the United Nations Security Council, which placed gender-based violence at the core of its agenda at the beginning of the 21st century (Macaya & Espinoza, 2021).

Additionally, as Enloe (2004, 2010) reflects, women are often at the forefront promoting peace by demanding human rights in their communities, speaking out against abuses, addressing issues of justice and survival, and rebuilding social trust. However, in formal peace negotiations, where future political power is distributed, women's contributions are marginalized or entirely excluded, as if they were unrelated to "real" peacebuilding work. Their involvement is more accepted in so-called "soft" topics such as humanitarian aid and civil rights, but not in "hard" discussions dealing with ceasefires and power distribution. The latter are framed as technical or military matters, which conveniently exclude women's experiences, ideas, and needs.

In a similar way, Enloe (2004) emphasizes the importance of understanding that militarization is not limited to the presence of armed forces; it is a process that infiltrates government structures, legal regulations, and economic priorities, which sideline social justice efforts during reconstruction. Militarization also affects women by fostering their dependence on men, reinforcing the notion that women require protection, which validates

and perpetuates patriarchal power structures. Furthermore, as Enloe (2000) explains, militarization obscures women's experiences by treating them as supporters rather than political actors, thus marginalizing their perspectives in favor of discussions deemed technical and typically led by men. Militarization, however, does not end with the official conclusion of conflicts, as it persists in the design of security policies, the continuation of sexual violence, and the limited space allocated to women in post-conflict governance.

The historical "invisibility" of women in data collection is beginning to be understood more deeply, and the lack of information is increasingly being studied. Data collection methods that fail to consider stereotypes, social norms, and other factors can introduce biases that compromise the quality of data, leading to overlooked aspects in decision-making. However, the absence of certain data about civilians in operational areas does not prevent general guidelines from being provided to military leaders, taking into account evidence and patterns of inequalities and risks faced by women and girls in conflict contexts. Furthermore, a measure that could help understand the consequences of attacks is the monitoring, tracking, and transmission of victim information categorized by gender and age, utilizing these results in future damage assessments that could be anticipated (Cameron et al., 2022).

It is also important to consider that, although the inequality affecting women and girls must be analyzed specifically, gender-related expectations and assumptions influence the experiences of all individuals during the handling of hostile situations, including men and boys. Often, it is assumed that men and boys are combatants or pose security risks solely based on their gender. This leads to problematic outcomes, such as men becoming targets of attacks due to gender and age criteria, while being excluded from incidental damage estimates. This demonstrates that women, men, boys, and girls experience conflicts differently due to their gender, yet gender issues affect everyone (Cameron et al., 2022).

In this regard, Enloe (2004) raises the problem of assuming that "security" is only military, excluding the daily insecurities faced by women such as violence, displacement, and economic difficulties, among others. For this reason, a gender approach must redefine security in post-conflict restoration to include these issues. This is even more worrisome if we consider the fact that sexual violence is not merely incidental to war. Rather, it becomes a deliberate mechanism of power created to dominate, humiliate, and control victims, as well as to break communities where military dominance is sought to be reinforced. However, transitional justice mechanisms often fail to integrate survivors' demands into formal legal frameworks.

Without a redefinition, as Enloe (2010) explains, women's experiences in war do not end with a ceasefire; their struggle continues as they face economic insecurity, social exclusion, and the trauma of having been victims of sexual violence. Meanwhile, they are expected to "move forward" for the sake of national reconstruction, without having the necessary tools to do so. Similarly, women are often expected to act as caregivers to address the aftermath of war, yet they are rarely included in discussions about how these processes should unfold.

Enloe (2010) highlights that, contrary to popular belief, women in war zones are not merely passive victims; they are survivors, negotiators, and leaders who challenge systems that attempt to silence them and later contribute to post-war recovery through informal networks of care, resource distribution, and community rebuilding. However, these networks are rarely institutionalized within state reconstruction frameworks. Additionally, post-conflict economic policies are often designed with male ex-combatants in mind, excluding both civilian women and female ex-combatants from access to land, credit, and employment opportunities. Recognizing this, we see that post-conflict reconstruction is not a gender-neutral task; if gender hierarchies are not actively dismantled, they will be reinforced in the new political and economic structures.

2.2. Internal armed conflict in Colombia and the 2016 Peace Agreement

The case of Colombia is important when studying gender violence in conflicts and the impact of reconstruction policies with a gender approach, due to its prolonged armed conflict for 50 years and the innovative Peace Agreement of 2016. The impact of the conflict on women is evident, as well as the effect of reconstruction policies on them, which can already be analyzed by incorporating women's rights through a Gender Sub commission.

First, it is necessary to contextualize this conflict, which originated in the period of La Violencia (The Violence period), between 1946 and 1964, during the confrontation between the Liberal and Conservative parties, where the war defined political and territorial power (Uribe, 2023). This violence, which began in Bogotá, intensified with the assassination of Jorge Eliécer Gaitán in 1948 and expanded to the rural area, with a strong radicalization and acts of violence against the civilian population (Cosoy, 2016).

After that, in 1954, President Rojas Pinilla, in an attempt to put an end to the violence, gave a pardon to the liberal guerrillas and the Autodefensas Unidas de Colombia (AUC) but had a negative response, which led to a military offensive that strengthened the revolutionary

guerrillas (Centro Nacional de Memoria Histórica, 2013). In 1958, the National Front excluded other political sectors, giving way to the emergence of guerrilla groups such as the FARC, ELN, EPL, M-19 and Quintín Lame (Gómez, 2008).

Thus, the FARC emerged as a peasant self-defense group that evolved towards a communist ideology, settling in peripheral areas until 1955, when they were declared illegal, which made them a military target. Because of this state repression, they adopted a mobile warfare tactic and expanded their influence. By the 1970s, paramilitarism and drug trafficking intensified the violence, until both actors became involved in criminal activities. During the 1980s, drug trafficking had an influence on the country's politics and economy, which affected justice and extradition, while the conflict between the state, paramilitarism, drug trafficking, and the insurgency consolidated (Fisas, 2015).

Between 2000 and 2010, the FARC reached its greatest military capacity with kidnappings and massacres, with serious consequences for the population (Centro Nacional de Memoria Histórica, 2013). In 2011, after the death of Alfonso Cano, Rodrigo Londoño assumed leadership and peace talks began. In 2012, the General Agreement was signed, and in 2016, the Final Peace Agreement between the Government and the FARC-EP was signed (Presta, 2018). Despite the rejection in the plebiscite of October 2, 2016, it was renegotiated, and a new agreement was signed on November 24 of the same year (Rodríguez, 2017).

This agreement is perceived as innovative since it was the first to recognize women as essential agents in peace building and established specific policies for their inclusion in the social and economic reconstruction of the country for the first time worldwide. The Colombian experience allows to analyze the progress achieved and the challenges in the implementation of these policies, being a reference to understand the role of the gender approach in the post-conflict.

Furthermore, in this agreement, the National Government and the FARC-EP recognize the important role of women in the prevention and resolution of conflicts and the consolidation of peace, as well as the need to promote and strengthen the political and citizen participation of women, especially at the end of the conflict, where their leadership and participation are necessary and essential in public decision-making processes for women's equality. For this reason, the agreement proposes the design and adoption of measures to strengthen women's participation and leadership to promote the fulfillment of the purposes already stated. This strengthening includes measures to guarantee a balanced representation

of men and women in all of the agreement's instances. Also, a Special Instance was created; it is comprised of 6 national and territorial Colombian women's organizations with permanent dialogue with the Commission for the Follow-up, Promotion and Verification of the Implementation of the Final Agreement (CFPVI) (Office of the High Commissioner for Peace, 2016).

As already mentioned, the agreement is innovative because of its gender core. In Point 1, which refers to the Comprehensive Rural Reform, the National Government commits itself to guarantee equal rights and opportunities between men and women in terms of access to land, housing, credit, and technical assistance, for which it presents mechanisms to formalize women's property, taking into account their needs and specificities. Regarding security guarantees, addressed in Point 3, End of the Conflict, the Agreement establishes that mechanisms will be created to investigate and punish sexual crimes that occurred during the conflict, as well as to guarantee integral reparation for the victims.

In addition, reintegration programs that consider women ex-combatants were proposed, and therefore have a gender differential approach to recognize their specific needs. Point 5, on Victims, proposes the promotion of women's participation in the political and economic life of the country by adopting measures to guarantee their representation in popularly elected positions, and in response to the comprehensive reparation proposed in point 3, it commits to the creation of comprehensive care programs for victims of gender violence, including psychological, legal, and social support. Point 6, on the implementation of the Agreement, establishes that it will have a gender differential approach, taking into account the specific needs of women, and institutes mechanisms that will be created to monitor and evaluate the implementation of the Agreement, including gender indicators (Office of the High Commissioner for Peace, 2016).

According to Cortés Zambrano (2016), looking for the clarification of public policies for post-conflict reconstruction in terms of human rights, the National Government of Colombia created the Ministry of Post-Conflict, an entity that led the development of public policies on peace, taking into account a Social and Democratic Rule of Law. This Ministry was dedicated to formulating, adopting, directing, coordinating, and executing public policy on peace and post-conflict matters in accordance with the agreements reached at the Havana talks in Cuba. In addition to the provisions of the Constitution and the law, it is in charge of coordinating relations between the Executive Branch, the Judiciary, the Public Prosecutor's Office and the agencies responsible for peace and post-conflict matters, Judicial, the Public

Ministry and the control agencies, for the development and consolidation of the policies indicated through the formulation, adoption, promotion and coordination of the policies and strategies in rationalization, reform and defense of peace as well as the processes corresponding to the post-conflict. This together with planning, legal order, defense and legal security, access to formal and alternative justice, fight against criminality, transitional judicial mechanisms, prevention and control of recidivism, prison and penitentiary matters, promotion of the culture of legality, harmony and respect for rights, through the institutions of the Administrative Sector.

It is important to recognize that the bodies of thousands of Colombian women became one more object within the dynamics of the internal armed conflict, since during the conflict there were serious and methodical degradations against them, resulting in significant social and psychological trauma. The aggressors remained unpunished until 2020. These aggressions, used as forms of terror, cannot go unpunished, as they constitute a violation of the specific recommendations of the Inter-American Court of Human Rights among other regional and international organizations that have intervened in the peace process of the conflict (Atencio, 2020).

Irregular armed actors exercised abuse of power throughout the Colombian territory generating sexual violence never seen before. In some cases, they were committed with a greater degree of brutality, which provoked terror, humiliation and dishonor. Among the most vulnerable sectors are Afro-descendant and indigenous women, displaced women, peasant women and women living on the outskirts of cities. In addition, in the case of indigenous women, their illiteracy or insufficient education can make them more vulnerable to violence, especially physical and sexual violence, since by their very nature they face barriers such as exclusionary and discriminatory systems when they seek help from public institutions or services.

Finally, we can say that there are different opinions regarding the Agreement developed between the Colombian government and the FARC-EP. In this way, the book “Los Enredos de la Paz” (The entanglements of Peace) presents the views of different scholars on the agreement and how it has been implemented, arguing that this agreement represented a significant advance in the inclusion of civil society. However, it also acknowledges that its implementation has been hindered by the ongoing violence against social leaders and the lack of resources allocated to reincorporation programs. Additionally, it considers that the Gender Subcommittee has been affected by the lack of political will,

despite having been a historic milestone within peace agreements in general, which leaves women in a vulnerable position. This failure to fulfill various points of the Agreement, especially regarding comprehensive rural reform and security guarantees for former combatants, has led to a resurgence of violence in several regions, perpetuating distrust in institutions and political fragmentation. It also highlights the unequal implementation of the Agreement in the most affected regions (Birke, 2021)

2.3. Progress in the implementation of the Peace Agreement between the Colombian government and the FARC-EP

Regarding the progress in the implementation of the Agreement, the Kroc Institute for International & Peace Studies (2021) released the seventh comprehensive report presenting the effective status from the beginning of its implementation in December 2016 until October 2021. The report identifies the main implementation milestones during those 5 years for each of the six points of the Agreement, considering gender and ethnic approaches, commitments, progress, and challenges. It shows that, of the 130 provisions with a gender perspective, no more than 12% of the provisions were complete, 15% were in an intermediate state of implementation, 51% were minimal, and 22% of the provisions had not begun to be implemented.

Regarding Point 1 “Integral Rural Reform,” in the Development Programs with a Territorial Approach (PDET), after the structuring and co-creation process of the PDET consolidated in the Action Plans for Regional Transformation (PATR), women and the LGBTI population influenced the inclusion of more than 4,600 initiatives labeled with a gender approach, out of the more than 32,000 conceived after this process. These initiatives are a parameter to promote equity and well-being for these groups through their implementation (Kroc Institute for International & Peace Studies, 2021).

In the implementation of Point 2 “Political Participation,” the Statute of the Opposition was approved and applied, with the approval of Law 1909 in 2018. This represents a significant advance for the qualification of the conditions for political debate by ensuring the participation of parties and movements with less representation in Congress. The law also played a key role in promoting gender parity within the governing bodies of Congress. Additionally, the recomposition and reactivation of the National Council for Peace, Reconciliation and Coexistence (CNPRC) and the Territorial Councils for Peace, Reconciliation and Coexistence (CTPRC) have been essential in promoting a different

relationship between institutional actors and civil society. These bodies have contributed to the inclusion of women, LGBTI individuals, and ethnic communities (Kroc Institute for International & Peace Studies, 2021).

Under Point 3 “End of the Conflict,” the disarmament and definitive bilateral ceasefire process were rigorously observed by the parties. At the time of the report, the Agency for Reincorporation and Normalization (ARN) reported that 12,925 people were undergoing the reincorporation process. However, women in this group continue to face structural barriers to accessing economic and social opportunities. In addition, the Special Instance for the Follow-up of the Gender Approach and Guarantee of Women's Rights as well as the Special High-Level Instance of Ethnic Peoples were established through Decree 1995 of 2016. Their creation was made possible by the advocacy efforts of civil society, women's organizations and representatives of ethnic peoples at the negotiation table. Both spaces have been strengthened technically and financially and generate optimal institutional conditions for monitoring and promoting commitments with a differential approach, despite the limitations they have experienced. The Special Instance for the Follow-up of the Gender Approach has been created to guarantee equity in the implementation of the agreements, although its impact has been limited due to budgetary restrictions (Kroc Institute for International & Peace Studies, 2021).

Regarding Point 4 “Solution to the illicit drug problem,” it is very important to implement the Comprehensive National Program for the Substitution of Illicitly Used Crops (PNIS) and to finish developing the “Guidelines for the differential and associative approach for Modalities of voluntary substitution of illicit crops in collective or associative territories of Ethnic and Peasant Communities.” This is important considering that its execution could increase the level of implementation of the provisions on the substitution of illicit crops, as it would consider the special interest groups of the Agreement. In the implementation of Point 5 “Agreement on the Victims of the Conflict,” sexual violence was recognized as a war crime within the Special Jurisdiction for Peace (JEP), which identified 6,402 victims of extrajudicial executions, which was an advance in transitional justice, but required greater implementation of comprehensive reparations for victims. In addition, with the active participation of women's organizations, 25,000 testimonies and interviews were gathered by the Truth Commission (Kroc Institute for International & Peace Studies, 2021).

Point 6, “Implementation, Verification and Endorsement Mechanisms,” establishes the mechanisms for implementation and follow-up of peace implementation. Specialized bodies,

such as the Special Instance for the Follow-up of the Gender Approach, have been created to ensure that the Agreement is executed in an equitable manner. However, progress was made, such as the inclusion of 54 gender indicators in the Implementation Framework Plan (PMI) and the reactivation of the National and Territorial Peace Councils. However, 73% of the provisions with a gender and ethnic focus had not yet been adequately implemented (Kroc Institute for International & Peace Studies, 2021).

CHAPTER 3

METHODOLOGY

For this research, a descriptive analysis was conducted with the use of a qualitative methodology where the researcher poses a problem, does not follow a strictly defined process, and is based on a logic and inductive process; in other words, exploring, describing and generating theoretical perspectives, going from the particular to the general. It focuses on collecting non-standardized and non-predetermined data, obtaining the perspectives and points of view of the participants, as well as giving importance to the interactions between individuals and groups. The methodology used in this research is in line with Guzman's guidelines, in which researcher collects data through unstructured observation, open interviews, document review, group discussion, evaluation of personal experiences that subsequently describes, analyzes and converts into themes that links to recognize trends (Guzmán, 2021).

In this way, qualitative data was obtained since the study sought to understand the level of implementation of post-conflict policies with a gender perspective in the Peace Agreement between the Colombian government and the FARC-EP, as well as the way in which the armed conflict affects women. In addition, information was analyzed mainly from secondary sources. However, some information was also obtained from primary sources.

The secondary sources that were analyzed are Colombian post-conflict policies, academic publications on the impact of wars on women and the role of women in peace processes, as well as data and reports on the results of the implementation of post-conflict policies raised in the Final Agreement for the Termination of the Conflict and the Construction of a Stable and Lasting Peace signed 2016 by the National Government and representatives of the Revolutionary Armed Forces of Colombia - People's Army (Office of the High Commissioner for Peace, 2016).

As complementary primary sources, semi-structured interviews were conducted with a small group of experts and key actors, such as professionals working with women victims and in the implementation of policies to understand their effectiveness and their effect. Five interviews were conducted to complement and validate the findings acquired through the documentary review.

3.1 Participants

In this research, important information was compiled in the analysis of the impact of the Colombian armed conflict on women and the level of reparation and support that has been achieved in carrying out post-conflict reconstruction policies with a gender perspective. In order to understand the reality of this issue, a group of experts was selected to provide a comprehensive and critical view on the subject.

The selection of participants was based on their expertise in topics such as accompaniment of women victims of the conflict and ex-combatants, human rights and gender, implementation of the Peace Agreement, gender and armed conflict and post-conflict economics. It also provided a more realistic perspective on how women have been affected. Table 1 summarizes the profiles of each individual interviewed.

Table 1
Interviewee profiles

Participant	Charge	Institution	Nationality
Dr. Pedro Miguel Gomis	Faculty of Political Science and Sociology - Department of History, Political Theories and Geography.	Pontifical University Javeriana	Spanish
Dr. Egoitz Gago	Full professor of the Department of Political Science and International Relations at Jorge Tadeo Lozano University in Bogotá, Colombia.	Complutense University of Madrid	Spanish
Dra. Beatriz Quintero	Feminist activist - Coordinator of the National Women's Network and active member of the Table for the Life and Health of Women.	National Network of Women	Colombian
Dra. María de los Angeles Ríos	Feminist lawyer - Coordinator of the Women and peace building line.	Humanas Corporation	Colombian

3.2 Process

In order to collect accurate information, prior contact was made by e-mail with the people to be interviewed. Based on the characteristics of the research and of the participants, a set of open questions was structured in order to have a better development of the interviews; these questions would ensure a fluid conversation, as well as the collection of more relevant data related to the research.

Thus, it was essential to establish the topics that would allow us to have a guide when conducting the interviews, focusing on collecting data that would be aligned with both the general objective and the specific objectives. In this way, information was obtained to learn

how the implementation of the agreement has progressed and the effect of this implementation on women victims and ex-combatants.

3.3 Informed consent

Before conducting the data collection interviews, it was very important to go through an informed consent process with the participants. Although the objectives of the interview were clearly communicated in the contact email, we needed to ensure that the interviewees understood what their role would be in the research being conducted. Informed consent helped to ensure authorization to share information obtained through the interview and created autonomy for respondents to make decisions during their participation.

This document helped to reinforce the ethical commitment in the research, at the same time that it contributed to obtaining more accurate and reliable data. In addition, it helped us to make the research more valid, creating a relationship of mutual respect between the researcher and interviewees. In this way, it ensured that the information obtained would be used responsibly for the purpose of this analysis to subsequently recognize the problems and, if appropriate, generate recommendations.

CHAPTER 4

RESULTS

This chapter presents the results obtained through the analysis of documentary sources and conducted interviews. These findings allow us to evaluate the implementation of post-conflict policies with a gender-focused approach in Colombia, identifying progress, challenges, and areas for improvement in the programs of reparations, justice, and reintegration for women affected by the conflict.

In the first place, we must acknowledge that the gender perspective was not present at the beginning of the conflict but has gradually advanced over time. This was evident when Valencia (1989) proposed a legal perspective on International Humanitarian Law in Colombia, emphasizing the necessity of its implementation through the 1949 Geneva Conventions and Protocol II. These frameworks assert that the human dignity of civilians uninvolved in armed conflict must be respected, condemning and prohibiting acts such as homicide, torture, unlawful detention, hostage-taking, terrorism, kidnapping, bombings, and the recruitment of children under fifteen as combatants. They also mandate aid and assistance for the sick and wounded. This demonstrates that in 1989, the forms of human dignity violations considered within the legal application of International Humanitarian Law in Colombia did not account for various types of gender-based violence, such as the systematic use of sexual violence during the conflict.

Regarding these mentioned transgressions, the Unit for the Attention and Comprehensive Reparation of Victims, through the National Information Network (RNI), presents the following figures: within the Colombian population, approximately 86% of victims are displaced individuals, while the remaining 14% suffered cases of threats, terrorist acts, harassment, crimes against freedom and sexual integrity, abandonment, forced disappearance, kidnapping, torture, and homicides, among others. In the Single Registry of Victims (RUV), 9,804,387 people were identified as victims of the internal armed conflict, of whom 4,922,862 are women, representing 50.2% of the total. Additionally, the following figures should be highlighted based on the types of victimization: first, 3,799,561 women were victims of forced displacement, followed by 461,550 victims of homicide, 203,058 of threats, 78,828 of forced disappearance, 47,959 who lost their property or homes, 41,167 victims of terrorist acts/attacks/clashes/harassment, 23,949 victims of crimes against freedom and sexual integrity, and 8,934 of kidnapping, among others (Atencio, 2020; Sanchez et al., 2019).

Considering this information and its impact, the Office of the Attorney General of the Nation presented guidelines to address the fight against impunity in cases of sexual violence during the Colombian conflict, particularly against women, to ensure their dignity. It urged public officials to apply protocols for the information, guidance, and assistance of victims of sexual violence, safeguarding their dignity and right to privacy. It also called on judicial operators to consider the rights of victims of sexual crimes in judicial processes (Office of the Attorney General of the Nation, 2012).

4.1. Post-conflict policies with a gender perspective

On post-conflict policies with a gender perspective, the Final Agreement for the Construction of a Stable and Lasting Peace, ratified by the National Government and representatives of the Revolutionary Armed Forces of Colombia – People's Army (FARC-EP), emphasizes that as a Final Agreement, it places greater attention on the fundamental rights of women and vulnerable social groups, such as Indigenous peoples, children and adolescents, Afro-descendant communities, and other ethnically distinct groups. It specifies that for the implementation of these principles, the State, in accordance with Article 13 of the Colombian Constitution, must guarantee the right to equality and non-discrimination in all its forms. Additionally, the State must ensure effective protection for individuals in vulnerable situations and sanction abuses committed against them (Office of the High Commissioner for Peace, 2016).

The Agreement, under Point 6: Implementation, Verification, and Endorsement, also states that affirmative measures are required to guarantee equality in response to the disproportionate impact the armed conflict has had on women, particularly through sexual violence. Regarding victims' rights, their protection involves differentiated treatment that acknowledges the causes and consequences of the armed conflict, particularly concerning women. To this end, it recognizes women as autonomous citizens and subjects of rights, regardless of their marital status, family ties, or community relationships, granting them equal access to land ownership, productive projects, financing options, infrastructure, technical services, and training (Office of the High Commissioner for Peace, 2016).

Acknowledging the aforementioned points, the State proposed adopting measures to clarify the paramilitary phenomenon to prevent its recurrence and ensure the dismantling of organizations and criminal behaviors that resulted in homicides, massacres, and systematic violence, particularly against women. Crimes against humanity, genocide, war crimes,

severe deprivation of liberty, torture, extrajudicial executions, forced disappearances, various forms of sexual violence, child abduction, forced displacement, and the recruitment of minors, as established in Article 7 of the Rome Statute, are included. In cases where criminal sentences use terms such as “ferocity,” “barbarity,” or equivalents, amnesty cannot be granted for the criminal acts designated as non-amnestiable in the agreement. Additionally, to fulfill the Agreement, the National Government committed to expanding public coverage and territorial deployment and improving psychosocial care for the emotional recovery of victims, particularly those who have suffered sexual violence (Office of the High Commissioner for Peace, 2016).

4.2. Impact of the conflict on women and their role in the post-conflict period.

About the victims and the Comprehensive System of Truth, Justice, Reparations, and Non-Repetition (SIVJNRN), emphasis is placed on the need to recognize the differential impact of conflict on women's bodies. For this reason, a gender-focused working group was proposed within the Truth Commission, highlighting the importance of reparations for women's organizations, among other advancements. Additionally, the protection of female leaders and women's rights defenders was proposed, incorporating and developing scenarios where women's struggles unfold. It reminds the State of its duty to ensure that those leading empowering and mobilizing processes in favor of women's rights are safeguarded from the actions of power structures within the national territory (Klimenko et al., 2023).

Since the 1990s, women have led peace initiatives in their territories as a political effort for social mobilization, analyzing the national reality with a focus on advocating for women's rights and their relationships within and beyond the conflict. These initiatives have empowered women and communities, addressing gender-based violence, transforming society, and working to end wars. Moreover, it was through the persistent efforts of women's organizations that the Gender Sub-Commission was established at the negotiation table in Havana. This achievement led to the comprehensive inclusion of a gender perspective in all six points of the Negotiation Agenda, culminating in the initial agreement signed in Cartagena in September 2016. This agreement recognized women as rights-holders and significant political actors in the development of the State (Klimenko et al., 2023).

As Andrade et al. (2017) explain, the role of women in post-conflict contexts is undeniable and essential for building peace. Mediation experiences demonstrate that when

women participate in negotiations, these processes become more viable and effective. Women provide constant support in socio-family education, fostering peacebuilding with a differential approach that accounts for gender, ethnicity, and the disabilities of victims of armed conflict. For instance, agrarian policy should prioritize women's access to land to promote rural development and ensure their active participation in Colombia's agricultural progress.

It is essential to recognize that rural Colombian women are agents of transformation, as family stability often depends on them. However, their contributions have been rendered invisible, burdened with unpaid caregiving responsibilities without recognition, and generally exposed to greater inequalities, violence, and lower social value compared to men. Empowering rural women as administrators in the reconstruction of the rural social fabric is, therefore, crucial. The participants demonstrated high levels of autonomy in decisions regarding agricultural production, land use, family economy, and local development, underscoring the importance of rural women in achieving the Sustainable Development Goals during post-conflict periods. If women are granted equal access to education, healthcare, decent work, and representation in political and economic decision-making processes, sustainable economies will also be promoted, thus, benefiting societies and humanity as a whole (Becerra et al., 2017).

In Colombia's progress toward peace, women from the FARC-EP, also known as "farianas," have undergone a political transformation that includes disarmament, the adoption of "feminismo fariano" (Fariano feminism), and their push for democratization to ensure participation in the post-agreement landscape. Fariano feminism, or insurgent feminism, represents an ethical-political proposal shaped by the experiences, reflections, and struggles of these women during the armed conflict and dialogue for peacebuilding. It aims to reinterpret women's roles within the insurgency and articulate their unique positions regarding peace (Simanca, 2018).

This process faces challenges, such as the internal divisions of the Partido Comunes (Common Party), which has been fractured since its inception. While Fariano feminism did not succeed in maintaining group cohesion, women have pursued various paths, creating new opportunities that did not exist before the Havana Agreement. Additionally, the fight against forced disappearances continues, driven by families—primarily women—working to combat impunity. Their efforts have led to the establishment of institutions like the Unit for the Search for Missing Persons (USMP) (Posada, 2024).

4.3. Perceptions on the Impact of the Peace Agreement

For this study, semi-structured interviews were also conducted using a set of five questions. The participants were Dr. Pedro Miguel Gomis, Professor at the Faculty of Political Science and Sociology - Department of History, Political Theories and Geography of the Pontificia Universidad Javeriana, Dr. Egoitz Gago, Professor at the Department of History, Political Theories and Geography of the Universidad Complutense de Madrid, Dr. Beatriz Quintero, Feminist activist - Coordinator of the National Women's Network and active member of the Roundtable for Life and Health of Women, Dr. María. Beatriz Quintero, feminist activist - Coordinator of the National Women's Network and active member of the Roundtable for the Life and Health of Women, Dr. María de los Ángeles Ríos, feminist lawyer - Coordinator of the line Women, peace building of the Humanas Organization and officials of the Special Jurisdiction for Peace (JEP) of the Advisory Office of Differential Approaches, who at the time of the interview expressed their desire to remain anonymous in the realization of this work.

The first topic discussed with the interviewees concerned the difficulties that have arisen in the implementation of post-conflict reconstruction policies with a gender approach and how their implementation has varied between rural and urban areas. According to Egoitz Gago (personal communication, March 21, 2025), although the six points of the Peace Agreement—as well as the provisional points and the institutions derived from it—should include a gender perspective, there is the problem that they should be based on public policy that is approved through a legislative process. The “fast track” was applied, referring to the exceptional mechanism that would allow for a quick approval in Congress of the agreed reforms that were approved in December 2016 (BBC News Mundo, 2016). Gago appreciates that it had limited success, and, at the end, many public policies have failed to incorporate the necessary gender approach.

He considers that this has been this way mainly for two reasons. The first is that the communities have not been listened to from that point of view, which has been a problem throughout the implementation of the Agreement. The second is that there has not been a political culture in Colombia to include it. This has generated many problems that have been solved on the fly, through specific and very particular programs, but these have not met the needs or provided the comprehensive and integrated approach that is required. Regarding the difference in implementation between urban and rural areas, he mentions that a distinction must be made, first of all, between urban centers of specific importance and urban

environments within rural environments. In urban areas, because of tradition and because the armed conflict had less impact, the plans carried out have been more successful, with certain particularities. They have been better implemented because they have been smaller, targeted to specific groups where it was not necessary to include structural processes as it was necessary in rural areas where implementation is more complicated.

On the other hand, in rural areas, the implementation of a gender approach, as well as any other type of approach, whether ethnic, age, youth, among others, requires a structural reform that goes hand in hand with it. These structural reforms refer to the fact that the programs, for example, of reparation to female victims, must go hand in hand with the health care provided by the rural health centers. These must also have a gender focus, which recognizes and attends to specific reproductive needs and specific health processes that affect women and men differently; however, this implies funds. Thus, in many areas of Colombia, even today, this has not yet happened

He presents a second difference through an example in the municipal capital of Tumaco, where there are active processes of this type — gender policies, access to public policy, access to education, etc. However, in the *veredas* of Tumaco¹ the situation is more complicated. First, these are more isolated communities, more distant from public goods, from the implementation of public policies. Second, there are no structural means to carry them out, which makes the process even more difficult.

Regarding this issue, Miguel Gomis (personal communication, March 19, 2025) states that during the first three to four years, policies were implemented with great difficulty. This had a lot to do with the implementation approach of the government of Iván Duque² that put many obstacles in the implementation of some measures, but this was not the only reason. He considers that this issue could be analyzed in 3 dimensions. Whether what is proposed is realistic, whether the implementation has failed and whether, at the end of the day, the conditions are not in place. He approaches it from the third dimension by pointing out that the conditions in some territories are not in place. Because, despite the fact that peace has been signed, many territories are still immersed in violence, in group struggles for territorial control, and this means that the state has not really permeated these territories institutionally. In fact, the current crisis in Cacatumbo and other areas of the country shows that, in reality,

¹ Vereda refers to the rural territorial unit, mostly small, characterized by being a dispersed community with houses and plots on rural roads (Mendoza, 2011).

² Político colombiano que fue Presidente de la República de Colombia entre los años de 2018 a 2022 (Wallenfeldt, 2025).

the state continues to have limited capacity in the territories, making implementation difficult.

Second, regarding implementation, he explains that, by itself, it is deficient for several reasons. The first reason is the budgetary issue, since it is clear that the Duque government had the financial means available, which attracted the attention of many associations and organizations. *Vox Populi*³, presents the common perception that the Duque government did not get involved as desired. But there is also another point, which is Colombia's entry into the OECD, which signals to partner countries that the country is moving from being considered a recipient country to a middle-income country that is estimated to no longer require the same level of external support.

He argues that the problem in Colombia, as in many Latin American countries, lies in implementation. In addition, there is still a marked difference between urban and rural areas, with a gap that, unfortunately, is even greater today than it was five or six years ago.

On the other hand, Beatriz Quintero (personal communication, March 24, 2025), proposes that this process should be separated into three important moments. The entire negotiation prior to the peace agreement, what was achieved in the peace agreement, and what came after. In the first moment, there were difficulties in accepting that the agreement had a gender focus. As a women's movement, the National Women's Network, with certain leadership, was clear that the peace agreement had to be negotiated with a gender focus, taking into account UN Security Council Resolution 1325. Even though there was no national plan, it had to be applied, and this was a very important argument on the part of the organization. First, it was possible to convince the international community, then the government, which helped the counterpart, in this case the guerrilla, to be forced to accept. They also worked beforehand with the guerrilla, especially with the women who had demobilized, to convince them of the importance of the approach, since they did not have much knowledge about it.

Then, when the agreement was signed, it was clear that it had a gender focus, which presented a problem. Right-wing groups attacked the peace agreement heavily by interpreting the gender approach as gender ideology. The attack was based on arguments that aligned with the international narrative on gender ideology, including claims that it

³ Frase del latín que significa "voz del pueblo" y se usa para indicar lo que es conocido y repetido por todos (ASALE & RAE, 2025).

would attempt to 'homosexualize' all children, among other unfounded arguments. These discourses were intertwined with the plebiscite, and used as an instrument of disinformation and deception towards the population. Quintero does not affirm that the plebiscite was lost only for this reason, but it was part of the multiple arguments used. Among other arguments, it was suggested that the pensions of the elderly would disappear because they would be handed over to the guerrillas.

After losing the plebiscite, they continued to work so that all that had been achieved would not be lost in this second negotiation because it was feared that women would be "the bargaining chip" of the new negotiation, because they were convinced that, although the government showed willingness, there did not seem to be a genuine conviction. Officials prioritized peace, even if it meant sacrificing women's rights. So, important advocacy work was carried out during the second negotiation after the plebiscite that took place between October and November 2016, by which several achievements were made. In fact, it recognizes that women were the ones who lost the least in that second negotiation, compared to the LGTBI community that had more significant losses. While women retained a category of citizens, they were given the category of vulnerable population, which shows a still limited citizen inclusion.

The alliance did some work, taking what was negotiated at the end, and with that information, they developed a model of what gender measures were approved in the peace agreement. This was done as an alliance called Gender and Peace (G-Paz). They then found 122 measures of which 13 had already been fulfilled because Point 3 of the peace agreement "End of the conflict" had been carried out. In this point, the weapons had already been collected, and the concentration spaces had been organized. Therefore, the implementation of 109 measures was pending. They were divided into categories since some of them implied normative changes or new legislation, national and/or territorial regulations.

The government that had promoted the peace agreement was weakened because its term was coming to an end in the next six months and, as usually happens, any administration in its last year tends to weaken. In addition, this government had been worn down politically after losing the plebiscite. A new government then took office, which was along the lines of the one that had sought to have the plebiscite voted down. However, the implementation of the agreement had already been set for a 15-year term, so the government was obliged to execute it, but it did not show the necessary interest and commitment. On the contrary, it put up barriers, which made four difficult years for those seeking the full implementation of the

agreement. During those four years, G-Paz played a crucial role, developing reports, analysis and direct work with women, seeking to ensure that the rights and commitments acquired were not diluted, facing a hostile context, without losing sight of the objectives.

For her part, María de los Ángeles Ríos (personal communication, March 26, 2025) identifies that the great challenge in the implementation has to do with the political will and the possibility of continuity as it is an agreement that was given in the framework of a government, which changed after the signing of the agreement, and that implied a change in the political will for the implementation. Associated with the willingness in the allocation of resources and the commitment to carry out all the promises that were defined in the framework of the agreement. This has implications associated with how the non-implementation of a peace agreement in the context of transitional justice exacerbates the intensification of the conflict. Because, as Ríos explains, the departure of an armed actor from a place, given that it signed a peace agreement, has not implied, in the case of Colombia, the termination of the conflict because there are other armed actors and this territorial vacuum is seen as an opportunity for other armed groups to control and dispute the territory.

There is another difficulty, which is the strengthening of armed groups that were not part of the negotiation process and in this sense their strengthening leads to the transformation of the conflict and there is a worsening of acts of violence that particularly affects the civilian population and therefore disproportionately affects women and children.

Regarding territorial implementation, it is considered that the difference between territorial and national implementation is linked to the fact that the peace agreement establishes the creation of mechanisms at the national level but does not clearly define the programs for territorialization. While specific programs were created—such as the Development Program with a Territorial Focus and the National Program for the Substitution of Illicit Crops, both of which require territorial implementation—the articulation and institutional architecture at the local level were not clearly defined to ensure effective territorialization. Furthermore, even when territorialization routes can be established, it becomes evident that without political will to allocate resources and ensure the operational capacity of institutions, these programs also create scenarios of revictimization for the civilian population. This occurs when expectations are raised but remain unfulfilled due to a lack of commitment from the government during transitions, leading to instances of

violence, revictimization, and dissatisfaction among those involved, as the commitments initially made are not upheld.

JEP Officials (personal communication, April 4, 2025) stated that, as a jurisdiction, their role is solely the administration of transitional justice. One of the key challenges they have been facing is locating victims, as some are in urban areas while others reside in rural regions. Additionally, Colombia's unique geographic characteristic—its dispersed rurality—creates obstacles in accessing both information and victim participation in various proceedings. To address this, the jurisdiction has established a comprehensive policy to support victims.

This policy ensures coverage of transportation costs for victims traveling from their territories to the locations where proceedings take place, as well as expenses incurred during the proceedings. It also includes accompaniment services, particularly for mothers, heads of households, or caregivers of minors or elderly individuals, while they attend hearings. The support extends to explaining to dependents why their caregivers are participating in the jurisdiction—without disclosing case details—and providing information on the JEP's functions, processes, and restorative justice principles. While most understand that they are not direct victims, they still have the right to fully participate in the restorative process outlined by the jurisdiction.

It also highlights specific protection strategies for those participating in the jurisdiction, given that the Peace Agreement was signed only with one of the existing armed groups in Colombia, while other armed actors remain active in different parts of the country. This has required measures such as controlled dissemination of information, particularly judicial decisions issued by the jurisdiction, as well as specialized training for officials—not only regarding legal information but also in their interactions with victims and respondents, with a specific focus on gender-based violence. In this regard, various approaches have been developed within the jurisdiction's information framework for those supporting victims in their judicial processes. There is a dedicated security component, a participation component, and a psychosocial or spiritual support component, considering victims' ethnic backgrounds, women's identities, and the inclusion of LGBTIQ individuals within the jurisdiction.

Regarding the extent to which current policies have improved access to justice and reparations for women victims, Egoitz Gago (personal communication, March 21, 2025) notes that numerous initiatives have been undertaken to support a gender-focused approach.

He emphasizes that this approach is not limited to distinctions between men and women but also includes transgender individuals and those who experience gender differently, as recognized in Colombian legislation and acknowledged within the framework of the peace agreement. However, when it comes to policy implementation, there is still a tendency to rely on a binary perspective rather than non-binary approaches. This is crucial to consider, as gender-based violence during the Colombian conflict—like in many armed conflicts—has significant gender dimensions.

Thus, most women who are community leaders have had to develop highly specific processes of reparation, recognition, and addressing victimization. To respond to such harm, mechanisms have been established within institutions responsible for investigating the atrocities committed during the armed conflict, incorporating a gender perspective.

The transitional justice system introduced by the peace agreement and currently being implemented in Colombia is based on three main pillars: the Truth Commission, which completed its work in 2022 with a comprehensive public report that integrates a gender perspective; the Search Unit for Disappeared Persons, which remains active but is significantly behind in its work; and the most prominent pillar, widely covered by the media, which deals with major human rights violations cases—the Special Jurisdiction for Peace (JEP).

The JEP is an independent jurisdiction aimed at imposing sentences for crimes against humanity committed during the conflict, based on confessions and collaboration between perpetrators and victims. These crimes include rape, denial of reproductive rights, and torture inflicted by various actors, including persecution based on gender identity or exclusion from heteronormative gender categories. Such crimes are recognized as violations of international law and cannot be ignored. Currently, the JEP is handling 11 macro cases, all of which incorporate a gender perspective to varying degrees.

One of the reasons why many individuals from community organizations involved in these macro cases are women or LGBTQ+ individuals is that the process must be approached differently from those involving associations of military victims or other groups. The macro cases arise because prior efforts have been carried out through the JEP's Investigation and Indictment Unit, which functions similarly to a prosecutor's office. This unit receives complaints, investigates them, and based on its findings, submits reports to JEP magistrates

requesting judicial proceedings, much like a standard prosecutorial system. Additionally, this unit incorporates gender-sensitive approaches.

Gago explains that the Universidad Javeriana and the JEP are collaborating on a three-pronged project with the indictment unit. This initiative assesses the difficulties individuals face in accessing the JEP, with a particular focus on gender-related challenges. In certain urban areas, individuals who identify as non-heteronormative or non-binary encounter significant obstacles in seeking justice. To address this, the indictment unit is implementing new mechanisms to ease access, ensuring testimonies are received while also integrating efforts at the community and organizational levels.

Additionally, mechanisms for gender equality between men and women have been in place from the outset. There is a dedicated section within the JEP specifically focused on this issue, and it functions effectively—not only in receiving testimonies but also in providing support, legal advice, and security measures. At this level, the system works well. However, a major challenge in these processes is ensuring continued support, as they are lengthy and can take years. All cases are currently ongoing, and throughout this time, organizations and individuals involved receive numerous threats and face severe security challenges, which the JEP itself lacks sufficient resources to counter. This is where institutions such as the government's victim protection unit come into play. However, this unit's efforts have been inadequate, leading to extreme cases where some organizations have abandoned the process altogether, highlighting an urgent need for improvements.

Miguel Gomis (personal communication, March 19, 2025) acknowledges progress in the system, particularly within the JEP. However, financial issues have emerged, as funding has been allocated gradually. Additionally, political disputes have arisen concerning the duration and scope of the JEP's mandate. The work of the JEP experienced significant polarization, especially in its first three years. Over the past two years, tensions have eased, largely due to increased oversight efforts from auditing bodies, associations, and civil society in Colombia, ensuring that certain commitments are fulfilled.

Pedro Gomis believes that pressure and logistics for the population are distinct issues, as some territories that were stable four years ago—where effective access to reparation and restitution could be promoted—are now experiencing instability. He attributes this shift to a certain degree of naivety in allowing coercive actions after the conclusion of dialogues. While state order had not been effectively reestablished in some areas, the government and

state also missed an opportunity to advance agreement-building, particularly through public services. However, Colombia's budgetary constraints pose a significant challenge to implementing these measures.

Beatriz Quintero (personal communication, March 19, 2025) states that during the negotiation process, when discussing sexual violence, it felt as if there was a tacit agreement among the men—both from the government and the guerrilla—that the topic would not be addressed. The reasoning was that sexual violence was not considered part of the war. Both guerrilla fighters and the military denied committing acts of sexual violence because such accusations would undermine their status. Politically, being labeled as a rapist means losing the myth of being a warrior; a guerrilla fighter is perceived as a "justice seeker," but a rapist is not. Significant efforts were made to bring the issue into the discussion, but former President Juan Manuel Santos⁴ at the time remarked, "I regret it deeply, but I am sure we will have to swallow some bitter pills in this negotiation." One of these "bitter pills" was sexual violence. However, women were not willing to be the ones to "swallow those pills."

Organizations began mobilizing, sending statements to Havana to insist on addressing the issue. This led to a meeting in Havana aimed at understanding the concerns raised by women. Quintero notes that many feminist women and human rights advocates who supported the new approach to negotiating the conflict argued that the organizations were creating obstacles to the negotiation process. She acknowledges that, to some extent, they were right—limits were being set. However, these limits were established based on the conviction that negotiations could not proceed at the expense of perpetuating discrimination against women.

If that had happened, it would have meant accepting a peace framework without the concept of a democracy that includes women, as if democracy were exclusively for men. As Quintero affirms, democracy is about freedom, equality, recognition, and non-discrimination. Therefore, they persisted, submitted key documents, and ultimately formed the Cinco Claves alliance. Through their efforts, they achieved the classification of sexual violence as a non-amnestiable and non-pardonable crime—a major victory that is widely acknowledged.

⁴ President of the Republic of Colombia from 2010 to 2018, Nobel Peace Prize in 2016 for his effort to end the government's hostilities with the FARC-EP guerrilla (Ortiz, 2010).

The macro cases began to open, but the case on sexual violence was not initially included. The JEP's argument was that sexual violence was always linked to other crimes, such as kidnappings, where women were abducted and then raped. However, it was crucial to establish sexual violence as an autonomous crime, independent of other violations. Armed groups did not necessarily have to displace or kidnap individuals—they could simply pass through an area and rape women. Additionally, treating sexual violence as a secondary crime diminished its significance, so strong arguments were made to demonstrate the distinction between different levels of crime—kidnapping, displacement, and rape. If sexual violence were not given equal weight, it would remain symbolic rather than being properly acknowledged in judicial proceedings. After five years of persistent advocacy, the macro case on sexual violence was finally opened.

Now, Macro Case 11 is open, and many consider it a highly complex issue. For instance, if someone in a rural town or municipality is raped by a guerrilla group, identifying the perpetrator is nearly impossible. The victim only sees a uniformed, armed man—possibly wearing boots or not—but has no way of knowing his identity. The responsibility of investigating the crime should not fall on the victim; it is the judicial system's duty. Since sexual violence involves victims being used and abandoned—because rape itself is the dehumanization of women—proof remains a challenge, but that is part of the justice system's role. In transitional justice, the idea is not to treat it as an individual crime but as a macro case that aims to transform society as a whole. The goal is for society to acknowledge that these acts are crimes and that they happen, leading to comprehensive reparations through cultural transformation. This approach also includes the implementation of TOAR (Trabajos, Obras y Actividades con contenido Reparador-Restaurador) [Works, Projects, and Activities with Reparative-Restorative Content], which are restorative or reparative actions imposed on perpetrators. In this form of restorative justice, once the truth is accepted, prison is not the consequence—rather, the focus shifts to restoration and reparation, making the process inherently more complex.

Regarding this issue, María de los Ángeles Ríos (personal communication, March 26, 2025) believes that, in general, the Truth Commission report provided a significant opportunity for victims of the conflict, particularly women. It became a crucial moment for reflecting on how the armed conflict affected them and for acknowledging the acts of violence they were forced to endure. This process led to institutional attention being focused on understanding what had happened, as part of the long-standing demands of many victims.

These events were not insignificant; rather, they hold a place within history and collective memory that extends beyond individual cases, reflecting the broader dynamics of war. This recognition created an opportunity for victims' stories to be central to the national historical narrative. Interviews were conducted, women's organizations submitted reports, and the Corporación Humanas specifically presented approximately seven reports to the Truth Commission. The preparation of these reports itself was an important process of acknowledgment, demonstrating how the war deeply affected victims and highlighting the importance of their stories in the country's history and the peace-building process.

However, like in other countries, Colombia's Truth Commission issues recommendations that are neither mandatory nor legally binding, which presents challenges in ensuring their implementation. These recommendations, built upon the lived experiences of affected individuals—particularly women and girls—rely heavily on the willingness of specific actors to adopt them. This raises a fundamental question about the report's relevance in the current context. For women's organizations, it serves as a critical resource, compiling reflections on how to transform the structural conditions that led to the war and how armed actors exploited these conditions to harm women and girls, treating them as instrumental to the war's objectives.

For JEP officials (personal communication, April 4, 2025), the justice system has historically been an adverse space for women and the LGBTIQ+ population. This is largely due to the persistence of strong patriarchal structures that continue to affect access to justice and interactions with judicial operators. They emphasize that the JEP has worked extensively to ensure accessibility with the necessary guarantees, but also that the training and preparation process for officials and contractors is highly rigorous. Personnel receive training in all gender-related components, and those working directly on sexual violence cases, in particular, undergo emotional first-aid training to ensure appropriate engagement with victims. Notably, many of the magistrates have prior experience in cases of gender-based and sexual violence.

This has allowed voluntary interviews, the way questions are formulated, and the environment in which these proceedings take place to be carefully adapted to these particular considerations. The goal is not only to ensure that victims or respondents reach the judicial process but also to make their experience within it meaningful and properly structured. While there will always be aspects to improve, it is widely recognized that a genuine shift has occurred in how justice is administered in the country.

Additionally, it is important to mention that the Special Jurisdiction for Peace (JEP) inherited the Gender Technical Assistance Board from the Truth Commission as a valuable mechanism for implementing the previously discussed measures. This board, alongside the Search Unit for Disappeared People, aims to create dialogical spaces for information-sharing and listening to women and LGBTIQ+ individuals from different territories. It serves as one of the effective channels for fostering participation, monitoring developments, and ensuring access to real-time information about what is happening in these regions.

Regarding the barriers faced by women survivors of sexual violence in accessing transitional justice and reparation mechanisms, Egoitz Gago (personal communication, March 21, 2025) notes that, beyond traditional obstacles such as stigmatization and revictimization, the processes are lengthy, and women often live in small communities where anonymity is scarce, making these types of reports more difficult. In the project led by Universidad Javeriana in collaboration with the JEP, a significant difference has been observed. When an organization operates, it first establishes itself structurally and then works within an urban setting. This trend is seen among women's organizations and also among LGBTIQ+ groups, many of which have created urban-based organizations to gain a degree of anonymity. This centralization of complaints through one or two organizations has significantly facilitated access to justice, making case processing more manageable for the JEP.

The traditional challenges remain. When the time comes, testimonies are required, which means that survivors of sexual violence must be present in a courtroom, facing a magistrate. In some cases, the JEP—unlike traditional justice—does offer anonymity mechanisms. However, in other cases, perpetrators are present, as the JEP's approach is based on recognition and confession rather than criminal prosecution. This model, centered on remorse rather than punitive measures, introduces its own set of complications. To address these issues, the JEP has implemented protocols that closely resemble those mandated in recent years for workplaces and corporate environments in Colombia. These protocols establish specific mechanisms for reporting sexual harassment and providing support throughout the process.

However, this is what appears on paper, but it does not always reflect reality. Typically, the JEP receives the initial complaint through organizations—it does not have to be an informal group—but individual testimonies are often incorporated later. These testimonies remain anonymous until the investigation progresses, utilizing specific channels

designed to first ensure anonymity and then provide appropriate support for the person giving the testimony. This process involves two key instances, one of which is the accusation instance. The professionals working within this stage receive specialized training in handling such cases, ensuring psychosocial support for the individuals who come forward, helping them navigate the process in a more comfortable and secure way.

As Gago explains, in practice, the limitations of available resources significantly affect the process. The professionals who handle these cases and provide psychosocial support are stretched thinly, and since this support must be sustained over a long period, gaps emerge. As a result, many survivors who come forward with accusations feel isolated. In many cases, their identities are known. They are threatened and persecuted by those who have suffered sexual aggression of the kind that occurs during conflict processes. This type of violence has a clear objective: the dehumanization of individuals. In many cases, their identities are known. They are threatened and persecuted by those who have suffered sexual aggression of the kind that occurs during conflict processes. This type of violence has a clear objective, that is the dehumanization of individuals.

Another issue, which is a formal challenge, is that while the JEP's judicial system has some differences, it still closely resembles the Colombian legal framework in certain aspects, its adherence to the principles of the Liberal Democratic State, which is rights-based. This means that the accused has the right to know who is accusing them and why. Typically, in protocols within universities, companies, and similar institutions, anonymity is preserved until a decision is made on whether to escalate the matter to judicial authorities. For this reason, universities, businesses, and other entities have established protocols to prevent exposure, often opting for administrative sanctions instead. However, civil organizations lack the authority to impose criminal penalties, such as imprisonment, asset seizure, or other legal measures. This happens with the JEP, then comes the moment in which the victim must make the decision to take his or her complaint to the ordinary justice system.

In cases involving criminal offenses, such as sexual harassment—which is now legally recognized in Colombia—not only physical aggression or rape but also acts that diminish a person through words, gestures, and other means are considered crimes. However, survivors face a crucial decision, whether to escalate their case to an ordinary court. If they do so successfully, the accused is granted full legal protection. This is a significant challenge, particularly for cases of sexual violence within the armed conflict. In the Special Jurisdiction for Peace (JEP), mechanisms exist to preserve anonymity, including testimony with

obscured faces, telematic interventions that alter voice and conceal identity, and other protective measures. Nonetheless, survivors must still navigate the judicial process, which remains complex and demanding. The JEP primarily handles macro-cases—large-scale investigations prosecuting widespread sexual violence within entire communities. These cases reflect the systematic nature of such crimes within conflict dynamics, addressing collective harm rather than isolated incidents.

However, when paramilitary or guerrilla commanders who committed these acts are informed of the town and the day on which they took place, it generates fear in the victims. In the case of the JEP, progress has been made in addressing crimes of sexual violence in conflict. Exemplary sentences have been achieved that are based not on the type of crime but on the perpetrator's collaboration, confession, recognition, and reparation processes. The JEP can provide this above all because of its female leadership and important training.

Beatriz Quintero (personal communication, March 26, 2025) also recognizes as a problem the fact that women cannot always identify their aggressors as such. Additionally, reports are required before the JEP, and many women did not initially report these crimes. For instance, if a woman was a victim of forced displacement and was raped, she might not have declared the rape at the time for any number of reasons. Displacement, on the other hand, is a visible event, so she may have registered as a victim ten years ago but only decided five years later to report the sexual violence. This creates a challenge in terms of recognition—the ability to come forward and report sexual violence. Furthermore, survivors may encounter officials who do not believe them due to the passage of time, presenting an additional obstacle within the judicial system, which is also patriarchal.

They are understood as different barriers which the perpetrators know prevent the victim from recognizing them. They then argue that rape was forbidden in their command or armed group, and that anyone who raped would be court-martialed and executed.

So, we also see a distinction between what justice means for them and what it means for women. This is an aspect that needs deeper analysis and understanding, especially considering that perpetrators are aware of the difficulty in proving these crimes and take advantage of legal protections in that regard. Moreover, time is working against the process. Since this macro-case was approved only a year ago—nine years after the Peace Agreement—there are only six years for its implementation, whereas other macro-cases have a fifteen-year timeframe.

For María de los Ángeles Ríos (personal communication, March 26, 2025), it is important to highlight how transitional justice mechanisms also reveal a lack of credibility in victims' testimonies, perpetuating a dilemma that is not about a conflict between the victim's truth and that of the perpetrator. Under the framework of transitional justice and Colombia's Peace Agreement, it was explicitly established that victims are central to the accord. Thus, the victim's statements should not be contested by external actors, as this can lead to re-victimization. The type of questions asked and the way trial scenarios are structured—where victims must be present alongside perpetrators—pose serious challenges, given the psychological and procedural implications these settings create.

Within the framework of this agreement, a significant opportunity has arisen to recognize that violence against women is distinct and has specific purposes relating to the actions of armed groups. The advocacy process carried out with civil society leaders has itself been an opportunity to educate over time.

It is also an opportunity to stop normalizing acts of violence committed by armed actors, especially in a country that has a peace agreement and is undergoing its implementation. Despite this, acts of violence continue to occur in parallel because the armed conflict persists, highlighting the need to insist on what the final peace agreement implies in terms of learning. This must be the minimum standard for any other negotiation process and peace agreement in Colombia. In the peace agreement with the FARC, sexual violence was neither subject to amnesty nor pardon; instead, mechanisms for truth clarification were established, and acts of violence were sanctioned. This means that in any future negotiation process, these must be the minimum standards, along with the creation of a peace agreement that incorporates gender-focused measures.

JEP officials (personal communication, 4 April 2025) consider historical barriers to male-female power relations, and how these affect access to justice. The jurisdiction has psychosocial and spiritual guidelines to ensure victims of sexual and gender-based violence receive the necessary support.

They also have a woman-family approach, which is specific to ethnic women and not handled by any other justice system. They also mention language and cultural barriers in the case of ethnic women because the way these gender violence issues are addressed with ethnic women is different. The collective nature of the victimization they suffer and the collective damage that this type of situation inflicts on women is also addressed.

Additionally, the discussion addressed the ways in which women have participated in the implementation and evaluation of policies, as well as the impact of female leadership in peacebuilding. Egoitz Gago (personal communication, March 21, 2025) argues that the construction of peace in Colombia since the 2016 Peace Agreement cannot be understood without the role of women in it. There are two main reasons for this. First, violence against women in Colombia has been aimed at denying their humanity and degrading them, though in most cases, not necessarily ending their lives. In conflicts, men are often targeted for killing, regardless of whether other forms of violence are present. In contrast, women are subjected to systematic efforts to erase their humanity, using rape and humiliation as weapons of war.

In Colombia, paramilitary groups used a model of violence to instill terror in communities, ultimately forcing their displacement. Male leaders were publicly executed in the town square, while women were raped and/or humiliated. In the medium and long term, this has led to a situation where the majority of individuals remaining in these communities to lead reparation processes or demand recognition, justice, and guarantees of non-repetition are women—who face highly complex challenges. First, they must become leaders in their own daily productive activities. This often includes raising young children alone, generating economic stability, cultivating land if they own farmland, or managing the business they depend on for survival. Then, within a community that, while empathetic to their suffering, often emphasizes the necessity of a male presence to support them.

Through processes of recognition, women begin to form groups with women in nearby communities who have experienced similar situations. What usually happens next is that a training process begins, often with the support of state organisations. In other cases, it is carried out by associations or victims' advocacy groups, training these women to become leaders in their communities. They become the spearhead and do so very well. Therefore, peace-building in Colombia today would be impossible without the efforts of women.

This process has meant that today these approaches to gender and peace-building in the field are much more widely taken into account than in the past. This has been replicated through institutional mechanisms at the local, regional and national levels, with varying degrees of success.

According to Beatriz Quintero (personal communication, March 19, 2025), female participation has led to the formation of alliances such as the National Network of Women

in GPAZ, which evaluate the gender approach at national and territorial levels. In the case of sexual violence, advocacy against the transitional justice system continues. She asserts that sexual violence must be recognized as a primary crime, as well as a crime within kidnapping, displacement and recruitment, and that it must always be visible.

Additionally, María de los Ángeles Ríos (personal communication, March 19, 2025) states that, within the framework of Colombia's peace agreements, the women's movement played a crucial role in advocating for the creation of a specific space for their participation. This effort resulted in the first peace agreement that included an instance to amplify women's voices—a milestone achieved through the persistence of women's organizations, especially the Humanas collective. This movement not only sought dialogue spaces but also promoted the implementation of gender-focused measures and monitored their progress, from the national to the territorial level, with detailed reports on advancements.

She also explains that the Colombian context, marked by humanitarian crises and conflicts, highlighted the importance of women's role in ensuring that the commitments of the agreements are fulfilled and that acts of violence are recognized. This scenario strengthened their leadership and organizational articulation, allowing them to assume key roles in the dialogue with public officials and the demand for the implementation of the agreements.

Women leaders have seized the opportunity presented by peace processes to make their historical contributions visible and transform experiences of victimization into self-recognition. This has boosted democracy and expanded the instruments and policies that guarantee women's rights, benefiting not only those who participate in these processes, but all women in the country. In this sense, the peace agreements represent a political opportunity to strengthen citizenship, based on the recognition of human rights as an essential component of sustainable peace.

JEP officials (personal communication, March 19, 2025) mention that, in the case of this jurisdiction, there is a high percentage of female magistrates—a situation that had not occurred in any other court in Colombia. Given that the percentage of women's participation in such positions, even in Latin America, is not particularly high, this sets a new standard within the jurisdiction. The role of female magistrates falls within the framework of justice administration, which is the core responsibility of the Jurisdiction.

However, for Miguel Gomis (personal communication, March 19, 2025), female participation is perceived as a necessary element due to pressure from both national leaders and human rights activists. In other words, the mere formulation of public policies does not guarantee that agreements are being fulfilled. Rather, it reflects an effort to align with modernization in public policy, partly influenced by Colombia's adherence to the OECD.

There has been strong policy formulation, often driven by external pressure, but significant challenges remain at the implementation level. Additionally, these efforts have succeeded in generating media impact, shaping public opinion, and influencing how policies have been followed.

Finally, regarding the adjustments or improvements needed for greater effectiveness and long-term sustainability, Egoitz Gago (personal communication, March 21, 2025) considers the most important adjustment—though it may seem obvious—to be funding. There must be stable, lasting, and sustainable financing. At present, it is heavily influenced by political cycles. He acknowledges that this issue became particularly evident during the Duque administration, which defunded all peace programs for four years, delaying the process.

On the other hand, he believes there should be a more comprehensive gender policy. It should have a stronger presence at the national level, not only in the context of the conflict but also addressing gender issues that already exist in Colombian society. These include youth demands for access to reproductive rights, healthcare policies that incorporate gender-specific distinctions and recognize health issues more characteristic of women than men. Beyond this, the issue of labor access, wage collection, and equitable salaries also remains critical. He also notes that progress has been made, with significant steps taken—ones that would have been unimaginable 15 years ago.

For his part, Miguel Gomis (personal communication, March 19, 2025) believes that there should be greater convergence or unification in the criteria between policies at the departmental and municipal levels. Many policies are highly uneven—not necessarily in their intent, but in their mechanisms of action. For him, the main issue remains implementation, whether in gender policy or general policies. He considers it an obvious conclusion that while policies continue to multiply, their effective implementation is less evident. He clarifies that many aspects are more symbolic, such as priority helplines, among others.

According to Beatriz Quintero, if the GPAZ matrix—which includes 109 pending measures—is analyzed, it would be ideal to implement what it proposes. This would involve establishing a concrete schedule and deadlines, representing a significant step forward. Additionally, she emphasizes the importance of evaluation and monitoring at the territorial level. Since the peace agreement prioritized 16 regions, conducting assessments in these areas, supervising planned initiatives, and tracking compliance would be key.

Ultimately, she advocates for a constant and systematic monitoring process of the commitments already made. Defining clear goals, such as accelerating delayed actions to achieve 50% completion within three years and reaching 100% in six years, would be a considerable advancement. Even if full implementation is not achieved within six years, committing to continue working on these objectives beyond the timeframe set in the peace agreement would be essential for sustained progress.

María de los Ángeles Ríos (personal communication, March 26, 2025) argues that, first and foremost, peace agreements should not depend on the political will of the governments in power but must ensure continuity. It is crucial to coordinate national and territorial levels, particularly in centralized countries like Colombia, by allocating resources to guarantee institutional presence in underserved regions.

Recognizes that peace agreements represent key lessons and should be integrated into current policies, such as "total peace," without disconnecting them from previous agreements. However, in Colombia, negotiation tables show fragility due to the lack of respect for international humanitarian law and the weak implementation of measures, including those with a gender perspective. Implementing these agreements requires the commitment of diverse actors, but in practice, local entities are often unaware of their responsibilities. This results in fragmentation and complicates the construction of sustainable peace, which should be an integral and cross-cutting effort.

JEP officials state that one of the jurisdiction's major challenges at present is the significant progress made in guidelines, pathways, structures, and training designed to enhance women's participation, particularly in this framework. The main challenge is ensuring that these advancements extend beyond the jurisdiction, given that they have a limited operational period. This creates an urgent need to transfer knowledge and facilitate the implementation of these pathways and protocols in other areas of ordinary justice administration.

This refers to transferring knowledge to the Prosecutor's Office about how to receive testimony, provide support, designate adequate spaces, and ensure that women who seek assistance in these institutions have representatives in safe environments—rather than being overseen by security guards, a common issue in ordinary justice. Thus, the jurisdiction's greatest challenge is successfully transferring this expertise to the broader justice system. Officials believe this is the most pressing issue, and they have consistently worked on addressing it, particularly through the Differential Approaches Advisor.

Training and knowledge transfer processes are being carried out with the Ministry of Justice, courts within the Colombian judicial system, and the general procuracy. The most recent collaborations have been with the Victims' Protection Unit, recognizing that gender-sensitive guidelines and protocols have been highly effective in this context.

4.4 Discussion

As outlined in the theoretical framework, a gender perspective is essential in armed conflicts, as it is argued that violence against women is not incidental but structural, resulting from preexisting patriarchal norms that are exacerbated in war. This assertion was confirmed by the findings from the interviews, which reflect how, in the Colombian armed conflict, violence against women has been exercised to deny them their humanity—though not necessarily to end their lives—through rape and humiliation, often carried out publicly as a weapon of war. This intensifies female exclusion, ranging from direct victimization to marginalization in negotiation and decision-making processes.

In addition, in conceptualizing transitional justice, emphasis is placed on the importance of comprehensive reparation mechanisms that take into account the differential harm suffered by women. This is reflected in the creation of bodies such as the Special Instance for the Monitoring of the Gender Approach and the recognition of sexual violence as a war crime by the Special Jurisdiction for Peace (JEP). However, the results reveal that, although these measures exist, their implementation has been deficient in many cases and there are still victims who do not have access to adequate reparations.

In the state-of-the-art review, recent research was analyzed to understand how gender perspective has been integrated into the study of armed conflicts. Studies such as those by Enloe (2004, 2010) indicate that militarization perpetuates patriarchal structures by minimizing the role of women in social reconstruction. This is reflected in the findings, where interviewees assert that, although the Peace Agreement included a gender perspective,

its implementation has often faced greater obstacles than other policies. These challenges stem from a lack of political will and the persistence of discriminatory structures. The Truth Commission gathered crucial testimonies, yet the effectiveness of reparations remains constrained by structural and budgetary barriers.

It is also essential to counterbalance the role of women as peace agents. Bibliographic analysis suggests that women have led significant community initiatives for reconstruction, as evidenced by studies on "Farian feminism" and female leadership in conflict mediation. However, the findings reveal that institutional barriers and stigma have hindered their political participation and effective inclusion in reparation and reintegration programs.

Even when the findings reflect advances in the incorporation of the gender approach in transitional justice and peace policies, they also show serious difficulties in the implementation of concrete measures. The interviews highlight that justice mechanisms continue to replicate patriarchal structures, casting doubt on testimonies of sexual violence and limiting victims' access to justice. The lack of financial resources and continuity in the implementation of the peace agreements have represented an obstacle to guaranteeing women's rights in the post-conflict period.

Finally, we can say that, although the theoretical framework and the state of the art agree on the importance of including a gender perspective in post-conflict reconstruction, the results show that in the Colombian case its implementation has been partial. With significant advances in formal recognition, but with structural failures in its application. This, taking into account that comprehensive transformation requires not only political will, but also institutional and budgetary adjustments and greater coordination with the affected communities.

An important aspect in the discussion of the results is the noticeable difference in the perception of the agreement's implementation and gender approach between JEP officials and other interviewees. While jurisdiction officials describe more significant progress in implementing the Peace Agreement, academics and activists express concerns about structural limitations and the lack of political will in executing reparation and reintegration policies. JEP officials highlight protection protocols for victims, gender-focused training within the jurisdiction, and the work of the Gender Technical Assistance Board. They present justice administration within the JEP as a structured process that has included the participation of women and LGBTIQ+ individuals, ensuring that their testimonies are heard

and considered within ongoing macro-cases. They also emphasize the presence of female magistrates in the jurisdiction and the effective participation of victims, suggesting a higher level of progress in implementation.

However, the other interviewees differ from this view, noting persistent obstacles. For example, Egoitz Gago points out that many policies have not yet adequately integrated the gender approach, a consequence of political and cultural barriers. Beatriz Quintero also emphasizes that the advances achieved in the agreement have been constantly attacked and hindered by conservative sectors. María de los Ángeles Ríos argues that the lack of resources and commitment has generated scenarios of re-victimization for those who participate in the peace process.

Nevertheless, the difference in perception between SJP officials and other actors could be explained by the scope of their responsibilities. Since the Jurisdiction is mainly focused on the administration of transitional justice. While civil society and academia observe the structural impact of the agreement on the availability of resources, protection and effective participation of women in peacebuilding. These differences highlight the importance of a comprehensive vision and constant monitoring so that progress within the jurisdiction is not isolated from reality in the territories.

Despite the fact that the analysis period considered was from 2016 to 2021, it is important to understand how the administration of the current president, Gustavo Petro, has approached it. As Beatriz Quintero (personal communication, March 19, 2025) points out, his vision is progressive and ambitious. However, evaluating his performance after two years shows that he has not fundamentally committed to implementing key policies. Even though his government introduced the "total peace" policy—which cannot be considered entirely flawed—it has been overly ambitious. According to Quintero, ambitious policies in Latin American countries often end up as rhetoric and broad statements, ultimately failing to be implemented in an integral manner. This is particularly concerning given the continued presence of guerrilla groups that operate with outdated methods, illegal armed groups connected to illicit economies—similar to the guerrilla movements—and urban criminal organizations that are not merely small gangs but well-structured groups controlling illegal economies in major cities. She believes that, since this government promised to transform Colombia into a more inclusive and prosperous country, it faces multiple challenges and increasing loss of credibility due to its inability to fulfill even part of these promises, with only one year remaining in its term.

In addition, we must know the progress of the implementation of the Agreement until 2023 as presented by the Kroc Institute in its eighth report with a quantitative and qualitative analysis on the period from December 2022 to November 2023 presenting both progress and challenges. Regarding Point 1 of the Agreement on Comprehensive Rural Reform, 30% progress has been achieved in land titling, 35% in the formalization of land and 25% in the investment of productive infrastructure with 20% progress in the implementation of programs focused on rural women. Point 2, Political Participation: Democratic opening to build peace, shows 50% progress in the implementation of regional and local elections and 40% in the implementation of mechanisms for citizen participation; however, 30% progress has been achieved in the implementation of measures that guarantee the participation of women in peace processes and decision making, showing that challenges persist both in the participation of women in politics and in the representation of ethnic minorities. Point 3, End of the Conflict, has seen the demobilization and reincorporation of the majority of former FARC-EP combatants, where programs have been implemented for the reincorporation of female ex-combatants and the prevention of gender violence in the territories (Echavarria et al., 2024).

Regarding Point 4, Solution to the Problem of Illicit Drugs, 40% progress has been made in the substitution of illicit crops and 30% in the implementation of rural development programs, although only 20% progress has been made in the development of programs for the substitution of illicit crops by women and the prevention of gender violence in territories damaged by drug trafficking. Point 5, Agreement on the Victims of the Conflict, has implemented reparation and comprehensive care programs, also specifically for women victims, and has sought to prevent gender violence in the territories, although challenges persist in the reparation and guarantee of their rights. Finally, Point 6 deals with Implementation, Verification and Endorsement, where among the advances is the creation of the Integral System for Peace (SIP) and the establishment of follow-up and verification mechanisms, as well as the creation of the Special Women's Instance for the Gender Approach in Peace to monitor and evaluate the progress of gender policies. On the other hand, challenges persist in the coordination of the institutions involved in the peace processes (Echavarria et al., 2024).

The analysis of the information compiled allows us to identify gaps in the research and contrast different perspectives on the effectiveness of reconstruction policies with a gender

approach. These findings will serve as a basis for contextualizing the study and justifying the need to delve into the impact of these policies in Colombia.

4.5. Conclusion

Through the development of this research, it has been demonstrated that the gender focus presents in the Peace Agreement between the Colombian government and the FARC-EP represents a significant step forward in recognizing the structural inequalities faced by women during an armed conflict. However, this inequality has resulted in the implementation of the gender-focused policies proposed in the agreement facing institutional and cultural barriers. These barriers have hindered the effective implementation of policies relating to reparation, justice and reincorporation, preventing them from having a significant impact on the lives of women who are victims of the conflict.

This agreement set a historical precedent as it was the first to include a gender approach in the six points of the agreement, recognizing how the armed conflict impacts women and LGBTIQ+ persons in different ways. Establishing provisions that guarantee their participation in the negotiations and later in the construction of the agreement, as well as their access to comprehensive reparation and protection. It has become evident that gender violence in the midst of the armed conflict is not incidental, but a strategy of control and domination. The attempt to exclude women and their experiences in peace negotiations, as well as the dehumanization through sexual violence and other forms of aggression, highlights the need for a gender approach when considering transitional justice and reparation policies.

However, the research has shown that the creation of specialized bodies, such as the Special Instance for Monitoring the Gender Approach, has not been sufficient to achieve optimal implementation, as it has been partial due to structural, budgetary, and political barriers. Additionally, interviews have revealed a difference between the perception of academics and institutional activists versus institutions like the JEP. While the jurisdiction emphasizes progress in the execution of transitional justice and victim reparation and protection processes, social actors highlight the lack of resources, institutional challenges, and the obstacles women face in accessing effective justice and reparation. This demonstrates the need to develop a comprehensive vision when implementing the agreement, ensuring that policies are not limited to institutional frameworks or forced formulations by humanitarian organizations, but instead achieve a real impact on victims.

In addition, the interviews revealed that women's leadership has played a significant role in peacebuilding by advocating for the inclusion of a gender-based approach and monitoring its implementation, despite the various challenges faced. Thanks to their active participation, women's organizations have achieved significant progress in the formal recognition of rights, but there is still a long way to go to ensure full implementation.

Thus, we say that peace in Colombia will not be effective if there is no equitable justice in the recognition and reparation of gender-based violence. Although the agreement establishes mechanisms for this, its implementation continues to be a challenge. Different aspects such as resource allocation, improving institutional structures and ensuring women's active participation in decision-making need to be strengthened to guarantee sustainable and inclusive peace. In this way, formal recognition of rights will be achieved as a palpable reality so that women can play a crucial role in the necessary reconstruction of the country.

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APPENDICES

Appendix A

Transcription of interviews

DR. EGOITZ GAGO

1. What have been the main difficulties in the implementation of post-conflict reconstruction policies with a gender perspective in Colombia and how does their implementation vary between rural and urban areas?

The agreement, both in its six main points and its provisional provisions, as well as the institutions that emerge from the Peace Agreement, must, by regulation, include a gender perspective. The JEP does so, as did the Truth Commission. The problem is that these provisions within the peace agreement must be grounded in public policy, which is approved through a legislative process. The well-known fast-track was applied between 2016 and 2017 but had quite limited success.

As a result, many of these public policies have struggled to integrate the necessary gender perspective for two main reasons. First, communities have not been consulted from this standpoint, which has been an issue throughout the implementation of the Agreement. Second, Colombia lacks a political culture conducive to incorporating this perspective. Consequently, numerous problems have emerged that have been addressed piecemeal through specific programs, but they have not achieved the comprehensive and integrative approach that was needed.

The Petro administration attempted to establish the Ministry of Equality, which was theoretically meant to oversee this process. However, it had a very short lifespan and became a concession that Petro made to his vice president, Francia Márquez, until their political alliance dissolved. As a result, the ministry has not had a long enough trajectory to claim responsibility for such reforms. Thus, the issues remain unresolved. Typically, this kind of approach is implemented at the project or specific process level, with varying degrees of success depending on the context.

In urban areas, due to tradition and the fact that the armed conflict had a different, lesser impact, the plans that have been implemented have been more successful, with certain particularities. They have been easier to implement because they are smaller in scale, more targeted, and did not require the inclusion of structural processes as would be necessary in rural areas.

In rural zones and municipal centers within rural areas, implementation is more complicated. There, gender approaches—like any other approach, such as ethnic, age, or youth perspectives—require accompanying structural reforms. These approaches are often associated with cultural models and values. However, one of the major failures in implementing the agreement has been the lack of recognition that the gender approach, like others, needs structural reforms.

What does this mean? Programs for victim reparation, specifically for women, must be coupled with healthcare services available in rural health centers that also incorporate a gender perspective. This includes recognizing specific reproductive health needs and medical processes that affect men and women differently and in distinct ways. Implementing such measures requires funding, which in many areas of Colombia still does not exist today.

This brings us to the second distinction mentioned earlier. In Tumaco, for instance, the municipal center has reasonably active processes of this type—gender policies, access to public policies, access to education, and so on. However, in the rural villages of Tumaco, implementation is far more challenging. First, these communities are more isolated and located far from public services and government infrastructure. Second, the structural means to carry out these policies do not exist. Consequently, we can say that is harder.

2. How much the current policies succeeded in improving women victims' access to justice and reparation processes?

Yes, that is the good news, because the first part of what I said might make it seem like everything is wrong—but no, that is the positive aspect of the process. When we, as academics, critique these issues, it often appears as though we are being overly critical.

In reality, many initiatives have supported the gender perspective. When discussing gender perspective here, it is important to recognize that we are not only referring to men and women but also to trans individuals and those who experience their gender differently. This has been incorporated into Colombian legislation through the Peace Agreement and is officially acknowledged.

However, in political discourse, the focus tends to favor the binary male-female equality framework over non-binary perspectives. Violence during the conflict—like in all armed conflicts of this nature—has a significant gender dimension.

This is why most community leaders are women, as they have undergone distinct reparation, recognition, and victimization processes. Specific mechanisms have been installed within institutions tasked with investigating atrocities committed during the conflict, addressing this gender dimension.

The transitional justice system outlined in the agreement, currently being implemented in Colombia, is structured around three key components. The Truth Commission, which concluded its work with a comprehensive report in 2022. This report is accessible and includes an entire section dedicated to gender issues. The Unit for the Search of Missing Persons, which remains active but is significantly delayed in its work. The JEP (Special Jurisdiction for Peace), which also faces delays but continues to function and is the most visible entity in the media. It handles major human rights violations cases.

The JEP operates as an independent jurisdiction, aiming—through perpetrator confessions and collaboration between perpetrators and victims—to impose sentences for crimes against humanity committed during the conflict. Rape, for instance, is one such crime, along with the denial of reproductive rights and various forms of torture, including targeting individuals who do not conform to heteronormative gender categories.

These are crimes against humanity and cannot be overlooked or dismissed under international law. As of now, if I remember correctly, there are 11 macro-cases within the JEP, all of which incorporate a gender perspective—some more extensively than others. One of the reasons for this is that many of the individuals from community organizations who participate as plaintiffs in these macro-cases are women or members of LGBTQ+ associations. This requires a distinct process that differs from cases involving victims of military forces or other groups.

However, this process does not begin when the macro-cases are initiated. Macro-cases are launched following prior work by an entity—the JEP's Investigation and Indictment Unit, which functions like a prosecutor's office. This unit receives complaints, investigates them, and based on its findings, submits a report to JEP magistrates requesting prosecution, similar to how a traditional prosecutor's office operates within a standard legal system. This unit incorporates gender-sensitive approaches.

This is indeed happening. In fact, I am working on a project with them. We have a three-party initiative with the indictment unit. One of our research questions involves measuring the difficulties people face in accessing the JEP. In this context, one of the issues that emerges

is the gender dimension—how individuals in certain urban areas who belong to non-heteronormative or non-binary gender identities struggle to access these legal mechanisms. The indictment unit is implementing new approaches to facilitate this process, ensuring that testimonies are received in ways that align with community and organizational efforts.

Additionally, mechanisms for gender equality between men and women have existed since the beginning. There is an entire section within the JEP dedicated specifically to this, which functions effectively—not only in testimony reception but also in providing accompaniment, counseling, security, and other support.

At this level, the system is well-structured and works effectively. The primary challenge in these processes is ensuring continued accompaniment. These cases take years to unfold; in fact, all are still ongoing. Throughout this period, organizations and individuals involved often receive threats and face serious security issues. The JEP itself lacks sufficient resources to address these threats comprehensively.

This is where other institutions must step in—such as the Victims' Protection Unit and the government's protection entities, whose role is to ensure security, among other responsibilities. Unfortunately, their efforts have been insufficient, leading—though in only extreme cases—to some organizations withdrawing from the legal proceedings due to security concerns. While these instances remain rare, they do happen. Addressing this issue is essential for improving the process.

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3. What barriers do women victims of sexual violence face in accessing transitional justice and reparation mechanisms?

Apart from the mechanisms—excuse me, the traditional barriers such as stigmatization, revictimization, etc.—which have already been mentioned, these processes are lengthy. The individuals involved, particularly women, often live in very small communities where anonymity is limited, making them more vulnerable.

In fact, in the project I mentioned earlier, there is a significant difference when an organization first establishes itself and then operates in an urban setting. This applies to women's organizations as well as LGBTQ+ organizations. Many of these groups have created urban-based representations to gain a degree of anonymity, which has greatly facilitated access to justice. Centralizing complaints through one or two organizations helps streamline processes for the JEP.

However, traditional challenges remain. When the time comes for testimonies, victims of sexual violence must be present in court, in front of a magistrate. Unlike conventional justice systems, the JEP provides anonymity mechanisms, allowing for anonymous testimonies. In some cases, perpetrators are present because the JEP operates on principles of recognition and confession—not solely on the crime itself but on acknowledgment and remorse—creating further complexities.

To address these challenges, the JEP implements protocols similar to those mandated in Colombia over the last five to six years in corporate settings. These mechanisms include specific procedures for reporting sexual harassment and providing support services.

That is what the official protocols state, but reality often differs. Protocol frameworks look well-designed on paper, but their actual implementation presents difficulties. The JEP typically receives complaints through organizations first, rather than from individuals acting alone. Individual testimonies are usually incorporated later and remain anonymous until the investigation process is initiated. Complaints are processed through channels designed to ensure anonymity and provide support.

Support is offered through two key entities, the indictment unit, staffed with professionals trained to handle these cases appropriately, and second the psychosocial assistance, which aims to make the experience more manageable for victims.

¿What is the problem? In the practice, resources are limited. This means that the number of personnel available to manage these processes is insufficient, and long-term psychosocial support—which is crucial in JEP cases—is constrained. This results in disruptions, causing victims to feel isolated and vulnerable. In many cases, their identities become known, leading to threats and persecution. The threats faced by survivors of sexual violence in armed conflict are especially severe. Such violence is not merely about physical harm but about dehumanization. Given the gravity of these acts, improving protection and support mechanisms is essential.

Second issue—and this is a formal legal problem—the JEP's judicial system differs slightly, but it closely resembles the Colombian legal system, which operates under a Liberal Democratic State and follows a guarantee-based model. What does this mean? The accused has the right to know who is accusing them and why.

In everyday situations, such as university or corporate protocols, anonymity is maintained until a decision is made to escalate the case to judicial proceedings. That is why companies and universities often have internal protocols to prevent this situation, relying on administrative sanctions instead. However, civil organizations do not have the authority to impose penal sanctions, such as imprisonment or asset seizure—something that the judicial system, including the JEP, does have the power to do.

This leads to a crucial moment where a person must decide whether to proceed. Typically, in these cases, a sanctioning regime is initiated, providing the accused with the opportunity to defend themselves. Under an internal sanctioning system, the outcome might be a temporary suspension from employment at most, along with a record in their employment file. If someone requests a service certificate from their previous workplace or a labor reference for future jobs, their past infractions will be visible. However, if the case involves a criminal offense, such as sexual harassment—now recognized as a crime in Colombia—not just physical acts like assault or rape but also forms of verbal degradation, gestures, and intimidation, then the individual must make a choice. If they decide to escalate it to court—whether in ordinary jurisdiction or through the JEP—then the accused receives full legal guarantees.

This presents a challenge, particularly in cases of sexual violence during the armed conflict, where the JEP applies anonymity protections. Measures include anonymous declarations, testimonies with obscured faces, and telecommunication methods that mask the voice and identity of victims. However, the judicial process remains complex. The macro-processes within the JEP address mass sexual violence in entire communities.

Among various forms of sexual violence, this is one of the most severe. When paramilitary or guerrilla commanders acknowledge their actions, specifying dates and locations, it naturally creates fear among survivors. This presents an operational challenge that is difficult to resolve.

That said, within the JEP, cases of sexual violence during conflict have benefited from strong female leadership and extensive training, which has allowed progress. The sentences issued serve as important precedents, shaping transitional justice in Colombia. Unlike

conventional rulings based solely on the crime, JEP judgments focus on collaboration, confession, recognition, and reparation processes involving both perpetrators and victims.

4. How have women participated in the implementation and evaluation of post-conflict policies and what has been the impact of women's leadership on peacebuilding at the community and national levels?

It is fundamental, it is central.

We could not understand peacebuilding in Colombia under the 2016 Peace Agreement without the role of women in it, for two reasons. One is that the type of violence against women in Colombia has sought to deny them their humanity, to make them suffer—but not necessarily to end their lives. While many women have been killed, the predominant form of violence is different.

This occurs in armed conflicts. Men are targeted for execution, regardless of other types of violence—which are also severe. Women, however, are subjected to violence that aims to erase their humanity, through rape as a weapon of war and public humiliation.

History has shown similar patterns in major conflicts. For instance, in World War II, when the Nazis were expelled from occupied territories, male collaborators were executed, while women were publicly shamed.

In Colombia, this dynamic repeated itself. When paramilitary groups entered communities—as did guerrilla forces—the paramilitaries relied on terror tactics to forcibly displace populations. When they sought to instill fear, male leaders were executed in public squares, while women were raped, humiliated, or both.

In the medium and long term, this has led to a reality where women remain as the primary figures leading reparation processes and advocating for recognition, justice, and guarantees of non-repetition.

These women face highly complex challenges. First, they must become leaders in their own daily survival, often raising young children alone, securing economic stability, and managing agriculture or small businesses to sustain their livelihoods.

Then, despite the community's empathy for their suffering, the common advice they receive is to find a man. When I first arrived in Colombia in 2008, working in rural communities, that was the dominant message. "I spent years hearing that I would never achieve anything alone, that I had to find a man. But I didn't want that. I wanted my husband back—paramilitaries had taken him, disappeared him."

Through processes of recognition, many of these women began connecting with others in nearby communities who had experienced the same trauma. Over time, this led to training programs, often supported by state institutions or victim advocacy associations, helping women become leaders within their communities. These women became the driving force behind visibility efforts, ensuring that gender-based violence in the conflict was acknowledged. Today, peacebuilding in Colombia would be unimaginable without the role of women.

This process has led to greater recognition of gender perspectives within peace efforts on the ground. Institutional mechanisms have sought to replicate these approaches at local, regional, and national levels, with varying degrees of success. Notably, progressive governments tend to provide more access to these mechanisms, whereas less progressive administrations often fail to prioritize them. Without women leaders, Colombia's peacebuilding framework as we know it today would not exist.

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5. What adjustments or improvements should be made to current policies to ensure greater effectiveness and sustainability over time?

The most important adjustment may sound predictable, but it comes down to funding. There must be stable, long-term, and sustainable financing. Without it, peace initiatives become highly dependent on political cycles. We saw this issue during the Duque administration, when all peace programs were defunded for four years, delaying progress.

Additionally, a more comprehensive gender policy is needed. The proposed Ministry of Equality presented an opportunity, but it has not materialized as expected. A gender-focused approach must be more present at the national level—not only in the context of the armed conflict, which has resulted in severe human rights violations, but also regarding broader gender issues in Colombian society today.

For example, youth-led demands for access to reproductive rights and differentiated healthcare that recognizes gender-specific needs, particularly health concerns more prevalent among women than men, are critical. In Europe, there is an ongoing debate about recognizing menstrual pain as a debilitating condition—a conversation that has yet to reach Latin America. Beyond health, gender equity also involves fair employment opportunities, wage equality, and eradicating daily harassment.

Today, Colombia—and, I imagine, Ecuador—remains a difficult place for women and individuals who experience their gender outside heteronormative frameworks. When discussing safety in Colombia, students are often reminded that riding the TransMilenio—Bogotá's public transport system—is merely uncomfortable for men because of crowding, but for women, it can be outright dangerous. This must be factored into policies on mobility, employment, and social equity. A more integrated approach is still lacking.

That said, progress has been made, and significant strides have been achieved—advancements that would have seemed unimaginable 15 years ago.

DR. MIGUEL GOMIS

1. What have been the main difficulties in the implementation of post-conflict reconstruction policies with a gender perspective in Colombia and how does their implementation vary between rural and urban areas?

Yes, well, the difference in implementation is evident, but I would say that, in reality, an evaluation should be conducted in two steps.

That is, in reality, the implementation of the agreements is something that most of academia agrees on. They even say that it was implemented with many difficulties in the first three or four years. Obviously, that has to do with the implementation approach of the Duque government itself, but not exclusively. Yes, there is a tendency to say that the Duque government obstructed the implementation of some measures, which is true, but not the only factor.

What does this mean? It means that, on the one hand, an analysis should be carried out, and one could look at it in three dimensions.

Whether what is proposed is realistic, whether implementation has failed, and whether the necessary conditions exist. I will start with the third.

The conditions in some territories are not in place because, ultimately, despite the peace agreement being signed, many regions remain engulfed in violence, with conflicts between groups vying for territorial control. This means that, ultimately, the state has not institutionally permeated these territories. In fact, the current crisis in Catatumbo and other areas of the country demonstrates that the state continues to have limited capacity in those regions, which makes implementation difficult.

The observation window supposedly extends until 2021, but I would say that the current government has made significant progress in land redistribution. It is perhaps one of the most advanced yet least visible aspects. And in the peace agreement, there was a clear connection between land distribution and gender issues, along with the fight against illicit crops and alternative agricultural programs. For example, UN Women has worked extensively on this with governments, especially in the last three years, and there have been clear advances. However, I believe that those advances are not necessarily well known or consolidated because territorial disputes between illegal groups persist.

This brings up the first major point, that is, regardless of whether the state wanted to implement well-formulated policies, implementation is difficult due to the state's limited reach and territorial constraints.

Second, implementation in itself has also been deficient for many reasons. The first is budgetary constraints. It is evident that the Duque government did not allocate the financial resources that were needed. Many associations and organizations noticed this, and it became widely recognized that the Duque government did not engage as expected. But there is another factor—Colombia's entry into the OECD. Joining the OECD signals to partner countries that Colombia has transitioned from being a recipient of substantial aid to a country of middle-income status that theoretically no longer requires as much assistance.

This creates a contradictory message regarding the Santos administration's decision to integrate Colombia into the OECD, which altered international cooperation dynamics. In theory, relationships were redefined, but European Union, USAID, and other partners remain involved.

The reality on the ground, however, is that many of these adjustments have not fully materialized. The formulation of many policies—such as the COMPES (National Council for Economic and Social Policy) 2022—has generally been strong. Policy formulations in terms of technical rigor and diagnostics have been quite good.

The issue in Colombia, as in many Latin American countries, is not policy formulation but implementation. And, of course, there is a clear difference between urban and rural contexts. The divide between these spheres is even greater today than it was five or six years ago.

2. How much the current policies succeeded in improving women victims' access to justice and reparation processes?

I think there have been advances in the system, especially in the JEP, although there have also been financial problems. Now, funding has been secured.

There have also been political disputes over how long the JEP should operate and how far its mandate should extend. In the first three years, there was a lot of polarization regarding the JEP's work, and then a little less afterward.

Let's say that in the last two years, that tension regarding the JEP's work has been resolved. I'd say so. I don't have concrete statistics to show you, but based on what I can infer, there has been improvement, especially because there has been a real effort in oversight, both from fiscal authorities and from associations or civil society in Colombia, and that presence has increased significantly.

The presence of civil society has increased considerably to ensure that certain promises are fulfilled. But this brings me back to the same issue as before—pressure is one thing, and logistics for the people is another. I have been to some territories that were stable four years ago but are now unstable. That makes it clear that people are reshuffling their priorities.

If you have certain territories that were stable four years ago, where it was possible to effectively promote access to reparations, restitution, etc., four years ago, that didn't necessarily mean delays in some places. But again, the situation with the total peace policy has deteriorated in many territories—not necessarily because, as the opposition says, the national government hasn't done anything.

At its core, there was a somewhat naive element—actions were halted when dialogues ended, but there was also no effective restoration of law and order in some areas. That situation wasn't leveraged to create agreements between the national and local governments to provide public services.

But the truth is that, in budgetary terms, it is difficult to accomplish in Colombia. So the answer is yes, but not very well.

3. What barriers do women victims of sexual violence face in accessing transitional justice and reparation mechanisms?

4. How have women participated in the implementation and evaluation of post-conflict policies and what has been the impact of women's leadership on peacebuilding at the community and national levels?

Well, at the community level, I don't have much knowledge about that.

There is a lot of disparity in what is happening at the territorial level. A lot.

It is also a matter of how, ultimately, implementation and progress in the territories over the past four years have shown increasing divergence in some areas. Some territories have greater municipal inclusion. Some territories have developed hedonistic policies.

Many territories have formulated feminist policies. Almost all departments have them. But implementation is highly uneven.

I believe the country has made significant progress in integrating gender into public policies in a transversal manner. Many departments or even cities have clear gender policies. They are not necessarily forced to comply with the agreements in the sense of saying, "this will be fulfilled."

But many are simply adopting hegemonic trends in public policy formulation following OECD standards. The fact that gender is incorporated into public policies and inclusion policies does not necessarily mean that it should be interpreted as fulfilling agreements or fully addressing the issue we are competing with.

It is seen as a necessary component due to pressure from both national leaders and human rights activists. That is, the formulation of gender-related public policies does not necessarily mean that agreements are being fulfilled, because fulfilling agreements is not necessarily the goal. Instead, it is more about aligning with a modern approach to public policy that essentially stems from Colombia's adhesion to the OECD.

There has certainly been a significant improvement in how public authorities, policymakers, and institutions consistently include the gender issue. I believe borders are being shaped much more in many urban areas regarding active gender inclusion. However, there is still a significant gap between policy formulation and actual implementation.

There are many issues at the implementation level. That said, policy formulation has been very strong, and there is significant pressure. Yes, leadership has played a role—especially in the creation of the Ministry of Equality.

It does have the merit of generating media impact. It has succeeded in shifting public opinion and influencing how policies have been followed.

The most evident impact so far is not necessarily an improvement in women's conditions in rural areas. But at least, well, in urban areas, it might be more limited, as the public institutions working on these issues are more detailed than the ones in Bogotá. Still, I would say that the main progress has more to do with how it is being carried out.

5. What adjustments or improvements should be made to current policies to ensure greater effectiveness and sustainability over time?

Well, there should be greater convergence or unification in the criteria among the policies at the departmental and municipal levels. Because many have policies, but really, even though they are supposedly revisiting the 2022 commitments, in reality, they are very uneven. They are not necessarily uneven in their intent, but they are in their mechanisms of action moving forward. And the last point is, obviously, the major issue continues to be implementation. What are the spheres of action? Well, in reality, the major issue continues to be implementation.

Whether in gender policy or in typical policies. I think this is not just a problem with gender policies. There are measurements.

There has been a very clear reflection on all of this, on how it should be made more accessible. In fact, there is a report that was explained in 2023 on the DNP, where they provide a list and analysis of gender policies that exist. And the conclusion is that.

Well, an obvious conclusion, but the conclusion is that there is a multiplication of policies. But a conclusion also means that they are being implemented effectively, as can be demonstrated. Now, we must clarify that some aspects are more symbolic. For example, priority assistance lines, etc.

Mechanisms proposed by the Ministry of Equality also aimed at modifying assistance protocols. That was quite good in the sense that I think it was well-targeted because it restructured how complaints were handled and how attention was divided, especially in vulnerable areas. But, well, according to the question, we are still far from achieving the third level.

We are very, very far. And even more so from the perspective of most workers.

I think that, although your observation window goes until 2021, you should consider the fact that there have been clear advancements in gender issues under the current government that were not present before. For example, the current government is discussing feminist foreign policy and clearly linking climate change with gender.

In other words, I think you should take into account the fact that there is a significant difference between the current and previous governments.

DRA. BEATRIZ QUINTERO

1. What have been the main difficulties in the implementation of post-conflict reconstruction policies with a gender perspective in Colombia and how does their implementation vary between rural and urban areas?

It is necessary to distinguish two key moments in the process. One is the entire negotiation leading up to the peace agreement, what was achieved in the agreement itself, and what happened afterward. In the first phase, there were difficulties in accepting that the agreement should include a gender perspective.

As a women's movement and as a group—in the case of the network—with significant leadership, we were very clear that the peace agreement had to be negotiated with a gender perspective because we were well aware of Resolution 1325. Even though there was no national plan, it had to be applied, and that argument was very important for us. We first managed to convince the international community, then the government, and that helped compel the opposing side, which was the guerrilla, to accept it. We also carried out prior work, especially with women guerrilla fighters.

I say guerrilla fighters, though at that point, they were no longer guerrillas, but at the time, they were, and we worked to get them on board with the idea. They were not clear on it, they had no idea, they didn't know anything about it, but we managed to make it happen. So, that was achieved, and when the agreement was signed, it was evident that the peace accord had a gender perspective. However, there was a significant issue—larger than we initially thought—which was that right-wing groups strongly attacked the peace agreement because of what I call gender ideology.

They attacked it, using arguments that aligned with international narratives surrounding gender ideology—claims that the agreement would somehow lead to the "homosexualization" of all boys and girls, and similar rhetoric. This narrative was tied to the plebiscite, and the plebiscite became an argument based on misinformation and deception of the public. I am not saying the plebiscite was lost solely because of that—no, we did not lose just because of that—but it was one of many arguments used. Some even went as far as claiming that pensions for the elderly would be abolished because they would be handed over to the guerrilla.

They were arguments of that nature, just as perverse, just as bad. So, the plebiscite was lost, and we continued working to ensure that everything we had gained was not lost in that second negotiation, because we were very afraid that we would become the bargaining chip in the new negotiations. We were also convinced that the Colombian government was not necessarily on our side, that it did not fully support us, that it wanted to include gender measures but was not entirely convinced, right? Because government officials say, "No, better to have peace, and what's the harm? Let the women be left out," right?

So, we had to engage in advocacy throughout October and part of November, during the second round of negotiations following the plebiscite. And we did achieve things. I believe women lost fewer things in that second renegotiation, but the LGTBI population did lose.

When I say they lost, I mean that we women remained categorized as citizens, whereas the LGTBI population was classified as a vulnerable group, which shows that they are not fully included in citizenship. So, there's that.

Then, things happened, and that's how they remained, and we couldn't achieve certain things because part of the discourse around gender ideology was built on fake news—false narratives were everywhere. So, when things happened, that's how they stayed, and we couldn't achieve some things because part of the discourse around gender ideology was based on misinformation and fake news. They pushed the idea that gender ideology would allow children as young as five years old to decide who they wanted to be—and that if they wanted, they could undergo surgery, take hormones, because boys and girls supposedly had the freedom to decide. And, of course, parents got scared, fearing that their children would change, that they would be turned homosexual or lesbian, or forced into something, because the rhetoric was built on the idea of coercion. So, all of that was present in the debate.

What did we do afterward? We worked with the final negotiated version of the agreement, and based on that, we created a model outlining which gender measures were approved in the peace agreement. We did this through an alliance called G-Paz.

You can find all this information on a website called Género y Paz. There, you'll find four reports already published, and we are about to release the fifth monitoring report. If you have trouble finding it, let me know, and I'll send you the link—but I think you should be able to find it by searching Género y Paz, and that's it.

So we found 122 measures, and for each of those measures, we analyzed what needed to be done to ensure their implementation. Out of those 122 measures, there were 11 or 13, I believe, that had already been fulfilled because a part of the peace agreement, which was the end of the conflict, had already been completed.

Whether they were fulfilled properly or not, they had been carried out—since the weapons had been collected, handed over, and the concentration zones had been established. So, there were 13 measures that remained as they were. That left 109 measures that still needed

to be implemented. We categorized them: some required legislative changes, meaning new laws, others fell under national and territorial regulations, and others were solely territorial. Based on that, we outlined what needed to be done and began advocacy efforts for each one. What did we find? Later, we realized that the government that had promoted this peace agreement was set to end within six to eight months. This meant the transition to another administration—a government weakened by its tenure, because, as you know, any government in its final year is weaker, and also further weakened by the plebiscite process and the peace agreement. Since it lost the plebiscite, it emerged even more vulnerable.

Then, the new government came in—one that had backed the campaign for a negative vote in the plebiscite. But since the peace agreement stipulated a 15-year implementation period, the new government had no choice but to carry it out. It could not officially refuse to execute or implement it because it was mandatory, but it did not dedicate the necessary attention to it. In fact, it imposed obstacles and barriers. Those were four very difficult years in which we, as the Género y Paz group, worked continuously. We published reports, presented findings, and collaborated with women to ensure they could continue demanding the agreement's implementation—all following a clear methodology on what needed to be done.

Then that government ended, and the next administration elected was the current one, Gustavo Petro's government—a progressive government. But, as we have evaluated, it did not fundamentally commit to this issue either. Right now, we are preparing to publish an evaluation of Petro's first two years in office. The report is already written, and it should be released in about a month. We feel that there was no real commitment to the implementation, for many reasons.

One of those reasons is that his administration embarked on a more ambitious initiative—what they call the Total Peace Policy. It's not that the policy is bad, but it is overly ambitious. And I believe that—you, being Ecuadorian, and I, being Colombian—know that in our countries, ambitious policies often turn into rhetoric and broad statements without actual implementation.

This government will leave office without distinction, even though it intended to change the world, transform Colombia, and make the country more beautiful and inclusive for all. In the end, we accomplished nothing—we had too many dreams and achieved nothing. That is exactly what happened with the Total Peace Policy—trying to establish total peace in four years is impossible.

We still have an old, outdated guerrilla, but it still exists. There are illegal armed groups, all of which—like the guerrilla—are linked to illicit economies. There are organized criminal groups in urban areas—not just small gangs, but highly structured organizations controlling illegal economies in major cities.

Guayaquil serves as an example for Ecuador. That's how Colombia is everywhere.

So that's what happened. This government aimed to change the world, flip it upside down, but could not even shift it by a single degree. And now there is only one year left. There's no time left. The administration is isolated, facing numerous problems and loss of credibility. I doubt they will be able to succeed.

So, at the national level, the implementation has been very bad. It has done some things, never denied it—the previous administration wanted to harm it, this one never says it wants to harm it, but it doesn't comply, doesn't advance.

Looking at the national and territorial levels over these ten years, one could say that institutionally and in terms of regulations, everything has been set up. In the territories, some things have arrived, but they are very marginal. We conducted a small regional report, and one could say that only 10% of what was needed has been achieved in the territories regarding significant changes.

Significant changes would include land distribution with a greater focus on women, but that has been very minimal—only 20% of what has been done has gone to women.

Political participation has also been very limited. It has been very little, because there has been no real transformation and no complete commitment to ensuring women's participation. To change that, it needs to be mandatory.

For example, there were large regional assemblies, and those assemblies were required to have 40% women, so 40% of attendees were women, even if they were wives, aunts, or sisters of the male leaders, just to meet the quota. Then, from those assemblies, delegates were chosen for the next level, which was more municipal, and in that selection, the same male leaders were picked as always.

So, by the time we reached the municipal assembly, the percentage of women dropped to 10-15%.

If no effort is made to require the selection of at least 40% women at each level, they simply don't do it.

Additionally, there was a broader democratic initiative in one election cycle—16 people from these specific territories entered the House of Representatives, like a lower chamber, as part of Special Peace Districts.

These elections were regional, and it was requested that they be single-member districts, meaning individual candidates.

The electoral lists had to be gender-balanced—one man and one woman per list.

In the end, more men won—so, while we managed to get both men and women registered on the lists, in the final results, 80% of those elected were men, and only 20% were women.

It was very interesting that the initial formation was balanced, but once the votes were cast, the men were elected. So, that's one of the problems we face.

2. How much the current policies succeeded in improving women victims' access to justice and reparation processes?

That is very interesting because we, too, when we were in the negotiation, started talking about sexual violence, and I felt there was a tacit agreement among the men, both from the government and the guerrilla, that it would not be discussed. Why? They said, first, that in war, sexual violence is not part of warfare. The guerrillas and the army itself claimed, "We do not rape." Because it undermines their status—politically, if you are a guerrilla and accused of rape, you lose the myth of being a warrior. The warrior is, in quotation marks, noble (just), but the rapist is not.

So we fought hard, because even the president at the time, President Santos, said, "It pains me, but I am sure we will have to swallow some bitter pills in this negotiation." And one of those bitter pills was the issue of sexual violence. We were stubborn and said, "We will not swallow bitter pills." And we started raising concerns, sending statements to Havana, insisting.

We succeeded when they called us to a meeting in Havana to ask us, "What is your issue?" Many feminist women here, friends, and human rights advocates—who agreed with negotiating the conflict, just like we did—told us that we were putting up barriers to the negotiation. And in some way, it was true, we were putting up barriers. But it was because we insisted that we could not allow a negotiation to take place while discriminating against women.

If that happened, we would be accepting a peace constitution without acknowledging the fundamental democratic principle that women are part of democracy. As if democracy were only for men and not for us. Because democracy means freedom, equality, recognition, and non-discrimination.

So we persisted, and we managed to present very important documents. That's how we formed an alliance called Cinco Claves.

If you search on the network's website, you'll find a section on this, along with documents from Cinco Claves, which we started presenting in 2017—documents discussing these issues.

We achieved the recognition of sexual violence as a crime that cannot be amnestied or pardoned. That was a huge victory, and we acknowledge it as such. This was established when the Special Jurisdiction for Peace or the Integral System of Truth, Justice, Reparation, and Non-Repetition was formed.

Then we started advocating for sexual violence cases. The macro-cases were opened, but the case on sexual violence was not included. So we started insisting, insisting, insisting. We insisted for five years to get a macro-case on sexual violence opened. The argument from the JEP, which are the good ones, was that sexual violence was always embedded within other crimes. That is, when people were kidnapped, women were kidnapped and raped. But we argued that it was crucial for sexual violence to be recognized as an autonomous crime, because if it was not, it would always be overshadowed by larger cases.

We had already seen this in other processes—because Colombia is a country with a complicated guerrilla history, but now, most of them have evolved into illegal armed groups and cartels.

That's why it was important to advance recognition, to make it clear that sexual violence is an independent crime, not necessarily linked to other acts. Armed groups could pass through a zone, rape girls, and move on, without displacing or kidnapping them—just rape them, nothing else. And in that case, rape would be excluded from prosecution and treated as a secondary crime.

But we refused to let it be treated as secondary. We provided strong arguments, demonstrating how there is no hierarchy between crimes—kidnapping, displacement, and rape. Because if it is not categorized equally, it becomes symbolically diminished.

After five years of advocacy, after five years of persistent lobbying, extensive documentation, and multiple meetings with the JEP, we finally succeeded.

At this moment, Macrocase 11 is open. I understand and accept that people say it is very difficult because, for example, if I am in a rural town, in a municipality, and a guerrilla group passes through and rapes me, I do not know who raped me—because it is a man in uniform, with or without boots, armed, but I do not know who he is.

So, we cannot place the burden on the woman or the person who was raped, who could be a woman, a man, or a trans person, to investigate on their own. That is the responsibility of the judicial system.

I know it is difficult, but it is different from kidnapping, because in kidnapping cases, there are letters, there are official communications, stating that "he must hand over X amount of money to Command 25."

Here, however, the perpetrator rapes simply because the victim is a woman—because women are seen as objects—so they use them and move on.

This is the dehumanization of women. Yes, because rape is exactly that.

So, we have a problem—a problem with evidence, and we are fully aware of this. But that is part of justice, right?

This is the discussion we are currently engaged in, and we have made recommendations. But it is not the responsibility of us as the Women's Movement, nor of women, nor of feminists, to provide proof. That is the responsibility of the judicial system.

I know it is difficult, but they are trying to address it.

And because restorative and transitional justice focuses not on punishing an individual for a single crime, but rather on processing macro-cases that aim to transform society—so that society understands that this is a crime, that this crime occurs, and therefore, it must be repaired comprehensively, including cultural transformations.

We are also thinking about how to implement what we call TOA (Trabajos de Obligación para la Reparación)—which are tasks imposed on perpetrators as part of reparations.

Because in this model of restorative justice, once truth is accepted, there is no prison sentence; instead, there are restorative or reparative actions.

That is why this process is so difficult.

So, that is where we stand—Macrocase 11 is the most delayed, it was the last to be introduced, and yes, it has challenges, which we acknowledge.

But we are making progress, and we continue to push forward. That is part of our work on this issue.

You can also find information on everything related to Cinco Claves, which is available on the network's website.

And if you cannot find it, let me know—I will send you the documents.

3. What barriers do women victims of sexual violence face in accessing transitional justice and reparation mechanisms?

Women cannot recognize their aggressors as such.

That's one issue. The other is that reports must be submitted to the JEP, and sometimes women did not report the crime initially. For example, in a place like Titiribí, in any municipality, there was forced displacement. Women left, their husbands were killed, or their children were recruited, or whatever happened—they were raped. But they did not report that rape, because they didn't want to, because they were ashamed, because they wanted to forget, for any number of reasons.

Displacement was very evident, so they registered as victims ten years ago, but as displaced persons, and five years ago, they decided to report the rape. So that creates a situation—not disorder, because I don't want to call it disorder—but a difficulty, right? There is a difficulty in recognition, in the ability to report sexual violence. That is not an easy process—that is the first challenge.

The second is encountering officials who do not believe me. "But you already came here and said something else. Why didn't you say this ten years ago, but today you want to say it?" And then they label me as a liar. So, that's the difficulty with the judicial system, which is also patriarchal. The second important point is to understand different barriers—the difficulties, and what the perpetrators know.

The perpetrator knows that she cannot identify him. For example, I might say, "In my area, Command 28 was present, but the colonel or the chief didn't rape me—it was one of the lower-ranking men." The colonel or commander—whatever his title may be—knows she cannot name him. And sometimes she doesn't even know who it was, because she closed her eyes, didn't see anyone, or whatever the situation was. Since they know this, they use the same argument as always "In our command, or in our armed group, rape was prohibited. Anyone who raped would face a war council and be executed." And then—that's it, that's supposed to be enough. But if they tell me that, I am not reassured.

So, ultimately, this is the difference between what justice means to them and what justice means to women. This is something that needs to be broken down and understood. Additionally, perpetrators know how difficult it is to prove these crimes, and they use that legal loophole to their advantage. They have lawyers, and those lawyers will never admit how difficult these crimes are to prove.

Instead, they say, "She has very little information. She doesn't have evidence. So just deny it."

And reaching the final stage of justice becomes incredibly difficult. So all of that is part of the reality. There are multiple barriers. Beyond that, time is against us. Since this macro-case was only approved—or opened—a year ago, now, at nine years since the Peace Agreement, we only have six years to work on this case, while other cases have fifteen years.

This case will only have six, with all the challenges it presents.

4. How have women participated in the implementation and evaluation of post-conflict policies and what has been the impact of women's leadership on peacebuilding at the community and national levels?

We have formed alliances, such as the Red Nacional de Mujeres, and we are part of GPAZ, which evaluates the gender perspective. We do this not only at the national level but also through evaluations at the territorial level in certain regions. I believe it is important to keep this clear in order to move forward and understand what we have done—this is purely national and territorial advocacy work. Regarding sexual violence, we are also part of the Cinco Claves alliance, and our work focuses on advocating within the transitional justice system, ensuring accountability not only for cases of sexual violence but also when we recognize sexual violence as a primary crime—to put it another way—and in cases where it is linked to kidnapping, displacement, or recruitment. Our goal is to keep these crimes visible, advocating for reparations, for truth, for measures of non-repetition, and ultimately, insisting on defining the minimum requirements for achieving justice. This means continuous advocacy at every level.

5. What adjustments or improvements should be made to current policies to ensure greater effectiveness and sustainability over time?

If we looked at the matrix that GPAZ has, which includes the 109 measures still pending—what we assessed—and if those measures were carried out exactly as recommended, it would be ideal. If we assigned a timeline, structured it properly, that would be perfect. Beyond that, I think the key is to keep insisting, evaluating, and conducting territorial follow-up, which is extremely important. After the Peace Agreement, 16 priority regions were identified. If those 16 regions were evaluated, if their implementation plans were monitored to see how they were progressing, it would be very useful.

Ultimately, I believe it's about ongoing monitoring and tracking of what was already promised—nothing more. If we can set goals, defining clear expectations—such as, in these six remaining years, we need to accelerate this delayed initiative and achieve 50% in three years, then 100% in six years, that would be the goal.

Or, if we realize that fulfilling 100% in six years is impossible, we should at least commit to meeting half the targets. It doesn't matter—as long as the commitment remains, ensuring that even after the official timeline of the Peace Agreement expires, we continue making progress. That would be the fundamental approach.

DRA. MARÍA DE LOS ÁNGELES RÍOS

1. What have been the main difficulties in the implementation of post-conflict reconstruction policies with a gender perspective in Colombia and how does their implementation vary between rural and urban areas?

Well, the first major challenge I identify has to do with political will and the possibility of continuity for an agreement that was reached under one government. When the administration changes, a new executive leadership comes in, which leads to a shift in political will regarding implementation. I would consider this the main challenge, as it is directly linked to budget allocation and commitment to fulfilling the promises outlined in the peace agreement. This has implications for how the failure to implement a peace agreement in a transitional justice context intensifies conflict dynamics. When an armed actor withdraws from a territory due to a peace agreement, it does not necessarily mean the conflict ends—at least not in Colombia. Other armed groups remain, and the territorial vacuum becomes an opportunity for new groups to seize control and dispute the territory.

This leads to another difficulty: a lack of political will, which manifests in budgetary constraints, lack of commitment, and non-compliance with the signed agreements. The strengthening of armed groups that did not participate in the negotiation process further transforms the nature of the conflict, making it different from before and exacerbating violence—particularly affecting civilians, with disproportionate impacts on women and children.

Regarding territorial implementation, the gap between territorial and national institutions is significant.

The peace agreement established the creation of national-level institutions, but it did not clearly define localized programs.

While specific programs were introduced, such as the Territorially Focused Development Program and the National Program for the Substitution of Illicit Crops, both requiring territorial implementation, there was no clear articulation or institutional framework at the local level to ensure effective implementation. Beyond these programs, even if territorial implementation strategies were well-defined, reality has shown that without political will, mediating budget allocation and ensuring institutional functionality, these initiatives can turn into scenarios of revictimization for civilians. Unfulfilled expectations due to government transitions mean that individuals engaged in these programs may face violence and revictimization, as their expectations go unmet due to a lack of commitment to the promises originally made.

2. How much the current policies succeeded in improving women victims' access to justice and reparation processes?

In Colombia, Point 5—which specifically addresses the Integral System of Truth, Justice, Reparation, and Guarantees of Non-Repetition—is composed of three key components: the Truth Commission, the Special Jurisdiction for Peace, and the Unit for the Search of Persons Deemed Disappeared. I will give you a general explanation, because I believe that by reading the Truth Commission report and its volumes, you will be able to analyze this in greater depth. The same applies to the resolutions issued by the Special Jurisdiction for Peace, which provide detailed accounts of these issues.

But in general terms, the Truth Commission report presented a huge opportunity for victims of the conflict and for women. It became a key moment for understanding how the armed conflict affected them, recognizing the acts of violence they were forced to endure, and placing institutional focus on understanding what happened. This is also part of the demands of many victims, including women, as it emphasizes that what happened is not insignificant—it holds historical value and is part of a collective memory that extends beyond individual cases, reflecting the broader dynamics of war. Thus, the report provided an opportunity for victims' stories to be included in the historical narrative of the country—which is essential—and also because interviews were conducted, women's organizations submitted reports, and in particular, the Corporación Humanas presented approximately seven reports to the Truth Commission. The process of drafting these reports was itself an opportunity for victims' recognition and for acknowledging how their war-affected stories are crucial—both for the country and for peacebuilding.

However, the Truth Commission in Colombia, as in other countries, issues recommendations that are not mandatory or legally binding, which presents challenges regarding how these recommendations—developed based on the life experiences of affected individuals, women, and girls—depend entirely on the willingness of certain actors to implement them.

This raises a major question about the role of the Truth Commission report in the current context. For women's organizations, it is a key resource, as it gathers reflections on how to transform the structural conditions that led to the war and how they were exploited by armed actors to harm women and girls, subjecting them to violence based on beliefs that served their war objectives.

While the Truth Commission report has faced some criticism in Colombia—whether due to its length or the lack of cohesion in writing—it is undoubtedly a key resource in terms of historical memory.

In Colombia, for example, the events documented in the report remain relevant today, as they continue to occur.

The value of the report and its function is precisely to preserve historical memory, ensuring that the impact of the conflict on women's lives is not forgotten or sidelined.

There are specific volumes, such as *"Mi cuerpo es la verdad"* and *"Voces de resistencia"*, which fulfill the role of giving space to these stories, these narratives.

Since the Truth Commission's mandate has ended, the responsibility now falls on civil society to continue advocating for the report's findings, and on institutions to understand and apply the recommendations—even though they are not legally obligatory, they address essential solutions relevant to the current situation.

Regarding the Special Jurisdiction for Peace, and its relation to victims' access to justice within the framework of transitional justice, there is a notable aspect:

The women's movement, alongside organizations like Humanas, led efforts to ensure sexual violence was not an amnestiable or pardonable offense—meaning that perpetrators would not have access to special legal benefits.

This was achieved during the negotiation process, but in the actual operation of the Special Jurisdiction for Peace, which works through macro-cases, more than half of the jurisdiction's mandate elapsed before the creation of the case on sexual violence, reproductive violence, and other gender-based crimes—which is Macrocase 11.

I would recommend reading statements issued by the Cinco Claves alliance, which consistently advocated for visibility of sexual violence cases.

Organizations like Humanas have submitted reports, represented victims, and identified that victims of sexual violence, reproductive violence, and other gender-based abuses—recognized as individual, autonomous crimes—have faced multiple challenges in accessing justice. However, there are resolutions, such as in Macrocase 02 and others, that demonstrate how the jurisdiction has made fundamental contributions to victims' access to justice—which would not have been possible in ordinary justice.

This reframes transitional justice as a genuine opportunity for victims to access justice.

There is also an issue with reparations, as the Special Jurisdiction for Peace implements TOARS (anticipatory reparations).

These reparations present challenges, as the individuals responsible for acts of violence define the measures of reparation.

Although there is a selection process, filtering, and review by the Special Jurisdiction for Peace, it has been observed that these reparations often fail to address the individual needs of victims. Rather than focusing on what victims themselves perceive as reparative, they reflect what perpetrators believe to be appropriate reparations. This presents significant issues, both in public policy and in the fundamental principles of reparations, as reparations should not be based on what the perpetrator believes is sufficient but on what the affected person actually needs.

So, the potential of these mechanisms—such as the Special Jurisdiction for Peace—is significant, particularly in a context where there has been a systematic denial of justice for victims. The system itself can be a means of reparation, as it provides an opportunity for transformation, reducing harm, and ensuring access.

However, in cases of sexual violence and gender-based violence, there are specific challenges. These acts of violence were not initially considered as standalone crimes but were instead subsumed under territorial disputes or other types of violence. Additionally, there is resistance, something we have identified among perpetrators, who struggle to admit they committed these crimes.

The Special Jurisdiction for Peace has two procedural phases. One in which the perpetrator accepts responsibility, triggering the entire process of indictment and legal proceedings. Another in which the perpetrator does not accept responsibility, leading to a dialogical process aimed at investigating and uncovering the truth.

We observe that the Special Jurisdiction for Peace has faced limitations, primarily due to a lack of access to key information. This creates a risk in which sanctions depend largely on what the perpetrator is willing to confess.

Therefore, these mechanisms are crucial for ensuring access to justice, as they provide valuable lessons—lessons that should also be applied to ordinary justice systems.

However, in practice, there are challenges, particularly concerning violence against women. Issues such as underreporting and normalization of gender-based violence continue to affect cases. I believe it would be very useful for you to review the resolutions from each macro-case, as this would provide a clearer understanding of their contributions.

There is also another challenge, which is linked to how transitional justice operates. One key demand is that transitional justice should serve as a precedent for ordinary justice. For instance, transitional justice allows for greater flexibility in evidence requirements and recognizes context as a valid element of proof for the prosecution of crimes against humanity and violations of international humanitarian law. The legal mechanisms established by the Special Jurisdiction for Peace must have a lasting impact on ordinary justice, helping to ensure comprehensive access to justice. This will also be an essential aspect to analyze once the mandate of the Special Jurisdiction for Peace comes to an end.

3. What barriers do women victims of sexual violence face in accessing transitional justice and reparation mechanisms?

The barriers can be found in these documents, where they are more clearly defined as categorical, and I believe they were addressed there. I think there is a key issue in how many barriers exist—one could compile a systematized list, but I think it is important to highlight how, even within transitional justice mechanisms, one can perceive a lack of credibility in victims' testimonies and how this dilemma persists. It is not a dilemma between the truth of the victim and that of the perpetrator. It should not be a debate, because within the framework of transitional justice and the Peace Agreement in Colombia, it was clearly established that victims are central to the agreement. Therefore, there should be no dispute between what the victim says and what other external actors claim.

However, transitional justice can still perpetuate revictimization—through the type of questions asked, through the way judicial scenarios are structured, such as placing the victim in front of the perpetrator, and the implications of those settings. That would be the issue.

Still, it is important to recognize that transitional justice, under this agreement, has represented a significant opportunity to acknowledge that violence against women is distinct, specific, and serves particular objectives for armed actors. Furthermore, the advocacy work carried out by civil society organizations has also been an opportunity to foster awareness and educate people on long-standing demands.

Creating a framework where the recognition of victims' experiences—especially the violence affecting women and victims—is a fundamental step toward ending the normalization of violence perpetrated by armed groups. This is especially relevant in a country like Colombia, where, despite having a peace agreement and its implementation, violence continues in parallel due to the persistence of armed conflict.

It serves as a call to action, a call for accountability—for example, when institutions like the JEP highlight that this should not be happening, yet it still occurs today, it signals that there is a need for condemnation.

One crucial aspect we must continue to emphasize is that the final Peace Agreement must set a precedent—a minimum standard for any future peace negotiations in Colombia.

For instance, in the Peace Agreement with the FARC, sexual violence was neither amnestiable nor pardonable, and mechanisms for truth clarification and prosecution of violent acts were established. This means that any future peace process must adopt these fundamental principles as minimum requirements. Likewise, the recognition of gender-specific measures and the creation of institutions designed to operate with a gender perspective resulted from the sustained advocacy of women's movements, which enabled the establishment of specific policies ensuring that peace includes women.

4. How have women participated in the implementation and evaluation of post-conflict policies and what has been the impact of women's leadership on peacebuilding at the community and national levels?

Well, the first role I would highlight—there is a document that could be very useful, I will send it to you—that details the history of how Humanas entered the negotiation tables and the inputs that were provided. In the framework of negotiations between the national government and the parties involved, there was strong insistence from the women's movement to ensure the creation of a specific space for women's participation. Colombia has had approximately 61 peace agreements, and this is the first one that includes a formal instance incorporating women's voices—a result of the women's movement's persistence. This means that the movement played a crucial role, a hard-earned role, resulting from women's organizations demanding spaces for clear dialogue on how to achieve a peace agreement and how to ensure its proper implementation. Once gender-focused measures were included in the agreement, advocacy efforts began to ensure the implementation of those measures.

There are monitoring reports documenting this process. Humanas has conducted three monitoring reports tracking gender-focused measures from the national to the territorial level. These reports illustrate how the measures outlined in the agreement have been territorialized. Additionally, they highlight a process of organizational strengthening—led by the women's movement itself—to enhance research tools, government engagement, and advocacy for the implementation of these commitments. This process moves from the desire to be included, to securing a place at the table, to making tangible progress, and finally to taking leadership roles in ensuring proper implementation. Furthermore, in Colombia's current context, women's organizations are not only pushing for implementation but also ensuring that acts of violence are recognized. Implementing a peace agreement, according to academic studies, often leads to an intensification of conflict, but Colombia is currently facing a humanitarian crisis, showing that risk factors were not adequately addressed—ultimately exacerbating the war with new demands.

Thus, women's movements operate on multiple fronts, constantly struggling for recognition. Once they secure their place, they must continue advocating to ensure their contributions are taken into account.

At the core of their efforts is the belief that their work is essential for sustainable peace—and not just because they say so, but because international entities recognize it. For example, the United Nations Security Council and Resolution 1325 affirm the importance of women's participation. Women's movements have appropriated legal frameworks to demand obligations that should already be enforced—even though these demands should not have to be made, they still do. Regarding the impact of female leadership in peacebuilding at both community and national levels, I believe peace agreements offer critical political opportunities for women. This is not just speculation—I can share my thesis on this.

Women participate in peacebuilding spaces, even when commitments are not fully met, because peace agreements serve as opportunities for recognition—recognition of experiences that have been ignored or forgotten. Women's role in armed conflict has not been limited to victimhood—they have also been persistent voices advocating for peace. In peace agreements or negotiation processes, this contribution gains visibility, strengthening both women's leadership and their advocacy agendas. In interviews I conducted, there were cases of women who had endured sexual slavery or torture. They shared that they had previously made silent pacts with their families to never speak about their experiences.

However, when they saw the opportunities unfolding, they broke that silence—realizing that what happened to them also happened to other women. This became an opportunity for self-recognition, for acknowledging their experiences. Additionally, collaborating with the broader women's movement strengthens democracy, as it creates accountability for gender-based violence. For example, when armed groups commit violent acts, such as confinement or kidnapping, discussions now include how women were affected within those broader crimes. Without a doubt, peace agreements and negotiation processes are key opportunities for visibility—they highlight women's contributions over time in the pursuit of peace and the impact of war on their lives. This happens because a framework is created that makes it possible. If other peace agreements fail to provide such spaces, then they do not recognize the process fully.

In Colombia, however, the women's movement is exceptionally strong and well-organized, allowing it to push for key demands and minimum guarantees. This has made peace implementation a critical opportunity to strengthen women's leadership. For example, in the PDET program, the implementation process involved regional, subregional, and local pathways. The process started at the local level, with participatory mechanisms, before moving to the municipal and then regional levels. This led to increased public engagement, with citizens learning how these routes functioned and how they could contribute. Women's organizations began discussing how to strengthen leadership to engage effectively.

Thus, new spaces for advocacy were created, which are always valuable as they expand the landscape for women's rights policies and mechanisms. Ultimately, all efforts and participation translate into new tools, policies, and structures—benefiting not just the women directly involved, but all women. This process also reinforces democracy, strengthening civic participation overall—not just for women. Additionally, the Peace Agreement has reinforced the idea that discussions on democracy, human rights, and women's rights are fundamentally linked. When we talk about women's rights, we are talking about human rights in the broadest sense.

Recognizing these rights benefits not just a specific group or sector, but rather enhances democracy itself.

5. What adjustments or improvements should be made to current policies to ensure greater effectiveness and sustainability over time?

The first thing is to understand that peace agreements do not depend on the political will of the person who happens to be in government at the time, right? When a country signs a peace agreement, there must be continuity and compliance with the commitments made.

That's the first thing, right? To stop thinking of it as something voluntary. The second is that there needs to be articulation between the national and territorial levels, especially in large countries.

Colombia is a very large country in terms of territory, and it is also centralized. So, it is necessary to have a clear definition of territorial articulation, and in those areas where there is no institutional presence, that institutional presence must be established, which requires the allocation of resources to ensure that articulation. The next point is that peace agreements themselves are experiences that must be considered as lessons to be applied at different moments in a country's history. In this sense, something happening in Colombia is that the current government has a policy called total peace, which is a government policy, and it is perceived as a separate policy that is not directly linked to the implementation of the peace agreement. What we are emphasizing is that one cannot advance in a negotiation process without taking into account what has already been agreed upon in a previous peace agreement and ensuring its implementation. We are about to

release a document, which I will send to you as soon as it is published, precisely on the fragility of negotiation tables, because in Colombia we currently have multiple negotiation tables. One issue is that there is no respect for international humanitarian law, and the second issue is that implementation is not progressing, nor are the recommendations from the commission on peace measures, right? Nor the gender-focused measures.

So, I think these are some of the lessons learned, and also how peace agreements in contexts with a history of war and armed conflict require the commitment of different sectors, from civil society to national institutions, local entities, international operations, and human rights protection mechanisms. In principle, one might say that all of this is present, but in practice, we find that local entities do not fully understand their responsibility in implementing the peace agreement, which means there is insufficient articulation and a lack of information flow to ensure compliance. When peace agreements are not understood as transversal to institutional structures, they become fragmented initiatives limited to certain actors or sectors within institutions, preventing a comprehensive approach to building sustainable peace.

JEP OFFICIALS

1. What have been the main difficulties in the implementation of post-conflict reconstruction policies with a gender perspective in Colombia and how does their implementation vary between rural and urban areas?

Within the framework of the Peace Agreement, our role as a jurisdiction is solely focused on the administration of transitional justice. In that sense, if you ask what challenges we have been facing, one significant issue you mention is the location of victims. Some victims are situated in urban areas, while others are in rural areas, and Colombia's geographical characteristics—particularly dispersed rurality—create barriers to accessing information and participating in proceedings. This necessitates a comprehensive support policy for these victims.

This policy ensures that victims receive financial assistance to cover travel expenses from their territories to the locations where legal proceedings take place, accommodation costs during the proceedings, and care services for those who are mothers, heads of households, or caregivers—whether for children or elderly individuals. While they participate in the proceedings, a team of officials provides care for their dependents, explaining to them why their guardians are involved in the jurisdiction, without delving into case details, and educating them about the function of the jurisdiction and the principles of restorative justice. The goal is for them to understand that even if they are not direct victims, they still have the right to participate in the restorative process mandated by the jurisdiction.

Regarding protection strategies, specific measures have been implemented for those participating in the jurisdiction, since the Peace Agreement was signed with only one of the armed factions, meaning other armed actors remain active in various regions of the country. This reality creates risks for participants and has required the adoption of information management strategies, including controlled dissemination of judicial reports and targeted training for contracted officials.

This training does not focus solely on technical information, but also on how officials interact with victims and perpetrators, particularly concerning gender-based violence and sexual violence.

In other words, multiple components are currently being developed: one focused on victim outreach, one on security protocols, one on ensuring inclusive participation, and one on psychosocial or spiritual support, which is closely tied to cultural and identity factors, especially for women and LGBTQI+ individuals involved in the jurisdiction.

2. How much the current policies succeeded in improving women victims' access to justice and reparation processes?

There is something we repeat constantly, and that is that justice has always been an adversarial space for women and the LGBTQI+ population. Precisely because, despite the passage of time, patriarchal structures remain very strong regarding access to justice and interactions with judicial operators. One of the main efforts of the jurisdiction has been to ensure that access to the jurisdiction is possible with the guarantees just mentioned, but also through a strong training and preparation process for officials and contractors. We receive training in all gender-related components, as well as in IHRAC code, particularly for those working directly with sexual violence cases. Most of us receive emotional first aid training to ensure proper engagement with victims, and a key aspect is that many of our magistrates have experience in gender-based violence and sexual violence cases. This allows interviews, voluntary statements, the formulation of questions, and the overall environment in which these proceedings take place to fully consider these particularities, ensuring not only that victims or respondents reach the judicial stage but also that their passage through it is meaningful and constructive for them. I believe this has been one of the greatest advances, and indeed, our ongoing interactions with victims indicate that we are on the right track. There will always be room for improvement, but I firmly believe we have brought about a shift in how justice is administered in the country. In relation to what my colleague mentioned about creating spaces for the effective participation of women and individuals from LGBTQI+ communities, the Special Jurisdiction for Peace inherited the Gender Technical Assistance Roundtable from the Truth Commission, and I want to highlight this as a strong example of implementing the ideas Liana has been talking about. The Gender Technical Assistance Roundtable is a space, alongside the Unit for the Search of Persons Deemed Disappeared, that aims to create dialogical spaces for the information exchange and hearing of women and LGBTQI+ individuals from different territories, and that is precisely its logic—to materialize what Liana was saying. How do we listen to those seeking access to Special Jurisdiction procedures? The Gender Technical Assistance Roundtable serves as an effective channel for fostering participation, maintaining monitoring, and ensuring accessible information on what is happening in different territories. So, this was just an example of one of the pathways to effective justice participation within the Special Jurisdiction framework.

3. What barriers do women victims of sexual violence face in accessing transitional justice and reparation mechanisms?

Despite justice, the issues we have mentioned in the previous two questions, because they are too closely related to others, the barriers, as I said, are historical barriers concerning the power dynamics between men and women and how these relationship barriers affect or impact access to the administration of justice. We have psychosocial and spiritual guidelines, as well as specific attention protocols for victims of sexual and gender-based violence. We also incorporate the woman-family-generation approach, which is unique to ethnic women and is not currently applied in any other justice system. So, when asked about this, it is clear that there are linguistic barriers for ethnic women, as well as cultural barriers, because the way gender violence cases are handled for ethnic women is very different from how they are approached for non-ethnic women, particularly due to the collective dimension of their victimization. Indeed, research examines individual cases of specific harm, but we also address the collective harm that these situations means to women.

4. How have women participated in the implementation and evaluation of post-conflict policies and what has been the impact of women's leadership on peacebuilding at the community and national levels?

Well, I think a first key element is that within the jurisdiction, the majority of magistrates, well, magistradas, there is a high percentage of female magistrates, something that had not happened in any other court in Colombia. I also know that the percentage of women in these positions, even in Latin America, is not common, so it sets a precedent that the jurisdiction establishes as a first standard. How do they participate? Well, effectively, the role of female magistrates within the jurisdiction is in the administration of justice; they do not have a direct impact on the creation of public policy. Public policy falls under the responsibility of another body, and the development of the peace court regarding policymaking is not within the jurisdiction's scope. So, in that sense, I wouldn't be able to fully answer the question you are asking. We, as a justice administration entity, well, within what we do as administrators of justice.

5. What adjustments or improvements should be made to current policies to ensure greater effectiveness and sustainability over time?

I believe one of the greatest challenges facing the jurisdiction at this moment, despite the significant progress made—well, let me explain it this way—we have made substantial advances in guidelines, pathways, structures, and training, all aimed at enhancing women's participation, particularly in this setting. However, the major challenge is ensuring that these efforts do not remain solely within the jurisdiction, given that the jurisdiction itself operates within a specific timeframe. This creates an urgent need to transfer this knowledge and support the implementation of these routes and protocols within the ordinary justice system.

That is, it is necessary to translate these learnings to the prosecution service—how to receive testimonies, how to provide proper accompaniment, how to design spaces, how to ensure that when women approach these entities, they have a safe environment and are not simply watched over by security personnel, which happens far too often in ordinary justice settings.

So, all these expertise and insights that we have developed—the great challenge of the jurisdiction is ensuring that this knowledge is effectively transferred to ordinary justice. I believe this is the primary challenge, and we are actively working on it at all times, particularly within this office.

We are carrying out training processes and knowledge transfer initiatives with the Ministry of Justice, courts within the Colombian justice system, the Attorney General's Office, the Prosecutor's Office, and most recently with the Victims Protection Unit. This is precisely because we have realized that our gender-focused guidelines and protocols are working very effectively.

Appendix B

Informed Consent Form

Informed Consent	
<p>We want to make sure that the people interviewed as part of the degree project "ANALYSIS OF POST-CONFLICT RECONSTRUCTION POLICIES WITH A GENDER PERSPECTIVE. CASO COLOMBIA 2016 - 2021", are fully informed about the implications of participating. Please check the boxes below if you feel you have all the relevant information. If not, please let us know.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><input type="checkbox"/> I have been informed about the subject and objective of the project.<input type="checkbox"/> I agree to participate in an interview.<input type="checkbox"/> I understand that the interview will take approximately 30 minutes, but could be extended or shortened depending on my availability.<input type="checkbox"/> I am voluntarily participating.<input type="checkbox"/> I understand that I may refuse to answer any question, for any reason.<input type="checkbox"/> I understand that I may withdraw from the interview at any time, for any reason.<input type="checkbox"/> I agree to have the audio of my interview recorded.<input type="checkbox"/> I agree to a video recording of my interview.<input type="checkbox"/> I agree to the researcher taking notes during the interview.<input type="checkbox"/> I understand that my words may be quoted in academic papers, research reports, and other research findings.<input type="checkbox"/> I understand that the information provided will be used for academic purposes only.	
Participant name	Signature
Date:	