



Impact of the COVID-19 crisis: The Barometer Initiative innovates and continues its work

Statement from Co-Directors, David Cortright and Josefina Echavarría Álvarez

In Colombia, as in the rest of the world, the response to the coronavirus has prohibited public gatherings, shuttered offices and businesses, and curtailed travel. The effects on the implementation of the peace accord are starting to show. Consultations and meetings that are part of the peace process are being delayed or are occurring online. Reincorporation services for ex-combatants have slowed. Financial priorities are changing and could affect the funding of implementation. In addition, legislative implementation processes have been affected, although Congress has now begun meeting virtually.

Many aspects of peace implementation are continuing and the Kroc Institute remains engaged in monitoring the peace process. The Barometer Initiative research team in Colombia is adapting to the government-ordered lockdown by employing virtual approaches to collecting and reporting data. With support from our strategic partners, we are maintaining frequent email and WhatsApp communication with a wide range of public officials and social actors. We are also planning to enhance the connectivity of our regional team members to improve their ability to virtually monitor implementation in the territories.

Later this spring, we will release our fourth comprehensive report on the status of implementation. As part of this process, we will sponsor virtual events to share our findings and brief key audiences on our assessment and recommendations for advancing the process. In this report, we argue that peace implementation is at an

inflection point as we transition from short to mid- and long-term efforts and structural changes, especially in the territories most affected by the armed conflict.

Even in the midst of this pandemic, we know that threats to peace have not gone away, as criminals and illegal armed actors try to take advantage of the current crisis. We also know that the effects of the pandemic are felt most acutely by the poor and marginalized, especially in Afro-Colombian and indigenous communities where public health facilities are limited.

We believe that implementation of the economic and social reforms of the peace agreement will help to create more resilient and accountable governance in Colombia, which could help mitigate the impacts of the pandemic and create greater state capacity to provide social services and respond to future public needs.

Our hope is that people in Colombia and around the world will learn from this experience the necessity of cooperation and the value of working together to protect public health and build sustainable peace.

For updates on the fourth comprehensive report, virtual launch events, and the latest news from the Barometer Initiative, please visit our redesigned website:
peaceaccords.nd.edu/barometer.