

# ROLE AND STATUS OF FARC'S WOMEN IN THE COLOMBIAN CONFLICT AND IN THE POST CONFLICT

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## ABSTRACT:

The FARC (Revolutionary Armed Forces of Colombia) have been a cruel reality in Colombia for the last 50 years. This internal war between the FARC and the Governmental Armed Forces left more than 220 000 dead in the last five decades of the bloodily pages of the Colombian history. In order to understand the involvement of the women in this conflict, a historical review of the origin and evolution of the FARC is conducted in this research. Women in the FARC have played different roles as part of the militia, however, being part of a clandestine group, the basic role was of combat forces, thereafter they could be a kitchen in charge, spies, informants, nurses and rarely even commanders. Sadly some roles were exclusively for them, like lovers, wives, sexual companions. These last roles are very often linked with crimes and abuses inside of the militia life. With this study it is possible to understand how the FARC passed from revolutionary communist movement to drug smugglers and finally as an inveterate terrorist group. This study focuses on the FARC 's women condition during the peace treaty talks and the post 2017 or era of post-conflict.

**KEY WORDS:** *The FARC (Revolutionary Armed Forces of Colombia), FARC's Women, Peace Treaty, Post conflict, Resocialization.*

## 1. INTRODUCTION

It is believed that more than 3000 women made part of the FARC (Revolutionary Armed Forces of Colombia). There are many women ex-combatants that after the peace treaty openly speaks about the militia life and their situation during the war. Most of the time the different testimonies agree into narrate the sexual exploitation to which their were object from their own companions and moreover by their own superiors. As consequence many cases of forced abortions were there and in forest conditions it means certain dead for many of them. There never invest a potion of command at superior level, some few cases like “Karina”, but it was not the normality because the single woman was associated with the authority of the companion but not for herself. Different form the communist propaganda of equality, the women in the FARC was under different conditions in competition with the men.

The FARC (Revolutionary Armed Forces of Colombia) have been a bloodily reality which let more than 220 000 dead in the last 50 years of the Colombian history. In order to understand the involvement of the women in this conflict, a historical review of the origin and evolution of the FARC is conducted. In fact, the FARC passed from revolutionary communist movement to a drug smugglers and finally as inveterate terrorist.

Everything started in 1948 when Jorge Eliecer Gaitan was assassinated being the origin of violent confrontation between Liberal and Conservative Parties. Gaitan was a charismatic and populist leader and his dead signed the period called “the violence”. Only the “National Front” (1958-1974) managed to settle a transitory peace. National front was a kind of agreement between the parties to alternate the direction of the country. After the Work War I the “Comintern” accredited PPC (Colombian Communist Party), they claimed social justice and social equality. The government tried to repress them in violent manner which causes their rise in weapons and started to fight as a clandestine army.

In 1961 Manuel Marulanda Velez who was the PPC leader proclaimed the “Marquetalia Republic”. The government replies with heavy violence in the intent of suppress the Marxist Leninist movement. The President Belisario Betancur in 1980 started to see the possibility of peace. In 1984 with the “La Uribe” (Meta) Agreement, a first cease-fire tried to gave some hope in the dialogues that ended in 1987 with the consolidation of the Patriotic Union (UP).

Later on in 1982, the years of the "coca boom" give to the irregular army a very good source of income and gave the capacity of give large-scale attacks on Colombian government troops. They started to forgotten the main aim and transformed into a drug smugglers army groups.

It was November 7 when the President of the Republic, Andres Pastrana granted to the FARC a bast area of San Vicente del Caguan (42.000 square Kilometers) in what is known as the second serious intent to settle peace. As result the FARC-EP enjoy of free space which they use as opportunity to enhance its power and control and to lunch the new strategy of undercover political movement, the Bolivarian Party. During the

90's, the FARC was just a terrorist group who use to kill innocent people, recruit children, commit crimes against the humanity and they distanced their selves from the communist ideals. As a reaction the people withdrew the support and start to think in other options to end the conflict. People started to claim for protection and democratic security. In this way the FARC was clearly identify as criminal group.

The government of Uribe adopted a double policy: The first one was to welcome who voluntarily would surrender. Many rebel members got the government offer to leave the violence and enter in a process of re-socialization. The second policy was the war confrontation which gave as result the re-control of geographical areas and sectors of the society in which the presence of the government was absent. In this way the power of force of the FARC reduce it troops in more than the 70%. Most of the historical leaders were captured or killed. The international support was blocked.

The President Juan Manuel Santos, Nobel Prize of peace, started a new intent of peace in the Habana Cuba in the year of 2012 and finish in 2016 with the peace treaty. The peace treaty between representatives of the government and of the FARC finally was signed after four years of dialogues.

This treaty had been polemic because the re integration in the society of the whole FARC members is not clear. There is not abandonment of the weapons, there is not abandonment of the territorial control, there is not reparation, and there is not expropriation and not penalisation.

The Colombian society finally started to talk about the post-conflict. Right now, Colombia is fronting a new begging but there are many things to be clarify and many hurting wounds to be cured in the memory, in the dignity and in the hope of several social actors.

In the post conflict phase, some women, ex militants of the FARC troops, raised their voices to denounce the crimes of which they had been victims inside of the FARC militia in the hands of the heads of the rebellion. As for the actual peace treaty, there is not space to claim justice. In front of the government and the common people's opinion, they are victimizers; they are criminals to be punished and not worthy to be pardoned. However, most of these women had been recruited forcefully or with lies or illusions and then, became also victims of the most of the chiefs of the revolution and companion of militia as well.

The general perception is that the armed forces will became a political party and indulgence from their crimes will be granted to the members of the FARC. In front of this possibility, there are many the victims who make opposition. Among the victims the women as in any conflict are the first victims and the first to claim for justice. In this specific long conflict the women have been victim inside and outside of the FARC's. Some institutions supported the idea of clarification, punishment and reparation of victims as condition to go towards lasting peace, for example UN, Human Rights, the Office for the defence of the Women and many others. There are contradiction in which in the name of the pace there is the risk of impunity and injustice.

The research enquired how often the women had been recruit at very young age, which is a serious international crime. These women have been force to cover equal roles as the men in the war, additionally due to the condition of women were abuse as sexual object, they were forced to commit abortions and many other crimes. All this crimes are not including into the criteria of crimes of the amnesty promised by the government and as for the reality seems to be destined to the impunity as silent price for the peace.

These women In front of the government and the common people's opinion are victimizers; they are criminals to be punished and so that not worthy to be pardoned. However, most of these women had been recruit forcefully or with lies or illusions and then, became victims of the most of the chiefs of the revolution and companion of militia as well. The research hows how the women had been recruit at very young age. These women have been force to cover equal roles as the men in the war, additionally due to the condition of women were abuse as sexual object, they were forced to commit abortions and many other crimes.

The research suggests for the future in order to consolidate the peace. Peace to be understood not as mere silence of the weapons but the peace of the freedom of the souls in a land of justice and progress. The information collected and the result of the research had been critically analyzed and put at disposition of all. Suggestions are given in order to offer his work as a tool to better understand the Colombian post-conflict.

## 2. METHODOLOGY

In the historical field, the deductive method is used to critically analyze the gradual integration and participation of the women in the FARC. The data is collected over by primary sources the data is collected throng interviews, questionnaires, formal and informal discussions and participant observation. Hence, interviews are conducted with FARC militants and ex-militants women. Additionally books, journals, records, documents and documentaries, either published and unpublished are used as secondary sources.

This research analyze the situation of the women inside of the FARC, taking in consideration the origin, evolution and the actual status of the situation by using the historical approach. This work determine when and how the women starts to be part of the FARC, what roles did they invest, what was their situation and what is their actual situation. To do so, meetings and interviews with some of this FARC's women are been conducted. Along with them a historical reading and analysis of the history of the conflict in Colombia during the last 50 years had been conducted.

## 3. WOMEN IN THE CONFLICT

The process of inclusion of women in the rebel groups is the result of the reciprocity of the guerrilla decisions and the women's circumstances. "Traditionally it was not given enough attention to the phenomena of such influence invert group"<sup>1</sup>.

The reasons for women recruitment were not clear for long time, not even for the FARC leaders. There are some reasons. First reason was the awareness regarding the advantages of deploy women, by resorting the conventional CP methodology; different and ultimate reason was to have them as fighters. The FARC realized that a strategical solution, after becoming an army fully organized, in order to potentiate the territorial and demographical growth. This option required a numerous incorporation of women. Feminization as solution transformed the organization and the concept of rebel army. This carry on with the fact that the FARC finished to created spaces in which gender inequalities should be reviewed. Another consequence of it, was the extension of the war once the strength of the forces gave the capacity of combat and of resistance; finally, there was a rich interaction in between the ideology and the structure the organization.

The ideology certainly explains the important demographic changes among the rebel groups in the context of the Colombian internal conflict. As example we can make mention of the paramilitaries groups or self defence organizations. They use to recruit very less number of women in competition with the guerrillas inclusion of the women, even more, in the rare cases they were relegate to be just fighters. However, is to clarify that. The guerrillas have never unify as only one body and each section or company normally use different policies, totally depending of the character and philosophy of the local commanders. Is clear that not all the FARC groups adopted the inclusion of the women neither they accepted with maximum of consensus. However the FARC had a special apparently advancement of inclusion and equality of gender in competition with other armed groups, like ELN, EPL ERP etc.

#### 4. FARC'S WOMEN IN THE CONFLICT

The FARC also made use of sexual violence as instrument of recruitment of young girls and women as combatants. The clear intention was not the war life but as object to render sexual services to the men in war. Testimonies collected from women demobilized from the guerrilla, we can clear affirm that they were methodologically forced to use systematically contraception. Some other testimonies affirm that girls suffered in many ways after being a kind of sexual slaves. For example, some extreme cases, some girls were assassinated, even more, they were decapitated, and buried in remote locations or rivers, in such way nobody could know about them anymore. In cases of pregnancy very often the solution was the forced abortion as policy of the FARC; the guerrilla commanders' were excepted to this policy, or if wife or companion of the commanders.

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<sup>1</sup> Francisco Gutiérrez Sanín and Francy Carranza Franco. (2018, 20 September). *Organizing women for combat: The experience of the FARC in the Colombian war*. Journal of Agrarian Change Volume17, 4 October 2017. (pp. 770-778)

Some testimonies reveal the many women who abandoned or escape the guerrillas in order to protect their unborn children. Some others testimonies talk about being victims of abuse and of forced abortions several times. These abortions were usually practiced without health conditions which causes the death of many. The demobilized commander of the 47 front of the FARC, Elda Nedis Mosquera, better known as Karina, admitted her participated in at least in three occasions to terminate a pregnancy of a subordinate. According to the Ministry of Defence's "Humanitarian Care Group for the Demobilized", data recorded from 2012 to 2013, shows that "out of the 244 demobilized female fighters 43 reported they had been forced to have abortions"<sup>2</sup>.

There are number of reports regarding the use of sexual violence to forcibly recruit girls and women. Male FARC commanders use to abuse of their positions and authority to commit sexual violations to a young girls. Besides, the FARC and other insurgent groups, women's sexual and reproductive rights violation was high and quite normal by imposing and enforcing strict regulations regarding female sexuality and reproductive behaviour on their members.

The guerrilla support family planning and prohibit pregnancy. "Girls of the age of twelve are required to use contraception, and must have abortions if they get pregnant,". Demobilized women's FARC confirm that the FARC use to practice of forced abortions, which FARC leadership justify it as necessary during wartime. This seem to be "part of the code of rules agreed to upon joining the insurgency Restrictions over sexuality and reproductive rights however sometimes motivate women to leave armed groups"<sup>3</sup>.

## 5. THE INCORPORATION OF WOMEN IN THE FARC

The FARC applies three basic changes in its incorporation process in they history. Initially they were focused in a ideological peasant self defence group, in which the Liberal ideology merged with the peasant youth movements during the time of so called the violence. The majority of the fighters were males, however they were in a clandestine group inside of the normal day life and among their families which were involved into the everyday life of the group by supporting economically, ideologically and emotionally. Their own women and children were present and active, specially in the assumption and infusion of the ideology and the diffusion of the movement, but never participate in armed conflict nor made part of the organizational and decision- making structures. As a ex member of the guerrilla says, "by the 1960s women accompanied men, and participated in activities like cooking". In fact, at the times of Marquetalia resistance in 1964, "women were helpers only, they did not carry weapons. They participated actively but were not fundamental. In the 1960s we had a mix of people with women, children and even dogs".

<sup>2</sup> WEF (World Economic Forum). (2016). *The Global Gender Gap Report 2016*. Retrieved from <https://www.weforum.org/reports/the-global-gender-gap-report-PDF>.

<sup>3</sup> Reproductive Health for Refugees Consortium. (2003). *Displaced and Desperate: Assessment of Reproductive Health for Colombia's Internally Displaced Persons*. (p. 20).

This clandestine family centred kind of life was changed and pass from static to a mobile guerrilla by the mid 60's. The FARC central direction were debating how to increase their men capacity and territorial control. After becoming a mobile guerrilla due to the government pressing, the fighters were forced to leave their families and to intern in solo into a wild far forest along with the other comrades. Then, the FARC became all- male organization due to its mobility and the clear concept that women belong to home and not in the wild forest areas. During this period, Women appeared in the group occasionally only, mainly as cooks and helpers, but not directly involved in the militia life.

The Communist Party (CP), politically partner with the FARC was actively involved in the pro Russian ideology and so they started to actively involve women as instruments of communism diffusion. During this period several female organizations and movements became popular in universities and social movements, as part of the global social communist diffusion, which was high and fast by the time. As consequence the FARC began an organized female support, however the roles were the traditional gender activities, like caring about laundry, food, logistics and mainly the cooking duties for male members of the organization. Yes, there was an initial increasing in the Female participation as one of the main objectives of the Communist Party and so as the renovated FARC ideology, still, women didn't take part in the war first front. The 70s give another important step in the women debate and its way of participation in the group. Tirofijo discuss regarding the inclusion of women in the active FARC combat forces. He was contrary to the idea however he accept the discussion of the matter as part of the politic strategy. He says that women have not the physical capacity for the militia life, neither the resilience and mental strength to take part in the horror of the war, women are sensible and emotional, he affirmed.

The female recruitment at this point became a hard point of the debate, motivated more in the need of combatants and in the need of appear in front of the other social movements and supporters as an inclusive group with respect for the gender equality. So it was motivated by the ideology rather than the strategical strength. During the 6th conference (1978) and later on during the seventh Conference (1982) as well, the FARC became officially an army, abandoning the initial stage of social movement based on the ideological confrontation and adopted the weapon as main tool for their ideas. In fact, the 7th Conference changed the organization's name: the FARC-EP (FARC—the People's Army). It was a significant and meaningful change. "They adopted a military structure model, differentiating from the civilian population by adopting an official uniform, inclusion of highly training and army kind of discipline, receiving ideological formation, and common life in a fully armed group"<sup>4</sup>.

The massive inclusion of women in the FARC push the group to establish new rules to control the sexual and personal life of the combatants, like the inclusion of contraception policies as compulsory; here the reason that in case of pregnancy, the measure to adopt was the forced abortion or in the best of the cases to give up the

<sup>4</sup> UNHRC (United Nations Human Rights Council). (2016). *Human Rights Situation in Colombia. Annual report by the UN high commissioner for human rights.* A/HRC/31/3/ Add.2

newborn to a surrogate family. During the 6th conference there was a discussion if there was possible to allow women to have children or not. The major motivation was the impossibility of merge the wild guerrilla life and the maternal care. Both the child and the mother could be on risk, but the central problem was that the new mother could not be useful as a trooper for around one year time between the pregnancy and the recovery after the delivery. Finally, this time of maternity the women should be absent and there was a high probability of desertion after the baby tenderness. The conclusion was that it was not good for the rebellions to be mothers.

However, there were some aspects to oppose this decision, like the Marxist ideology itself, which was not restrictive regarding the matter. The need of war as a political expression of the peasantry and the “proletarian” CP programme make clear that the war would take long time to conclude. This reality make clear that women must be fundamental part to the cause because not only military revolution was needed, but also the political and ideological expansion was required. Women were not expected to be active part of all the process, for this reason they would be the surprise factor of the war. This decision would give credibility and originality to the group which look for major acceptance among intellectuals, student, politics, peasants and International movements associated with the proletariat and the social communist cause.

The transformation and the need of expansion push the group to adopt new policies, like the enrolment process which degenerates at the extreme point of determine the inclusion of minors in massive numbers. The ideology was not enough when they started to face the serious persecution by the government forces, they feel the need of more power and less ideology. If for 20 years they could debate about the role of the women, now the circumstances forced the group to think out of the ideology frame only.

During the 70's the Farc based on Ideology witness a small growth, but it was clear that the political ideas were not enough to increase geographical expansion and incorporation of volunteers (Ferro & Uribe, 2002). It will be in the 80's in which with the change of policies and with the inclusion of some illegal sources of income like the kidnapping, the coca smugglers and the fixed tariffs of cooperation to the business and farmers the group really expanded its influence in rural areas, cities and increase the power of fire and the troops.

The FARC mostly had lost its members in combat, many were killed under the government forces fire confrontation, some survived with irreparable injuries in their bodies, but anyway the FARC register a loss of member due to the desertion. All these three elements made a significant backward of the movement and forced to change the policies by using the forced recruitment of equal men and women which causes loss of consensus among the people used to support their ideology. Another significant turning point was the increasing severe discipline, which put pressure and tension over the mental capacity of the troops, who many times became victims of the same idea they defended, under the authoritarian leaders. They were also forced to expend the whole lifetime in the war, which was not clear for the romantic young energetic volunteers who attracted of the social causes decided to join the movement, but they became prisoners of a dream without re-



alization and now they were without possibility of escape or possibility to regain their freedom, in fact it was not allowed the abandonment of the movement under threat of being killed by the FARC itself. At this point the desertions became common even if there was the heavy risk of personal or family retaliations.

The FARC leaders try to fulfill the reduction of the troops with new hazardous policies incorporating any kind of people, but with the time it demonstrated to be unsuccessful, in fact to replace an experienced and trained troops in short time was not easy and resulted to be ineffective. Many of the new recruits were absolutely unfit for this kind of life and the majority were not motivated for the ideology. At this point the women play an important and valuable role in terms of discipline and bravery. Many of the women members were from rural areas with low literacy rate or a girls with a problematic pass full of desire to make justice and gain equality and status, psychologically easy to manipulate at the same time that physically and characteristically strong.

The Farc commanders size the moment and increased the incorporation, capacitation and deployment of women at different levels and roles. This new female forces guarantee to the movement the possibility to secure the objectives as institution. Along with the child troops a women became the weak point for the government troops who looked to preserve their lives even in the middle of the combat, knowing the forced unjust lives they were forced in the FARC and the lack of real consciousness and willingness of fight that war. This increase the discipline difficulties and open a privileged space for the sexual crimes against women and Childs. Prove of that is the 1997 conference in which forbid the sentimental relationships among combatants and between civilians and combatants. Rather to be a solution, the love causes a lot of desertion among combatants lover, among prisoners and captors, and among combatants and civilians.

The new discipline policies put men and women in equal status, but it will show a failure in the social reading of the problem and wrong conception of the human beings. Men and women cannot be equal in physical and skill activities. Some roles in fact could just not simply completed by women, so again the roles like radio operator or radio speakers, perhaps the role or nurse were relegated exclusively to the women. Some surprising exceptions saw women performing task with a specific complicated weapons. At the hierarchical level, only few women as became first or second officers in charge of small units (12–26 combatants approximately). In the Secretariat (FARC's central body) only Elda Nedis Mosquera, better know as Karina, was the sole into became a Front Commander (command over about 250 combatants).

## 6. THE POST-CONFLICT

The Status and the Role of the women has been changed since the conclusion of the agreement of peace between the Colombia Government and the leaders of the FARC. However, the gender continues to be a constant factor of discrimination in the way of participation the process of peace and moreover regarding the reparation and punishment to the crimes against the FARC female members. Women are now in a weak position in which the future is a gap signed by the pass. There are some urgent challenges in order to guarantee and

enduring peace. There is need of a adequate Legal Frame and there is need of an efficient mental heal care to support women victims and actors of the conflict.

Most of the FARC women, who overall together are more than 40% of the armed group, return home is Utopia. After the peace treaty, they are reconnecting with their family members whom they had abandoned from years, some cases even for decades. Some women in the guerrillas were originally from far places, mostly rural areas. This ex-combatant told that, being honest with themselves, they didn't regret the facet of being members of the FARC. They say that they were escaping the hard weigh of the household and the rural life. "Among the communist guerrillas, they felt that they could find the easy life and gender equality, at least that was the first impression, that was what they were looking for"<sup>5</sup>.

Now, after giving up their weapons as part of the requirements of the historic peace treaty, they face a terrible stigma. Completely different is the case of the men who are welcomed as powerful macho, as a hero, for being fighting during the war; on the other hand the women are stigmatized as "loose" for the fact of being with males during the militia, and taunted for the abortions committed. The most painful thing for all those women is that the men ex companions are the first into reject their previous lovers once they get into the civil law. For the men, this is an opportunity to escape from their responsibilities and commitments, for the women is the beginning of a torment full of looniness.

The official government programme of reintegration, earlier was accused of pigeonholing the combatant women after the disarmament into domestic economics kind of workshops, but now is struggling to accept all those women into communities able to accept them by forging them and helping them to overtake the situation and to go beyond the traditional gender roles. Women ex combatants say that there is disposability and determination to go ahead, and if is necessary to fight in this new, different way, this time for gender equality. The goals are high, but the reintegration in the society is essential for Colombia, for that in necessary to move absolutely from the past of the war and really put end to the cruel and longest conflict in Latin America.

## 7. THE LEGAL FRAME

The IACHR (Inter American Commission on Human Rights) put in evidence the obligation and responsibility for the States to act diligently and to demonstrate the concrete political commitment into the adoption of the proper measures to prevent, to investigate, to punish and to redress the sexual violence.

"The UN establishes that is required and extra effort by the Colombian judicial system to take out any possibility of impunity in the specific cases related sexual crimes"<sup>6</sup>. Some laws and policy had been changed and that is favourable and positive in the path; however, there are some others, like the reform of the military penal justice and the same legal framework for Peace (Marco Para la Paz), which has traces of possible impunity

<sup>5</sup> Williams, Raymond Leslie, and Keven G. Guerrieri. (1999). *Culture and Customs of Colombia*. Westport, Connecticut: Greenwood Press.

<sup>6</sup> Borer, Tristan Anne. (2006). *Telling the Truths: Truth Telling and Peace Building in Post-Conflict Societies*. South Bend, Indiana: Notre Dame Press.

as for the actual formulation and that is referred especially for war crimes, including all those related sexual violence

## 8. LOOKING FORWARD, SEEKIN FOR JUSTICE

The Truth and Memory Commission for women is the very first independent commission of truth established in Colombia; Also poses the primacy of being the first commission to critically analyze the affectation of women as consequence of the conflict. This is the first truth commission in the world to be created, promoted and ruined by a women; “Also is the first truth commission which is explicitly feminist, using a comprehensive approach focused into document both women’s victimization, and women’s strategies to address their victimization”<sup>7</sup>. A very challenging action Tok place at the National Summit for Peace, there the women called to the armed groups to ensure that members of such organization would do not commit crimes of sexual violence against women and against none. “Additionally women called the responsibility and the needed to uphold international standards to consider sexual violence as crimes against humanity and war crimes”<sup>8</sup>.

Some of the victims who testified before the Commission “Women’s Truth and Memory” make clear that the humiliation of which they carry the consequences are impossible to cancel. However, women victims see positive the formal reparations since these provide somehow and important opportunity start the process of reparations and so to change the broken lives. Is necessary to facilitate women’s rights, like right to education, right to an economic opportunities, right to have justice, right to have health care, and finally to have an important psychosocial services as path to reclaim their lives.

These women specify that there is needed of both personal and collective reparations. In fact, is to take in account that the reparation must be proportional to the magnitude and to the nature of the violence suffered. At the individual level, it is needed of specific measures in order to give the opportunity to heal and restart new live with dignity. At the collective level, women ask for a deep structural transformation and to create such mechanisms which must apply the necessary collective censure of any kind of violence against women in order to guarantee the prevention of gender discrimination and abuse. It means, the admission of responsibility by all of the parties involved in crimes of sexual violence, with the clear commitment to adopt the necessary changes in order to make accountable the crimes and a date the prevention of such kind of crimes.

Women as Peace building are agents of transformation and weave the social relations, prevent the usual parameters of exclusion, and potentiate the respect for the human rights, in which are including the rights of the women. Regarding this matter, the Colombian Women’s Initiative for Peace declares that: “Peace building is

<sup>7</sup> Bell, Christine, and Catherine O’Rourke. (2007). “Does Feminism Need a Theory of Transitional Justice? An Introductory Essay.” In International Journal of Transitional Justice 1:1: 23-44.

<sup>8</sup> Amnesty International. Colombia, *This is What We Demand: Justice, Impunity for Sexual Violence against Women in Colombia’s Armed Conflict*. (2011, September). London: Amnesty International.

not centred on the individual will of the armed actors of the war, but must be understood as a comprehensive political, social, economic, citizen-based, and cultural process.” Only in this way is possible to understand the concept of transitional justice.

## 9. CONCLUSION

Records shows than around 40% of the FARC troop are women, it means that more than 3000 women are part of the FARC (Revolutionary Armed Forces of Colombia). They played different roles as militants but being part of a clandestine group the basic role was of combat forces, thereafter they could be a kitchen in charge, spies, informants, nurses and commanders similarly as the men management but some roles were only for them: lovers, wives, companions. These last roles are very often linked with crimes and abuses inside of the militia life.

The group called FARC (Revolutionary Armed Forces of Colombia), have been a cruel reality in Colombia lasting 50 years until the peace treaty in 2017. The internal war between the FARC, which are inspired in the Social Communist ideology, and the Developed Governmental Armed Forces let more than 220 000 dead in the last five decades of the bloodily pages of the Colombian history. The FARC began it existence on 1961 when Manuel Marulanda Velez who was the PPC leader proclaimed the “Marquetalia Republic”. At that act, the government replies with heavy violence in the intent of suppressing the Marxist Leninist movement. This story will be repeated for the next 50 years, in which the Farc tried to be the people’s voice and the government tried to guarantee justice and security to the people.

The Women was not involved at the begging of the war. The war was a kind of family war so the rebels use to live in their own families and so there was not need of women as portents or else. Later on there was need to increase the number of the FARC members and some of the leaders propose to involve even women. Marualnda was contrary to that idea saying the woman would not able to cover the war tasks. At the end the conclusion of the debate was to involve women in the revolutionary cause, bit initially they cover only roles of house holding duties at the service of the men combatant. Gradually the women show that their were also capable as men and so they started to assume other roles and other duties, but never in the central secretariat of the FARC.

There are many women ex-combatants that after the peace treaty openly speaks about the militia life and their situation during the war. Most of the time the different testimonies agree into narrating the sexual exploitation to which their had been object from behalf of their own companions and moreover by their own superiors. Today these women are confined in a camps of transition and reeducation trying to manage the pass experiences and trying to change mentality as part of the process aimed to reinsert all the ex-combatants in the normal social life. It is not easy due to the mental health issues and due to the discrimination from the male partners , family members and from the same society. The more discussed topic related with the FARC’s women

after the war is the role and the status as ex members of the group. Their rights and duties are including in the general agreements but is believed there is needed to be more specific regarding their condition of women.

One very hard page in the post conflict is the page regarding the women of the FARC who has been used as a “weapons” in the war and now in freedom and in safe areas they disclose the abuses which their had been victims inside of the Farc lines. In the legal frame of the Peace treaty there is not an adequate treatment to this topic. There is an unfair gap in the punishment of the comrades and commander males of the FARC who abuse of women in condition of subalterns or underage condition.

The Status and the Role of the women who belonged to the FARC’s changed since the conclusion of the peace treaty between the Government of Colombia and the FARC. However, gender continues to be a constant factor of discrimination in the way of participation in the process of peace and moreover regarding the reparation and punishment of the crimes against the FARC female members. Women are now in a weak position in which the future is a gap conditioned by the past. There are some urgent challenges in order to guarantee and enduring peace. There is need of an adequate Legal Frame and there is need of an efficient mental health care to support women victims and actors of the conflict. There is needed to help these women in to start a new life after the FARC’s life, this process of reintegration in the normal society is not easy, but is the key to really close this horrible page of the Colombian history.

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