



Security Forces, Environmental Protection, and Peacebuilding within the Human Rights and IHL Framework

Luis Antonio Martín Moreno
Diego Fernando Cano Cuevas
(Editors)

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LUIS ANTONIO MARTÍN MORENO
DIEGO FERNANDO CANO CUEVAS
(EDITORS)

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Luis Antonio Martín Moreno
Diego Fernando Cano Cuevas

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Preface

Major General Jaime Alonso Galindo

Former Director, Escuela Superior de Guerra "General Rafael Reyes Prieto"

As part of the research "Historical Memory, Peacebuilding, and Human Rights," the Master's Degree in Human Rights and International Humanitarian Law (MAEDH, by its Spanish acronym), together with the Military Historical Memory Research Center, formed a working group to address *security forces, environmental protection, and peacebuilding within the human rights and IHL framework*. The internal armed conflict has produced multiple adverse effects on the environment, both direct and indirect, which paint various scenarios to be considered.

Indeed, after the signing of the Final Agreement to End the Armed Conflict and Build a Stable and Lasting Peace between the national Government and the self-proclaimed Revolutionary Armed Forces of Colombia-People's Army (FARC-EP, by its Spanish acronym), there have been grave threats against the environment, the evolution of communities, and human security in various territories nationwide.

In addition to the legal considerations that transitional justice may take into account when investigating, penalizing, and redressing damages to the environment, we must examine the relationships between the environment, conflict, environmental peace, and the population's well-being to offer, in a potential post-conflict scenario, opportunities for intervention, preparation, and implementation of measures that favor peace and development in Colombia.

Introduction

Luis Antonio Martín Moreno
Diego Fernando Cano Cuevas

Escuela Superior de Guerra "General Rafael Reyes Prieto"

From an interdisciplinary and multidisciplinary perspective, this research examines the relationship between environmental protection, government policy on environmental matters, and the framework of contemporary conflicts. These conflicts are currently aggravated by new threats, such as the use of natural resources for war purposes, which poses unprecedented challenges for restoring environmental peace.

The results from a socio-legal argumentative discourse revealed problems inherent to the dynamics of the country's internal conflict and how they have direct and indirect effects, both regionally and nationally, on the notion of respect, guarantee, and protection of human rights and the natural environment.

Any direct impact on this environment, to the extent that it compromises communities, has a serious effect on human security. Therefore, it is imperative to recognize that contemporary conflicts are directly linked to criminal actors who do not share the view on the importance, values, and principles of respect for the environment; instead, they have learned to use it as a weapon of war for their benefit.

This research demonstrates the need to design policies and application strategies in the field of national defense. Environmental issues require legitimate, unified responses because they affect the variables of the strategic context.

We seek a comprehensive approach to these problems by designing strategies, building capacities, establishing the interrelationships between risk and threat factors, and specifying the convergence of criminal actors that aim to destabilize the country, control illicit economies, and create centers of criminal power around environmental degradation.

Research Problem

The internal armed conflict in Colombia, influenced by emerging, globalized, and transnational threats, has permanently damaged the stability of the ecosystem, violating the right to a healthy and sustainable environment. Multiple scenarios exist in which diverse heterogeneous agents take part, and the environment is impacted by conflict. Thus, the environment becomes a victim, either due to the harm caused by such agents or because it has been used as a resource for war in the context of excessive exploitation where humanity is put at risk.

Accordingly, the subject matter to be investigated is: What are the implications for human rights of the direct relationship between environmental protection amid the armed conflict and environmental peacebuilding in Colombia's territorial consolidation? From this question, we may understand the socio-legal argumentative discourse on protecting human rights and IHL concerning the direct effects on the environment and the implications for communities as a category that can impact multidimensional security.

To fulfill the research purpose, we adopted an interdisciplinary qualitative approach involving two knowledge domains: environment and law. The aim is to delve into and understand the environment as a victim, considering post-agreement scenarios and threats posed by the territorial control of illegal armed groups that continue to exploit natural resources illegally.

The research is descriptive in scope, so interpretive hermeneutics plays a predominant role in the analysis of primary sources or official documents, such as treaties on international humanitarian case law and specialized doctrines of human rights protection and domestic law bodies that designate the environment as a specially protected rights-holder in the context of armed conflict. Then, with secondary sources, we will demonstrate the effects on the environment caused by armed groups outside the law and the challenges these circumstances pose to consolidate territorial peace and security in all dimensions.

Chapter 1

Sustainable Development and Environmental Policy to Restrict Hydrocarbon Production*

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Abstract: This chapter examines, from a hermeneutic-interpretive approach, the implications of the unilateral restriction of hydrocarbon production to fight global warming. In the Latin American context, restricting the exploration and exploitation activities of such energy sources does not solve environmental degradation. However, it does affect government policies and the population's quality of life and welfare.

Keywords: Colombia; sustainable development; alternative energies; hydrocarbon policy; environmental protection; energy resources

* Book chapter resulting from the research project *The Role of Security Forces in Protecting the Environment in the Context of Armed Conflict and Peacebuilding from the Perspective of Human Rights and IHL* by the Historical Memory, Peacebuilding, Human Rights, IHL, and Justice Research Group of Escuela Superior de Guerra "General Rafael Reyes Prieto," categorized A by the Ministry of Science, Technology and Innovation (MinCiencias) and registered under code COL0141423. This points of view and results in this chapter belong to the authors and do not necessarily reflect those of the participating institutions

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Introduction

Sustainable development is a term that took hold mainly due to the actions of several movements and the work of international organizations. From this, we can ensure the means that, derived from the use of natural resources, satisfy their own needs without sacrificing those of future generations (Asamblea General de las Naciones Unidas, n.d.), considering the viability of alternatives through which this specific goal can be achieved. However, given the problems facing contemporary global society, the crisis caused by the coronavirus, the intensification of poverty, economic instability, and other circumstances that affect social development, the purpose and effectiveness of sustainable development can be called into question.

In 2015, the United Nations (UN), a key organization promoting sustainable development, established 17 goals. These goals primarily focus on reducing poverty, ensuring the right to health, improving well-being, and enhancing the quality of life through education, clean water, and employment opportunities. They also aim to promote economic development, address existing inequalities, work toward gender equality, achieve sustainable and social development, and strengthen environmental conservation efforts. Moreover, they seek to promote peacebuilding and institutional consolidation within member countries (Programa de las Naciones Unidas para el Desarrollo [PNUD], 2019).

These goals aim to address underlying issues that have persisted over the years and have been exacerbated by factors such as violence, conflicts, and the emergence of multidimensional threats. These issues do not just stem from poverty, the economy, or healthcare. They also involve new variables that could lead to increased needs for the population in the future. For instance, the rise in ecosystems affected by crimes like illegal mining and indiscriminate felling of trees

results in deforestation, negatively impacting wildlife, flora, and the well-being and quality of life of communities in those areas.

According to the UNDP, as part of the efforts made in favor of vulnerable communities identified worldwide and the fulfillment of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), the 2030 Agenda is promoting programs that aim to strengthen the environment to provide opportunities to vulnerable communities in member countries. Thus, it lays the foundations for economic, social, and environmental development, which at first glance shows that it is considering the present and projecting society into the future through donations and investments such as the one made in 810 environmental projects in 143 countries (Asamblea General de las Naciones Unidas, n.d.). This is directly consolidating sustainable development in the nations benefited. However, several doubts arise around this initiative; one is whether it will be possible to keep these projects afloat after the COVID-19 pandemic.

As mentioned, several SDGs pursued by the United Nations aim to improve individuals' quality of life. Still, with the onset of the coronavirus, many of these purposes and the strategies designed for each will have to be rethought or, otherwise, strengthened. For example, some of the purposes that must change their perspective of sustainable development are related to no poverty, zero hunger, quality of education, decent work and economic growth, industry, innovation and infrastructure, and sustainable cities and communities.

The above is seen as a consequence of the crisis unfolding around the economic slowdown that has affected countries, which, until the beginning of 2020, did not anticipate such high unemployment rates and, therefore, an increase in poverty levels. Among European countries, Spain showed discouraging figures regarding the migrant population, as stated by Oxfam Intermón—a non-governmental organization that works on reducing poverty despite global inequalities.

After the coronavirus pandemic and due to the economic crisis it caused, levels of poverty and unemployment never considered became a reality, revealing that in 2020 alone, according to RTVE estimates, up to 10.8 million human beings were in poverty. Due to the coronavirus, countries deemed “strong” now have needs other than those considered when proposing the SDGs, which could require rethinking the strategies devised so far for their achievement.

The outlook for South America is no different from Europe. It is one of the regions hardest hit by the virus, with high numbers of infections and deaths in countries like Brazil, which until September 23 had reported 426,996 cases and

139,000 deaths (Organización Mundial de la Salud [OMS], 2020) and Colombia, with 784,268 cases and 24,746 deaths, according to Ministerio de Salud y Protección Social (2020).

The emergence of the coronavirus represented more than a prolonged quarantine for around five months and a slow economic reactivation, at least for Colombia. It was the profound manifestation of poverty and other economic, educational, and healthcare problems, adding to the closure of several business sectors. This indicates that the pandemic's effects are unfavorable and are increasing the needs of the Colombian population.

Unemployment rates reached 20.2 % in July (DANE, 2020), indicating increased poverty as families had no purchasing power to supply themselves with food and essential items. Besides, a decrease in the quality of life was reflected in the increasing demands of the population that would gradually face the consequences of an economy with a downward trend.

Colombia, like other countries at global and regional levels, presented to public opinion the consequences of the pandemic and the transformation in the population's basic needs. The efforts governments make to meet these needs and stop other phenomena, such as insecurity, which has considerably increased in a group of cities headed by Bogotá, seem insufficient. Thus, we must consider whether the current objectives and strategies suggested are sufficient.

Economic crisis, underdevelopment, problems caused by natural disasters, and risks associated with climate change are also drivers of poverty¹. To provide successful solutions to the crisis, satisfy people's basic needs, and guarantee their well-being, it is important to achieve equanimity between the economy and ecology.

The environment is a *res communis* interest or heritage of humanity. Clearly, production mechanisms, technologies, and forms of economic growth compatible with the environment must be incorporated. Nonetheless, facing crises and precarious social situations in developing countries with environmentally compatible elements is a current dilemma when we are rising from a pandemic.

Research Problem

Governments, both globally and regionally, face the pressure exerted by the imbalance left by COVID-19 and its effects and the aftermath of global warming.

¹ Swelling of rivers, floods, heat and cold waves, extreme storms, droughts, fires, pests and forest loss, among others.

They must respond promptly, striving to improve well-being and meet the population's basic needs so that compliance with the SDGs does not harm the quality of life of society at large and the environment itself.

Latin American countries such as Colombia find their primary source of energy subsistence in subsoil natural resources, and the population's quality of life depends on them. Then, referring to subsoil resources, especially hydrocarbons, is to refer to the energy sources most used on a planetary scale: natural gas (21.4 %), coal (28.9 %), and oil (31.1 %) (Anglés, 2019, p. 297).

The paradox lies in the materialization of a balance between environmental protection, environmental peace, and the rational use of natural resources, helping minimize climate change's adverse impact and not criminalizing poverty as a binding factor in the cause-effect relationship of environmental degradation² (Martínez Alier, 1992). Therefore, adequate and balanced prevention alternatives must be sought so that they do not negatively influence the environment or human well-being, an issue where developing countries have been most affected, with the highest poverty and unemployment rates.

Policies aimed at achieving better conditions for populations dependent on natural resources to survive should be understood as environmental policies; for example, the person who heats their home using technological mechanisms. The applicability of an environmental policy, which seems to be an effective mechanism for environmental conservation, could be regressive as the individual should not have to look for coal or firewood to meet the urgent need for providing warmth for their family.

For a person, being unable to solve house problems is a condition of poverty.³ Then, it is about offering options to leave poverty aside, allowing people to access better living conditions and adequately satisfy basic needs. Development is sustainable if it improves the level and quality of human life while guaranteeing and conserving the planet's natural resources (Vergara & Ortiz, 2016, p. 37).

Therefore, it is possible to consider that the strategies implemented up to this point by the UN in the search for sustainability are undeniably challenging for nations and international organizations after the pandemic. The concept of sustainable

² In 1987, the Brundtland Report, prepared at the request of the UN, argued that poverty was a major factor in environmental degradation. It is worth noting that for the first time, this document brings to the fore the concept of sustainable development, defined as it appears in the introductory part by the United Nations General Assembly, on the basis of meeting present needs without compromising those of future generations.

³ If an individual cannot pay the costs of electricity, for example, they are poor; if a person requires subsidies for their education, there is a condition of poverty.

development should be oriented toward a broader group of needs that could previously be deemed low scope but today have loomed large in a transitioning global scenario. It will be necessary to rethink the goals, the 2030 Agenda, and even how sustainable development is being achieved as its effectiveness is questioned in a world that, due to a pandemic, needs new ways to survive.

There is an apparent contradiction between the urgency of minimizing climate change and the growing need for energy resources that ensure the continuity of modern life, translated into well-being and quality of life as social and economic rights that define life today, with the possibility of involving fundamental rights, given the strong connection with them.

This chapter, therefore, aims to delve into the effects of this approach and the viability of an environmental policy restricting the production of hydrocarbons. So, the question is: What is the convenience of limiting the production of hydrocarbons by Governments to confront global warming and achieve environmental peace?

This approach to the problem requires addressing the hypothesis of its inconvenience. Two elements are explored: the impact of the restriction on hydrocarbon production as a unilateral government policy on the respective state's public finance versus its effect on climate change and the population's energy needs concerning hydrocarbon production. Following this line of analysis, we conclude this chapter by exploring the alternatives and their relationship with the restriction on hydrocarbon production as a government policy.

Working Hypothesis

Among the challenges involved in building and consolidating environmental peace infrastructure, the existence of a strategic advantage to counteract the ecological crisis can be questioned, as there is a marked dependence on hydrocarbon derivatives throughout Latin America for the social well-being and subsistence of communities. Executively suppressing its usefulness in developing countries with few resources and where the costs of alternative measures exceed the State's capabilities for their implementation could be detrimental to the environment and the population's quality of life and well-being. This is a real challenge. It will not be easy to contribute to the joint global effort, which is also costly when dealing with alternative energies.

Theoretical Framework

Negative Environmental Peace and Ecological Imbalance

Multiple socio-environmental factors shape the notion of environmental peace in the post-agreement to end the conflict and future post-conflict scenarios. For instance, environmental policies, the enactment of laws, and citizen participation in environmental decision-making may affect an individual's humanity, welfare, or even relationships with economic growth.

Notably, addressing opportunities to contribute to peace is incumbent upon everyone. There is not only the co-responsibility of the State and its institutions but also of key stakeholders, including civil society and those who participate directly or indirectly in these dynamics of conflict within a territory (Martín, 2020).

Building environmental peace is often associated with antagonistic interests, inequality, and exclusion in these circumstances. Ide (2021) states that the negative impact of building environmental peace is predominant. While it is not greater, it may result in inequality or discrimination as there are probable contexts for the appearance of the so-called *dark side* and the worsening of conflicts when building the structure of a peaceful environment. In agreement with Ide, it is not inappropriate to affirm that using strategic natural resources such as oil, natural gas, or other minerals paves the way for peace and the creation of sustainable livelihoods.

The above is a paradox in building environmental peace since it will be somehow marked by adverse effects, as noted in the conduct of this research. Understanding points of balance between dependence on natural resources and environmental management helps counteract ecological crises and build peace. Appropriate strategies must be sought to review the effects of the hydrocarbon restriction policies in Colombia. The possibilities of tackling the issue of peaceful environmental management in the best way must be pondered, thus avoiding adverse effects that violate human rights and serve as a smokescreen for antagonistic interests of the dark side.

According to the theoretical approach to the damaging impact of environmental peace and the enhanced governance of natural resources associated with environmental protection, peacebuilding, and welfare, a potential scenario could favor international commercial interests without improving people's quality of life.

For example, an obstacle to solving or addressing the non-international armed conflict (NIAC) in the country has been illicit crops, its most important method of financing. Food assistance, production projects, technical support, and even financial aid from the State were considered to attack this center of gravity after the peace accords. Consequently, the Comprehensive National Program for the Substitution of Crops for Illicit Use (PNIS, by its Spanish acronym), which became a cornerstone for undermining illicit economies, especially the illegal cultivation of coca plants and other crops, and providing the peasant population with more sustainable livelihoods in the face of rural poverty, was not entirely practical (Vélez & Lugo, 2021, as cited in Ide, 2021). Greater coca production, increased felling of forests for planting, and continuous environmental pollution in those territories due to the use of chemicals were observed.

The October 2022 report from the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC), which summarizes the results of coca cultivation in 2021, states:

In 2021, coca cultivation reached a historical high level in Colombia, breaking the downward trend of the last three years. Also the potential cocaine production reached a historical record high, following the upward trend since 2014. (UNODC, 2022, p. 15)

The findings have yet to show consensus between environmental peace, ecological balance, and welfare since these achievements have been limited and insufficient. Ide (2021) distinguishes six potential adverse effects of environmental peacebuilding management: 1) putting the political problems implicit in (armed) conflicts in the background; 2) involuntary displacements that lead to the destruction of social fabric and poverty; 3) escalation of the conflict; 4) discrimination; 5) loss of confidence in state institutions and the legitimacy of their actions, and 6) looting of natural resources.

Methods

The hermeneutic approach adopted for this research—located in the understanding of the reality studied and the perspectives and experiences of the social actors involved—becomes the basis of the interpretive paradigm and qualitative epistemology to achieve the stated objective. It is understood that everything must start from the contextualization of reality, a reality marked by behaviors,

knowledge, and attitudes shared by individuals in specific spatial and temporal contexts (Bonilla & Sehk, 2005).

The study of human and sustainable development, such as the recognition of and respect for environmental rights, socioeconomic sustainability, and, of course, the social balance necessary to get out of the current situation (poverty) and improve the well-being of the population, is a unique matter subject to interpretation and analysis. Therefore, the method used throughout this academic work has been a simple case study. According to Stake (1999), it involves the study of the particular and complex nature of a specific and singular issue, going beyond the understanding of such a reality in important circumstances.

We used document analysis techniques, taking into account official documentation from international organizations and studies and research published nationally and internationally, to understand the context and assess the existing relationship between environmental peace, environmental protection, and the population's well-being in a region where conditions of underdevelopment prevail, such as Latin America. The implications regarding environmental policies of restriction on the production of hydrocarbons at the regional and local levels should be established by contrasting environmental peacebuilding, ecological balance, and human well-being.

The semi-structured and group interview with academic experts on the subject, such as teachers and other educational actors, was also employed to investigate their opinions, experiences, and knowledge. Convergent conceptions are extracted in two senses: a) environmental governance and management and b) peace and the population's well-being.

Results

Disadvantages of Restrictions on Hydrocarbon Production as an Environmental Policy

Multiple trends have defined the 21st century. One poses important challenges regarding humanity's future and climate change's acceleration. This phenomenon can be described as the worsening of environmental conditions as a result of global

warming, being indisputable both its existence and the efforts of the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) to prevent it, let alone the intervention of climate law, also known as *Klimaschutzrecht* (Oschmann & Rostankowski, 2010, p. 60).

In turn, global warming refers to the increase in the planet's temperature, which can modify weather patterns and cause more intense and unpredictable winters and summers. Such conditions are associated with the rise in environmental catastrophes that are disruptive to social life. The destruction of towns and crops and the alteration of climate predictability worry governments and institutions at the national and international levels.

Many efforts have been made to modify this sequence of events. There has been a particular interest in reducing people's impact on climate change associated with their consumption of products that generate greenhouse gases in the atmosphere, favoring the reduction of hydrocarbon consumption within the statements of various political institutions.

Our world is also deeply addicted to goods that use enormous amounts of energy. Thus, humanity's growth is accompanied by the need to generate this energy. There is also a growing demand for these products today since petroleum derivatives are a substantial energy source for humanity.

The 21st-century world is experiencing an important contradiction between the need to reduce climate change and the growing need for energy resources that allow the continuity of modern life and the comforts that define it. Various governments are concerned about solving these problems, and some have chosen to take measures to reduce the production of fossil fuels.

Any advance in the creation of possible energy sources constitutes hope that can resolve the contradiction toward environmentally friendly and sustainable development. However, alternative energy sources are expensive since the manufacture of these artifacts usually requires challenging materials. Furthermore, they may require inputs whose mining extraction is also polluting, and recycling their materials is currently expensive.

This depiction has not been enough to dissuade some governments from adopting policies to reduce hydrocarbon production. Many consider that this path could be the most convenient to defeat climate change, adding to the environmental dilemmas of peacebuilding. Still, the associated risk requires exploring the matter, considering the complexity of the scenario described.

Relationship between the Theoretical Assumption of Economic-Environmental Sustainability and Sustainable Development

Paradoxically, society is never limited exclusively to sociocultural relationships between individuals as social groups but rather systematically interacts with the natural world, whose inputs become part of the broad productive chain in the same economic process for social satisfaction of needs and desires for well-being (Schandl, 2002).

The theoretical-conceptual approach of economic-environmental sustainability from a comparative perspective allows us to fulfill the purpose of the research, provided that the discussion on the notion of sustainable development, in the sense of the environment as a rights-holder, is compatible with the theories of economic growth and productivity predominant in modern history.

Accordingly, inclusive and sustained economic growth can drive progress, create decent jobs for all, and improve living standards (Varela, 2021, p. 108) so that natural wealth, the environment, and welfare are not jeopardized. This does not mean that we depend uncontrollably on subsoil resources, but that we no longer will. This would have serious repercussions for countries in poverty susceptible to dependency, such as Colombia, since it does not solve the environmental problem unilaterally but can be regressive when such alternatives may be too costly and inviable for a dependent and poor population, moving away from the probabilities of the lasting use of natural resources.

It should be noted that addressing such a notion of sustainable development must clarify the perspective of the transformation process. Following Pujol (2003), resource stewardship, investment direction, and channeling of technological development and institutional transformations are determining factors for improving economic potential and, of course, satisfying human needs in present and future times.

Societies establish differential relationships with their environment in a particular way. This results from the alternation in the varied styles of development, modes of production, and forms of appropriation, use, and utility of livelihoods derived from the natural ecosystem to meet needs. Nonetheless, catering to needs would represent a dichotomy between the concept of growth and the meaning of development.

Then, it is necessary to differentiate the notions of *growth* and *development*. The first concept involves physical expansion (increased production, gross domestic

product [GDP]); the second, improvement capacities regarding the quality of life and the satisfaction of socio-personal needs in healthcare, education, culture, housing, and other social aspects (Meadows, 1993). This conceptualization shows a broader, more qualitative meaning of development, focused on the perception of individuals' well-being and quality of life. In contrast, the notion of growth is a rather quantitative measure.

Societies can sometimes experience significant economic growth but not noticeable development. Conversely, development does not mean substantial increases in capital accumulation or greater financial availability. On that account, convergence for the balance between growth and development revolves around the notion of sustainable development, seeking the integration of these two dimensions. Sustainable development inclusively promotes economic growth in harmony with the duty of protecting the environment and contributing to improving human well-being.

Griffin (1973) called the significant changes in the conception of development "the rude awakening." Indeed, he referred to the world requiring a broader view of development to reach an international, global, and even planetary dimension—a view that sponsors economic equity and the investment of resources in society to attain a quality of life for humanity and the earth (Griffin, 1973).

Understood as a synthesis of qualitative approaches in economic, environmental, and sociocultural dimensions (Calatrava, 1998), *development* must be characterized by comprehensiveness. Of these dimensions, one of the most outstanding is caring for the environment, which comes together with a burning issue: the need to progressively change years of extractivist economies based on hydrocarbon exploitation to sustainable economies as a qualifying and defining determinant of "development." This dimension initially had a clear environmentalist sense that, of course, it still possesses, to such an extent that two meanings of sustainability have been proposed:

- *Strong sustainability*, which defends development as long as the stock of natural capital is maintained and secured.
- *Weak sustainability*, which considers it sufficient to preserve the global capital stock (Calatrava, 1995, pp. 309–310).

As Chesney (1993) argues, sustainability can be regarded as an ecological concept and even as the capacity of an ecosystem to maintain the vitality of its components and operating processes over time (p. 81).

In Colombia, with a new administration since August 7, 2022, a strategy has been set out through the approval of several reforms in the first year of government to change the unsustainable extractivist economic model to sustainable entrepreneurship and equity. Overarching land and tax reforms and the continuity of the peace agreement are sought. The bill also creates an agrarian and rural jurisdiction (Ramos & Vázquez, 2022).

Domínguez (2022) points to a lack of financial sufficiency in Colombia's tax system. It creates a gap in taxation, with a GDP that does not cover the social spending necessary to maintain equity levels. This situation must be rectified if the country expects to stop depending on extractive economies such as mining and oil. The tax reform is thus justified, which, together with the land reform, will address the "structural heterogeneity" of the Colombian economy.

In short, the country's economic and social context will indeed change, but it will take longer than planned and possibly be chaotic for its growth needs. External and internal factors divert the attention of regional and local authorities, which undoubtedly play an indispensable role in introducing the reforms pushed through by all levels of government.

Discussion

Restriction on Hydrocarbon Production as a Unilateral Government Policy

During the United Nations Climate Summit in 2019, a young Greta Tunberg delivered a speech in which she called for reducing hydrocarbon production to zero to mitigate global warming and save the world from the coming environmental catastrophes. The teenager's words made a great impression, and her video went viral. Over time, the prevailing discourse has revolved around the need to diminish the environmental footprint, decrease the consumption of oil and derivatives, and take measures to produce these fuels. Its explicit purpose is to reduce emissions to points where the planet's natural capacity allows the stability of the biosphere to be recovered.

Following these recommendations, it is unsurprising that some governments have suggested oil exploration and extraction restrictions. Pressure from NGOs, added to campaigns announcing the need for a change in production dynamics, has been present for decades in the popular sphere.

Therefore, it is advisable to discuss the proposal from the environmental and budgetary perspective of a State that can implement this idea. Firstly, we must mention the size of the problem. The world actually consumes large quantities of oil and coal. In Colombia alone, oil production has substantially impacted the GDP and the country's high tax revenues and exchange market (López et al., 2013).

Petroleum refining generates various derivative products, such as lubricating oil, asphalt, sulfur, pitch, petroleum coke, rubber, wax, polyvinyl chloride, detergents, diesel, solvents, fertilizers, kerosene, carbon black, paraffin, plastic, and polyethylene. Coal can be divided into four categories: anthracite, bituminous, subbituminous, and lignite.

Replacing oil and coal in the consumer product line takes work. These elements are involved in multiple products and are particularly necessary for energy generation. Recycling can help extend the use of products made from oil and coal. Still, it represents a level of global commitment and requires a substantial investment in processing plants for recoverable waste.

Coal energy use is equivalent to more than a quarter of the world's power generation, second only to oil and closely followed by natural gas. These three energy sources provide more than ninety percent of global energy. Hence, the policy of ending hydrocarbon production becomes difficult to implement, given the size of the generation gap that it would create in global needs. At the same time, the manufacture of products that use alternative forms of energy entails generation risks that do not facilitate the process of a political decision in this direction. The energy shortage that the exclusion of hydrocarbons would cause must be thought of realistically, under penalty of suffering tight restrictions on the productive capacity of humanity, with the undesirable economic effects that not resolving the issue in time would bring.

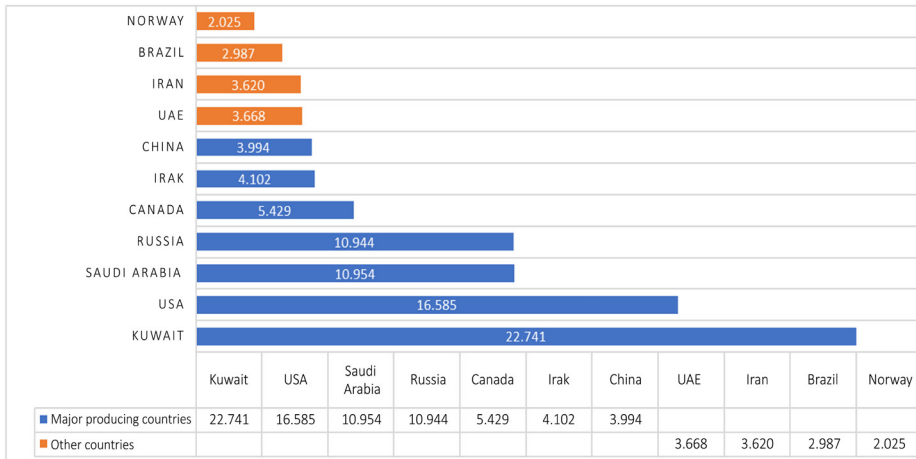
Substitution by renewable energy sources is a bigger problem for a global society and more complex from a national perspective. An issue added to this consideration is the actual impact of unilateral decision-making since a country's reduced production would have a negligible effect compared to the dimensions of the global hydrocarbon market.

Countries positioned as globally important oil producers, such as the USA, Russia, or Canada (Figure 1), would need a significant enough share to unilaterally decide to reduce their production and make a visible impact on climate change.⁴

⁴ The current members of OPEC led by Saudi Arabia are Algeria, Indonesia, Iran, Iraq, Kuwait, Libya, Nigeria, Qatar, United Arab Emirates, and Venezuela.

That being the case, effectively addressing this situation requires concerted actions on the part of producer and consumer countries, working together to reduce greenhouse gas emissions and promote clean and sustainable energy sources.

Figure 1. World Ranking of the Leading Oil-producing Countries in 2021 (in thousands of barrels per day)

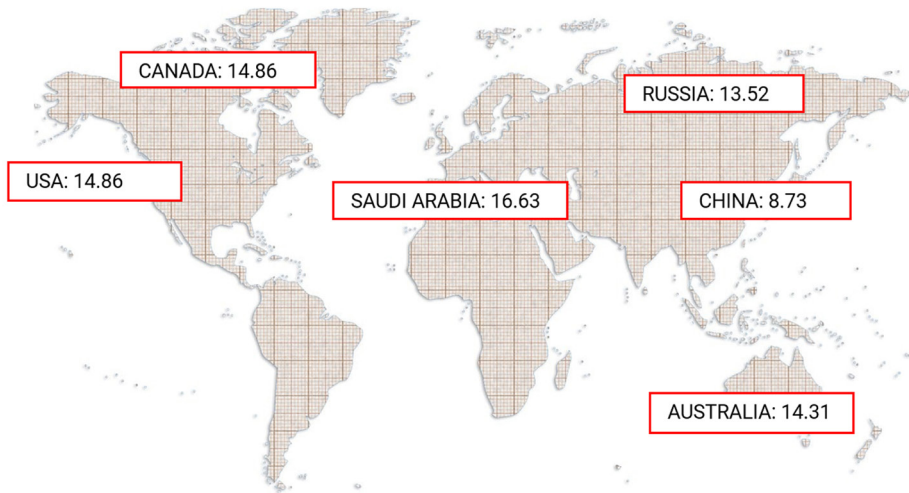


Source: Own elaboration based on Fernández (2022).

Notably, if any of the leading producers (countries in blue) suddenly ceased production, the international impact on the prices of crude oil derivatives would increase substantially. Good evidence of this effect is the invasion of Iraq by a US-led coalition from March 20 to May 1, 2003, with the consequent increase in the price of oil. It went from USD 25.50 per barrel of Brent oil to an estimated increase of 74 % between June 2003 and March 2005, as established by the International Monetary Fund (IMF), compared to an actual price increase of 185 % during 1974 and 158 % between June 1978 and November 1979 (Isbell, 2005).

The relative weight of the pollution caused by hydrocarbons from developing countries is minimal, such that the suspension of production by a single country constitutes an incipient effect at a global environmental level. Industrialized countries are the main emitters of CO₂. For example, the USA, China, and Russia are among the top polluting countries that emit CO₂, as are India and Japan. In this ranking, developed countries are the most polluting globally (Figure 2).

Figure 2. *Tons of CO₂ Emissions Per Capita 2021*



Source: Authors' elaboration based on Muntean et al. (2024).

Although such impacts related to climate change are perceived globally and locally, local solutions do not imply local effects due to the interaction of climate systems from all regions around the world. Therefore, a unilateral effort against climate change is insufficient, and a global endeavor is required to produce significant effects if the measure is appropriate. However, from an economic point of view, the unilateral cessation of hydrocarbon production profoundly impacts the society that makes such a decision. Firstly, the fact that the triad of oil, coal, and natural gas are the primary sources of energy worldwide gives them a strategic position for the development of society. The national budget relies upon the state's income from these elements. In such circumstances:

The mining production of hydrocarbons and power generation at the national level has implications for foreign investment flows, exports, income, and taxes such as royalties, income tax, and wealth tax. Locally, such production gives rise to production chains, creates jobs, transforms the dynamic use of territory and other local resources, and collects taxes and subnational contributions that are important for the finances of territorial authorities. (Ministerio de Minas y Energía, 2018, p. 5)

Stopping the exploration and exploitation of these resources will significantly reduce an economy's tax revenues. Ergo, the government's ability to promote various policies, development, social plans, and peace would be interrupted.

Indeed, the outlook does not have to be pessimistic. At a global level, any initiative aimed at energy substitution would be a favorable option. Nevertheless, the proposal's viability imposes two requirements: the involvement of a significant part of the international community and the promotion of a low-cost substitute system to allow its economic sustainability. In these circumstances, the first requirement is tied to the banality of local implementation to face a global problem. The second comes from the high prices of alternative systems and the environmental cost incurred in extracting the required materials.

Locally, implementing alternatives to hydrocarbons can bring industrialization and reduced fuel prices. These measures could be helpful in the development of remote areas where fuel is too expensive for their residents, i.e., places that are so distant and abandoned that they are ideal for illicit activities or public order disturbances, where the same population would defend itself or adapt to the context (Kaplan, 2022). Reducing energy costs can improve living conditions in such places, making it more difficult to obtain fuel as a precursor for illicit activities. This last consideration is speculative about the dynamics of illegal fuel markets or the extent of its use for processing illicit drugs.

Finally, it is about understanding that the unilateral restriction of hydrocarbon production involves undesired effects and that the good intentions that may be had for its implementation will not necessarily attain the goals pursued. Besides, it has an undesirable impact on a sovereign state. Cutting oil production may imply energy dependence on other economies, resulting in the loss of independence. The population's living conditions could only be met by turning to foreign governments that, when negotiating energy transfers, would gain leverage to demand strong conditions from the government of the requesting country.

For this reason, the loss of energy independence may imply the loss of political autonomy, that is, less sovereignty for the State, even though energy independence is not always a synonym for energy security (MINEM, 2016, p. 10).

Energy Needs of the Population Regarding Hydrocarbons and the Urgency of Environmental Peace

We live in a world with limited resources and a growing need for inputs. Therefore, energy needs are a clear imposition of modern life (Calabrese et al., 2022). In such

circumstances, the growing dependence on everyday items that require electrical energy for their operation forecasts greater energy resource consumption in the immediate future.

Now, the use of means of transport, more friendly habitats for human life, and improved access to information are growing needs in a population eager for efficient energy services. Depriving the population of sufficient stable energy becomes a formidable obstacle to their life plans. In the medium term, it can imply a substantial deterioration of living conditions and the environment, leading to aggravated precarious situations (Segura et al., 2018). Although efforts to provide a stable mechanism to serve energy to the population are desirable, like environmental peace, they are difficult targets.

As mentioned, hydrocarbons are humanity's primary energy source, and due to their environmental effects, replacing them in the power generation chain is sensible. Still, the dimensions of the hydrocarbon share constitute an enormous problem within energy generation policies (Domínguez, 2022).

It is consistent to point out that mechanisms that transfer the need for hydrocarbons to the end consumer can be implemented. This is particularly simple, although it can be costly when standards are set that reduce the consumption of fossil fuels or derivatives and prohibit combustion engines. While effective in reducing consumption, these measures transfer the problem to power generation systems (Garrido, 2020).

A country can produce energy in different ways, including nuclear power plants, hydropower plants, wind farms, and photovoltaic power stations. Of these, thermal power plants require special attention in the energy-consuming production line.

A policy restricting combustion consumption is of little use when the population's power generation is provided by a set of thermal power plants. If these plants produce energy by consuming vast quantities of coal, oil, or gas, is the population's effort not to use electric vehicles or electric heating worthy? The substitution must be oriented at the different links of the energy chain, a structural change aimed at decarbonization (Hernández & Céspedes, 2020).

Meanwhile, imposing restrictions on the use of vehicles with combustion engines on the population can be contradictory if there are no efficient alternative mechanisms for their transportation needs. Ignoring the individual's reservations regarding their view and standard of living is arbitrary (Lotero et al., 2019). If it is a matter of changing the personal transportation system for a collective mechanism, such as public transport, talking about efficiency implies divergent levels of

analysis: predictability, safety, comfort, health, and price. These considerations can be weighed concerning citizens but respecting their condition as fundamental public policy targets.

It is not about ignoring the importance of the environment but understanding that decisions must be based on consensus building and the design of appropriate responses regarding policy-making and government programs for environmental peace, well-being, satisfaction of needs, and the population's quality of life.

Citizens must be seduced by proposals that make allowances for their approach since they have different considerations to meet their needs, build trust among related parties, and highlight advances in environmental cooperation and natural resource management. Consumers' substitution of hydrocarbons involves offering efficient and reliable systems that make the energy transition more friendly, being coherent and efficient in the policies for modifying generation systems so that it is not a transfer of pollution but a complete structure that helps create a healthy environment and guarantees the population's well-being and quality of life.

Along with the above comes the process of building environmental peace, understood as the motivation to promote peaceful and sustainable relationships between all living beings. This means going beyond the human/nature division, establishing cooperative relationships around natural resources, and understanding that if the environment is related to the conflict, so is peacebuilding (Alvarado et al., 2022, p. 1904).

Thus, accepting the governance of natural resources in a manner that is transparent, balanced with the demands of the population and the urgency of a healthy environment, and egalitarian among the stakeholders involved in building the infrastructure of environmental peace is to offer sustainable management that is more obvious to conflicts in order to rebuild emotional and community bonds. The evidence examined from the *dark side* shows the unfeasibility of a policy of reducing hydrocarbon production by assuming that care for the environment is guaranteed and conditions of well-being and quality of life are provided to communities. This approach must be much more careful and consensual in a way that aims to rebuild emotional bonds in the individual and within communities, armed groups, and the State itself.

The consensus must exist, as it "reinforces rebels' perception of the credibility of the government's commitment to the peace process" (Keels & Mason, 2019, p. 46). Alleviating tensions that may arise between the needs of the post-agreement to end the conflict, the environment, and the population's well-being in Colombia,

where a development model firmly based on a mainly extractive economy persists, is imperative at present. Virtually, the roles of each actor committed to building environmental peace must be deeply addressed to know their degree of involvement in the process.

Comprehending the climate-conflict link, especially concerning armed groups, opens the possibility for measures that even improve peace (Abrahams, 2020). A proactive approach to climate and conflict in all its contexts allows us to guide the relationship between natural resources, conflict actors, environmental peace, and welfare.

Alternative Energy Sources and Difficulties in Replacing Hydrocarbons for the Population's Well-Being

As noted, the global warming crisis points to the convenience of replacing hydrocarbon production in power generation with sustainable alternative sources that provide a reliable, environmentally friendly, and financially accessible service for users.

Firstly, reliability means that the service can be provided stably and not be subject to outage risks. So, the service must be sustainable and constantly flowing. The provision of systems that depend on the intensity of sunlight, the strength of the wind, or the accumulation of water raises serious doubts. The intensity of sunlight is variable, causing interruptions in power generation. As a result, the system requires accumulating mechanisms that increase costs.

If the intensity is reduced due to environmental factors or any other cause, power outages are a very likely consequence. The same applies to systems that depend on wind energy since wind patterns may vary and are, to some extent, unpredictable. Concerning hydropower plants, rainfall patterns can be variable, as shown by the El Niño or La Niña phenomena. That is why having various forms and alternative generation plants can help solve the problem to the extent that the deficiencies of one system can be remedied by another, which requires reliable and safe interconnection systems.

Secondly, environmentally friendly refers to the cost-benefit analysis when using the system. The environmental cost can be understood as *pollution*, and the benefit as *the required power generation*. Exploiting minerals such as lithium used in solar or wind energy generation facilities to manufacture accumulators and other components is particularly worrying (Vidal, 2019).

It is not environmentally friendly to discard hydrocarbons as an energy source and replace them with sources that pollute during extraction. In addition, solar and wind devices have a limited useful life, and recycling for reuse is currently so expensive that disposing of such elements primarily results in the accumulation of garbage and consequent pollution (Vidal, 2019). Therefore, it is advisable to conduct studies to investigate and develop new forms of recycling these elements.

In this context, the main objective is to make mineral processing cheaper and more efficient. Regarding hydropower generation in rivers, the environmental cost comes from selecting the place for its establishment. Dam construction is the most frequent form and requires flooding areas constituting fragile and valuable ecosystems. The consideration is finding places where such systems' damage is minimal (Vargas & Piñeros, 2020).

Lastly, being financially accessible is a requirement consistent with the costs of the substitution. An important consideration is the market prices of goods aimed at energy substitution. An electric vehicle can currently be purchased for USD 4,500, compared to a conventional car costing USD 1,000, even though the technical features are very similar. Moreover, the cost of changing electric vehicle batteries continues to be a significant expense for the owner of this type of vehicle.

Replacing a city's mass transportation may imply more expenses for its tax system, and its implementation may take time. A metro may be desirable, but its operation is subject to fiscal efforts, and its use depends mainly on the favorability of its fare for users. Similarly, mass transportation between cities can be carried out using electric trains, but constructing its infrastructure demands significant budgetary efforts from a State (Naranjo, 2019).

The only way to determine substitution difficulties is to explore some substitution systems in terms of consumption and production and the relationship between fossil fuel sources and alternative sources. Such solutions should be taken seriously and require a consensus that turns them into state policies rather than government policies so that they are not influenced by political changes and allow the continuity of these programs.

Conclusions

The political decision to restrict hydrocarbon production generally seeks to mitigate climate change and consequently favor the environment. This effort, however laudable it may seem at first, requires a much more careful approach. A process to

build environmental peace can be marked by adverse effects if there is no balance between the interests and needs of the stakeholders involved.

Although environmental peace tends to avoid violence and promote bonds of trust, the existing tensions between human dependence on hydrocarbons for their well-being and the dimensions of the climate issue lead to unilateral decision-making, producing unwanted adverse effects on that cooperative relationship between environment, conflict, and peacebuilding.

In principle, a measure to restrict hydrocarbon production negatively affects the development of a country like Colombia because it diminishes fiscal capacity by reducing royalty income from hydrocarbons. It also risks energy stability because replacing power generation sources is costly for the state and individuals; after all, there are few ways to reliably generate power for society. More importantly, it affects society's political autonomy by making it dependent on the energy availability of other states.

At the same time, a unilateral restriction on the production of fossil fuels does not have significant implications for climate change, so it is not the best solution to the problem without substantial international support.

These policies must be taken from a much more global standpoint. They must be accompanied by measures aimed at energy substitution in consumption, without forgetting that doing so executively can be deemed authoritarian by denying the democratic logic of inter-party dialogue.

Finally, replacing the hydrocarbon energy and production system is a program that must be considered along with the viability of alternative systems and the idea of reducing environmental damage, and some alternative systems have their ecological costs.

The path to confronting climate change is complex and involves not only one society but all of them. Local solutions are insufficient, and global efforts must be convened and studied, taking into account the complexities of the problem and emphasizing the implications of alternatives, under penalty of producing more destructive effects on our planet.

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Chapter 2

Impact of Illegal Mining on Sustainable Development Goals in Colombia*

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Abstract: This chapter examines the current environmental degradation caused by illegal mining (IM) in the Province of Chocó. It assesses the conditions of the riparian communities along the Atrato River and explores the impact of this crime on SDGs. Additionally, it highlights the efforts of the Military Forces, which works alongside these communities to protect the environment in the region. It is important to clarify that while IM may be viewed as a means of subsistence, it should not be conflated with the artisanal mining practices historically carried out by the Afro-Colombian communities living along the riverbanks.

Keywords: Chocó; Colombia; Military Forces; environment; illegal mining; SDG; Atrato River

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SECURITY FORCES, ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION, AND PEACEBUILDING WITHIN THE HUMAN RIGHTS AND IHL FRAMEWORK

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Introduction

This chapter analyzes the consequences of illegal mining (IM) on the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). The impact is reflected in the ecocide due to the exploitation of alluvial gold exploitation (EVOA, by its Spanish acronym), which violates the right to life of the riparian communities of the Atrato River. This phenomenon occurs in the country's rivers and directly affects the Afro-Colombian communities, which lack constant drinking water sources and must consume the waters of the rivers where these exploitations occur, preventing compliance with SDGs 1 and 6. The analysis will contribute to the discussion on ways to prevent and remedy the harm caused by IM in the Afro-Colombian community and the environment.

The SDGs reveal a reality in Colombia. Each region with a social problem linked to armed conflict, the transition from negative peace to positive peace, and the birth of new structural violence becomes a source for financing criminal organizations such as organized armed groups (OAG), whose multiplicity of illicit activities includes IM.

Mining activities in rivers, both within their channels and in their vicinity—flood terraces and banks in general—produce multiple negative impacts on the natural processes of sediment transport and the health of the complex ecosystems they sustain and very significantly affect the way of life and the well-being of the communities settled there. (CRPC, 2028, p. 48)

Actually, open-pit mining makes it difficult for Colombia to meet the SDGs over time. Due to its resurgence, there is great concern about EVOA, as noted between 2018 and 2020. This was established in the report prepared by the Colombian

Ministry of Mines and Energy, the US Embassy in Colombia, and the UNODC in 2020, a perception that negatively impacts SDG compliance.

This exploitation paradoxically occurs in provinces where the greatest crisis regarding the SDGs occurs, according to the 2020 report. With 87 % of the national total, exploitation is highly concentrated in Antioquia, Chocó, and Bolívar. Likewise, the trend focused on the municipal level prevails: 98 municipalities show EVOA on land (out of 1103 in the country), and 10 concentrate 53 % of the total: Zaragoza, Nechí, and Nóvita lead the municipalities with 22,190 ha, which represent 22 % of the national total (UNDOC, 2020). The surface mining phenomenon directly impacts SDGs 1 and 6, and there is no evidence of improvement or tools to mitigate the problem in the population unrelated to mining and exploitation often carried out by outsiders in the region. In addition, mercury and cyanide are dumped in freshwater rivers for alluvium mining using dredgers, dragline excavators, and suction pumps.

Colombia's purpose of ending multidimensional poverty and ensuring drinking water consumption has revitalized a sector of the State. Globally, the 2030 Agenda has been considered to need urgent compliance. Colombia's efforts are not few. In 2015, the SDG Commission was created to implement the SDGs with prospective planning methods that guarantee the inclusion of socio-environmental and economic matters in sustainable development programs or activities (Decreto 280 de 2015).

The creation of the Commission attempted to integrate all of the State's public policy to avoid differentiated scales between the progress of provinces. However, in a diverse country like Colombia, this research finds that, although progress in percentage equality was sought, the same diversity of provinces that make up the national territory prevents progress in equality percentages. Regarding the SDGs subject to this investigation, we recognize that they are even more ambitious to achieve since crime prevents so.

Ruling T-622/2016 and Problem

What is the negative consequence of IM for the SDGs, and how is the right to life of the Afro-Colombian communities in Atrato violated? The problem of these fundamental water sources for Chocó and its Afro community is that in Colombia, the Constitutional Court issued Ruling T622/2016, calling on the State to combat IM. Still, its basis was the care of the Atrato River, designating it as a rights-holder, representing a crucial case law advance for its conservation and tackling pollution.

By Decree 1148/2017, the Presidency of the Republic appointed the Ministry of Environment and Sustainable Development as a legal representative. It formed a collegiate body of guardians¹ under the Guardian Commission, comprised of a government representative and another from the communities.

This ruling establishes a precedent that urges the Colombian State to take concrete actions to prevent and halt the decline of water sources essential for the survival of entire communities. However, the measures implemented by the State appear insufficient, as the IM activities damaging the Quito and Atrato rivers continue to escalate systematically. Although the government's efforts have not been negligible—evidenced by a national initiative calling on various sectors and ministries to collaborate in saving the Atrato River—they still seem inadequate.

The current administration has diligently upheld the ruling regarding gold exploitation. However, the extraction of gold from the region's rivers has led to deoxygenation. Increased mercury production in the Chocó rivers has resulted in significant environmental problems, adversely affecting the health of local inhabitants who rely on gold mining from these water sources for their livelihood. The consequences of the relentless pursuit of gold have been visibly reflected in the health of those who engage in this activity daily.

It is essential that the ruling from 2016 is implemented before the degradation of the Atrato and Quito rivers progresses further, as this could lead to irreversible environmental damage for the area's inhabitants. The innovative aspect of this ruling lies in its ecological approach, which prioritizes the environment to protect both the Atrato River and the riverside communities. This ruling places ecology at the forefront:

The Chamber structures its analysis based on the case's complexity, resorting to the framework of the fundamental right to water, the protection of nature, food security, the physical, cultural, and spiritual survival of ethnic communities, and territorial and cultural rights. In its journey, and as a guide for the decision of this Ruling, the Court: i) addresses two cross-cutting concepts: ecocentrism and biocultural rights; ii) connects the protection of biodiversity and biocultural diversity with 24 international instruments and with the case law of the Constitutional Court; iii) focuses its analysis on the fundamental right to water, the right to food, and the territorial and cultural rights of ethnic communities; and then iv) establishes a framework of understanding of two essential principles: prevention principle and precautionary principle. (Gómez, 2020, pp. 23–24)

¹ Made up of 14 representatives of seven community organizations.

Regarding the problem affecting water sources of critical importance for that area of the country, the results of applying this ruling will be reflected in overcoming multiple issues aggravated by large-scale mining activity without legal authorization. The author of this investigation interviewed William Klinger, director of the Environmental Research Institute of the Pacific (IIAP, by its Spanish acronym), about the reason that led the Court to make the ruling:²

T. G. Rodríguez M.: How or from what perspective does the IIAP see the environmental damage this crime causes to our Afro communities in Chocó?
W. Klinger: I want to start by saying that most of the information provided by the communities that filed an action for the protection of collective rights that gave rise to the 2016 ruling was collected by the Institute through research. I particularly remember two robust investigations in the Quito River, one related to forest degradation and another to the mercury in fish, an element of the food chain that could result in human mercury exposure. We found mercury in 100 % of the fish and above the permissible exposure limit in more than 50 %. I think that the whole process started there. In addition, we had shown how feces contaminated the river, especially organic waste that went into the river without any prior treatment. Therefore, our research has focused on knowing the current state of the existing ecosystems in the territory, its causes, and the type of remediation that can address such causes and restore degraded ecosystems. From this perspective, using a participatory methodology that involved the main mining stakeholders, we undertook the research processes without ignoring that this activity had historically contributed to the material growth of the population. These processes led us to be part of the advisory bodies of the ruling and to draw up action plans with the Ministry of Environment for Order 5, which has to do with environmental issues, and with the Ministry of Agriculture for Order 7, which deals with production problems for food security while respecting the biocultural rights of the population.

The Colombian State committed to complying with the ruling. However, it is also a matter of the inhabitants, who must play an active role in this achievement since they were the ones who ensured that their rights were protected. As this ruling was a historic event, being the first of its kind issued by a judge in Colombia, the author of this investigation interviewed Darío Blandón Caicedo, regional director of the Administrative Department for Social Prosperity (DPS, by its Spanish acronym) in Chocó, to verify compliance:³

² Personal interview, Thursday, May 26, 2022.

³ Personal interview, 2022.

T. G. Rodríguez M.: Is the ruling that granted rights to the Atrato River being complied with?

D. Blandón C.: We should consider several elements. The ruling is not being complied with; national entities are not the only ones obliged. Territorial entities should not be forced. No more training is needed; communities are saturated with training. We need those resources that the Ministry of the Interior has... those many resources go to Black and Palenquero communities, to Indigenous communities. No more training; we need the regulations to be verified and the resources used for producing and planting. Apart from the Military Forces and the Prosecutor's Office organizing security, those resources are needed to grow crops. Until now, this money goes to the Atrato River, and people are worn out, resources are lost, and illegal mining continues. We must begin by saying, "No more strengthening meetings," but rather strengthen the farmers to plant again. Let the communities start producing again. The Victims Unit, the Ministry of the Interior, the Ministry of Agriculture... These strengthening meetings are total corruption; they are useless. I'm told: "Director, we don't want any more meetings." The Presidency convenes a meeting with the Ministry of the Interior and solves everything with the "strengthening." What would Chocó be without the presence of the Military Forces? The presence of Brigade 15 and Titan Task Force is terrific. Without this institutionality, Chocó would be an unviable region, mutating into a failed province. The Military Forces and the Police are the most critical institutions that Chocó has.

The official makes it clear that the work of the Ministry of the Interior, which is responsible for the State's enforcement of the ruling, needs to be corrected since it is not aimed at what the Court sought. The preservation of water sources, including the Atrato River, has, until now, been in the hands of the Military Forces, which has guaranteed the survival of vital water sources to fulfill SDGs 1 and 6 through reforestation and elimination of coca plants. The inhabitants must have the tools to participate directly in environmental conservation.

In addition to the social problems evident in the province, other factors arising from the degradation of water sources have to do with the health of the inhabitants. IM uses other minerals to extract gold and platinum, which are indiscriminately causing diseases in the population. Without distinguishing age or sex, the diseases arising from this illegal activity are increasing. If the population continues to depend on this activity, the province will be doomed to a health crisis, as the regional director states:

T. G. Rodríguez M.: What is the health condition of the Afro-Colombian communities? Is illegal mining affecting the population in this regard?

D. Blandón C.: I will tell you something, so don't be scared. Sit tight: "The health situation is dire." We have people with mercury in their blood. Many of my friends have to go to Medellín for treatments because the material used is deposited in the San Juan, Atrato, Andaguada, and Quito rivers, the latter being one of the most affected. People have mercury in their blood, and many have died from it. Some mercury is used for washing; the rest goes into the rivers. The fish become contaminated; the natives feed on the fish and become contaminated. Many people die of cancer because of this. The problem is serious now; the only secondary care hospital, San Francisco de Asís, is in Quibdó and was taken over by the Government... Corruption is rampant. People must go to Medellín and Pereira for medical treatments, and most people, ordinary people, must suffer the inclemency of a government-controlled hospital. It's been four months since the strike started. There are no supplies. Mortality is high, and there are many cases of cancer due to mercury, the material used to extract gold. All this material damages the rivers, and fish are contaminated by burned fuels already used. The farmer gets paid some money to help in such mining. Then, with that money, the farmer buys fish to eat. It's a conscious-unconscious suicide. It's a chicken and egg situation.

Accordingly, the health crisis is expected to increase. The situation of the population could be different if they returned to the commercial and agricultural activities that the province had been carrying out for decades. The Ministry of the Interior's programs cannot continue to be reduced to continuous training. We must also insist that with the willingness of the province's population, it will be possible to overcome the situation.

2021 EVOA Report

The report *Colombia. Alluvial Gold Exploitation. Evidence from Remote Sensing 2020* (UNODC, 2021) found that the situation is not improving; on the contrary, it declines each year compared to the previous one.

In the analysis of the 2020 national consolidated report, 69% (69,198 ha) of EVOA corresponds to illegal exploitation. Chocó and Antioquia stand out in this category, with 43% and 29%, respectively, of the national total for the category. Twenty-four percent (24,677 ha) have technical and environmental

permits, and Antioquia holds 78% in this category. Finally, the remaining 7% is in transition to legality (6,876 ha). Chocó and Antioquia once again stand out in this category, with 51% and 26%, respectively, of the national total for the category. The provinces of Valle del Cauca, Guainía, Caquetá, Putumayo, Córdoba, Cauca and Chocó have more than 80% of their EVOA on land in the illegal exploitation category. (UNODC, 2021, p. 42)

According to the report, Chocó and Antioquia remain at the top of provinces where EVOA exists in high percentages. As confirmed by visual inspection during fieldwork in Chocó and Bajo Cauca (Antioquia), there is an excessive growth of mining ponds where soil removal and outcropping occur. This exploitation is not alien to the damage caused by IM in rivers since it is conducted in river beds. Environmental damage is not significantly different from one another either since soil removal and deforestation are essential parts of the ecological damage caused by both types of mining.

The remote sensing tool used to obtain this United Nations report allows for a more global view of environmental damage and its dimensions. The figures provided are highly credible since the tool was implemented to obtain environmental results. Thus, the implementation of solutions could yield more and better results.

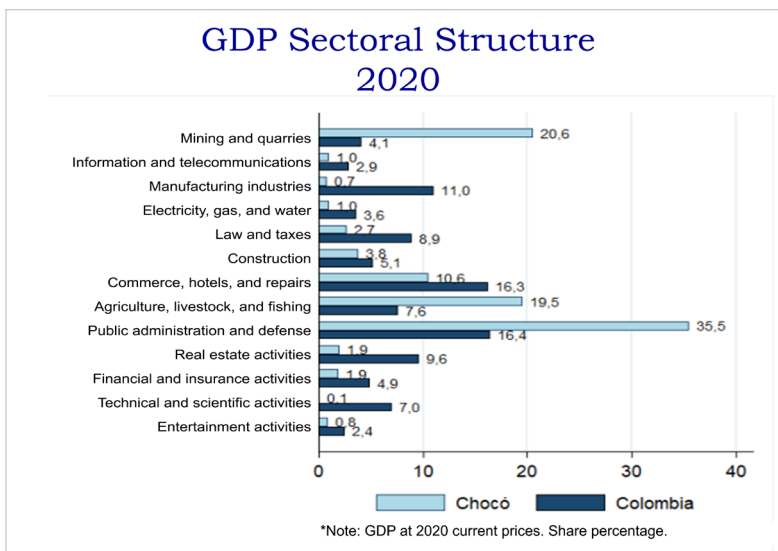
Through remote sensing tools, the monitoring model covers the detection of evidence of alluvial gold exploitation (EVOA). That is, evidence of exploitation in secondary deposits with machinery used to initially extract the material. In this context, it is necessary to specify that the type of evidence depends on when and how mining is performed. For mining developed in alluvial landscapes with machinery on land (backhoes), the evidence is characterized by changes in the surrounding landscape related to alterations in bodies of water, deforestation and the degradation of soils, among others. On the other hand, for mining in water with machinery, mining performed directly in water flows using dredges or settling basins leaves evidence based on the alteration of suspended sediments, which are detected through spectral indices. (UNODC, 2021, p. 25)

SDG 1 and Compliance by the Military Forces

To explore the poverty situation in the province, it is necessary to review some general aspects that the State has been working on as a result of what has materialized there during the last decades and taken root despite the presence of the State. However, this research confirmed through fieldwork that poverty in the

Chocó riverside areas is directly related to the arrival of criminal actors who have displaced the Afro-Colombian population from one of their historical livelihoods: ancestral mining. This activity is cross-cutting in the life of the Afro-Colombian communities in that area and, therefore, when they are displaced by outsiders who threaten and dispossess them, achieving SDG 1 is practically impossible in the medium term.

Figure 1. Labor Market Activities



Source: DANE (2024).

As shown in Figure 1, mining in the province far exceeds that in the rest of the country, where legal mining is mainly performed. IM has taken over the labor market; the regional director states that it is owing to the ease of obtaining cash. Due to their delay in bearing fruit, the residents have left aside basic food crops for subsequent sale.

Every four years, the relevant administration releases its National Development Plan (PND, by its Spanish acronym), which disaggregates investment for each province. No province or area of the country can be left out. Now, it is the responsibility of local authorities to distribute resources to reduce poverty, which in recent years has been the most crucial objective of each administration.

The share of Chocó in national finances has been meager, amounting to 0.45 % (MinComercio, 2024). Poverty in this province results in a GDP per capita of USD

2,277 (DANE, 2024), which indicates that a person in Chocó lives with just over USD 2.00. In addition, its inhabitants are subjected to an illegal activity that condemns them to a disease but brings them cash almost immediately after extracting the product from rivers. This province is going through a true environmental, economic, and health emergency.

Poverty is not the cause of crime, and there is no objective data to prove it. In the past, when economic opportunities and fields of action were scarce, there was a reason to swell the ranks of illegal groups. However, this is not the case today, either in Colombia or in Chocó, although there may be certain levels of extortion, theft, kidnapping, or membership in illegal groups. When the National Army, in fulfilling its legal duty, renders the machinery for the illicit extraction of gold and platinum useless, the residents who make a living from it start to commit these crimes (Table 1).

Table 1. *Crimes and Captures in Chocó, 2020*

Robbery	16
Bike jacking	12
Mugging	62
Burglary	9
Extortion	47
Damage to third-party property	7
Child exploitation	1
Subtotal	154

Source: Policía Nacional (2020).

Although Chocó is surpassed in these statistics by other provinces, such as Antioquia, Atlántico, Cesar, Cundinamarca, and La Guajira, these are more populated and have vastly different economic activities. Regarding the Military Forces' participation in the PND and how it is materialized in achieving SDGs, ending poverty is part of its functions. Of course, Chocó is not excluded from this initiative that goes hand in hand with the Military Forces.

The Defense and Security Policy encourages the insertion of multiple sectors, mainly due to the complexity of emerging threats and their surrounding network system in the international scene, where they also have minions (Barrero, 2020). It is a joint effort between state institutions to achieve economic recovery to overcome poverty. We insist that Chocó is not excluded from this. Reducing poverty in this area involves the national government and the local government firsthand. Therefore, the participation of the Alto Baudó mayors is vital.

Innovation is the field of development of ideas for new generations. For the present and future of Chocó, we must foster, promote, invest, and develop the economy, society, and the individual as a fundamental stakeholder. Despite everything, great, small, and even emerging powers have limited their future development to this sector of the economy, implying trust in the individual, especially in their creative capacity, in the way of assimilating failure and overcoming it, and in becoming successful. Different companies exist, including microenterprises (home-based businesses) and small companies covering a market niche but not growing outside of it. These companies can create jobs that keep residents away from IM.

While the national government has recognized natural resources as “strategic assets of the nation,” the effort to preserve them calls upon us all. Their recovery, restoration, and promotion should not entail the impossibility of exploiting them. In Chocó, it must be done not only from the perspective of charging individuals with a crime for carrying on an economic activity. The State is heading toward designing a sustainable economic security plan for this province. Since it is a critical area of national interest precisely because of its wealth, leaving it at the bottom of the initiatives is not the most advisable way to escape poverty. There are essential steps to take, and the Military Forces must be part of them.

Institutional commitment to environmental security demonstrates disengagement, especially when resolving fundamental problems. State institutions must pursue alternative conflict resolution mechanisms in all their actions, such as access to vital resources, sustainable development, citizen security, and justice (González, 2020).

Given the diversity of its forces, the defense sector could contribute the most to innovation in Chocó. Therefore, it would be the most robust platform for the country to develop and obtain results in this matter. Using armies as a source of innovation is not new; this has happened since World War I. The experience acquired by Colombia during the entire internal conflict reflects what soldiers, non-commissioned officers, and officers have learned in various internal sectors of the Military Forces. Innovations from the military sector should be fundamental for the country's development, job recovery, and economic growth within the territories.

SDG 6 and Compliance by the Military Forces

The participation of the Military Forces and the Police as leading actors in the prevention, protection, recovery, and sustainability of the environment allows

Colombia to advance this issue. The support of domestic legislation is also an essential means to achieve progress. The fight against the destruction of the environment in the country is not new. Two decades ago, Colombian legislation classified this conduct as a crime in the Code of Criminal Prosecution § 164, with sentences between ten and fifteen years in prison as well as fines between 5,000 and 30,000 monthly minimum wages for those who, under the internal conflict, use methods or means against the environment and cause severe, extensive and lasting damage (CPP, 2004).

Nonetheless, as this crime expanded throughout the national territory and became one of the primary sources of financing for residual organized armed groups (rOAG), governments needed to go further and form a Brigade Against Illegal Mining. Today, the Titan Task Force operates in Bajo Cauca, Antioquia, the Area of Operations of the 7th Division of the National Army. Permanent Directive 004/2017 provides functions for the institutions part of this brigade and gives particular instructions (Table 2).

Table 2. CGFM: Illegal Mining

Coordinate security with the National Police for operations against IM and related crimes. The relevant coordination protocols will be established and shared for these purposes.	
Contribute to information exchange mechanisms to launch operations against IM and related crimes.	
According to its duties, the CGFM Weapons, Ammunition, and Explosives Trade Control Department (DCCA) will:	1. Control explosives and accessories that may be diverted or produced for IM activities and related crimes.
	2. Together with the Chiefs of Staff of Territorial Brigades, inspect explosive storage facilities within brigades, battalions, and private company magazines. These must be verified as provided in current regulations. For these purposes, a scheme of scheduled and unscheduled reviews will be established for companies in prioritized areas.
	3. Control the delivery of explosives to individuals or legal entities with legal authorization to use them for industrial purposes. Military Industries (INDUMIL) will coordinate the marking, numbering, or special emblems to control the quantities for use. A file recording the quality, characteristics, and percentage of use of such materials must be implemented.
Make the necessary arrangements for the National Army and the National Navy to check for compliance regarding heavy machinery transport on the roads and waterways for which they are responsible.	

Submit a report to the MDN and the Public Security and Infrastructure Division on the minerals seized to date by the Military Forces in operations against IM and related crimes. This report must contain the location, date of seizure, and authority responsible for safeguarding the mineral, among others. The same applies to seized machinery and precursor inputs in IM.

Design an action protocol for the Military Forces regarding the seizure of minerals in operations against IM and related crimes.

Submit a semiannual report to the MDN and the Public Security and Infrastructure Division on the minerals seized by the Military Forces in operations against IM. This report must contain the location, date of seizure, and authority responsible for safeguarding the mineral, among others. The report and the seizure process must be audited by a firm external to the Colombian Military Forces. The same applies to seized machinery and precursor inputs in IM.

Support, according to its jurisdiction, the work of the National Police and administrative authorities.

Source: Own elaboration based on MDN (2017).

During the last two administrations, Colombia made legal progress in prosecuting this and related crimes. Thus, the National Development Plan 2014–2018 legally initiated the fight against this crime by the Colombian State, which is why the Brigade Against Illegal Mining (BRCMI, by its Spanish acronym) was created, becoming an organic part of the National Army (Provision 0013 of September 11, 2015 issued by the Army Command), approved by CGFM Provision 043 of October 19, 2015, and MDN Resolution 9925 of November 3, 2015 (EJC, 2016).

Regarding SDG 6, *Ensure access to water and sanitation for all*, there are not enough water resources to make sure it is met. In Colombia, this is not the reason for environmental degradation, quite the opposite. Colombia is rich in water resources. The problem lies in the exploitation by aggressive means that pollute rivers, making it impossible to obtain drinking water from them and even perpetuating extreme poverty in remote regions of the country. There is also the cost of returning the environment to its initial state, i.e., the cost of environmental recovery for each restored area, and the accessibility to these areas since they are generally in the power of rOAG. Thus, the Military Forces are responsible for the life and physical integrity of the residents of these population centers. The effort and commitment that this work entails on the State's part is not minor; on the contrary, it builds up complex environmental expectations to fulfill.

The participation of the Military Forces in environmental tasks has a long history in the country. It was embodied in Article 103 of Law 99/1993 (General Environmental Act), which determined that the Armed Forces (as the Military

Forces were formerly known) would protect the environment and renewable resources to defend national sovereignty. The need for security forces to support control and surveillance in mobilizing, processing, using, exploiting, and commercializing renewable natural resources was pointed out (§ 64 and 65). This link has become increasingly deeper [...] This policy defined, among other actions, that the Military Forces and the Police would support the National Environmental System (SINA, by its Spanish acronym); conduct scientific research to create knowledge about preserving the environment in maritime, river, terrestrial, and aerial scenarios; harmonize the infrastructure projects of the Defense sector with land use planning instruments and environmental management plans; and support actions to eradicate illicit activities in the country's ecosystems. (FIP, 2020)

To guarantee SDG 6, the Military Forces has BR 15 as the Area of Operations of the National Army in Chocó. It is territorially charged by Colombian law with preventing, preserving, and promoting the sustainability of water sources in that area. Among these water sources is the Atrato River. In a visual inspection, the author of this research identified the need to preserve this river since it is the "main road" of riverside communities. The Atrato River is a source of employment due to artisanal mining and the route that connects the population centers with the rest of the area.

The continued presence of security forces guarantees mobility through this water source, the region's main "highway." The security problems resulting from the IM are a considerable challenge for the State today. The National Army oversees operational efforts to combat IM through military and social strategies, consolidating them each time new intervention structures are identified. Such social strategies focused on production projects and inter-institutional relationships are being strengthened in Chocó, becoming a perspective of interest for the military institution and the province (Mejía, 2020).

Concerns about environmental degradation by the State in the last decade lie not only in IM and how it is performed but also in the difficulties of reversing the environmental damage caused, since it is incalculable, especially IM, which affects soil and water sources, as in some provinces. In 2020, the Police's Anti-Narcotics Monitoring System (SIMA, by its Spanish acronym) managed to detect approximately 6,330 points of EVOA, with the most impacted provinces being Chocó (40,780 hectares) and Antioquia (35,581 hectares), where damage is irremediable.

Defense Sector, the Guarantor of the Environment in Chocó

In Chocó, BR 15 has jurisdiction and is responsible for ensuring the safety of the communities in the area. It is also responsible for preventing, preserving, and sustaining the environment. In conjunction with the Marine Corps and the National Police, among other institutions legally in charge of preventing serious and irreversible environmental damage in the face of risk, according to the MDN, even if there is no scientific certainty about its occurrence.

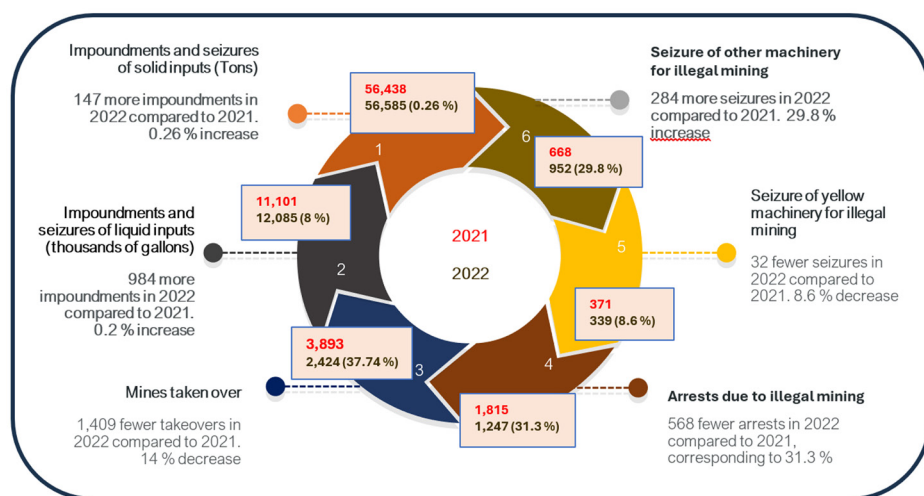
Environmental policy from the Defense sector is relatively new. However, it has developed rapidly, thanks to the commitment of the Colombian State to this matter. Regarding the Seventh Division, which, in this case, exercises jurisdiction over the province subject to this investigation, we verified, through fieldwork, the work it performs to protect the environment. The campaign began with Operation Artemisa to preserve water, natural resources, and everything related to biodiversity and has become a permanent agenda, including the deployment of joint, coordinated, inter-institutional, and multinational operations for its defense in protected areas (FF. MM., 2019, p. 18).

Colombia's efforts in environmental matters have been ambitious if we consider the challenge of stopping the degradation of both land and water ecosystems due to various criminal activities that materialize in Colombian territory. From drug trafficking in its beginnings to today's IM, the responsibility of the Colombian State in this matter is not small as one of the countries with the most remarkable diversity, and achieving objectives should be accelerated in public policy. Thus, in 2020, the MDN announced the creation of the Environmental Task Force to address the severe damage and serious violations that organizations such as OAGs perpetrate against water, all biodiversity, and the environment (FIP, 2020, p. 6).

The participation of the Military Forces and the Police has been fundamental in preventing and restoring environmental damage and in arresting criminals who constantly seek to benefit from crimes that harm the ecosystem. Results are delivered daily since the enormous wealth in Chocó, as in other areas of the coastal population in the Pacific, means that the interests of actors engaged in organized crime are always present. To mention just one of the results in April 2022, the 16th Marine Infantry River Battalion—assigned to the Joint Task Force Titan—and the National Army seized wood derived from deforestation, in Chocó and Antioquia. In just three days, they seized 147 cubic meters of wood (CGFM, 2022; Kienyke Regiones, 2022).

Thus, the Defense sector in Chocó is a primary guarantor of the environment against crimes directly related to IM and those concatenated with it in causing the environmental degradation of that area. Colombia's commitment to meeting the SDGs, in particular, 1 and 6, seems to be increasingly more profound in the sense of further protecting the environment. The operations then move on to a phase of permanence, thus becoming public policy. According to MDN (2022), Artemisa has turned into a permanent, comprehensive, and sustained campaign of security forces from the very issuance of Directive 008 on March 23, 2022. Nationwide, for example, significant progress has been made in the fight against IM, which is a factor in the pollution of water sources and deforestation, among others (Figure 2).

Figure 2. Fight against Illegal Mining (2021–2022)



Source: Martín (2023).

With Artemisa, the 59 National Natural Parks (NNPs) and the 62 Protected Areas in Colombia will be monitored by the Army and the National Police in coordination with the Division of Mounted Police and Rural Security. Thus, Colombia is tasked with building and expanding its capacity to maintain the viability of the country's natural ecosystem, making it one of the most important in the world. Nature in Colombia is a critical "asset" for the survival not only of natural species but also of the populations that live in areas targeted by organized crime and suffer the consequences of illicit activities.

Conclusions

In Colombia, there are delays regarding the fulfillment of SDGs 1 and 6. Usually, a country without organized crime can meet such goals promptly. However, in our case, the stagnation of crime and, in some cases, its increase will prevent the country from ending multidimensional poverty and guaranteeing drinking water in the areas delimited for this research. EVOA, instead of decreasing, has increased, as observed in the UNDOC report, according to which it grew by 10 % from 2019 to 2020.

The Military Forces' and Police's work is insufficient in light of the number of crimes committed by the rOAG in Chocó, on the margins of the riverside territories of that area. As this research confirmed, the accentuation of the sand banks caused by the removal of sand accounts for the sedimentation experienced by the Atrato River and other tributaries in Chocó. Similarly, the State's presence, limited to the Military Forces and the Police, restricts the potential for sociocultural and economic progress within the Afro-Colombian population.

Expanding protected areas in the country to reach 30 % of the territory does not guarantee environmental sustainability in the coming decades. Achieving the SDGs will be challenging due to various factors that hinder progress. As a result, the outcome of the 2030 Agenda for Colombia is expected to be negative. It is crucial for the State to consider the involvement of Chocó's civilian population in protecting the environment, as their participation could significantly enhance the prospects of achieving the SDGs addressed in this research.

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Chapter 3

Actions for Comprehensive Remediation of Deforestation in Colombia*

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Abstract: This chapter analyzes the main actions implemented in Colombia by the relevant entities to contain and even eradicate deforestation, which disproportionately impacts community development and produces environmental damage. Qualitative methods and documentary analysis establish an approach to the brutal reality of the national territory due to deforestation. We examine the most significant actions, point out their achievements, and conclude with some contributions to new policies, plans, and projects that comprehensively improve the lives of people inhabiting the affected areas.

Keywords: Colombia; deforestation; Colombian Military Forces; policies; environment; comprehensive remediation

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Introduction

The cruel reality of deforestation worldwide goes beyond any precedent of environmental damage we could have previously recognized. Particularly in Colombia, the excessive felling of trees is due to the different social and conflict dynamics in which we are involved. Between January and March 2022, deforestation increased by 10 % (FGN, 2022), which has not only environmental implications, often incalculable, but also social, economic, cultural, and other consequences. This demonstrates the correlation between the environment and community, with the damage it causes to the social fabric.

In Colombia, areas historically recognized as hubs for intensive tree felling possess strategic characteristics that have enabled criminal groups to carry out their operations. These groups engage in violent activities that undermine the social conditions of surrounding communities and, gradually, the entire nation (Cardona Giraldo, 2021).

These processes of environmental damage due to the felling of trees have been, in recent years, part of the new center of attention for the State and governmental and non-governmental organizations that have sought to once again position the environment as the backbone of human development. Under these conditions, it has been essential to establish new actions to comprehensively remediate cases of deforestation that have precedents in society. Among the most notable actions are Operation Artemisa and the Action Plan aimed at reducing deforestation and facing the effects of climate change in the Colombian Amazon (STC 4360 de 2018) and initiatives for reforestation and restoration of watersheds through the planting of native trees in those areas that protect the region's water sources (Red de Árboles, 2019).

These actions have allowed for the integration of new national or community endeavors that seek to remediate not only the apparent physical damage to the environment but also its social, economic, cultural, and structural consequences. These have even been addressed by the law to guarantee the human rights of the population and meet its basic need for a healthy environment that allows it to develop (García, 2018). The social context in which the right to a healthy environment is asserted has international precedent. Various forums for discussing environmental harm and accountability have paved the way for states affiliated with organizations like the UN to constitutionally establish this concept—as both a right for the populace and a duty of care (Vernet i Llobet & Jaria Manzano, 2007).

These precedents underscore the urgent need to address deforestation in Colombia, which undermines the entire population's access to a healthy environment, quality of life, and sustainable development. Consequently, it is essential to review current reforestation efforts—examining the conditions under which they are implemented, evaluating both their positive and negative impacts, and fostering collaborative initiatives that benefit the environment and ultimately eradicate excessive deforestation.

Methods

To meet the objectives of this chapter, we will employ a qualitative methodology for identifying impacts, such as excessive action against the environment, especially deforestation in Colombia (González & Urieta, 2003). We will also review the actions that the national government has implemented to comprehensively remediate the damage caused by deforestation. Community actions that impact the recovery of the environment, such as damage due to the indiscriminate felling of trees by different groups in some regions of the country, will be highlighted.

Continuous data collection from primary and secondary sources reveals the reality of some regions of the country where deforestation occurs, its increase in recent years, and its social implications. Therefore, the documentation collected, its systematization, and analysis will provide a much broader panorama of this phenomenon (Molina & Garza, 2021).

The information collected with a qualitative methodology allows us to identify various parameters that expand the possibility of drawing much more accurate conclusions within the phenomenon concerned—an approach to the real problem, its possible causes, developments, and consequences in the short and long term (Hernández-Sampieri, 2018).

The research adopts an ecosystemic approach, proposing strategies that promote a harmonious balance between natural resource use and development processes. Their objective is to generate actions that protect ecosystem integrity and support coexistence with local communities while ensuring that any environmental damage is met with proportionate remediation measures (Vergara & Schlegel, 2017).

This approach will be used to review strategies for managing natural resources in an integrated manner, promoting their conservation and sustainable use while ensuring equity associated with environmental justice. This concept focuses on the fair distribution of resources and the remediation or compensation required from those whose actions may harm the environment or its resources, ensuring that such actions are proportional (Legarda & Buendía, 2011).

Therefore, implementing this concept, along with the research methodology, will enable a more objective analytical development. It will enhance our understanding of the problem, the actions taken to address it, the conditions in which these actions unfold, the social reality in which it occurs, and the consequences of deforestation on the communities closest to the phenomenon.

Results

Colombia is one of the most biodiverse countries on the planet. Its moors and forests have supported a variety of flora and fauna, thereby providing sufficient natural resources for the population's subsistence along with efficient natural renewal (Molina, 2011). Unfortunately, the excessive actions of humans beyond their notion of development have caused conditions to change continuously. The overuse of resources diminishes the natural regeneration of these resources, and the persistence of such actions without adequate remediation has resulted in environmental degradation that is nearly impossible to reverse (Cafferatta, 2010).

In addition to these dynamic processes, the conflict in Colombia has been a significant factor that has exacerbated damage to the rights of the population, including access to a healthy environment. These conditions have allowed environmental damage from various actions to escalate to a level where it risks becoming irreversible, potentially leading to generational harm as resources are continuously depleted (Quintero & Hernández, 2020).

Given this knowledge and context, it is clear that in recent years, the international system has undertaken various actions to address the issue of deforestation globally. Amid this global surge in acknowledging environmental impacts and

seeking solutions to this problem, we can discuss global governance. Initially, there was a limited focus on international governance frameworks or strategies, which have diminished in significance over the years due to ongoing transformations. Therefore, it is necessary to reassess this governance in situations where new environmental challenges require much more specialized international oversight (Dauvergne & Clapp, 2016). This highlights the significance that the global system places on environmental governance as a process of public deliberation for developing environmental policies. This involves formulation, execution, and evaluation with sector-specific impacts, as it represents a governance approach that acknowledges each phenomenon in a distinct manner (Molina, 2013).

Therefore, it is clear how this has global consequences and can lead to immeasurable and irreversible damage. Adhering to these international processes, programs, and projects that set internal regulations in Colombia is essential to address the issue. This approach aims to tackle what has occurred in the country and create comprehensive remediation efforts focused on achieving peace with the environment, particularly concerning environmental deforestation. Various organizations, including state agencies and internal collectives, have committed to developing initiatives that address the challenges related to reforestation needs in the country (Beltrán, 2021). Deforestation puts livelihoods at risk, causes severe consequences for the stability of populations that depend on forests, and encourages displacement, exacerbating harrying tensions (ACNUR, 2022).

Conditions in a country like Colombia have left different groups of the population at a disadvantage when it comes to facing deforestation, whether due to social conditions, economic stability, institutional presence, or otherwise. These elements must be addressed differentially in order to really develop comprehensive remediation actions for reforestation in the country (Mendoza et al., 2019).

Emphasizing the most vulnerable groups of this problem entails highlighting the undoubted dialectical relationship between peasants, Indigenous or aboriginal people, and the environment, considering the complex environmental knowledge, experience, wisdom, and magical-religious rituals (Altamirano, 2014) to preserve biodiversity over time. However, this population group resists tensions caused by the constant tragedy of the environment (Duque et al., 2014).

Without a doubt, deforestation is an environmental crime with a persistent trend, which takes accelerated steps toward the cataclysm of forested areas (ActionAid, 2020). Due to its destructive action, it directly produces an adverse socio-environmental effect, harms fauna and flora, and fragments the local communities that live the drama of seeing, experiencing, and participating in

the destruction of their habitat due to disinformation or the tactical pressure of intimidation from criminal agents.

In the forests and their surroundings, population settlements depend on natural resources to cover basic subsistence needs and maintain their quality of life. However, the driving factors of the devastation of ecological spaces destabilize the physical, mental, and psychological well-being of local peasants and Indigenous people.

Consequently, deforestation is a practice with a large-scale catalytic effect on the environment, which also spreads to the surrounding populations by triggering social problems such as poverty, territorial inequality, forced displacement, discrimination, destruction of social identity, decreased quality of life, diseases, fragility, loss of territories, violence, disregard for rights, internal cornering, loss of culture and the family unit (Ulloa et al., 2008), abandonment of values, disorderly conduct, and increased administrative corruption (Policía Nacional, Dirección de Antinarcóticos, 2014, p. 173).

From a more general perspective, it should be noted that deforestation is linked to the contamination of water basins, excessive soil erosion in coastal areas, the death of wild species, the burning of vegetation cover for the planting of illicit crops, pollution, the activities of extractive industries (gas, oil, wood, and mining, among others) and commercial agriculture, and forest degradation processes that negatively impact nature.

Likewise, it brings chaos to the population of rural areas due to changes in rainfall patterns, landslides, and floods, declines in harvests, incidences of infectious diseases, viruses, and bacteria, psychological impacts of the environmental effects, and little or no presence of the Colombian State. This results in an evident lack of social services aimed at satisfying the basic needs of the population (IIDH, 2009).

The relevance of comprehensively evaluating the effects of deforestation is evident, which allows for large-scale measures to mitigate environmental impacts and thus reduce risk factors for human settlements. Addressing remedial, restorative, protective, and guaranteeing actions for environmental rights, along with sustainable development strategies that mitigate the consequences of deforestation—particularly the impact on ecosystems vital to Colombian territory—brings attention to the strategies and actions that uphold environmental well-being, thereby implementing restorative justice in nature.

The final peace agreement led to areas of imperfect peace in regions where uncertainty persists, recognizing that the institutional capacity often cannot encompass the entire country due to a lack of necessary resources. This results in

disputes and the appropriation of these areas by illegal groups or irregular actors, primarily because of the economic benefits they offer (Dauvergne & Clapp, 2016). In these scenarios, only the presence of the Military Forces is usually recognized as the closest approach to the national government. Therefore, there should be a good relationship between the population and this part of security forces, seeking networks of cooperation and trust.

Places such as Urabá, Antioquia, and Chocó, among others, have a high presence of groups outside the law due to their geographical conditions and the ease of exploiting them to generate profits. Thus, the presence of security forces is vital to maintain peace and harmony within the territory, not only based on armed confrontations. Part of the Military Forces who are in these parts of the country provides education to raise people's awareness of environmental management and design new conservation strategies to contain and avoid the actions that continue to occur against Colombian water sources, tropical forests, fauna, and flora.

Although little mentioned, the Army carries out different activities through its brigades to try to remediate or contain the actions of these groups, including operational units such as the Brigade against Drug Trafficking and the Brigade against Illegal Mining or tactical units such as the High Mountain Battalions and the Jungle Battalions. Such activities aim to care for and protect the environment and the recovery of environmental zones where illegal actions occur that disproportionately affect citizens and the ecosystem.

Discussion

In Colombia, the actions taken by both the communities and the State have yet to effectively halt deforestation. Comprehensive remediation of damage as complex as that caused by the general population is challenging, but we must recognize that it is a step-by-step process. There are essential elements to replicate at both national and local levels to achieve a greater impact on environmental issues. These elements are crucial for implementing actions that can positively influence and reduce the ecological footprint caused by this type of activity for decades (Cuadros, 2015).

The first step is to acknowledge that over the years, various community actions and initiatives have emerged, even categorized as undertakings dedicated to establishing improved environmental conditions. These initiatives focus on

preventing excessive deforestation, which, if it continues as current figures indicate, will lead to conditions that increase societal precariousness. Certain elements essential for the population's survival begin to be altered due to environmental impacts, to the point where natural disasters may result in displacement. This empowers the community and fosters actions to address emerging needs and respond to these phenomena more effectively (Álvarez et al., 2006).

Some military actions are based on the technical capabilities and operations developed over years of study, along with activities that support civil authorities. For instance, Operation Artemisa aims to control deforestation and related issues, such as illegal mining, illicit crops, and illegal agricultural borders. These actions are taken by the Army to assist local governments in a decentralized state that assigns powers and responsibilities to entities focused on protecting their territories (Pastrana & Piñeros, 2020).

The acts for which the Army fosters cooperation are based on generating information through the Intelligence section, which identifies crimes, provides early warnings, and points to those responsible for these actions, thereby sharing this knowledge to assist local governments. Another method is prevention, through which, under the comprehensive action of coordination, projects are introduced to benefit communities, promote legal economies that support the environment, and aim to weaken ties with criminal groups. Additionally, the relationship between the national government, communities, and institutions such as security forces is strengthened (Romero, 2022).

Furthermore, the control of actions such as deforestation under this plan seeks offensive and defensive operations with inter-institutional coordination that contain these criminal advances by illegal groups to reduce crime, hoping to end these events definitively. The monitoring of control operations and other actions carried out within the identified areas that must be intervened for environmental care, the mitigation of the impact during reforestation days, and ecological restoration by the active Military Forces demonstrate their commitment to the environment and human security in all its spheres (Gómez, 2002).

Another notable project within the military actions that seek environmental care and recovery is "Sowing Frailejón," which aims to restore páramos through the reproduction of frailejones (espeletias). This remarkable project is led by the High Mountain Battalions, more specifically ten of them, which sow two species of frailejón, under environmental guidelines to recover the páramo ecosystem in the country. The assisted natural restoration of the Medellín hill is another project

that aims, from actions of the Military Base of the Infantry Battalion, to establish an environmental corridor by planting trees and fique. This project is conducted in cooperation with the Governor's Office of Antioquia, the Mayor's Office of Medellín, and Universidad San Tomás. This relationship between citizens and security forces encourages care and builds trust, determining new spaces of interaction and harmony between different groups of the population and the national territory (Pérez-Martínez & Velasco-Linares, 2021).

The project "Sowing Peace, Life, and Reforestation in Facatativá" aims to cultivate a culture of care and preservation of natural resources. This culture develops between the troops and the community through reforestation efforts and environmental education focused on three main themes: peace, life, and reforestation, facilitated by higher education institutions (HEIs) and municipal companies. These initiatives support environmental preservation and sustainable development.

In addition, the Military Aviation Project, which is based on sustainability and environmental friendliness, aims to measure the carbon footprint in airfields with the support of Fenalco Solidario Colombia. This joint action intends to address climate change and its effects through early warning of acts that damage the environment and education and awareness of such acts (Jaimes, 2020).

"Military Forest Nurseries" is another initiative through which military units support environmental authorities in afforestation and ecological restoration via nurseries, promoting closer relationships with environmental authorities and the wider community. This project is crucial for enabling military involvement in environmental care, showcasing the multitasking capability of the forces and their units, which aids in the protection and preservation of the environment alongside human security efforts. Finally, the Aero-Reforestation Plan seeks to replicate efforts from other countries for the swift propagation of seeds to rapidly reforest affected areas, particularly in Guaviare. This includes fieldwork for collecting seeds and the use of capsules containing fertilizer and clay, which are combined with the seeds to be dropped from helicopters. This method leverages effective afforestation in areas positively impacted by environmental initiatives (Gordon, 2022).

These are some of the acts carried out by the Military Forces to take care of the environment. It is essential to recognize these actions taken in the pursuit of maintaining harmony and peace in the territory from various areas, as the environment in the country is one of the critical issues that must be addressed. Understanding its significance is vital for different cultures and social groups to effectively develop and enjoy their rights, fostering smooth social relationships.

This highlights the importance of the work done by security forces, which, through their actions, safeguard all citizens' rights, including the right to a healthy environment, as stated by Article 4 of the Code of Civil Procedure (CPC): "Every person has the right to an adequate environment for their development and well-being" (CPC, 1991).

Caring for the environment as part of the Defense and Security Policy of the Republic of Colombia must be included in all public institutions. In this regard, the Defense sector has demonstrated its commitment through projects such as those mentioned. As indicated in this policy, the aim is for society to be equitable and for all citizens to enjoy the same opportunities and rights. Environmental conditions are also a factor that facilitates the formation of human capital thanks to an adequate environment of security and national defense guaranteed by the security force agents that transit the territory (Rodríguez, 2016).

In addition to the work conducted by the National Army on behalf of the Colombian State, it is important to highlight other actions and initiatives undertaken by various communities and groups dedicated to reforestation. The conditions for environmental care have improved, and developments have emerged in the country that aim to promote the protection and preservation of the environment, as well as to reduce the environmental footprint of excessive human activities.

A clear example of this is the Red de Árboles Foundation. This organization began its activities in 2015 and carries out voluntary reforestation activities that consist of repopulating areas to recover forests that were cut down, as well as actions to create a culture in companies associated with the *corporate social responsibility* concept. The Red de Árboles Foundation has partnered with different companies that have sought to improve environmental care from different angles, such as the conditions established by industries and their environmental responsibility, and to comprehensively remediate the damage caused (Flórez, 2021).

The Andean Amazon Monitoring Project is an action promoted by the IDEAM Forest Monitoring Group, the Sustainable Colombia Fund, and the Ministry of Environment and Sustainable Development. It seeks to fulfill the SDGs and hopes to take measures to combat the causes of deforestation through community consultation processes and undertakings, especially three National Natural Parks (NNP) of Colombia and Indigenous reserves (Sarmiento et al., 2015).

This project provides opportunities for the most vulnerable communities affected by deforestation, that is, the peasant and Indigenous communities, who, to a greater extent, inhabit the NNPs where the project takes place. It carries out ecological restoration activities, which allow for improving the excessive

deforestation occurring in a specific part of the national territory, including these parks. Comprehensive processes to remediate the damage caused are an essential part of this project to achieve the proposed objective of improving the environmental conditions of communities (García, 2012).

As part of other initiatives established in the country, the program co-financed by the German cooperation Kreditanstalt für Wiederaufbau (KfW) was developed and designed by the National Federation of Coffee Growers of Colombia. This program aims to encourage forestry as an alternative for improving livelihoods and contributing to the reforestation of the Province of Huila. Through this initiative, farmers are involved in reforestation and environmental care and strive to combat the significant loss of forest by conserving it and implementing forest plantations to create tree planting systems around coffee crops (Saavedra, 2018).

The tools developed in Huila through these actions implemented by groups that seek to improve environmental conditions and land use account for a community interested in solving social phenomena identified in the territory and adversely affecting part of the social fabric. With this process, Huila has been recently recognized for its reforestation efforts, reduction of this problem, and interest in creating a culture of environmental responsibility (Mosquera, 2020).

These internal actions, plans, and projects demonstrate how communities or social groups have been empowered in the fight against environmental damage. This responsibility has led them to generate comprehensive actions, driven by their understanding of the problem and a commitment to maintaining the territory they inhabit, as it provides them with the means of livelihood necessary for their daily development. It is also worth noting the sacred importance that certain Indigenous communities attribute to their territories and the traditions surrounding them.

To establish any project within the State or beyond, it is essential to consider the environmental, social, and economic indicators, which are fundamental when discussing the most critical elements for identifying the most effective actions. Therefore, it is important to determine how resources should be allocated consistently with the phenomena occurring in the territory, such as deforestation. While the aforementioned strategies are crucial, specific criteria and elements within the imposed projects must be enhanced to create effective actions (Charry et al., 2018).

The conditions in the country demonstrate that beyond merely complying with the SDGs, there is a need to enhance not only the country's environmental conditions but also the entire international system. This requires understanding the significance of Colombia in global biodiversity and, consequently, the necessity to preserve the diverse ecosystems within its national territory.

Conclusions

The various strategies recognized throughout the chapter address a problem that has become increasingly systematic and industrialized over the years, leading to prolonged damage to the population. This is why new actions were developed to contain and potentially eliminate it, reflecting the positive implications of policies and projects from both the State and local communities. This is a crucial aspect for enabling the comprehensive remediation of areas suffering from excessive deforestation caused by human activity.

The skills learned from the actions of the State, communities, and other organizations make specific points clear. First, it is essential to thoroughly understand the problem and its associated elements, especially the existence of groups operating outside the law, the cultivation of both illicit crops and crops unsuitable for the soil properties, extensive livestock farming, and other issues that, in various ways, contribute to deforestation. Without knowing the root cause of this problem and the context in which it occurs, it is almost impossible to solve it (Álzate Rodríguez, 2022).

Second, understanding the affected population is crucial for establishing any action based on the experiences of those facing the issue. This includes grasping the extent of the community most impacted by deforestation, identifying the factors that need to be addressed to eliminate or mitigate the problem, and recognizing the actions that the affected individuals believe would enhance their conditions and subsequently resolve the issue. This serves as a foundational element for comprehensive remediation that does not harm the community and, instead, provides them with the essential tools to address these actions that fail to improve conditions and, in fact, may exacerbate them, even affecting future generations.

Third, support networks should be built up. These actions only affect a portion of the national territory; they do not have the necessary impact to effectively eradicate the phenomenon, especially considering the complexities of the environment. Therefore, it is essential to strengthen the collaboration between state institutions and community actions, allowing for a more significant impact across the territory and improving conditions for a large part of it. This, in turn, will establish elements that provide greater guarantees for the rights of the population, such as the right to a healthy environment.

Fourth, similar to designing actions, a collaborative relationship must exist between the population and the institutions to implement projects, plans, or actions

that establish internal oversight, allowing us to understand whether the actions taken have the desired impact. Furthermore, we must recognize the factors that can be applied to continue addressing the problem and ensure that if not, the proposed action should be reevaluated and enhanced to achieve the desired objective.

These four points serve as a guide that can be effectively compared to what was recognized prior to the country's comprehensive actions being implemented. These points aimed at fostering cooperation between institutions and communities would facilitate efficient actions that help improve the overall environmental conditions for the population, taking into account the various contexts in which individuals can thrive and the externalities—both positive and negative—encountered to achieve the primary goal, in this instance, reforestation (Bernal et al., 2020).

The most compelling cases for minimizing deforestation in the country are tied to the actions of local communities. These communities, through their presence in this area of the national territory, are tasked with maintaining reforestation and implementing rigorous monitoring to support its progress and remediate environmental damage caused by humans. A prime example is the actions of Indigenous peoples who, due to their relationship with nature and concept of good living, undertake various initiatives to stay in harmony with the land and restore part of what the population enjoys (Acosta, 2022).

In addition to the previously mentioned elements, Colombia can implement an environmental education process as part of reforestation efforts. This process aims to instill attitudes and values in citizens, guiding them away from the culture of deforestation prevalent in certain regions of the country (Lezcano et al., 2018). Environmental education is a crucial foundation for developing a plan, policy, or action that goes beyond mere initiatives and is ingrained in the community's culture. This educational approach focuses on the connections between living beings and nature, which fosters environmental conservation or recovery through initiatives like interest in reforestation in Colombia (Franco, 2018).

Empirical reforestation that incorporates ancient knowledge, along with the modernization of improved processes, has led to small advancements in environmental conservation. By merging these innovative processes with technological enhancements and other new elements, we can effectively remediate various areas affected by excessive deforestation. Consequently, relying on technological advances that are economically supported by the State is essential to halt the mass felling of trees.

In summary, the remediation, restoration, and comprehensive recovery of the environment, ecosystems, and environmental conditions in territories affected by excessive deforestation in Colombia require the maintenance and enhancement of strategies established by the State. This emphasizes the role that the Military Forces have played through Jungle, High Mountain, and other battalions, as well as the involvement of the population and organizations dedicated to improving the affected environmental conditions and defending ecosystems. These efforts are crucial for the re-establishment of the damaged tree cover due to the multitude of crimes and factors contributing to the phenomenon of deforestation in Colombia.

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Chapter 4

The Military Forces vis-à-vis the Environmental Impacts of the Internal Armed Conflict*

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Abstract: This chapter examines the environment as a standard legal asset that becomes a rights-holding victim. From a critical and social perspective, it presents the systematic occurrence of war crimes and crimes against humanity and analyzes the challenges of the military in the defense and protection of the ecosystem and the concomitant challenges in territorial consolidation. It also highlights the actions of the Military Forces and the Police in protecting areas of ecological importance with plans nourished by the strengthening of institutional capacity and proposes educational initiatives in military training to protect the environment.

Keywords: conflict; war crimes; Colombian Military Forces; environment; protection; victims

* Book chapter resulting from the research project *The Role of Security Forces in Protecting the Environment in the Context of Armed Conflict and Peacebuilding from the Perspective of Human Rights and IHL* by the Historical Memory, Peacebuilding, Human Rights, IHL, and Justice Research Group of Escuela Superior de Guerra "General Rafael Reyes Prieto," categorized A by the Ministry of Science, Technology and Innovation (MinCiencias) and registered under code COL0141423. This points of view and results in this chapter belong to the authors and do not necessarily reflect those of the participating institutions.

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Introduction

In the current global context, a multitude of problems and complexities that have arisen in recent times have led nations to confront a series of challenges stemming from globalization. These challenges require human capital that is well-informed, innovative, critical, and adaptable, with the willingness and ability to learn, particularly in disciplines that need to be ideologically capitalized. Social and economic transformation is occurring alongside processes linked to financial and humanitarian crises, as well as climate change. This situation requires people capable of managing risk with a solid multidimensional perspective that facilitates interaction with the environment, and these people must become active actors in the process of sustainable human development.

Colombia has a protracted internal conflict that involves multiple actors, interests, and impacts on people and protected property. One of the most persistent characteristics is that historically, there has been a systematic occurrence of crimes against humanity and war crimes that violate the human rights (HR) regulatory framework and international humanitarian law (IHL), respectively. Organizations such as the Special Administrative Unit for the Comprehensive Care and Reparation for Victims (JAEARIV, by its Spanish acronym) report a total of 9,294,225 victims resulting from the internal armed conflict (Registro Único de Víctimas [RUV], 2022). This figure can be compared to what was identified by the Memory and Conflict Observatory of the National Center for Historical Memory (CNMH, by its Spanish acronym), which, based on the systematization of its extensive database, records nearly eleven categories of victimizing events: sexual violence, kidnappings, recruitment of minors, landmines, massacres, forced disappearances, attacks on civilian property, terrorist acts, selective murders, attacks on populations, and wartime actions (CNMH, 2022).

The described panorama, complex in nature, underscores the efforts to document the most painful events and impacts of the Colombian internal conflict; however, a significant omission in the careful collection of this information is the environment, a common legal asset that also constitutes a victim and has recently been recognized as a rights-holder. This is evident in the case of certain rivers, such as the Atrato, which was addressed in Ruling T-622 of 2016, and regions like the Amazon, referenced in a ruling by the Supreme Court of Justice 11001-22-03-000-2018-00319-01 or Ruling 17001-22-13-000-2017-00468-02, where the same corporation granted *habeas corpus* to a bear named Chucho, acknowledging it as a rights-holder (Méndez, 2019, para. 3).

It should be noted that the dynamics of violence and indiscriminate extraction evident in the context of the internal armed conflict have been relentless toward the environment and ecosystems, resulting in environmental disasters that significantly impact those who rely directly on these resources for survival. This issue necessitates definitive coordination among various institutional organizations, communities, and, of course, those directly involved in hostilities to carry out actions aimed at protecting and restoring ecosystems. Undoubtedly, the challenges are immense, requiring education, regulatory enhancement, and criminal prosecution as just a few of the strategies that must be integrated into all state and institutional agendas to achieve peace in the regions.

Various threats risk the right to enjoy a healthy environment. Behaviors such as illegal mining (IM), indiscriminate felling of trees, and deforestation, have frequently occurred, causing damage and irreversible impacts. There are some other conducts that have been resorted to, especially by those armed groups outside the law, such as the use of illicit methods and means of war, the indiscriminate planting of anti-personnel mines (APMs), improvised explosive devices (IEDs), and unexploded munitions. All of these are part of the blend of violent methods targeted at this legal asset common to everyone.

Illegal armed groups have resorted to unlawful methods and means of warfare, such as IEDs and APMs, as part of their tactics of violence. This situation highlights a complete disregard for the rules and principles that govern conduct during armed conflicts. As a result, there is a significant impact on individuals and assets protected by IHL, including the environment.

During Colombia's prolonged internal conflict, it became evident that the indiscriminate use of IEDs and APMs was a common tactic among illegal armed groups, particularly the now-defunct FARC-EP. This cross-cutting practice was documented in various booklets, manuals, and training courses of this illicit armed organization. Such circumstances create a complex landscape for filing complaints

and pursuing criminal prosecution and punishment, as one of the most common decisions in the ordinary justice system relates to the status of investigation files or non-initiation decisions, primarily due to the “impossibility of determining the active subject of the conduct”¹ (Código de Procedimiento Penal [CPP], 2004, Title 2, Single Chapter).

It has been proven that the use of illicit methods and means of warfare, such as IEDs and APMs and explosive remnants of war, causes impacts in various dimensions. Even the slightest suspicion of its existence profoundly alters a community's relationship with its environment. As a result, it limits the possibility of safely inhabiting a territory where there are hidden explosive devices that can injure or take the life of anyone.

This suggests a fragmentation in the relationship with the environment and the lives of those who reside in mined areas, even when the mines are not yet active. APMs have changed the uses and forms of land appropriation (CNMH, 2013). The presence of these artifacts has resulted in confinement, school absenteeism, forced displacement, and alterations in rural dynamics due to the inability to carry out normal peasant activities. For communities, this represents a disruption to their daily lives, means of livelihood, and social interactions. A mined territory is stripped of its most basic purposes; it ceases to be a livable and sociable space, transforming instead into a distant, warlike landscape, where the horrors and dangers hidden within these artifacts exist alongside the anguish of those who live there. The communities inhabiting these mined areas face two alternatives: to live with danger or to abandon their land. Choosing the former means enduring not only significant movement restrictions but also facing daily uncertainty, fear, anguish, and worries centered on the risk of losing one's life, part of one's body, or having loved ones fall victim to IEDs or APMs. The second option, equally tragic, leads to the disappearance, dismantling, degradation, severance, and sudden loss of the traces built in a territory (crops, roads, plots, livestock, rivers), resulting in the forced displacement from the land that held the social relationships and possibly the entire life ambitions of whole families.

This social phenomenon spreads like a shockwave, generating suspicion and distrust among local residents, who are forced to choose from the available options. Sometimes, even when some community members know the locations of APMs, they must keep that information hidden to avoid retaliation from the illegal

¹ According to Article 79 of the Code of Criminal Procedure, prosecutors have the authority to close investigations, allowing them to stop pursuing an alleged crime before presenting an accusation to the guarantee judge. Under this rule, a case can be closed when the prosecutor determines that there are no reasons or factual circumstances that classify the investigated fact as a crime, or when its existence cannot be confirmed.

armed groups that placed them. The existing relationships among individuals in the community shift: You cannot entirely trust who is on the side of security and who is not, heightening the suspicion that others might possess information that could have prevented the attacks. Additionally, there is a fear of being identified as guerrilla collaborators due to the knowledge they hold. All of this results in blaming certain community members and transferring responsibilities that rightfully fall to those who actually planted the devices.

This problem is similar for members of the Military Forces, as it presents numerous challenges due to their continuous exposure to effects, damages, and irreversible impacts, compounded by the impunity derived from the dynamics of criminal investigations surrounding this type of violence. Factors such as 1) inadequate assessment of IHL criteria, 2) ignorance of the law, 3) barriers that create inequalities among victims, and 4) the dehumanization of the military (Estatuto de Roma, 1998) are just some of the causes that contribute to the revictimization of this population. In light of this situation, the Special Jurisdiction for Peace (JEP, by its Spanish acronym) has recently initiated a comprehensive case that will address

crimes associated with illegal means and methods of warfare, particularly the forcible capture of populations through the indiscriminate use of weapons by the FARC. This encompasses social control over the population, sexual and gender violence, homicides, massacres, forced disappearances, and other unquantifiable crimes committed by the FARC's urban areas networks. (El Espectador, 2022, para. 3)

This decision raises great expectations for security forces personnel affected by this victimizing event. It is understood that, in this aspect of transitional justice, a resolution from the UAEARIV will not be necessary, which is anticipated to decrease the levels of impunity stemming from ordinary justice and improve access to truth, justice, reparation, and guarantees of non-repetition (VJRGNR, by its Spanish acronym).

Theoretical Framework

An Approach to the Environment from a Social Perspective in Context

Ten years ago, Solórzano (2014) stated that environmental protection is essential for human survival. According to the United Nations Development Program (UNDP),

around 1.6 billion people depend on forests and ecosystems for their livelihood. Forest ecosystem services, such as pollination, water provision, and purification, are a priority for modern agriculture and play a crucial role in the global fight against climate change.

In this regard, forests are crucial in mitigating and adapting to climate change. They are also sources of grazing and provide traditional medicine, contributing to the health of approximately one-third of the world's population. Numerous studies have shown that trees are capable of increasing water availability at the local level (CIFOR, 2018); that is, forests are an essential component of nature for the survival of human beings and different forms of life on this planet. Furthermore, it is well known that trees absorb water through their roots and release it through transpiration from their leaves. This process, combined with the evaporation of the oceans and other bodies of water, drives the water cycle and fills the atmosphere with water vapor.

Several studies support findings indicating that mangroves, in addition to being refuges for unique wildlife and storing large amounts of carbon, could also serve as coastal protection against sea level rise. However, despite playing a crucial ecological role in adapting to climate change, mangroves are being rapidly destroyed by human activities, with a large area of these forests being lost each year.

Extensive research demonstrates the direct benefits of forests to human diets, agriculture, and other sources of livelihood. In addition to the direct food they provide, forests also play a crucial role in maintaining the agriculture practiced in their vicinity, as they host pollinators that contribute to the reproduction of many crops.

In Defense of the Environment

It has become clear how many of the world's governments, beyond their typically ideological discourses, have established plans and actions to support ecosystems and the care of flora and fauna as a means that directly affects the survival of all living beings. These measures, of a legal and social nature, have significantly impacted the protection of ecosystems, fostering community commitments that enhance awareness of the issue and legally constraining those who, due to a lack of environmental culture, inflict irreparable harm on ecosystems.

Colombia is not indifferent to taking legal action and currently has the Environmental Crimes Act (Ley 2111 de 2021), which aims to penalize those who commit acts against the environment, such as deforestation, wildlife trafficking, invasion of areas of particular ecological importance, and illegal appropriation of the nation's wastelands. This Act also punishes those who promote and engage

in mining exploration or exploitation without adhering to legal requirements (Ministerio de Defensa Nacional [MDN], 2021). The goal is to establish state control mechanisms and reduce violence that harms the rights of the civilian population. However, the Colombian State already includes penalties for individuals who commit environmental crimes and harm biodiversity in its Criminal Code.

The national government has been very alert in this regard, and institutions such as the MDN and the National Army support environmental leaders and their communities. It has also made progress in protecting and defending the ecosystem factors of the territories, which is why the “Pact for Colombia, Pact for Equity” was established in the National Development Plan (PND) 2018–2022. This Pact serves as a legal instrument in which the government’s objectives are framed, contributing to their subsequent assessment, and focuses on finding a balance between productive development and environmental conservation to promote new economies, ensuring natural resources for future generations. Based on this premise, Operation Artemisa was defined as a government strategy aimed at preserving and defending water, biodiversity, and natural resources as strategic assets of the nation.

The use of illicit methods and means of war (ICRC, 2010) is one of the most systematic forms of violence within the framework of the internal armed conflict in Colombia. Armed groups outside the law have historically resorted to this practice prohibited by IHL to undermine the humanitarian provisions that regulate hostilities. This behavior has impacted not only the affected territories but also people and protected property, including members of security forces who have suffered from this scourge.

Such a scenario poses significant operational challenges for the Military Forces regarding its connection with the constitutional mission of defending sovereignty, independence, the integrity of the national territory, and the constitutional order. One of these challenges is protecting and conserving the environment in view of deforestation and the increase in illegal activities such as illicit crops, mining, and timber trafficking (FIP, 2020).

In this context, it is crucial for the Military Forces that the objective of protecting the environment is institutionally coordinated with the duty to preserve it, as established by the Constitution of Colombia. According to the Constitution, all individuals have the right to enjoy a healthy environment, and the State is responsible for safeguarding the diversity and integrity of the environment, conserving areas of ecological significance, and promoting education to achieve these goals (Constitución Política de Colombia, 1991). Consequently, various institutional actions are undertaken, ranging from military control operations in the

area and psychological operations to security and defense maneuvers conducted by the Force, as well as offensive operations to address the factors that threaten territorial integrity. The Ministry of Defense announced the establishment of the Environmental Protection Task Force (CGFM, 2020) to mitigate the severe damage inflicted by organized armed groups (OAG) on water, biodiversity, and the environment: "The policy guideline has been implemented through the Artemisa campaign, initiated in April 2019 in coordination with the Attorney General's Office and the Ministry of Environment and Sustainable Development" (El País, 2020).

Against this backdrop, the constitutional mission regarding the duty attributed to the Military Forces in favor of a comprehensive defense is clear. However, it is wise to consider the imminent dangers that the use of IEDs and APMs—methods of violence linked to deforestation, mining, and the safeguarding of illegal crops, among other activities—pose to military personnel. According to the Unit for Victims, there is a record of 6,602 soldiers affected by this violent event (RUV, 2022), but what is most worrying is that after the signing of the agreements, this phenomenon seems to escalate, as informed by the National Center Against Improvised Explosive Devices, with a figure of 657 uniformed personnel between 2016 and 2022 (Infobae, 2021).

Methods

This chapter examines the use of illicit methods and means of warfare, their relationship with environmental impact, and the challenges faced by Military Forces in fulfilling their constitutional mission. To this end, a general analysis of the environment is proposed, including the dynamics of violence within the context of internal armed conflict and its positioning within the peace process, as well as the Military Forces' contributions to the defense, protection, and recovery of this legal asset. This is complemented by a reflection on the following variables: the nature of this victimizing event and the challenges Military Forces members face in various justice mechanisms, along with the psychosocial impact generated by this type of violence. Finally, the chapter analyzes initiatives and educational factors in military training aimed at environmental protection. All of the above is achieved through the qualitative analysis of collected information and the hypothetical deductive method, starting from an initial hypothesis or explanation to draw relevant conclusions that address the stated problem.

Results

Armed Conflict and Environment

The interactions between armed conflict, the illegal drug trafficking economy, and the degradation of Colombia's natural heritage, mainly due to illicit crops affecting vast conservation areas such as the Amazon, cause significant damage to the environment. In this sense, peacebuilding is crucial in restoring a beneficial balance between using and conserving natural resources, protecting them from harm, guaranteeing their continuous replenishment, and safeguarding environmental activities in the territories.

To achieve this purpose, it is imperative to promote productive and sustainable exploitation strategies that help communities in affected areas achieve greater economic benefits, improve employment opportunities, and increase income levels through the provision of environmental goods and services. The contributions of international cooperation regarding development ideas related to environmental protection and climate change offer significant opportunities to build peace in territories during a potential post-conflict scenario.

Peacebuilding

In September 2018, the special report from the Ombudsman's Office on the development of illegal economies, armed actors, and new risk scenarios in the post-agreement period specifically highlighted that the FARC-EP's withdrawal from its areas of influence had caused the Army of National Liberation (ELN), post-demobilization armed groups (Autodefensas Gaitanistas de Colombia [AGC], Clan del Golfo [CG], Puntilleros, and Pelusos), and the dissident factions of FARC-EP to engage in violent activities aimed at controlling the mining economies and the environment, participating in the development of circuits associated with these activities. These groups established themselves in these areas through criminal strategies, ranging from confrontations with rival armed groups to forming operational alliances, which heightened the risks of victimization for the population in the affected regions.

This highlights the need for more active intervention by the State, particularly the Military Forces, in areas of ecological and environmental interest in Colombia. Peacebuilding in the country cannot be separated from the requirements of environmental sustainability, which include the development of agreed territorial planning, the protection of natural reserves and protected areas, the prevention

of socio-environmental conflicts, and the regulation of land use according to its vocation. Therefore, promoting sustainable local development processes in the territories, especially those most affected by armed conflict, is a priority, considering that many have some form of protection or regulation in even up to 100 % of their area (OCDE, 2014).

When conducting a general diagnosis of the peacebuilding situation, there is a noticeable increase in mining activities and the emergence of new exploration and exploitation fronts in areas predominantly inhabited by Indigenous and Afro-descendant populations, posing a threat to the community's peace and harmony. Some leaders and environmentalists oppose both industrial and ancestral mining practices based on their ideological beliefs.

These environmental leaders argue that informal mining brings severe environmental consequences, negatively impacting soil and water sources, which threatens communities' food security and undermines their cultural traditions. Furthermore, they oppose the existence of illegal armed groups and mining activities in their territories. These conflicts exacerbate disorderly conduct and result in the loss of human lives.

Social Advances in Environmental Protection

The media report that following the implementation of the Artemisa campaign, several military operations have been conducted in National Natural Parks (NNP). These efforts have led to the recovery and positive intervention of a significant number of hectares of forest, the capture of approximately 400 individuals for environmental crimes, and reforestation initiatives.

These operations are essential for the Army as they contribute to the joint strategies involving defense and security policies outlined in the Héroes de la Libertad Bicentennial Campaign Plan (CGFM, 2018). Since the start of Operation Artemisa, the Military Forces have planted numerous native trees, frailejón, and wax palms, and have established frailejón nurseries, which are being renovated with the support of the Ministry of Environment and Sustainable Development to aid in the restoration of the Colombian páramos. These operations have received guidance and support from the national government, which is dedicated to protecting the environment. Consequently, institutions like the National Police, the Attorney General's Office (FGN), and environmental authorities have engaged to combat OAG, organized crime, transnational crime, and criminal activities that threaten natural resources and the environment. Through this operation, the Military Forces have collaborated with communities, focusing on the individuals responsible for deforestation and other environmental crimes.

An increase in mining activities has been observed across various regions of the country, and the affected areas are experiencing displacement and crime in multiple forms. The exploration and exploitation of minerals without complying with legal requirements have become a primary source of funding for groups that engage in violence, even surpassing traditional drug trafficking, which significantly impacts governance and national security.

Of note is that military intervention in the areas most affected by deforestation, where Operation Artemisa has focused, has proven effective (El Espectador, 2020). These areas include the La Macarena Special Management Area, situated between the Tinigua and Sierra de La Macarena NNPs. In these regions, a deforestation pattern similar to that observed in the Guaviare Peasant Reserve Zone, the Amazon Forest Reserve, and the Nukak Makú Indigenous Reservation (Guaviare) has been noted, where land is being illegally appropriated, trees are being cut down, and livestock is being introduced as a means to demonstrate land occupation.

These protected areas of the Amazon face the dilemma that clearing one hectare of forest could cost between COP 500,000 and COP 1,000,000, which exceeds the economic capacity of low-income farmers to undertake this activity across hundreds of hectares. Although they are not responsible for the deforestation and logging, it is they who have borne the pain of displacement due to criminal networks and armed groups in the region, alongside environmental authorities such as Corpoamazonia, Cormacarena, and NNPs, as well as officials like park rangers. This situation has resulted in five officials from Amazon parks, such as Chiribiquete, Cahuinarí, Río Puré, La Paya, and Yaijagé Apaporis, being declared “military objectives” and expelled from the region by FARC dissidents. Furthermore, park rangers have been murdered, including Wilton Fauder Orrego León, a ranger in the Sierra Nevada de Santa Marta, and Yamid Alonso Silva Torres of the El Cocuy NNP.

In summary, these threats highlight the need for sustainable development to ensure the well-being of regions and the people who inhabit them. Since institutional, geographical, and violent conditions have been obstacles to permanent social, economic, and environmental advances in the country, these advances must be distributed equitably at the territorial level.

Peace Agreements and Environment

After the development of the internal armed conflict, violence-driving agents have been linked to the gas and oil sector through kidnappings and extortion of officials and contractors. Armed attacks against the critical infrastructure of the State are

the preference of these agents, including the FARC-EP and ELN guerrillas and paramilitary groups.

Several illegal armed groups emerged after the demobilization of paramilitary structures in the Province of Nariño. In the first phase of these violent demonstrations, the so-called Águilas Negras [Black Eagles] stood out, who focused their work on controlling the trafficking of coca paste and cocaine in mangroves and rivers, considered strategic corridors disputed by the FARC-EP, the Rastrojos, the Urabeños, and the ELN (Defensoría del Pueblo, 2018). These post-demobilization groups have solid connections with drug trafficking cartels and have given rise to more violent deforestation groups in various areas of the country. This form of criminality is the one that most confronts the FARC-EP and has caused the disappearance and emergence of different criminal groups that the Autodefensas Gaitanistas have co-opted.

The Colombian guerrillas, especially the ELN, have used the environment as a strategic resource of war, attacking the oil infrastructure, which has been their most recurrent action. These attacks not only have economic motivations but have also become sociopolitical objectives and war tactics.

In 2017, a year after the signing of the peace agreement, the country lost 219,973 hectares of natural forest, representing a 23 % increase compared to the previous year. This situation foreshadowed the future of these territories, but many people in the country did not recognize this new reality and those who did, exploited it. It was predictable that, with the signing of the agreement and the departure of the former FARC from some areas historically occupied by the group, there would be an increase in deforestation and impacts on the ecosystem and the environment, driven by multiple factors intertwined with both settlers' and own interests.

This state of affairs can be analyzed based on two factors: firstly, the de facto actions taken by the FARC, who viewed themselves as the sole authorities in difficult-to-access areas, where residents and other criminal actors were either limited or controlled through violence as they imposed their orders; and secondly, the eagerness of coca growers, who exploited the absence of this long-standing "authority" to deforest indiscriminately, expanding the boundaries of illicit crops.

Faced with this threat and projecting strategic plans to neutralize this destabilizing factor, the CGFM launched Operation Artemisa in April 2019. This operation aims to stop deforestation in the country, recover the tropical rainforest, and bring to justice those responsible for deforestation and forest burning. In April, the first phase began in the Serranía de Chiribiquete and Sierra de la Macarena NNPs. It was then extended to the Llanos de Yarí Reservation (Caquetá) and the La Paya NNP (Putumayo).

Discussion

Military Victims of IEDs and APMs, Challenges for Access to Justice

The Colombian soldier faces various challenges in fulfilling his constitutional mission, which positions them among the most victimized public servants in the context of the internal armed conflict, even after the signing of the agreements. The difficulties identified in the accreditation of this population as victims reflect the process of institutional transition that they must undertake in the search for recognition and vindication. On the contrary, the soldier is re-victimized and excluded from access to legitimate possibilities of VJRGNR that dignify them in their human condition.

The evolution of the concept of military victims has been a relatively recent process, during which they have been stigmatized not only by society but also by institutions. This has led many to renounce the recognition of such a condition, given the constant obstacles they must face in the process. Below are some of the difficulties and challenges that military personnel encounter before the Unit for Victims, ordinary justice, and the JEP in their pursuit of recognition of their status as victims, access to justice, the right to reparation, and guarantees of non-repetition.

Challenges before the Unit for Victims

Currently, there are some challenges regarding access to and implementation of measures of protection, reparation, and restoration of rights of security forces as victims of armed conflict, as follows:

- Law 1448/2011 is precarious regarding sufficient incentives for the affected security forces members and their families and the recognition process before the UARIV that grants victim status. This law limits their access to all comprehensive reparation measures related to satisfaction, rehabilitation, restoration, and guarantees of non-repetition, leaving out administrative compensation because they belong to the special scheme.

Through this process, direct victims—we, the military—and indirect victims—our families—will be able to know the truth about the facts that caused us so much pain and left scars on our bodies, and the perpetrators will be forced to tell the truth. (Giraldo, Corporación Militares Víctimas del Conflicto [MilVíctimas], 2021)

- Recognition and reparation become an arduous, complex process full of barriers imposed by the legal system and the assessment criteria used,

resulting in up to 275.36 % (RUV, 2022) of cases not included in the Single Registry of Victims (RUV, by its Spanish acronym).

They have denied me access to the Unit for Victims as a victim who had to endure all of that; it is so wrong for us combatants to be treated this way. There is no recognition, no support, and we are human too. We nearly lost our lives defending our nation, our homeland, so that people could feel at ease and live peacefully. (Duque, MilVíctimas, 2021)

- Typically, many events within the assessment criteria are not considered to violate IHL, such as the effects of IEDs, APMs, and unexploded ordnance. The burden of proof falls on the military victim, who must establish the cause, manner, and mechanism in their testimony to effectively demonstrate a violation of IHL by the OAG and the selective and indiscriminate use of means and methods prohibited by IHL, such as IEDs, which are employed due to a widespread and systematic practice.

Since 2005, I have tried to access the benefits of the Victims Act, but I have always been rejected. To date, I have not been able to do so; I have exhausted all resources, yet I still have not succeeded. They informed me that, as a combatant, this outcome was expected and that the terms had expired. The device that caused my injuries was a non-improvised explosive, which is prohibited by the rules of war; it was an indiscriminate attack that also harmed civilians. I have not been assisted in accessing the Victims Act; not only civilians are victims, but many individuals like me also deserve recognition. It would be beneficial if they included us so we could participate. Many soldiers like me should be classified as victims, and I do not understand why they are not. (Camargo, MilVíctimas, 2021)

- Ignorance of the law has become another criterion for recognizing victims, as the entity argues that *ignorantia juris non excusat* or *ignorantia legis neminem excusat*, Latin expressions of the legal principle indicating that ignorance of the law does not constitute an excuse. According to Article 9 of the Civil Code, it is presumed that all citizens must be aware of duly enacted laws. Based on this premise, victims cannot claim during their testimonies that they failed to comply with the law due to ignorance, particularly when they are expected to be aware of it given their positions. Nevertheless, it is overlooked that military personnel may be stationed in remote areas without access to mobile networks for extended periods due to their constitutional mission.

The obstacles arise, first of all, when the oversight bodies (Inspector General's Office, Ombudsman's Office, etc.) responsible for handling requests for testimony and processing before the Unit for Victim Care and Reparation (UARIV) deny the possibility of completing the process of giving testimony. The most common response when approaching these bodies is, "Don't waste your time; you are not a victim." Major Cifuentes emphasizes that these circumstances forced them to hold special sessions coordinated with the UARIV nationwide so that soldiers and police officers could be heard. (El Espectador, 2019)

Challenges before Ordinary Justice

As mentioned in previous sections, the military population affected by this form of violence while performing their constitutional functions lacks an effective justice system that prosecutes crimes and punishes those responsible for the actions and modes of violence related to the use of IEDs and APMs. This situation results in impunity and, in turn, signifies a failure of the court system to provide satisfaction for all victims under equal conditions.

At this point, it is important to note that the judicial outcomes concerning this conduct have not been substantial. The most suitable solution has consistently been to close and inhibit these investigations, as Article 79 of the CPP allows for the adoption of such decisions:

It was established that when the Attorney General's Office is aware of a fact regarding which it confirms there are no factual reasons or circumstances to characterize it as a crime or indicate its possible existence as such, it will order the discontinuation of the proceedings. (Congreso de la República, 2004)

The cases in this investigation are clear examples of denial of justice by the prosecution, which does nothing to favor victims, given the importance of knowing the truth, non-repetition, and compensation for damage. According to *Ámbito Jurídico* (2019), which evaluates the operational capacity of the FGN:

The FGN processes, on average, close to 75 % of the cases with discontinuation decisions over which there is no judicial review or evidentiary discussion. The Colombian justice system considers inhibitory decisions a denial of justice that seriously affects victims; Colombian justice considers the concept of closing a case comparable to inhibitory decisions.

Challenges before the Special Jurisdiction for Peace

Without a doubt, the Comprehensive System of Truth, Justice, Reparation, and Guarantees of Non-Repetition (SIVJRNR) builds up expectations for the universe of victims of the internal conflict in Colombia, wherein it would be unjust to exclude victims belonging to security forces. Five years have passed since the signing of the agreement, and consequently, the judicial mechanism of the JEP has come into effect. The outlook for police and military personnel affected by illicit methods and means of war remains unfavorable concerning access and participation. This is especially true considering that only with the delivery of the report *The Devastation of a People: Illicit Methods and Means of War Used by the FARC* (MilVíctimas et al., 2019) did the judges of the Truth Recognition Chamber realize the significance of this document for initiating investigations related to this type of violence. Despite the reasons given, it was not until March 2022, three years after the report, that the Chair of the JEP, Eduardo Cifuentes, officially announced the opening of a macro-case to investigate these events formally.

As will be seen below, an example of disproportion regarding the rate of events and participation in the JEP is evident in Case No. 005, which prioritized the situation in northern Cauca and southern Valle del Cauca and where only one soldier was recognized as a victim due to injuries sustained after an APM was activated. This indicates that the access difficulties for victims of security forces are related to the lack of actions or strategies that enhance and encourage their participation. It is important to remember that this region of the country has been most affected by the systematic use of IEDs.

Figure 1. *Comunicado 009 of 2021, Case No. 005. JEP*



The image is a screenshot of the official website of the Special Jurisdiction for Peace (JEP). The header features the JEP logo and the text 'JURISDICCIÓN ESPECIAL PARA LA PAZ'. Below the header is a navigation menu with links such as '¿Qué es la JEP?', 'Participa', 'Los casos de la JEP', 'Acreditación', 'Normativa', 'Relatoría', 'Sala de prensa', 'Transparencia', and 'Portal niños, niñas y adolescentes'. The main content area displays a press release titled 'COMUNICADO 009 DE 2021' with the headline 'La JEP acredita como víctima a un soldado lesionado por una mina antipersonal'. A bullet point states: 'Con esta acreditación se comienza el estudio formal de crímenes de guerra cometidos por las Farc-EP contra integrantes de la fuerza pública, en los municipios priorizados en el Caso 05.' The text below the bullet point reads: 'Bogotá, 04 de febrero de 2021. En el marco del Caso 05, "Situación Territorial en la región del Norte del Cauca y del Sur del Valle del Cauca", la Sala de Reconocimiento de la JEP acreditó a un soldado profesional del Ejército Nacional como víctima, por las lesiones sufridas tras la explosión de una mina antipersonal.'

Source: JEP (2021).

Later, in Comunicqué 081 of 2021, the JEP reported on the recognition of five security forces members in Case No. 005. As mentioned, this case addresses the situation in northern Cauca and southern Valle del Cauca, specifically in 17 municipalities: Buenos Aires, Caldono, Caloto, Corinto, Jambaló, Miranda, Morales, Padilla, Puerto Tejada, Santander de Quilichao, Suárez, and Toribío in the Province of Cauca, and Candelaria, Florida, Jamundí, Palmira, and Pradera in the Province of Valle del Cauca.

Figure 2. Comunicqué 081 of 2021, Case No. 005. JEP



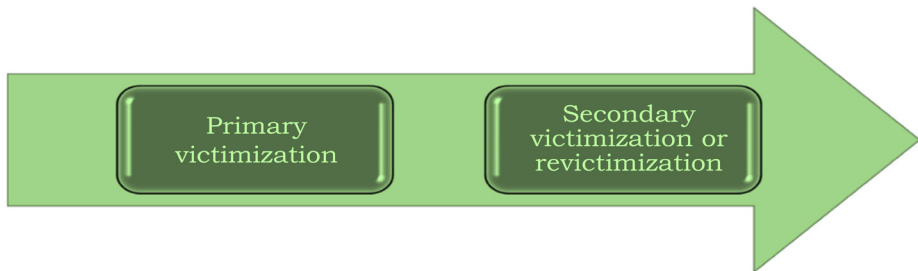
Source: JEP (2021).

Regarding the described panorama, it is crucial to promote mechanisms that strengthen participation for the benefit of both direct and indirect victims of security forces. This way, they can be recognized in significant numbers, ensuring their involvement in scenarios such as the JEP that provide access to the truth and promote non-repetition.

Damage and Impacts on Military Personnel Due to Revictimization

It is important to understand the definitions of primary and secondary victimization (Mantilla, 2015). The former arises from the traumatic impact of a criminal act; instead, secondary victimization, or revictimization (Bezanilla, n.d.), occurs as a consequence of the relationship between the victim and the legal system, other entities, individuals, or the community at large. This type of victimization arises when an individual who has experienced trauma comes into contact with authorities or institutions, potentially facing unfair treatment and even being criminalized for the very act of which they were a victim.

Figure 3. *Victimization Diagram*



Source: Own elaboration based Mantilla (2015).

These damages may have consequences on four levels (Mantilla, 2015): 1) physical: minor, severe, and very serious injuries to the victim; 2) emotional: difficult to determine due to their complexity, although they include actions that impact individuals' mental health, such as questioning the victim, failing to acknowledge the harm caused, blaming the victim, and unnecessarily reliving the traumatic event without adherence to proper protocol, or actions that may lead to perceptions of rejection, feelings of hopelessness, emotional distress, exclusion, and stigma; 3) sociocultural: effects on the victim's interpersonal relationships and psychosocial spheres; and 4) economic: all the damage resulting from the event, encompassing material losses along with the physical and emotional effects on the individual's overall functioning, thereby altering their quality of life.

The consequences or damages of revictimization can affect any individual, group, population, or community that has experienced significant trauma. One such group includes members of security forces who are victims of armed conflict, along with their families.

Some situations related to revictimization in security force members who were victims of illicit war methods at the time of their interviews involve actions by close people, such as relatives, friends, institutions, and the general community. These actions arise from discrimination or stigmatization by third parties who doubt the events that transpired, make judgments about the expected outcomes of belonging to military and police institutions, and assume that economic reparations can compensate for all damages incurred. They suggest that being or having been part of such institutions does not classify them as victims of armed conflict in Colombia. Furthermore, they face systematic exclusion from various actors to the extent that they are ridiculed and indiscriminately singled out simply for wearing a uniform.

In contrast, various institutional efforts have been made to reduce revictimization and its effects. In Colombia, for example, the National System of Comprehensive Care and Reparation for Victims (SNARIV) was established as a government agency responsible for ensuring compliance with the provisions of Law 1448/2011 and other national decrees, adhering to international standards for the protection of victims of attacks, whether psychological or physical, as well as violations of their rights, including revictimization. The UAEARIV, in the framework of Law 1448/2011, provides measures for the care, assistance, and comprehensive reparation for victims of armed conflict registered in the RUV.

The RUV is an instrument that allows people who consider themselves victims of armed conflict in Colombia to provide testimony, offering the necessary information in a format specifically designed for this purpose. This testimony outlines the circumstances of the time, manner, and place where the victimizing events occurred (Corte Constitucional, 2019). According to the latest data report published in 2022 by the UAEARIV, members of security forces have also been victims of numerous events.

Table 1. *List of Victims per Security Force*

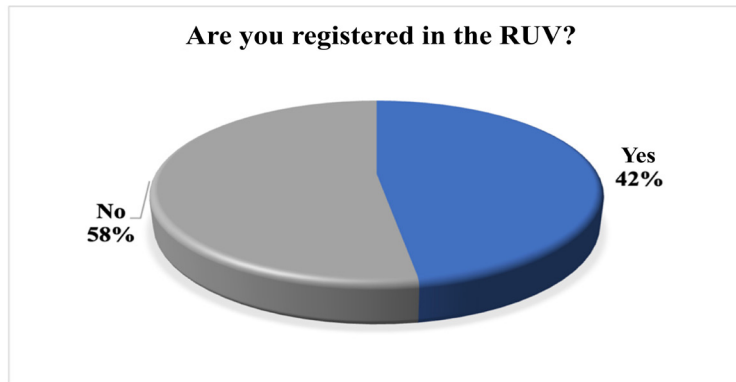
Security force	Total victims
National Army	288.421
National Navy	37.825
Air Force	6126
National Police	70,980
Total	403.352

Source: Own elaboration based on UAEARIV (2022).

However, the study conducted by Corporación MilVíctimas could determine the systematic denial experienced by security forces members and their families in the RUV. This is a concerning situation, as the Unit for Victims is responsible for protecting and promoting victims' rights and should not be a setting for discrimination or distinction against any group within the victim population affected by armed conflict in Colombia.

Considering the above, Figure 4 shows the results obtained regarding registration in the RUV for the individuals in the study sample: 58 % of them have not been recognized as victims.

Figure 4. Figures of the Study Sample – RUV



Source: Own elaboration.

On the other hand, within the universe of victims, there is a lack of understanding regarding the reality of the members of security forces and their status as victims of the Colombian conflict, which also reveals some degree of rejection. In the collective conscience, it is inconceivable that a direct actor, such as the members of security forces, in the performance of their duties, can simultaneously be a direct victim of the conflict, overlooking the human being that precedes the uniform and the institutions to which they belong.

Now, and seeking to get closer to the latent reality of members of security forces and their families about revictimizing experiences in various scenarios, we find explicit facts that show how this phenomenon occurs. Below are some statements made before MilVíctimas that account for the multiple actions against the victims, classified as acts of re-victimization.

"In a call for victim recognition, I wasn't included." "While I was going through the process to obtain victim status, it seemed to me that there were many requirements. I thought to myself: 'The facts are already documented and supported by medical records. There's a report.' The process took so long that I lost the desire to continue with it." "Just because we're working with an institution like the Police and receive a salary, we're not considered part of the conflict; that's the saddest part." "We face discrimination. A bandit today earns millions and enjoys many perks; he has an escort, a cell phone, a pick-up truck, while we must rely on prosthetics, walk, or take a bus." "Once, I was told, 'You joined the Police; you knew that one day you could end up dead or

disabled.” “Discrimination is acknowledged, yet we’re discriminated against by the same people, the same society we serve. It’s a bit depressing; it’s up to oneself to learn to live with that.” “What left a mark on me was the death of my sisters—young girls who had no part in this conflict—simply for being relatives of a police officer.” “It pains me to see those individuals who caused us harm working in Congress and receiving benefits that should belong to others.” (MilVíctimas, 2021)

The above only partially reflects the perception of damages from revictimization, actions carried out by various actors that wound victims. In this case, the victims are the members of security forces, who, in addition to enduring the effects of the victimizing event, are often subjected to constant stigmatization for their affiliation with the Military Forces and the Police. Moreover, there is a silent phenomenon: invisibilization. “The conflict has reproduced dehumanization, a lack of accountability, the denial or concealment of reality, as well as the invisibilization and silencing of victims” (CNMH, 2013).

The situation afflicts the members of security forces and their families since they are not heard. The existence of the paradigm that denies their status as victims has resulted in a strong social invisibility, preventing them from accessing the spaces to which they are entitled. This, in turn, revictimizes them and adds to the physical, psychological, and social effects, leaving this population with deep scars in their lives and rendering them vulnerable.

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Chapter 5

The National Army Soldier as an Educator in Environmental Peacebuilding*

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Abstract: This chapter reflects on education as a pillar for humanizing the conflict and as a central component in addressing existing environmental problems. New practices allow for the transformation of the conflict, redirecting it toward the establishment of ecological peace, which requires strengthening efforts in higher education institutions (HEIs) and military training schools aligned with this mission. This chapter supports the concept of education, presents its regulations, and explains its application as the sole guarantor of forming moral principles and knowledge—essential elements in training men and women of the National Army.

Keywords: competencies; conflict; education; Colombian Military Forces; environment; environmental peace

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SECURITY FORCES, ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION, AND PEACEBUILDING WITHIN THE HUMAN RIGHTS AND IHL FRAMEWORK

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Introduction

Colombia has the potential to drive sustainable growth, thanks to its strategic location on the equator. The advantage of having two oceans, three mountain ranges, jungles, valleys, and plains has resulted in a wide variety of climates and soils, which in turn creates unique opportunities for extensive production work in the rural sector. The IDEAM Forest Monitoring System estimates that Colombia has 59.8 million hectares of natural forests (Visión Amazonía, 2021). However, some hectares are allocated for other activities, such as illegal mining, when they should be designated solely for forestry use, including the production of wood and other forest products, or to protect watersheds based on their environmental conditions.

Aware of this problem, the Colombian State established the National Institute of Renewable Natural Resources and the Environment (INDERENA, by its Spanish acronym), which acted as the national environmental authority between 1968 and 1994 and laid the groundwork for the creation of the Ministry of Environment and Sustainable Development (MinAmbiente) in 1993 with the mission of

Being the public entity responsible for defining national environmental policy and promoting the recovery, conservation, protection, planning, management, use, and exploitation of renewable natural resources to ensure sustainable development and guarantee all citizens the right to enjoy and inherit a healthy environment. (MinAmbiente, 2021)

In compliance with this mission, the 17 sustainable development goals (SDGs) established by the UN are adopted to balance sustainable economic, social, and environmental development. Therefore, an international agenda was established until 2030 to achieve these SDGs (United Nations, 2015), the vision being expressed as follows:

By 2030, the Ministry of Environment and Sustainable Development will contribute to the economic and social development of the country, protecting the environment and renewable natural resources and guiding the territory's environmental planning within the framework of environmental sustainability. (MinAmbiente, 2019, p. 6)

Likewise, its constitutional framework includes the Rio Declaration, made in June 1992, which contains the definition of sustainable development and guarantees the survival of the planet:

With the goal of establishing a new and equitable global partnership through the creation of new levels of cooperation among States, key sectors of societies and people, working towards international agreements which respect the interests of all and protect the integrity of the global environmental and developmental system, Recognizing the integral and interdependent nature of the Earth, our home (United Nations, 1992, p. 1)

Thus, it is the responsibility of the State to work on effective action plans to mitigate different environmental problems, as set out in the *Framework Principles on Human Rights and the Environment, 2018*, main guidelines regarding a safe, clean, healthy, and sustainable environment:

To protect against environmental harm and to take necessary measures for the full realization of human rights that depend on the environment, States must establish, maintain and enforce effective legal and institutional frameworks for the enjoyment of a safe, clean, healthy and sustainable environment. Such frameworks should include substantive environmental standards, including with respect to air quality, the global climate, freshwater quality, marine pollution, waste, toxic substances, protected areas, conservation and biological diversity. (United Nations, 2018, p. 17)

Recognizing Colombia as a region rich in natural biodiversity, it is evident that the Colombian State has established control and surveillance organizations to conserve and protect its wealth of natural resources. Consequently, its participation in international organizations that promote sustainable development is commendable, as it embraces international provisions to achieve its objectives. Its task extends beyond merely implementing these efforts.

For this reason, the State, mindful of its responsibility, regards education as a fundamental pillar and strategic tool to address existing environmental challenges, adopt new practices, and foster peace. Drawing on legitimacy, it utilizes military

entities such as the National Army to enhance this mission through training schools. Thus, this document endorses education, outlines its regulations, and establishes it as the sole guarantor of moral principles and knowledge that are vital for both men and women in military institutions.

To ensure a safe and environmentally friendly environment, the Colombian State utilizes education from its military training schools as a proactive tool, as they will be the first responsible for conveying these principles to future guarantors arriving in various territories across the country. Based on the legal frameworks of human rights and related environmental principles, the State has a responsibility to provide adequate training and education to the men and women undertaking the duty of being part of security forces (2018, p. 4). Thus, it is essential to explore the training within the military context and its alignment with the environmental policies in the Defense sector.

Like any educational institution, to certify the achievement of its objectives and demonstrate the learning results, the competencies addressed, especially those developed in the military field, are listed.

Finally, we consider the regulatory framework addressed and the different categories to affirm in an argumentative manner that education is the most efficient and assertive tool in building environmental peace. Therefore, strategies are proposed so that the soldier, through their initial training as an instructor (counselor), can carry out this task successfully in any context in which they must fulfill the institutional mission.

Methods

Bibliographic research has been necessary to achieve the above, allowing us to go to the written sources and carry out the respective interpretation and analysis. Based on Alfonzo (1994), this methodological research strategy is based on the bibliographic analysis of scientific sources, whose purpose is to investigate existing knowledge, a method conducive to constructing knowledge, following the process of collecting, organizing, analyzing, and interpreting the data obtained.

Similarly, the systematic review is subjected to a qualitative data collection method to specify, strengthen, and affirm the premise with which the research begins since qualitative data “refer to detailed descriptions of situations” (Hernández-Sampieri, 2018, p. 9). Then, the following phases were established to achieve the research objectives: 1) background search; 2) information exploration; 3) survey and classification of the information found, and 4) from an interpretive phase, the

identification of megatrends as difficulties and limitations for subsequent analysis of the information collected.

To fulfill the objective, it was necessary to go to the sources that account for the authenticity, credibility, and representativeness of documents and, thus, conduct a reading from interpretation and analysis.

Theoretical Framework

The concept of *education* and its implementation from its regulations are defined to show that it is developed in a process of coherence. The word education has at least two etymological conceptions; the first comes from the Latin *educatio* ("upbringing") or *educo* ("I educate, I train"). Besides, there is *educere* and *educare*, which means promoting the student's intellectual development and psychic, cognitive, and cultural potential (Online Etymology Dictionary, 2024). Based on this, there is a clear difference in the meanings of the word *education*: One can be understood only through concepts, preconceived schemes, and specific processes, and the other, in the alignment of reasoning that leads to developing intelligence, interpretation, analysis, and reflection.

It is important to specify that two meanings have been adopted: the first is to disclose the history and culture of the process that humanity has experienced throughout its various periods, and the second pertains to reflective processes that emerge from these. For this reason, other disciplines such as pedagogy and didactics are incorporated, which foster a learning process between teacher and student.

Education is a universal right and is framed in the object established by Article 26(2) of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights of 1948 (United Nations, 2024), which consists of achieving the full development of the human personality and strengthening respect for human rights and fundamental freedoms. More broadly, education contributes to the training of the individual regarding respect for and appreciation of diversity, where the notion of tolerance, understanding, and friendship between the parties is promoted to keep peace.

This statement suggests that education serves a purpose for humanity. It is not merely a conceptual activity regulated by institutions and agents based on relevance; rather, it shapes the development of a tangible and sensitive human process aimed at instilling principles and values in children, men, and women, without social, racial, ethnic, religious groups, or other distinction.

Besides, international entities such as the United Nations promulgate that education is the basic foundation in the construction of any society (United Nations,

2024). The above explains that the international community, in its desire to consolidate a favorable world for all countries, populations, and communities, reaffirms that education is the foundation for building and consolidating better societies.

Similarly, there are 17 SDGs proposed in the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, setting out the following regarding the issue of quality education:

4. Quality Education. Ensure inclusive and equitable quality education and promote lifelong learning opportunities for all. Education enables upward socioeconomic mobility and is key to escaping poverty. (United Nations, 2015)

This SDG provides the foundation to overthrow social and cultural problems, such as social inequalities, stemming from distinctions of gender, race, beliefs, religion, political positions, and others. It also proposes that opportunities should be for everyone regardless of their condition, but this can only occur if and only if the State offers quality education, and that the result of all these good actions will be reflected in the eradication of poverty.

Education in the Formation of Principles and Knowledge in the Men and Women of the National Army

Education is not treated as a new science; it has been conceived since ancient times, approximately since the 5th century BC, and, for more accuracy, we will reflect on it from the cradle of the culture of all humanity, Greek culture. The Greeks conceived education from the following premise: Education is the principle through which the community preserves and transmits its physical and spiritual peculiarity (Jaeger, 1994, p.3). Thus, for this culture, intelligible and intangible worlds were represented in the physical and the spiritual. Plato, who fed his intellect with the speeches of Socrates, his teacher, proposes to explain the theory of forms based on the theory of two worlds, where the birth of ideas first dwells in man (intelligible world) and then man materializes them in the tangible world.

From these reflections, Greek culture thought it impossible to think of the existence of man without this duality, the body without the existence of the soul. These two conditions are also attributed to education since it builds, preserves, and transmits all knowledge from generation to generation, referring to the material and visible aspects of the world as what man can experience and know from his intellect and his senses.

Furthermore, the Greeks understood education as relevant to the entire society and not as a privilege for a few. Education is not an individual property, but belongs, by its essence, to the community (Jaeger, 1994, p. 3).

Greek culture stands out for the birth of a democratic society where rules and strict compliance with them are part of the fundamental essence of its State (*polis*). To conceive of the State without guidelines is to jeopardize stability, security, and any action in education, which would condemn any society to deprive itself of knowledge and, ultimately, to destruction.

The consistency of the foundations of education corresponds with the firmness of the authorized norms. For Jaeger (1994), such dissipation and annihilation of norms materialize in fragility and insecurity, making the exercise of education impossible.

The Greeks nourished education with all power for the spiritual and physical development of man. If he had adequate and comprehensive training, he was worthy of being a citizen and a ruler for his State. For the Greeks, the idea of education represented the meaning of all human effort. It was the ultimate justification of the existence of the community and human individuality (Jaeger, 1994, p. 6).

For this culture, the sense of the spiritual takes on an essential value in man since matter (the body) disappears when we die, leaving wisdom and memories in the soul. For this reason, education as the only vehicle to acquire knowledge had to be a process of conscious construction involving edifying precepts that formed and molded men.

Concerning the problem of education, a clear understanding of the principles that by nature are part of human life and the inherent laws that direct its bodily and spiritual capacities gained relevance. Placing this knowledge as a pillar in training, based on the educational process and educating, through them, authentic men, just as the potter sculpts his clay and the sculptor his rocks, is a bold idea that entails creation and that could only succeed in the spirit of that populous artist and thinker. So, the creation of living man was the highest work of art (Jaeger, 1994, p. 11).

It is clear at this point that education is not only considered to provide concepts for application to the world; it has been regarded since the Greeks as unique and necessary to form the human personality in good habits, principles, and values. Education is considered the formation of human personality through constant advice and spiritual orientation (Jaeger, 1994, p. 35).

If the essence of community life is based on the possibility of elucidating and integrating the best traits of the individuals comprising it, it is necessary that education, as an instrument of socialization and critical attitude, delivers valid responses to the challenges posed by humanity. (Novo, 2011, para. 1)

From Greek reflections, we can see that education is an essential aspect of human life. It promotes not only knowledge, but also elevates it to a plane of greater

transcendence, enabling it to change and transform the reality of its environment and those who inhabit it.

Results

Training in the Military Context

Education and training in military institutions are guided by the Education Policy for Security Forces (PEFuP, by its Spanish acronym) 2021-2026 (Ministerio de Defensa Nacional [MDN], 2021). It presents the notion of quality in education as the set of articulated, correlated, and dynamic learning competencies developed by educational actors that are the basis of and respond to social, cultural, and environmental demands.

In the Strategic Plan of the Educational System of the Armed Forces (PESE, by its Spanish acronym), the MDN restructures the education of the Armed Forces (AF), considering military and police professional training inspired by doctrine as a pivotal element (MDN, 2008). The MDN (2008) established the PESE for 2007-2019 and defines the Educational System of the Armed Forces (SEFA, by its Spanish acronym) as “the set of interrelated subsystems and elements in a virtuous circle to educate, train, instruct and coach the members of the Armed Forces” (p. 23) (Figure 1).

Figure 1. SEFA Subsystems



Source: MDN (2008).

In 2010, the MDN resized the curricula in the educational policy of the Military Forces and implemented the development of skills focused on the instruction of students in terms of being, knowing, doing, and living together. Therefore, it states that:

PEFA is not only concerned with military or police training, but also with comprehensive training: citizens with solid training in principles, values, virtues, and professional ethics who practice the art of thinking and develop complex thinking to achieve solid military or police judgment; professionals with excellent humanistic training, and exemplary citizens oriented to community service; that is, it is about making a profound transformation in the development of the “competences of being.” (MDN, 2008, p.17)

Alignment of Environmental Policy in the Defense Sector

For Molina et al. (2017), Law 99/1993 gives rise to the connection between the environment and the Defense sector, contributing not only to being a pillar for the beginning of the National Environmental System and the Ministry of the Environment. Article 103 thereof also establishes that the Military Forces must protect renewable and non-renewable natural resources, carry out control and supervision tasks and actions, and support the agencies with environmental authority, territorial entities, and the community.

The six main strategies regarding the environmental policy of the Defense sector are summarized as 1) supporting national initiatives for the safeguarding, protection, and preservation of biodiversity; 2) committing to conservation and sustainable use of biodiversity and ecosystem services as a guarantee of environmental balance where planning and territorial ordering are also integrated; 3) promoting good environmental practices in its activities aligned with the Defense sector; 4) necessary support for actions aimed at the eradication of environmental crimes; 5) supporting actions aimed at conserving the environment and protecting human rights and IHL, and 6) providing environmental education as a scenario for training ethical officials who are more responsible for the environment, based on raising awareness throughout the Defense sector (MDN, 2018).

To achieve this, environmental management practices must be integrated into the military sector to ensure the State's ecological, social, and economic sustainability (Mendoza, 2009). Thus, to implement the strategies, the objectives related to environmental policy are annexed to the development of medium- and long-term plans to face these challenges currently and in the future (Molina et al., 2017). Such is the case of the National Army, which designs and implements

the Artemisa plan to support environmental conservation, water conservation, and protection of biodiversity and natural resources as essential and strategic sources of the nation (Ejército Nacional, 2018).

For Contreras and Arango (2020), the education provided by the military institution is strategic to enhance the environment and thus meets the parameters of national and institutional policies, aimed at achieving the objectives and goals set by the Army for the protection and defense of the environment.

Training by Competencies

Competency in the educational framework of the Military Forces is defined as:

the element that integrates aspects related to military principles, values, virtues, knowledge; ability and skills; attitudes or behaviors; that is, it covers ethical, cognitive, procedural, and attitudinal aspects, interrelated in the search for efficient performance in environments related to the military profession (MDN, 2010, p. 26).

The military profile establishes three dimensions of the soldier's comprehensive training and competencies:

1) thinking and knowing being: intellectual, methodological, investigative, and metacognitive abilities; 2) social and axiological being: interaction, communication, coexistence abilities, the development of attitudes and values; and 3) practical being: the development of skills and abilities, mastery of practices, and intervention in specific media and contexts. (MDN, 2010, p. 30)

There are four general competencies: being, doing, knowing, and living together. Each of them contains a set of specific competencies that must be developed and promoted in the programs offered. The training processes are expected to relate theoretical knowledge with practical knowledge in order to develop and reinforce the defined competencies (MDN, 2010).

Competencies in the Military Context

Competencies are defined as the actions that demonstrate the execution and application of knowledge, skills, aptitudes, attitudes, and values that contribute to exceptional performance. They aim to exhibit behaviors that add significant value to the institution (EJC, 2014). It has been established that organizational

competencies must be possessed by all military personnel in the Force, from generals to soldiers, to achieve outstanding performance and meet strategic objectives. These are generic competencies defined based on the analysis found in academia's vision and mission, as well as the current and future challenges facing the Force.

Competencies at the managerial level are necessary for all officers and non-commissioned officers to successfully and efficiently hold highly complex or managerial positions aimed at attaining the optimal goal of missions and performing assigned tasks. Managerial competencies are those required by Force personnel to carry out the functions assigned to the different positions successfully.

In 2010, 27 competencies were established, divided into organizational, leading, and managerial. It should be noted that at each level, specific competencies are adapted to the position held (soldiers, non-commissioned officers, junior officers, superior officers, and general officers), as follows:

- 1) organizational competencies: commitment to academia, transmission of messages or orders effectively, personal growth, adaptability to change, ability to serve, orientation to results, and teamwork;
- 2) leading competencies: command as a leader, guidance and orientation of groups, planning and control, assertiveness in the peaceful resolution of conflicts, and resource management;
- 3) managerial competencies: numerical analysis, relationship building, information management, project management, negotiation, time management, initiative, self-control, innovation, strategic thinking, analytical thinking, information search, flexibility, tolerance to pressure. (Vargas, 2015, p. 9)

Discussion

Environmental Education through Competencies and Application of Strategies

According to the reviews on developing competencies and identifying strategies for educating about environmental peace, aligned with fulfilling military activities within their constitutional mission to safeguard national sovereignty and protect and conserve renewable and non-renewable natural resources, the following competencies are defined for the military role of educator (Table 1).

Table 1. *Competencies in the Military Role of Educator*

Strategies to educate in environmental peace	Compliance with environmental policy	General competencies	Required competencies
a. Clear knowledge of current international and national regulations to act within the law	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Support sovereign actions aimed at caring for, protecting, and conserving biodiversity • Encourage the careful protection and sustainable use of biodiversity and ecosystem services through environmental and land use planning • Support every activity that seeks to eradicate illicit actions in ecosystems 	Competencies in knowing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Set objectives clearly • Analyze situations, look for relevant information to diagnose problems, and choose solutions • Generate reliable and timely information • Develop and implement a project
b. Previous knowledge of the context and the population so that security and credibility can be built in the discourse and presentation of proposals	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Guide the activities and work of the Defense sector with appropriate environmental practices • Help eradicate illicit activities in the country's ecosystems 	Competencies in knowing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Act under the principles and values of the institution • Analyze situations, look for relevant information to diagnose problems, and choose solutions • Establish constructive interpersonal relationships
c. Sufficient knowledge of the environmental issues that affect a community in order to present the short, medium, and long-term consequences with credibility	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Help sovereign efforts aimed at safeguarding, caring for, and preserving biodiversity • Promote the conservation, care, and sustainable use of biodiversity and ecosystem services together with environmental and land use planning • Support activities aimed at eradicating crime against ecosystems in the national territory • Raise awareness in the Defense sector through environmental education to train more ethical officials committed to their environment 	Competencies in knowing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Set the objectives clearly • Analyze situations, look for relevant information to diagnose problems, and choose solutions • Generate reliable and timely information • Lead the definition and implementation of a project or program

d. Conditions for conflict resolution since other problems may arise along the way	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Support environmental conservation by defending Human Rights and IHL • Raise awareness in the Defense sector through environmental educational processes that allow the training of ethical officials responsible for their environment 	Competencies in doing and coexisting	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Express ideas clearly and precisely • Make efforts to know the needs and attitudes of others • Establish constructive interpersonal relationships • Reach mutually beneficial agreements
e. Excellent leadership attitude to achieve harmony in the community	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Seek alignment between the actions and activities of the Defense sector with appropriate environmental practices 	Competencies in being	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Make permanent efforts to achieve personal growth and comprehensive development • Make conscious efforts to achieve the expected results • Lead the definition and implementation of a project or program • Generate practical and innovative ideas and methods

Source: Own elaboration.

Education as a Tool in Environmental Peacebuilding

It is necessary to review and analyze some statements that some organizations and authors have made on issues related to education and its intrinsic relationship to achieving peace from the environment. According to UNESCO (1980), environmental education is a notion that should be understood as a constant with reactions to the change of contemporary times. Individuals must be prepared to face these complexities by understanding today's environment, where human beings must acquire the necessary technical knowledge and qualities to carry out productive actions in order not only to improve daily life but also to strengthen the protection of the environment.

From the previous statement, UNESCO, aware of the dizzying changes and transformations that were taking place in the world, foresaw it a few decades ago when it proposed that States work through education to prepare man for the different challenges that he had to face, and one of them was environmental

protection. To do this, it is necessary to start with the interpretation and analysis of the concept of *culture of peace*:

A set of values, attitudes, traditions and modes of behavior and ways of life based on: (a) ending of violence and promotion and practice of non-violence through education, dialogue and cooperation; (b) Full respect for the principles of sovereignty, territorial integrity and political independence of States and non-intervention in matters which are essentially within the domestic jurisdiction of any State, in accordance with the Charter of the United Nations and international law; (c) Full respect for and promotion of all human rights and fundamental freedoms; (d) Commitment to peaceful settlement of conflicts; (e) Efforts to meet the developmental and environmental needs of present and future generations; (f) Respect for and promotion of the right to development; (g) Respect for and promotion of equal rights and opportunities for women and men; (h) Respect for and promotion of the right of everyone to freedom of expression, opinion and information; (i) Adherence to the principles of freedom, justice, democracy, tolerance, solidarity, cooperation, pluralism, cultural diversity, dialogue and understanding at all levels of society and among nations; and fostered by an enabling national and international environment conducive to peace. (UN, 1999, pp. 2-3)

From the previous assessment, it is clear that, in a culture of peace, several characteristics converge to foster peace. Education serves as the immediate tool that all states can leverage to advance this mission and build peace.

The UN has continued to expose global problems, but at the same time, it makes proposals to mitigate them. Thus, in its 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, SDG 16: Peace, Justice, and Strong Institutions states: "Promote peaceful and inclusive societies for sustainable development." This goal is presented with relevance, given the following threats promulgated by the same organization:

Conflict, insecurity, weak institutions and limited access to justice remain a great threat to sustainable development. The number of people fleeing war, persecution, and conflict exceeded 70 million in 2018, the highest level recorded by the Office of the UN refugee agency (UNHCR) in almost 70 years. In 2019, the United Nations tracked 357 killings and 30 enforced disappearances of human rights defenders, journalists, and trade unionists in 47 countries. (United Nations, n.d., paras. 1 and 2)

Given these statements and figures presented, it is essential to work immediately and consistently on actions that lead to strategic plans from the State and its organizations, ensuring the security of the Colombian national territory. While education indeed provides parameters for conducting conscious and reasoned processes that contribute to efficient strategies, helping to generate knowledge about the traceability of teaching and learning between teachers and students, it must serve as the primary vehicle for learning about peace and the environment. Below are several authors who have formulated postulates on issues regarding environmental peace through education.

Edward J. Brantmeier positions education as the central postulate for achieving sustainability, asserting that a key element of implementing sustainability in education is its synergy with peace, social, environmental, and economic education, which offers a comprehensive approach (Brantmeier, 2013, p. 1). The classroom experience and the themes this author addresses lend credibility to his postulate and reaffirm education as a strategic tool for fostering changes and habits that cultivate better societal citizens.

Toh Swee-Hin establishes a close link between environmental education and peace education, as both aim to guide and foster practices that promote sustainability and harmony in society. Environmental education and peace education are complementary, with significant synergy between them, as their objectives focus on building a just, sustainable, and non-violent world where the rights of all forms of life are respected. Both emphasize developing critical education that can lead to transformations. They seek answers to the causes of conflicts and effective strategies for building peace while considering environmental issues (Swee-Hin & Cawagas, 2010, p. 172).

Betty Reardon argues that peace education must incorporate the values of environmental responsibility, cultural diversity, human solidarity, social responsibility, and gender equality (Reardon, 1999, p. 399).

Martha Craven Nussbaum states that education is essential due to its responsibility to all humanity and its values. It provides a basis for facing the inequalities that occur at global, national, and local levels so that peace can be built and kept.

From the authors mentioned, education is affirmed as both a sufficient and necessary tool for constructing a more just, equitable, sustainable, and

inclusive society where tangible harmony can be observed. Due to the climate crisis –including natural disasters, floods, water salinization, and crop failures– consequences such as refugees and conflicts arise in various countries. Thus, sustainable development becomes a vital and cross-cutting educational content, alongside the promotion of a culture of peace.

Proposal and Application of Strategies to Educate in Environmental Peace

It is evident that education is the most effective tool for fostering environmental peace, making it essential to explore the strategies that Colombian soldiers can implement in their context. It is important to highlight that all men and women serving in the National Army receive comprehensive training for any position aligning with their hierarchy, but one consistent aspect of their work involves commanding and leading. To prepare for this, they are trained in specialties like leadership that equip them with adequate tools to oversee several personnel, according to their role, thus making them accountable for the actions of a group. This experience enables them to learn how to control, guide, and redirect situations, a practice that proves valuable in a community or population.

Conversely, addressing environmental issues in communities inherently requires the development of actions, as mere discourse cannot provide solutions. Thus, a soldier with the following characteristics is needed: 1) clear knowledge of current international and national environmental regulations to act within the law and avoid incurring in situations that may require subsequent punishment; 2) previous knowledge of the context and the population so that security and credibility can be built in the discourse and presentation of proposals; 3) sufficient knowledge of the environmental issues that affect a community in order to present the short, medium and long term consequences with credibility; 4) training and conditions for conflict resolution since other problems may arise along the way, and 5) excellent leadership attitude to achieve harmony in the community.

The aforementioned characteristics, backed by contextually relevant projects and issues, will enable genuine, conscious, and sensitive transformations, allowing for the creation of new habits, customs, and even economic dynamics while preserving environmental ecosystems.

Conclusions

In a global context of severe environmental crises, economic and social imbalances, and threats to peace and security, urgent transformations are necessary to stabilize the degradation of the environment and ecosystems. This has prompted the Colombian State to seek tools and strategies to mitigate these impacts, which affect all regions and populations in vulnerable situations.

One of these tools and strategies is education. Through this, knowledge, good habits, and customs can be transmitted from generation to generation, helping form peaceful, fair, equitable, supportive, and inclusive societies, protecting human rights, and guaranteeing the protection of the planet and its resources.

Similarly, it was possible to specify that the men and women of the National Army of Colombia, since their training, gained sufficient knowledge, skills, and tools to become educators and active agents in restoring and building environmental peace in the national territory. It is suggested that the population's participation in various processes and proposals for ecological projects helps prevent future socio-environmental conflicts.

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Chapter 6

Defense Support of Civil Authorities in Responding to Natural Disasters*

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Abstract: This chapter analyzes how the Colombian Military Forces, in performing unified action and working harmoniously with State institutions under its doctrine, are legal and legitimate. It highlights the mechanisms of collaboration and civil control, which are often unknown to members of society, making them a paradigm. Through a qualitative analysis of the laws, doctrine, and actions of security forces, based on the cooperation of the Military Forces as an element of reliable development alongside institutions and civil power, this not only dismantles the paradigm but also brings to the attention of civil society the military profession supported by the developments of its doctrine in conjunction with unified state action.

Keywords: Unified action; Defense Support of Civil Authorities (DSCA); response to natural disasters; civil control; civil power; political-military relations

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Introduction

The interest politicians from civil societies typically have in the military extends only to threats to their internal and external security and is confined to the provisions in the constitutions of most nations: the defense of constitutional integrity, the independence and sovereignty of the country, and the responsibility for the use of the State's legitimate force.

Myths surround the interaction of State institutions with their military forces. Opposition political groups, journalists, thinkers, and artists, among others, perceive this interaction as dangerous for democracy. This interaction is usually classified as unconstitutional, without any basis, and outside the competence or mission of such forces due to ignorance of their roles. In short, it is a biased view that focuses on a possible militarization of civil society for political interests, which disregards the benefits that may be derived from this work.

For an efficient operation, military institutions require functional capabilities in war and peace that benefit nations in all spheres, not only security and defense. However, the unified action¹ partners' knowledge of these capabilities is essential since they are linked to the concept of protection² and help develop the State.

It should be noted that using military powers to support unified action is not an attack on democracy but rather a viable capability option for the development

¹ According to the doctrine, unified action (UA) includes synchronizing, coordinating, or integrating the activities of governmental and non-governmental agencies with military operations to achieve the unity of effort contemplated in MFC 1.0.

² Protection: This is a warfighting function that describes how to coordinate protection to preserve the nation's combat power, personnel, unified action partners, critical infrastructure, and strategic assets covered by MFE 3-37.

of nations that take advantage of the multifunctional configuration of their armed forces without distancing them from their constitutional mission.

To examine the competencies, we will analyze characteristics and procedures of military action with specific actions, which are not general knowledge but serve to expand the perception of the relationship between defense support of civil authorities (DSCA).

Fundamentals that Make the Military Different in Society

Discipline, order, and permanent subjugation to civil authority under a hierarchy are everyday activities for the military but not for the rest of society. In the military, there is a different organizational structure, in which the possibilities of each man vary thanks to their talents and special abilities that are put at the service of their unit; there is no individualism, but rather a collective action with a clear objective, which includes even the military families and their way of taking on life.³

Duties and responsibilities mark the mission and daily life of the military forces according to their specialty. The promise to serve the country is honored daily, not from the liberal vision that each citizen has, but by fulfilling their assignments in the branch delegated to them, with regulated responsibilities from dawn until they go to rest.

Being a soldier⁴ requires regular physical training, strict adherence to discipline rules, and teamwork to fulfill one's duties according to one's position, which is crucial for the security and survival of fellow team members, as well as training in a wide range of military techniques and tactics.

Training in receiving and following orders must be permanent and provided accurately because these are generally accompanied by elements that can cause harm to others if neglected. Additionally, preparation for using force requires

³ Military families must deal with specific stresses that make parenting difficult. The figure of the military father must battle with short-, medium-, or long-term absences and the stress associated with enlisting for active duty. Infants must assimilate and face the situation of having a parent who is far away and in danger. Likewise, these homes also face frequent moves and changes in school, adapting to new challenges of cultures and customs. The partner must also face new challenges and various responsibilities while the military parent is away (Children Welfare, Information Gateway, 2023).

⁴ When we refer to the word soldier, we are referring to all personnel from the most basic ranks and functions in a military institution, such as those of a soldier in a combat team, to the most complex committed functions led by an army's commanding general.

meticulous planning, which should leave nothing to chance. In the use of force in a war operation, any carelessness can lead to the physical disappearance of a unit.

These concepts of physical training, adherence to orders, and rigorous personal and team discipline are not defining elements of modern armies. They are principles found in the philosophy of the Spartan soldier described in Herodotus' *Histories* from the 4th century BC and in Sun Tzu's *The Art of War* (1999), dating back to the 5th century BC, which remain familiar to and prevail in the army today.

The values⁵ and conduct of a soldier are governed by principles⁶ that cannot be negotiable. Their foundations are described as the cornerstone of military institutions as repositories of the nation's weapons and legitimate use of violence at the risk of their own lives, safeguarding respect for the constitution and the laws of the republic. André Gavet, in his book *L'Art de Commander*, states about the soldier's duty:

It is nothing but the form of the citizen's duty toward the country guided by the moral basis of collective duty. It is organic and not tyrannical. It is exercised through the selfless collaboration of individuals and not by violence. Command and obedience are attributes of equal dignity. (Gavet, 2018)

Within the modern conception of freedoms, described in Law 1862/2017, there needs to be more understanding of what discipline, obedience, subordination, self-denial, and persistence mean. These are essential qualities that every soldier has, exercised not under the coercion of abuse, mistreatment, or arbitrariness but under the command's leadership governed by the attitude of service, respect, and solidarity.

In civil society and institutions, the understanding of military sciences is quite poor or almost non-existent, which is logical in such a closed field that is only relevant to the military. According to *MFE, 1.0, El Ejército* (2017), civil society overlooks the processes that require specialization, which is achieved through educational, instructional, and training processes, necessary for adequately acquiring and enhancing the individual and collective organizational competencies of leaders.

According to military doctrine, knowledge of the military profession is based on four fields: technical-military, ethical-moral, political-cultural, and leadership training, which are multipliers of expertise. Such knowledge is strengthened

⁵ Respect, honesty, loyalty, courage, prudence, perseverance, solidarity, fidelity, and transparency are contemplated in *MFE 1.0, El Ejército* (2017).

⁶ Fundamental norms or ideas that guide thought and behavior, derive from beliefs and culture, and regulate the lives of men on land, sea, and air, being the support that makes the ethics and morals of the Military Forces unbreakable. Referenced from the manual of ethical generalities for the military vocation (CGFM, 2016).

by doctrine, making education and training fundamental in the development of technical skills so that officers, non-commissioned officers, and staff have correct judgment in decision-making (MFE 1.0).

The education, training, and retraining processes are certified at all levels, according to rank and specialty, from regular soldiers to brigadier generals for promotion to the rank of major general. This makes military education a constant source of preparation and updating, which requires a professional army competent for the defense of a nation.

All military education programs, in addition to being aligned with the parameters required by the Ministry of National Education (MEN, by its Spanish acronym) under Decree 1075/2015, which regulates the Education sector at the national level, follow the guidelines established in the Education Policies of Security Forces (PEFuP, by its Spanish acronym).⁷

All aspects of the defense of nations cannot be linked to chance or the political logic of the moment. Thus, military sciences are limited to logical premises, academically founded and relevant to the historical context, and adjusted to detailed rationing, as described in *On the German art of war*, as follows:

Nothing could be more dangerous than to follow sudden inspirations, however intelligent or brilliant they may appear, without pursuing them to the logical conclusions, or to indulge in wishful thinking, however sincere our purposes. We need officers capable of following systematically the path of logical argument to its conclusion, with disciplined intellect, strong enough in character and nerve to execute what the intellect dictates. (Condell & Zabecki, 2001)

This foundation of the soldier's training in a solid doctrine focused on the knowledge of their military profession and the optimization of human and material resources at the nation's service. It keeps the armed forces away from political deliberation, making their decisions solely and exclusively under the political directive and civilian control of the president and the minister of defense.

⁷ Taken from PEFuP 2021-2026, Resolution 0455 of March 11, 2021, the educational system has institutions recognized by the MEN, six of them accredited as high quality. Likewise, it has 170 higher education programs approved by the MEN, of which 39 already have high quality registration and 131 have qualified registration. They also provide more than 4,500 training programs that specialize uniformed personnel in military and police art.

Precepts of the Politics-Soldiers Relationship

The relationships between politicians and the military have very marked visions regarding the management of forces exclusive to politics. This is related to the words of Winston Churchill (1985): "Politics is almost as exciting as war, and quite dangerous. In war you can only be killed once, but in politics many times." The conviction that war is exclusively for politicians is also expressed by the former Prime Minister of France, George Clemenceau, who stated that "war is too serious a matter to entrust to military men," perhaps due to Achille Tournier's reasoning: "The military has too much strength, and the politicians have too much skill."

Carrying out violence and war as a decision of political powers is generally analyzed taking the well-known axiom of Carl Von Clausewitz (2016), "war is the continuation of politics by other means" or as explained by John Keegan (2014), in his book *A History of Warfare*, "as the continuation of political intercourse with the intermixing of other means," the other means being the use of violence by the military until the political will of the opponent is subdued.

The rulers and political establishments of States use force because they see military power as an option to conquer the objectives, they consider vital. Failing to achieve this through politics or diplomacy, they impose them by force. Violence and submission become their ultimate goal, and for that, they use the soldier and the armed capacity.

It is not the soldier who initiates conflicts but rather the one who fulfills the political intention of the ruler to whom they are subordinate, since the State led by the ruler has prepared, equipped, and made them ready to comply with the constitutional provisions of nations, which in modern times are none other than the defense of sovereignty, independence, and the integrity of the constitutional order.

Politicians and civilians have a conception of the soldier, shaped in modern times by film and television content in which the countless dramas of their lives are narrated. They are the ones who suffer in the development of war, caused by political acts of States or organizations that fight causes, from the historical view of each conflict.

However, it is not always expected for the military to have political intentions or to be pressured by military institutions due to different reasons that are generally marked by the low or no room for maneuver in public institutions, managed by

technocrats with specialized skills whose expertise the military lacks. Furthermore, “politics is beyond the scope of military competence, and the participation of military officers in politics undermines their professionalism, curtailing their professional competence, dividing the profession against itself” (Huntington, 2000).

History may mark the emergence of military leaders who have taken up political banners and abused force, breaking democracies or changing de facto constitutional orders. This entry of military personnel with command into political arenas is a transgression of honor and the army codes that have governed them in the subordination of authority.

Nonetheless, in all areas of civil and military life, there are anomalies: officers who manage to have particular success in politics and who generally retire to lead a political life. Still, it is no longer common for them to do so in uniform or even think about taking power de facto, as was usual in the 1960s and 1970s in Latin America.

The ideas of the military dictatorships from the 1950s to the early 1990s in Europe, Latin America, and Africa were due to geopolitical factors derived from the bipolar world that existed then, with opposed ideological loads. These dictatorships caused severe *violations* of human rights in the containment and combat reactionary communist ideologies with nationalist content, which, with their revolutionary actions or influenced by the elites of each country in the face of the possible installation of communist governments in the region, gave rise to military dictatorships.

The behavior of these military regimes in power showed that they were unreliable, nor did they bring stability or progress to nations. Thus, they lost support from the USA and its allies. “Events such as the fall of the Franco regime and the democratization of Spain, the Carnation Revolution in Portugal, the collapse of dictatorships in Latin America, and the universal acceptance of democracy as a universal value” (Huntington, 1991).

All this added to the advances and development of international instruments that promote democracies, such as the Universal Declaration of Human Rights of 1948, the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights, the global declarations and conventions of the ILO, and the creation of the Inter-American, European, and African human rights systems, makes it very difficult for a nation to be taken over de facto by a military authority.

In *The Third Wave*, Huntington (1991, p. 8) concludes that since 1990, “military coups, censorship, rigged elections, coercion and harassment of the opposition, jailing of political opponents, and prohibition of political meetings are incompatible with democracy,” which have consequences in international political spheres, in the

UN, commercial powers such as the USA and the European Union, and multilateral economic organizations that would make a military dictatorship like those of the 1960s and 1970s unviable. Likewise, the fall of the totalitarian governments of the communist system, education, information shared by the media, and dissemination of democratic values created a broader and more applicable vision of democracy in the world that differs substantially from place to place due to cultural and religious conceptions or States under a single-party regime.

The experiences of dictatorships in Latin America sponsored by the USA and documented as *Operation Condor* have been extensively studied by the disciplines of social sciences, law, sociology, and anthropology. They have also been exposed and prosecuted for the abuses of the military in power through truth commissions and other bodies of international justice due to human rights violations, which have revealed some shocking truths.

The events that occurred with the dictatorships of the Southern Cone did not become a constant of conduct and military behavior in Latin America. The fact that some countries were not led to arbitrary acts by the military was due to training and education in democratic values; they ignored the concepts of what was called *the national security doctrine* as a method to combat communism through control and revolutionary focus of the world (García, 2021).

National security doctrine coexisted as an unofficial U.S. doctrine that tried unsuccessfully to keep Latin American countries aligned in order to anticipate insurrections or leftist governments and stop the Soviet influence seen in the financing of guerrillas in Africa, Indochina, and Latin America, as the political science professor Francisco Leal Buitrago stated in multiple writings on sociology.

The USA's financing and support of military dictatorships was a failure of its foreign policy of containment because it involved violence, use of force, and military repression. Meanwhile, the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics (USSR, 1917–1991) had been gaining ground with political ideology by unifying all forms of struggle in social niches and promoting Marxist-Leninist ideas and their conception of society through communist parties.

All the promotion of communist ideas that came out of the USSR or the Iron Curtain countries, full of liberating political messages based on equality and equity with perfect systems of life, hid from the Western society of the 1960s and 1970s the poverty and horrors against life, freedom, and other fundamental rights occurring in the USSR, China and, generally, all communist countries perpetrated by political leaders such as Stalin, Mao Tse Tung, and Breszhnev, under the Soviet system.

This knowledge of the emancipatory scope of the economic doctrines of the Marxists, Leninists, or Maoists, which had so much impetus on the part of academics and students in political science or sociology, was not taken as *repression* from a military point of view.

What caused concern in the military community of the free world was the manner of establishing single-party governments, where the name of democracy was invoked in speeches, yet the methods and use of violence for social control constrained them in all their forms (Queralt, 2020).

The analysis and knowledge of Marxist doctrines throughout history have excited society due to their liberating nature, yet they have also worried and alarmed those responsible for maintaining the security and integrity of democracy. These individuals have been concerned with studying Marxist ideas in depth and contextualizing the horrors that were often dismissed or considered false in academic and political settings.

In Latin America, the study of the national security doctrine created a condemnatory stigma against military institutions due to the line of action and preservation of public order, specifically in Colombia, as cited by Leal Buitrago (1992):

Terms associated with military actions under national security doctrine often serve political purposes. This political usage is varied, encompassing public and private denunciations of overtly criminal actions or excesses that are questionable in terms of compatibility with laws or military regulations and the disqualification of nearly any military task. The social sectors that make these assessments are also varied: individuals, trade associations and labor unions, academic sectors, political parties and movements, human rights organizations and groups, guerrillas, and even anonymous groups of drug traffickers. (Buitrago, 1992, p. 26)

These terms against military institutions mean that civil power relations reach very tense contexts in an environment of mistrust fueled by political leaders or academics who do not evaluate the specific circumstances of each country or identify which military bodies did not accept the national security doctrine proposed and financed by the USA. Colombia and Venezuela did so, and despite having suffered revolutionary violence in their territories, they complied with civil order in the 1960s, 1970s, and 1980s, supported by their democratic system and the civilian nature of their military institutions.

Cursorily analyzing military institutions using the same parameters as politicians, academics, or journalists and lacking a detailed observation of the contexts and knowledge of each country's specific military culture and military tradition is a complicated issue that has not been sufficiently integrated into the academic disciplines of sociology and political science.

Above all, academia has no clear intention of knowing the parameters of the training and academic preparation of the officers of the armed forces or of understanding that, in military institutions, training follows democratic principles and not the personal interests of a group of officers, especially in Colombia.

The Military Government in Colombia

It can be affirmed that in Colombia, the military experience in the government of General Gustavo Rojas Pinilla (1953–1957) had a stabilizing effect on partisan violence. The presidential cabinet was entirely civilian, supported by the National Confederation of Workers. The Government gave women the right to vote through a plebiscite and made constitutional changes that favored fundamental reforms, with very few events of significant repression, which cannot be attributed to the general's orders (Bushnell, 2007).

The above shows that Colombia is not very welcoming to dictatorships, no matter how much blood has been spilled in its political history. When General Rojas Pinilla tried to extend his mandate democratically, he failed and, at the suggestion of the military command, discreetly withdrew, handing over power to civilians without using violence or military pressure. Just as he came to power through politicians, he returned it to them (Bushnell, 2007).

This transition from military dictatorship to democracy politically established the presidential alternation between conservatives and liberals and distributed the three public powers in halves between two parties at all territorial levels. This agreement pacified the country and ended sectarian fights (Palacio, 2002), giving way to the political control of the State bodies and the return of the Armed Forces to their constitutional duty.

This Colombian experience in military governments was clear and was not repeated. Furthermore, the political power ignored situations of public order since it delegated control to the military authority over court decisions that derived therefrom through martial law decrees (Gallon, 1983). The military neither wanted nor were they responsible for these functions, which would later ignite multiple

discussions in legal spheres regarding abuses of military justice while trying civilians for crimes related to public order and non-military offenses.

As Gallón (1983) explains, this type of delegation to security forces was so tricky and complex because they assumed functions that properly belonged to mayors and governors, and imposed responsibilities on the military that were not even aligned with their constitutional and functional missions. Consequently, the Minister of Defense himself requested to be relieved of the role of administering justice in situations of public order.

These requests were not accepted or heard by the Government or the Ministry of Justice with the approval of the Supreme Court of Justice, which clearly violated the principle of separation of powers (Comisión Colombiana de Juristas, 2011), being compliance with a political order not a choice for the Military Forces, who continued performing a task delegated by the Government.

Philosophy and Antimilitarism

New philosophies, coming from the rise of the ideas of critical theory based on the revolutionary transformation of society in the 1960s and 1970s, the Marxist theories of the Frankfurt School, and Michel Foucault's ideas of micro-powers that circulated in the social order, promoted revolutions at all levels in the student and academic community, what Mauricio Archila Neira (2008) describes as: "the preaching condensed in the image of the class struggle as a political confrontation of popular actors led by the organized vanguards to radically change society".⁸

Particular emphasis is placed on Foucault's concepts and the use of violence, especially regarding useful illegalism,⁹ the ways in which he conceives the relationship with power and the use of the legitimate authority of the State, and the exploitation by dominant classes, political parties, and other elements. A mechanism justifying violence cannot be accepted simply because it is conceived from a kind of historical relationship of opposing material forces, as it is established in a dominant class memory that delimits a condition of unilaterality from some

⁸ Mauricio Archila Neira (2008) himself quotes Alfonso López Michelsen who stated: "Today we have a class struggle more than a party struggle, that is why the sides are divided into those who want to end the system and those who want to preserve it." (Archila, 2008).

⁹ Illegalism refers to some fields of legally prohibited activities, but in which existing repressive powers are often suspended. One could speak of zones of tolerance on the part of power regarding certain practices that, despite being legally prohibited, are not usually interfered with by the State apparatus (Foucault, 1992).

excluded sectors, built in turn by rhetorical forms of such unilaterality (Foucault, 1991).

These views from the field of thought suggest that institutions like the State, military forces, or police can be seen as enemies of society (Vega Diaz, 2019), distorting the roles of authorities and fostering prejudice and distrust toward the legitimate functions of the social rule of law.

Moreover, the conflicts experienced during those times of revolutionary awakening, such as the protests against the Vietnam War in the USA, Europe, and Mexico, the excesses of the decolonization wars, the phenomenon of May 1968 in France, and the use of repression in various parts of the world, created an imaginary of violence that implicitly separated society from military forces.

Between 1960 and 1970, the conception of equality provided by the theories of the socialist utopia of the *Manifesto of the Communist Party*, as the ideological basis of a unique power of emancipation but of impossible applicability, promoted the ideas of the new society that asked for equality through the organization of public power, defining it as "the organized power of one class for the oppression of others" (Marx, 2014).

Based on the above, the armed forces are viewed as an obstacle and a contributor to the ongoing issues of hunger and inequality in the world, placing the military aspect in the forefront while the political aspect remains in the background, attributing the world's ills to the capitalist economic system.

The solution to these ills raised by thought and academia in those times focused on the demilitarization of the world and the return of democracies in African countries and Latin America. A broad concept of military control¹⁰ generated by the Cold War was developed, which was not acceptable to the academic communities and students who engraved antimilitarism in their hearts. This is called the convention of contention and "is culturally inscribed and socially communicated. The learned conventions of contention are part of a society's public culture" (Tarrow, 2011, p. 29).

The environments of freedom of expression and large social movements against militarism in the 1960s and 1970s were not aligned with the armed forces of the nations, which were adapting to the lessons learned from mid-20th century war conflicts without recognizing the emerging threats to the democratic traditions of these nations, perhaps because they were severe and could be avoided in the future.

¹⁰ Military control has the following ingredients: political positions with managerial importance occupied by military officers, martial law, extrajudicial authority exercised by security forces, absence of central political control over the armed forces, or occupation by foreign military forces (Tilly, 1990).

These conflicts raised new concepts of national defense and changes in military structures that allowed them to face new challenges and threats, which were necessary and relevant, and new ideas with democratic overtones emerged and were supported by the government of the people. Still, in essence, they were against democracy and the plurality of ideas, restricting freedoms, not only free enterprise but through single-party doctrines and totalitarian governments, which suppress political dissent and, therefore, citizens' freedom.

The national strategic concepts, the doctrines concerning national security, and the notions of State and security,¹¹ with which the military was trained before and after the Second World War under a rigid, logical, scientific, disciplined model of service to the nation (Huntington, 2000), were not sufficiently disseminated to society through information or feedback campaigns for academia and politicians of all parties. Emphasis was not placed on the importance of changes, modifications in defense policies, and protection of the State toward capacity building that threatens the constitution and democracy and not to attack it.

This lack of feedback between the civil and military communities in the 1960s, 1970s, and 1980s led to a distancing between national defense and security policies that, given their importance, are of general and public interest. Now, in the 21st century, academic scenarios are pervasive, focused on civil-military relations and the concept that security does not belong solely and exclusively to the military but to all the nation's political, economic, and academic entities; this is what is called unified action.¹²

Threats to Society and Approach to the Military Forces in Colombia

The ideologies arising from the currents of the 1960s and 1970s, which shaped a notion of antimilitarism, transformed the collective imagination of Colombian society due to two factors: the violence from drug trafficking cartels and the territorial dominance of guerrillas. Consequently, paramilitary agents initiated actions against the Army, Police, and civilian population, resulting in an epidemic of

¹¹ These concepts are part of the National Security and Defense Manual 3-43, confidential.

¹² Unified action is defined as the synchronization, coordination, and/or integration of government entities' activities with military operations to achieve unity of effort (MFE 3-0, Operations).

kidnappings throughout the country, and a peace process with the FARC guerrilla between 1998 and 2002 ultimately failed, among other issues.

The late 1980s and 1990s were the toughest for the country in terms of attacks by drug trafficking and its allied structures, such as the FARC and ELN guerrillas, in addition to paramilitaries and other criminal groups. They put the governability of the State in check and almost kidnapped the civilian population, as stated in the documents of the "Internal Armed Conflict: The Perfect Scenario" of the ¡Basta Ya! report (CNMH, 2013).

The union of the political establishment with military action successfully limited the guerrillas and pushed them back to the strategic rear. This process began during President Pastrana's administration (1998–2002), coinciding with peace talks in the clearance zone, known as "Change to Build Peace." During this time, an internal restructuring took place within the Military Forces to adapt to the domestic scenario by collaborating with the population, trade associations, labor unions, private companies, and academia (Cardona, 2015).

These organizational efforts, including the development plan "Change to Build Peace," the defense and democratic security policies of the Álvaro Uribe government (2002–2010) aimed at establishing the rule of law throughout Colombian territory, and the structural changes and support received by the Military Forces, restored the confidence and security of the country with the civilian population's moral strength and faith in the Military Forces, as evidenced by favorability surveys over the last twenty years showing a percentage consistently above 58 % (El Espectador, 2020).

The reliability of the Military Forces demonstrates their capacity for teamwork and subordination to civil authority. Their actions have been solely dedicated to the constitutional mission, not on behalf of a political party, but for the well-being of the community as a whole, always under civil direction and control, as provided by the Constitution and the law.

Civil Authority and Control over the Military

Society's concerns are focused on the economy, laws, and progress. Generally, security and defense issues take a back seat unless citizens' conditions are affected by public order or a disaster, whether due to external threats or internal security problems.

In the political actions of states, security is rarely viewed as the ideal condition for citizens to exercise their rights freely. This is so prevalent that security

considerations and appropriate planning are absent from land use plans, and priorities are not assigned to the capabilities required to ensure them, as they are regarded merely as expenses rather than investments that guarantee the tranquility of other societal activities. As cited by Professor Carlos Alberto Patiño Villa in his study included in the book *Medellín: territorio, conflicto y Estado*:

Today's large cities across different continents pose fundamental challenges for urban governance, administration, and service provision, as well as the acknowledgment of rights. The primary issue lies in the inability to define the scope of urban government within the areas it should oversee... When the demands of cities exceed the capacities of existing government models, the consequence is the subjugation of municipal governments by violence, informality, illegality, the encroachment of illegal armed groups, and the criminal control of society. (Patiño, 2015)

This example of the urban also extends to the territorial, including the institutional framework, which is fundamental for it to operate through the unified action of the State and the harmonious collaboration of its institutions, as mandated by the National Constitution. Generally, political discussions involve military spending,¹³ which, in Colombia, encompasses the support of the National Police. It is often considered exaggerated, as it takes precedence over other budget items, fluctuating between 3.3 % and 3.38 % over the last twenty years (Datosmacro.com, 2024).

The political discussion does not focus on military capacity or the maintenance of security, but rather on the amount of spending and whether it is absorbing resources that could be more effectively used in other areas, such as education, development, and industry as drivers of employment and safety conditions. These discussions not only address Colombia's political reality but also resonate with a global context. Countries often prioritize political objectives over security concerns, frequently overlooking the repercussions of security gaps, which can impact the functioning of states in terms of territorial control and illicit economies, among other factors.

However, alongside the budget issues and political tensions, there are discussions concerning the limitations on the power of military establishments,

¹³ According to the Colombian Constitution, military spending in Colombia includes the operation of the Ministry of National Defense, CCGFM, Army, Navy, Air Force, General Division of Military Health, Superintendence of Surveillance, National Police Commissioner, General Maritime Division, National Police, and Police Health Division.

especially given that in Colombia's reality, the Military Forces are crucial for the nation's social and economic development. They serve as a barrier to illicit economies, ensure the functioning of institutions, and provide protection and services in the country's most remote and neglected areas.

Politicians and the media often overlook the law-regulated decision-making processes of the president, minister of defense, governors, mayors, and military or police commanders. They assert that decisions regarding army or police operations fall solely to military commanders, thereby ignoring specific aspects of maintaining public order in municipalities and provinces.

What Is Public Order

The Constitutional Court, in Ruling 435-13, has defined public order as: "the set of conditions of security, tranquility, and health that enables general prosperity and the enjoyment of human rights, along with regulatory parameters that ensure security and citizen coexistence." This constitutional projection assigns public order the role of imposing limits on citizens' guarantees and civil liberties to facilitate the peaceful management of coexistence and oversee public policies aimed at interagency collaboration to maintain public order.

Public order management involves judicial and investigative authorities that can swiftly take legal action when necessary to address criminal offenses or crimes threatening citizens' lives, peace, and property.

The political stability of constitutional democracy is the obligation of the organizations that guarantee national security. Still, the three political elements of public order (national defense, national security, and citizen security) must work independently but, at the same time, in a harmonious and coordinated manner regarding their roles and the independence of their functions, which have the sole purpose of guaranteeing peaceful coexistence without any interference under the rules imposed by the Constitution and the laws.

Responsibility for Public Order

According to the National Constitution of Colombia, managing public order is the responsibility of the president of the republic, under Article 189, the governors as per Article 303, and the mayors according to Article 315, rather than being

exclusively the duty of the Armed Forces, as is often believed. This is evidenced by the fact that the Constitution does not list or mention it among the responsibilities outlined in Chapter 7, "About Security Forces" (functions, items 216 to 224).

But the Military Forces are the arms of force and coercion that the president, governors, and mayors have to guarantee public order. For this reason, it is relevant to make a list of the regulations that order it, beginning with Law 4/1991, "Whereby regulations on internal public order, local civic police, and other provisions are enacted." It delimits the regulatory scheme of internal public order that goes from the provincial to the municipal and the mayor is designated as the chief of police.

Law 4/1991 establishes the regulatory scheme for jurisdictional control of municipal acts on public order and the disciplinary scheme in matters of public order. It also supports the measures taken by mayors or governors, even resorting to the president of the republic when required.

However, regulating public order would be useless without the necessary tools to consolidate, support, and enforce what is established in the functions of security forces about those in charge of maintaining order. To this end, the law establishes the communication channel and platform not only to maintain it but also to create the conditions of communication and distribution of responsibilities for the administrative acts of government and the fulfillment thereof by the Armed Forces.

For this purpose, Decree 2615/1991 was issued as a vital tool for maintaining public order. The National Police is directly responsible for this work, while the Military Forces provide DSCA, utilizing their capabilities to serve and preserve public order across all institutions.

But in the understanding that neither the mayors and governors nor security forces have all the elements to overcome a breach of the peace, Article 113(2) of the National Constitution stipulates that "the different organs of the State have separate functions, but they collaborate harmoniously to achieve their purposes." Thus, the coordination of these purposes includes not only the Executive but also investigative entities, such as the Attorney General's Office, and control entities, such as the Inspector General's Office and the Ombudsman's Office, making them relevant for the maintenance of public order.

These entities participate in security councils as decision-making elements. It should be noted that public order committees are made up of authorities of various kinds and have a preventive and policy-making function, in addition to financing security and citizen coexistence funds and other institutions that are part of or that provide security.

Both security councils and public order committees are bodies of prevention, action, control, and accountability for the results of security forces' tasks. They

issue the general security intentions of the national government, adjusted to the characteristics of each municipality or province. Tasks and objectives for the National Police and the Military Forces emerge from the security councils, as part of the political responsibility of those truly in charge of public order in territorial entities such as governors and mayors.

The convening of security councils can be routine or prompted by external threats, risk reports, threats to the civilian population, crime spikes, or other elements analyzed in the sessions by the relevant authorities. In these councils, the person responsible for public order not only exercises civil control but also assesses and verifies the capabilities of the National Police, which is accountable for its assigned missional areas and shares the responsibility of preserving public order with the Military Forces in their respective jurisdictions, escalating issues to the central level in the case of serious threats.

As a result, certain laws are followed to maintain the public order of the nation, while simultaneously guiding the security policy set forth by the president of the republic. This organized effort is held accountable on an annual basis, and its realities are hard to overlook due to the oversight conducted by civil institutions, including the press, citizen and industrial oversight bodies, and, in general, civil society, all of which are impacted by insecurity and crime.

In the administration, management, and handling of public order, mayors and governors not only present local requirements but also receive early warnings from the national government, particularly from the Ministry of the Interior, aimed at preventing or averting risk situations that could disrupt the peace.

Law 418 of December 26, 1997, prioritizes specific functions because early warnings are provided not only by state agencies but also by various social organizations, individuals, and different intelligence sources, including the military, police, or judiciary, as well as information gathered from open sources like the media.

Additionally, these early warnings or risk reports from the central government level contribute as inputs to identifying signs in the social system or even to preventing situations that may constitute potential natural disasters. These early warnings are managed by the security councils or public order committees, which take the relevant measures to anticipate an escalation of activities that may cause a significant breach of the peace.

They serve as the spaces for managing public order at the national, provincial, and local levels, utilizing the tools provided by law, where tasks are defined, and the operational plans of the Military Forces and Police are developed. Compliance

begins in the operational areas according to each unit's capabilities, whether individually, jointly, in coordination, or even interagency. The primary objective is to restore or maintain public order.

Just as the central, regional, and local government entities have the tools to shape public order in their areas of responsibility and to coordinate with security forces to guarantee conditions of security and coexistence, the military institutions and, in particular, the National Army, have doctrinal procedures in place through DSCA, and, in an extraordinary, temporary and focused manner, through military assistance,¹⁴ ordered exclusively by the president of the republic.

Fundamentals of Defense Support of Civil Authorities (DSCA)

The meaning of conflict, like the concept of war, has changed in the 21st century. Mary Kaldor, as cited in Gobetti (2009), argued that interstate war, due to new concepts shaped by the consequences of World War II in the 20th century and the notion of democratic peace (the idea that democracies do not fight each other, leaving aside the historical record of democracy and its association with war, Gobetti, 2009), had lost its definition because violence was more likely to be perpetrated at the individual level and therefore, criminal activity will challenge the state monopoly on the use of force.

History and the events that have happened in different countries and various places in the world confirm this due to the situation of interstate conflicts due to the concept of new threats coming from criminal apparatuses with the capacity to use force, making the forces police forces in charge of fighting these criminal organizations are insufficient and raise the need for a concept of approach to the use of the capabilities of the armed forces in the internal sphere.

New Concept of Security

In 2003, after the Organization of American States (OAS) Special Conference on Security held in Mexico, the global situation and the concepts of defense of human rights, global peace, transnational threats, national security, drug trafficking,

¹⁴ Ordered by Article 170 of Law 1801/2016.

and rule of law were analyzed as fundamental pieces for the emergence of a comprehensive vision. Concepts such as traditional, social, environmental, and economic threats resulted in the creation of a new concept of multidimensional security: "It takes charge not only of traditional threats to security [...] it identifies a set of new threats that originate from different social spheres and which are also the responsibility of our States" (OEA, 2003).

Figure 1. *Multidimensional Security*



Source: Departamento de Acción Integral y Desarrollo (2021).

This approach led to an international endorsement to ensure that the Military Forces broaden their perspective on security issues globally while concentrating on their missions. Meanwhile, an institutional process was initiated to unify efforts in addressing new social, economic, cultural, and environmental threats, with potential support drawn from its capabilities if necessary.

This was just the beginning of the new challenges that countries face in contributing to development and confronting threats directly in coordination with civil authorities. Colombia, for its part, continued to analyze and embrace this concept for its involvement in activities that, until a few years ago, would have been considered purely institutional responsibility.

Development of the DSCA in the National Legal Framework

The Military Forces were not unfamiliar with the advances made during the OAS Special Conference on Security. Since its dissemination and implementation, the organization has directed its efforts toward aligning institutionally with national policy to facilitate participation in activities beyond its institutional responsibilities. However, Article 2 of the Constitution can be identified as the foundation for the involvement of the Military Forces in supporting civil authorities.

The essential purposes of the State are to serve the community, promote general prosperity, and guarantee the effectiveness of the principles [...] defend national independence, maintain territorial integrity, and ensure peaceful coexistence and the validity of a just order [...] The authorities of the republic are established to protect every person residing in Colombia in terms of their life, honor, property, beliefs, and other rights and freedoms, while ensuring compliance with the social duties of the State and individuals. (Constitución Política de Colombia, 1991, art. 2)

On the other hand, and in compliance with the parameters established by the president of the republic per Title VII About the Executive Branch, Chapter 1, Article 189(3) of the Code of Civil Procedure (CPC, by its Spanish acronym), "Lead security forces and dispose of them as Supreme Commander of the Armed Forces of the Republic" and Article 189(4), "Preserve public order throughout the territory and restore it where breached," the military commander must facilitate the performance of activities that guarantee the nation's peace. To this end, the president convenes meetings of the security council, regional committee, and disaster prevention committee in coordination with civil authorities, all within a framework of respecting fundamental rights, prioritizing life, and ensuring immediate assistance for those affected.

Likewise, under Presidential Directive 01 of March 20, 2009, titled "Coordination of the National Government to Implement the National Territorial Consolidation Plan," the following lines stand out:

to maintain investor confidence and advance effective social policy, the national government has focused on designing a mechanism to strengthen the alignment of military, police, and anti-narcotics efforts with social, justice, economic, and institutional development efforts of the State in strategic areas of the national territory, called Strategic Leap.

Changes in Army Doctrine, Damasco Project, and Concepts of DSCA

Based on the new concept of multidimensional security, the National Army undertook the Damasco Project, whose fundamental objective is to develop and disseminate military doctrine, transformed from including necessary tools for cooperation and interoperability with the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO). It resulted in the structuring of the fundamental Army manuals (MFE) and fundamental Army reference manuals (MFRE), which contain the principles; the Army campaign manuals (MCE), which explain tactics and procedures; and, finally, the Army technical manuals (MTE), which refer to the techniques to fulfill missions, functions, or tasks in the theater of operations and training centers.

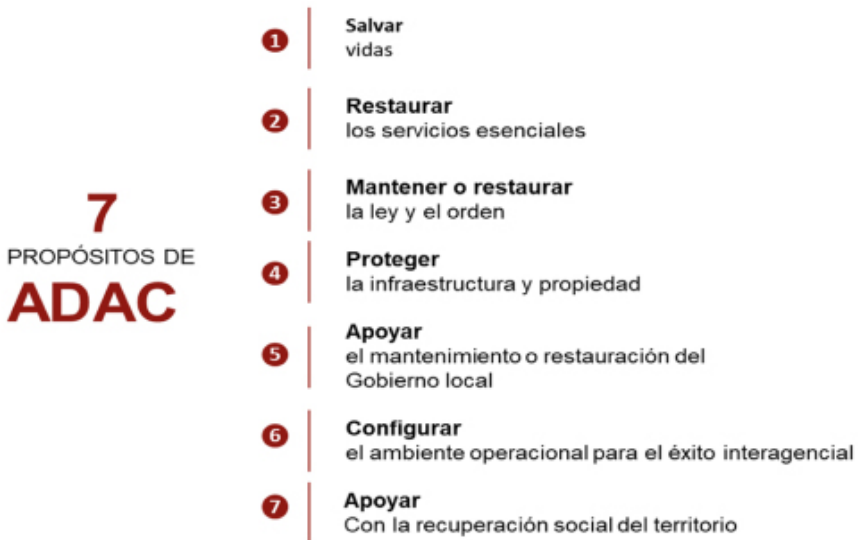
Thus, the concept that emerged was that of unified land operations (ULO), which the MFRE 3-0, Operations, defines as “offensive, defensive, stability, or defense support of civil authorities tasks performed simultaneously to seize, retain and exploit the initiative to gain and maintain a position to prevent conflict, shape the operational environment and win the war as part of unified action,” carried out through decisive action (DA). This concept contemplates DSCA, which will be examined below.

The doctrinal foundation of DSCA is laid in MFE 3-28 and MFRE 3-28 (Ejército Nacional, 2017). It is defined as the “support provided by the Military Forces of Colombia and all the institutions that make up the defense sector in response to requests for assistance from national civil authorities in domestic emergencies of any kind” (MFE 3-28). This is achieved thanks to cooperation between the military and civil spheres to confront situations that competent authorities cannot resolve, usually when they have exceeded their capabilities and require other entities to strengthen security from a multidimensional approach.

DSCA has seven fundamental purposes (Figure 2): 1) to save lives; to protect human life; 2) to restore essential services necessary to sustain life, including water and domestic services; 3) to maintain law and order, supporting civil authorities in maintaining order to disperse crowds amid riots, patrol in unauthorized areas, control riots and serve as security forces; 4) to protect infrastructure and property (public and private); to protect state domains; 5) to support the maintenance or restoration of the Government; institutional presence to strengthen governance and recover the economy; 6) to shape the operational environment for interagency success; to support all partners from unified action, medical capabilities,

intelligence, logistics and communications to provide solutions to crises, and 7) to support the social recovery of the territory; integration of capabilities, focused on the same objective, taking into account the priority of the national Government.

Figure 2. Purposes of DSCA

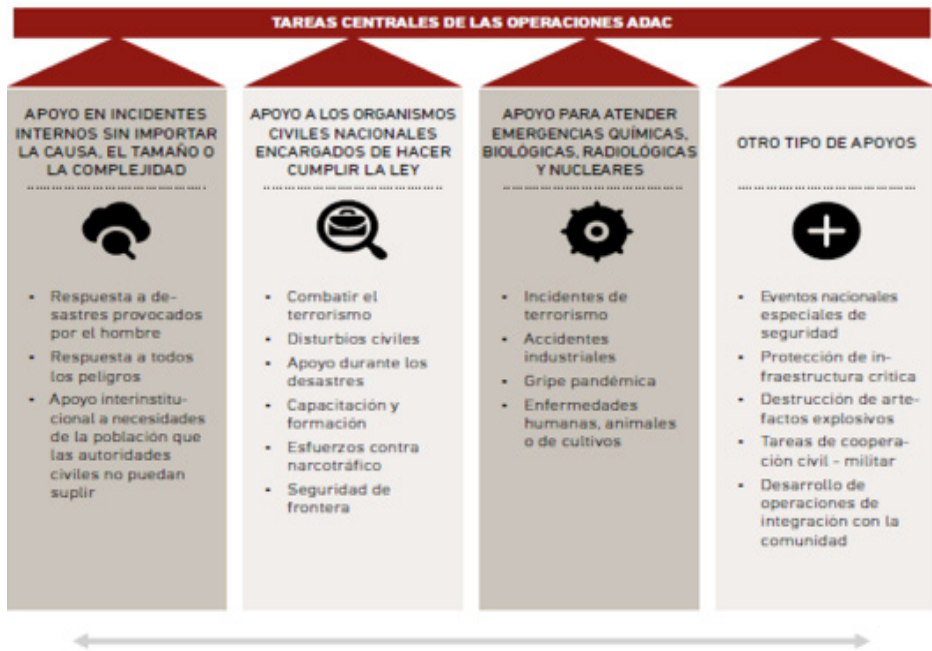


Source: MFE 3-28 (2016).

DSCA Tasks within the Doctrine of the Military Forces

Military units will support civil authorities as requested to: 1) provide support to national civil institutions in charge of law enforcement; man-made disasters, institutional support for the needs of the population; 2) provide support to act and assist in chemical, biological, radiological and nuclear (CBRN) incidents; fight terrorism, civil unrest, support during natural disasters, efforts against drug trafficking, and border security; 3) provide support for internal incidents, *no matter* the cause, size or complexity; terrorism, industrial accidents, pandemic influenza, human and animal or crop diseases, and 4) provide other designated support; security, protection of critical infrastructure, destruction of explosive devices, civil-military cooperation tasks, community integration activities.

Figure 3. DSCA Tasks



Source: MFE 3-28 (2016).

To fulfill these tasks, it is essential to maintain active and continuous communication with the institutions or civil authorities that facilitate the activities being carried out directly. They are responsible for leading all actions in the affected municipalities and regions; in turn, the Military Forces will provide support utilizing the capabilities available in the nearest unit.

We must not forget that, as this is a military operation supporting civil authorities, it is essential to document each action taken (photos, videos, sketches) and the assistance provided during the emergency for the historical record of Force support. This documentation allows us to emphasize its non-lethal contribution to new threats, distinct from traditional ones, affecting areas impacted by organized armed violence. This approach aims, from a broader perspective, to tackle internal crises in coordination with civil authorities.

It is important to recognize that the efforts made in collaboration with the community, civil authorities, and the Military Forces are horizontal, meaning that no orders are issued to the military units or personnel engaged in the activities. Consequently, the Military Forces will establish a mission order (MO) to provide

timely crisis support according to their capabilities, as determined by the unit commander. Institutions, for their part, will fulfill their responsibilities following their mission and established organizational functions. This approach ensures that everyone is involved in the planning, preparation, performance, and assessment processes to achieve the shared objectives.

Warfighting Functions¹⁵

In the development of military operations, it is necessary to consider that the warfighting functions contemplated must be fulfilled, which helps perform DSCA tasks since some of them would not apply. For the deployment of DSCA, the relevant ones are mission command, movement, maneuver, sustainment, and protection, which become the cornerstone to support the activities required by civil authorities, as follows:

Mission Command (MC)

In coordination with NGOs, military units must continue to deploy their capabilities according to their training and experience, considering their own ability to act, the commander's intent, and the framework of respect and legality.

Movement and Maneuver

The main objective is to restore mobility and alleviate and improve the quality of life after a disaster.

Sustainment

To comply with the plan and achieve the necessary support, the units assisting civil authorities must have physicians, supplies, and equipment. Most affected areas experience shortages of water, electricity, and sanitation, requiring the installation of a base to support troop operations.

¹⁵ In accordance with the doctrine, warfighting functions are the set of tasks and systems (people, organizations, information, and processes) united by a common purpose that commanders use to fulfill missions and training objectives and are linked to joint functions of the Military Forces (MFC-1, 2018).

Protection

It is essential that commanders manage their capabilities in this field and how they are legally exercised at the national level to integrate them into this protection scheme.

Before starting DSCA, the unit commander must understand the operational environment and identify the ethnic groups, religions, beliefs, civil authorities (including governors, mayors, police, firefighters, and civil defense), and arrange for both horizontal and vertical coordination through security councils or documented meetings to ensure direct and frequent communication between the unit and regional institutions.

Working in a coordinated and inter-institutional manner is essential for DSCA tasks. According to the doctrine, these missions occur when civil authorities request assistance from the National Army and are executed under a unified command post (UCP) comprising the civil authority, the military commander, and partners engaged in unified action to support the operation, while also considering the level of coordination required for each situation. (MFE3-28, 2016)

The support provided and resources allocated for fulfilling the tasks initially come from the general budget of military units. However, as the complexity of the emergencies or support provided increases, these will be taken over by civil authorities or escalated to higher units until they reach the central level.

Capabilities of the Military Forces to Be Used in DSCA

Only some of the Military Forces' capabilities are usable in DSCA. However, soldiers are trained to exploit initiative in combat. Furthermore, they understand that military capabilities can be applied to DSCA tasks since this helps them make the most of their disciplined initiative and effort (MFE 3-28) within the framework of the needs in which they are required, such as 1) performing tasks effectively and efficiently, 2) performing tasks safely, and 3) performing tasks within the current laws.

Considering the above, the Military Forces, through their various specialties, offer DSCA tasks, integrating their own capabilities with those of educated, trained, and qualified personnel to achieve common objectives that address the immediate needs of the affected population through non-lethal actions. To clarify the roles

of each participant, the MDN issued a policy for the defense sector regarding disaster risk management, serving as effective support for the National Disaster Risk Management System (MDN, 2019). This policy aims to achieve risk reduction and train personnel during environmental emergencies, with support from public and private institutions and the National Police.

This enabled the National Army, through Provision 0033 of September 3, to establish “the Risk Management Division for Disaster Prevention and Consolidation” in 2009, which was renamed the Disaster Risk Management Division in 2015.¹⁶ From there, the foundation of units specialized in environmental issues continued. To this end, the Battalion of Disaster Care and Prevention Engineers No. 80 “BG Álvaro López Vargas” was created. In 2012, platoon-level tactical units were formed to respond to and prevent disasters within the engineering branch, ensuring preparedness for potential humanitarian assistance at all levels and providing an immediate response.¹⁷

The military engineers maintain a demining brigade and battalions, a disaster response and prevention battalion, a construction brigade, and a humanitarian demining brigade, all of which are strategically positioned to ensure immediate response capacity in support of the country's development. (Ceballos, 2015)

For this reason, military engineers can engage in preventing and responding to risks associated with incidents of both natural¹⁸ and anthropic¹⁹ origin. They are also equipped to assist in internal incidents, irrespective of their cause, size, or complexity. Their support extends to the construction, restoration, and maintenance of shelters, supply centers, bridges, dispensaries or hospitals, schools, retaining walls, artworks, roads, hydraulic, sanitation, and electrical networks, water supply, electrical systems, demolition of structures, debris removal, flood response, fire

¹⁶ Its purpose was to formulate plans, guidelines, projects, programs, and technical documents that guided the development of risk management, including its knowledge processes, risk reduction, and disaster management within the Force. Additionally, it aimed to coordinate interventions with the National Disaster Risk Management Unit (UNGRD, by its Spanish acronym) to assist communities affected by emergencies or disasters at the national level (NGDR, 2015).

¹⁷ Through Ministerial Resolution 3725 dated September 2, 2009.

¹⁸ Including earthquakes, tsunamis, volcanic eruptions and mass movements, fires, atmospheric events (floods, hurricanes, tornadoes, El Niño phenomenon, La Niña phenomenon, droughts, frosts, fires, among others), and climate change (mitigation and adaptation) (NGDR, 2015).

¹⁹ There are two types: intentional and unintentional, such as CBRN, epidemics, pandemics, mega-mining, and fires, among others (NGDR, 2015).

response, use of canines to search for and locate people, and rescue of individuals and vehicles in emergencies.

The Army Aviation and the Colombian Air Force can quickly and efficiently deploy one or more aircraft to any location in the country within three hours, reaching remote disaster sites; evacuate and relocate individuals at risk from unsafe or high-risk areas to safe zones; provide aeromedical evacuation, extraction, or rescue of disaster victims using combat search and rescue techniques; transport food and medical supplies; facilitate emergency communications, aircraft recovery, transportation of bodies,²⁰ and firefighting; and have qualified personnel²¹ equipped with the necessary skills and experience to fulfill these missions. (Niño, 2020)

Between 1999 and 2014, the development and acquisition of Army Aviation capabilities were decisive, as the fleet increased from 35 helicopters to over 200. Among these, 54 % belonged to the National Army, featuring unique specifications that enabled them to successfully perform a range of missions. Notable examples include the Russian-made Mi-17 helicopters, American UH-60L Black Hawks, a Blackhawk for 180 passengers, five MI helicopters for evacuating 120 people, and three Antonov aircraft with a capacity of 12 tons per flight. This experience has facilitated 24-hour operations supporting ground troops, air assaults, medical evacuations, troop transport, parachute deployments, reconnaissance, and intelligence operations using unmanned aerial vehicles.

Military Police Units²²

The Military Police units are primarily designed, according to doctrine and training, to assist civil authority “when the police commander requests it, if the National Police lacks the capacity to manage serious disturbances or address a public calamity.” Currently, within the context of DSCA tasks, Military Police units perform

²⁰ Army aircraft will transport corpses only in cases of adequate preparation with protection methods and preferably by the external load method.

²¹ Experience in search and rescue, aquatic firefighter aviators, air dispatch aviators, ground support and supply team aviators.

²² It is the specialized unit of the National Army with education, training, and appropriate lethal and non-lethal equipment that provides support to local authorities in establishing law and order. It is focused on breaking up a crowd through the rules of the use of force in a simple and flexible way to control and end a situation of breach of the peace.

crowd control missions; they do not engage in confrontations with the civilian population, nor are they involved in riot control, which is prohibited by Presidential Decree 003/2021.

Thus, treatment must be impartial and kind in crisis management “so that when intervening in acts of civil disobedience, it must be through a series of procedures and physical barriers” (Niño, 2020). This could involve providing security for tasks assigned to the National Police to free up forces of law and order for specific functions that the Military Forces can carry out.

The military personnel taking over tasks assigned to the National Police, such as securing facilities and fixed posts of critical infrastructure, helps free up valuable personnel since the Police is the only institution responsible for monitoring and controlling these types of collective violence activities following social protests.

On the other hand, it ensures support for civil authorities to secure operations in transportation, communications, and public service systems, such as clearing blockages on the roads. Due to its quick response, it is possible to establish alternate routes with secured escorts and ensure safety at civil facilities.²³ Comprehensive action

is the collection of military actions that encompasses military information support operations, civil affairs, civil-military cooperation, and public affairs, enabling the Army's capabilities to be integrated with those of unified action partners in support of the commander's intention. (MFE 3-53, 2016)

In recent years, this concept has evolved from the doctrine structuring. MFE 3-53, Comprehensive Action, establishes its capabilities, activities, structure, and tasks but has as a frame of reference the lessons learned from the activities that have been carried out. Until 2019, through these doctrinal documents, their standardization, strengthening, and recognition were not possible, becoming those in charge of the non-lethal part of the Force.

Since 2016, the National Army has established specialized units equipped with skilled personnel, education, training, and tools that enhance support for military operations and DSCA. Currently, it includes a Comprehensive Action and Development Command (CAAID, by its Spanish acronym), two comprehensive action brigades (BRAID 1-2, by their Spanish acronyms), eight comprehensive action battalions (BAAID 1-8, by their Spanish acronyms) assigned to each

²³ Including government buildings, prisons, sources of water, electricity, fuel, and industrial complexes.

division, and one comprehensive action operations battalion (BOAID, by its Spanish acronym). This structure enables a more thorough analysis of the areas where operations, activities, and coordination with civil, local, and regional authorities take place.

Figure 4. Army's Comprehensive Action Organization

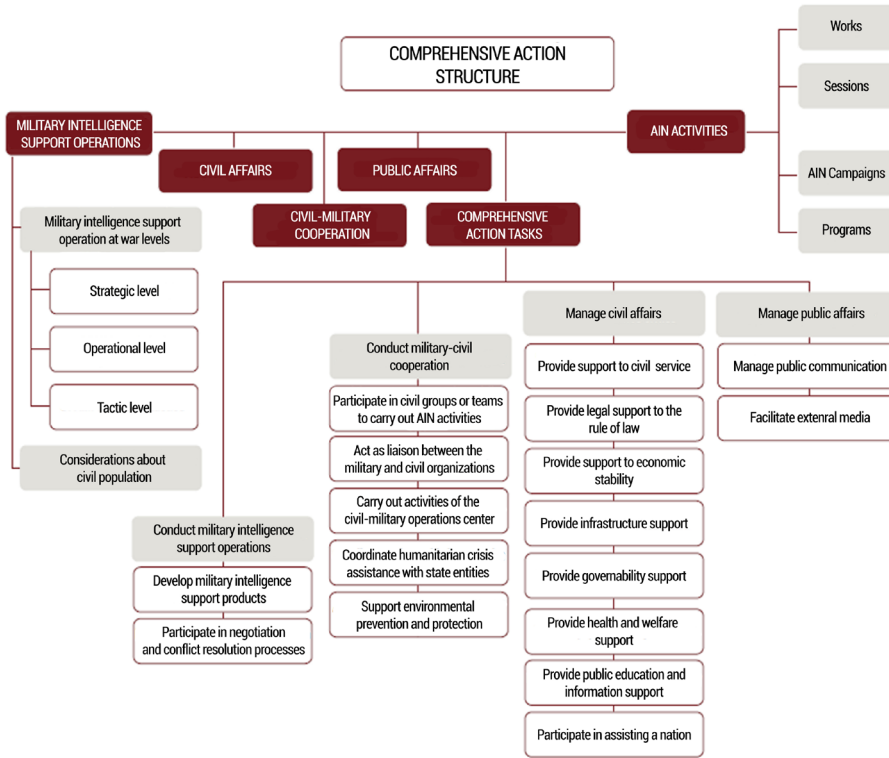


Source: Ejército Nacional (2021).

The comprehensive action manual describes four disciplines that will facilitate fulfilling institutional objectives: civil affairs, public affairs, civil-military cooperation, and military information support operations. They aim to build relationships of trust, provide information, and establish communication channels with civil authorities, unified action partners, the media, and the community.

The Military Forces, particularly the National Army, through its units, stand ready to respond to the call of civil authorities, including health personnel (doctors, combat nurses, specialists, and brigade members) and the dispensaries established within the military units to support any situation that may arise.

Figure 5. Comprehensive Action Structure



Source: Ejército Nacional (2021).

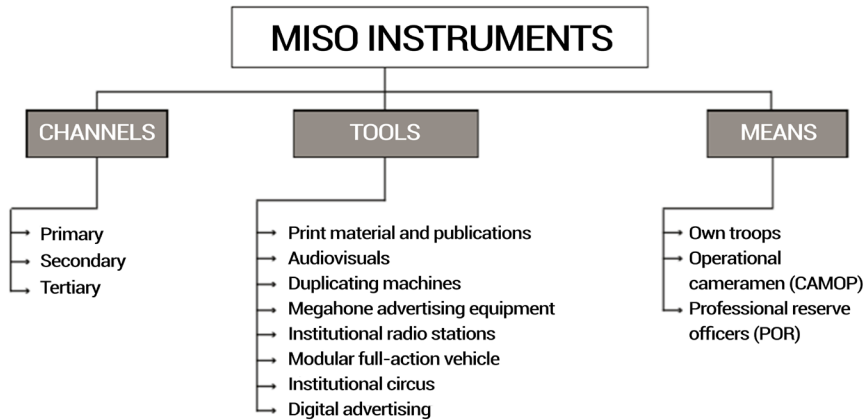
In the process of updating, formalizing, and recognizing capabilities, units, and personnel, we identified instruments, channels,²⁴ tools,²⁵ and means²⁶ that facilitate the conduct of operations established for developing activities according to the region's needs.

²⁴ The military information support operations channel is the instrument to identify the appropriate way to deliver or disseminate the outputs of military information support operations.

²⁵ Tools are the technological instruments used to support the production and/or dissemination of the MISO series to the target audiences.

²⁶ Means are human resources used to support the dissemination of the MISO series among the target audiences to be impacted.

Figure 6. Instruments for Military Information Support Operations



Source: Ejército Nacional (2019).

This is how comprehensive action is prepared to face crises under Law 1523/2012 in disasters resulting from one or several natural and man-made events that cause intense, severe, and widespread alterations in the normal conditions of society, which give rise to risk situations for the population. In the Colombian case, there are geological phenomena, such as earthquakes, volcanic eruptions, avalanches, and landslides; hydrometeorological phenomena, such as floods, droughts, frosts, tidal waves or tsunamis, tropical cyclones, hurricanes, and fires; technological phenomena, such as industrial and health risks; and phenomena stemming from massive concentration of people.

Relevant DSCA Tasks of National Significance

To complement this writing, the Military Forces, particularly the National Army, will serve as an example of coordinated and interagency joint work with various civil authorities. We will present three emblematic cases of significant institutional efforts: 1) Ángel Plan 2017, in response to an avalanche in Puerto Asís (Putumayo); 2) San Roque Plan 2020, addressing the COVID-19 pandemic; and 3) Providencia 2020, following a natural disaster. It is important to note that these operations are not the only ones conducted, as most units of the Army, Navy, and Air Force, decentralized at their level, maintain ongoing contact with civil authorities and undertake DSCA tasks that contribute to the governability of municipalities.

Ángel Plan

In recent years, Colombia has faced multiple environmental challenges that have impacted thousands of residents in various regions. One such challenge occurred in Mocoa, Putumayo, on March 31, 2017, as the rainy season began; while some were sleeping, others were having dinner, and some were preparing for the next day:

The Mocoa, Mulato, and Sangoyaco rivers, along with some streams like La Taruca, rose higher than expected. In just a matter of seconds, they overflowed their banks and surged down the streets with such fury that they dragged along rocks, creating a domino effect that pushed others. Simultaneously, they destroyed everything in their path: homes, cars, trees, and, most tragically, hundreds of lives. (Ceballos, 2015)

Within the framework of the doctrine of the National Army and in response to the call of civil authorities during the environmental crisis, the Ángel Plan emerged (Sepúlveda, 2018), focused on addressing the disappearance of 17 neighborhoods, the lack of essential services, 330 deaths, 400 people injured, and the ruins left by the avalanche.

In coordination with civil authorities, from the very first moment of the natural disaster, organic troops from the National Army's 27th Jungle Brigade of the 6th Division promptly supported civil authorities as the initial step of aid, due to their inability to control the situation and the inadequacy of rescue institutions in the area. The Army deployed 100 personnel, including non-commissioned officers and soldiers, to initiate the rescue of 116 individuals and provide first aid assistance.

In the hours following this natural disaster, Army troops took immediate control of the situation (El País, 2017), with a thousand men providing urgent support and assistance. Since state reaction times are slower, the respective institutions relied on the initial information provided by the troops on the ground and began their activities through the Disaster Response Unit.

The unity of command and decision-making procedures enabled a prompt deployment of capabilities and coordination spaces for the state, preventing the duplication of efforts and allowing civil authorities to provide and supplement the necessary aid.

The National Army remained for a month, during which it deployed all of the Force's capabilities to benefit the inhabitants of Mocoa, Putumayo. It coordinated military efforts with civil authorities and the local community. Through civil-military cooperation, it received 2,093 tons of essential items, reconstructed pipelines, provided differential assistance, and responded to the situation in a timely manner.

Military engineers successfully constructed a bridge to connect Putumayo with the rest of Colombia in just two weeks. They also created two temporary shelters for the victims; Army Aviation transported pipes and donations, while the Military Police assisted local authorities and ensured citizen security to prevent looting in unaffected homes and businesses (Sepúlveda, 2018).

This was one of the first actions carried out by the National Army within the framework of DSCA; in this case, it was a purely military task. After achieving reconstruction, civil authorities regained control of the area, and the work continues to this day.

San Roque Plan

In March 2020, the president of Colombia issued Decree 457/2020, which provided instructions regarding the health emergency caused by the COVID-19 pandemic and the maintenance of public order. To this end, and in accordance with the provisions of the decree, the Military developed a strategy to assist civil authorities during the emergency.

The commanders of the Forces (Navy, Army, and Air Force) analyzed how to align their support with national capabilities, considering the impact of the pandemic on the lives of millions worldwide. They optimized their efforts in coordination with civil authorities, guided by orders issued from Bogotá, to identify needs, necessary logistics, and personnel required to achieve the stated objectives.

For this reason, the San Roque 2020 operation was established as a contribution from the Military Forces to the national government's strategy to confront the COVID-19 pandemic and unify capacities for humanitarian aid during this crisis (CGFM, 2021). It was widely known that, at the beginning of the pandemic in Colombia, new courses of action were developed to disseminate accurate, timely, and factual information to thousands of people isolated by the virus.

Each of the Forces fulfilled the tasks assigned by the national government to promote the well-being of the country's inhabitants. The land, sea, and air capabilities focused on providing essential support to the communities affected by the pandemic. Although the president of the republic made a direct call in this instance, the authorities also sought the collaboration of soldiers, non-commissioned officers, and officers to manage this challenging situation.

This illustrates how, by creating the unified command post (UCP), 88 municipalities situated in the Amazon and Pacific regions of Nariño were prioritized. Coordinations were initiated by the National Risk and Disaster Management Unit (UNGRD), governorates, and mayors' offices to compile a list of families, assess

economic situations, gather information on members, and collect other details that would enable the effective delivery of aid to those most affected.

Civil-military relations within a framework of cooperation facilitated the alignment of efforts and capabilities with institutions solely aimed at ensuring the well-being of the population and upholding a successful and functional rule of law amidst the crisis.

Figure 7. Operation San Roque



Source: COGFM (n.d.)

Four lines of effort were established to implement the San Roque plan, aiming to preserve the health and integrity of the Military Forces while also assisting those most affected:

- 1) preserve the integrity of the Force, which aimed to keep its members healthy by ensuring full compliance with the measures implemented to prevent the spread of COVID-19; 2) maintain operational capacity, focusing on fulfilling the mission entrusted in the development of operations and utilizing the capabilities of the Military Forces when necessary; 3) conduct border control operations; although the priority was to prevent the spread of COVID-19, sovereignty over Colombian territory could not be overlooked. Therefore, it was essential to continue monitoring organized armed groups and exerting border control, ensuring security and implementing measures for entering and exiting the country; and 4) provide DSCA to raise awareness among populations

and communities to prevent contagion while leveraging all capabilities in humanitarian assistance in regions that required it. (CGFM, 2021)

The activities conducted by the National Army included the delivery of 1,0908,911 food items, various action tasks, military information support operations (MISO), 4,484 activities such as checkpoints, 485,381 flyers, 1,625 COVID-19 prevention messages disseminated through public address systems, 104 messages spread via comprehensive action mobile vehicles, and 749 talks and conferences with communities, as well as local, regional, and national authorities.

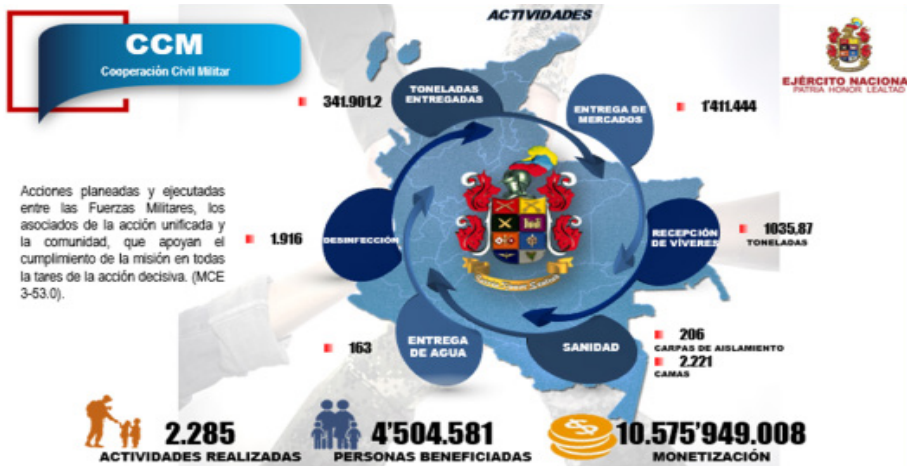
Figure 8. MISO Results



Source: COGFM (n.d.)

Civil-military cooperation facilitated the transportation and delivery of 341,901.2 tons of donations and 1,411,444 tons of food items and conducted 1,916 disinfection activities at homes, vehicles, and health entities. Additionally, 163 liters of water were distributed, along with the installation of 206 isolation tents in areas where hospitals exceeded their capacity (San Andrés was one of the first beneficiaries). Support was provided to health entities with 221 beds for personnel exhibiting symptoms of or already infected with COVID-19, alongside campaigns for receiving 1,035.87 tons of aid in coordination with civil authorities.

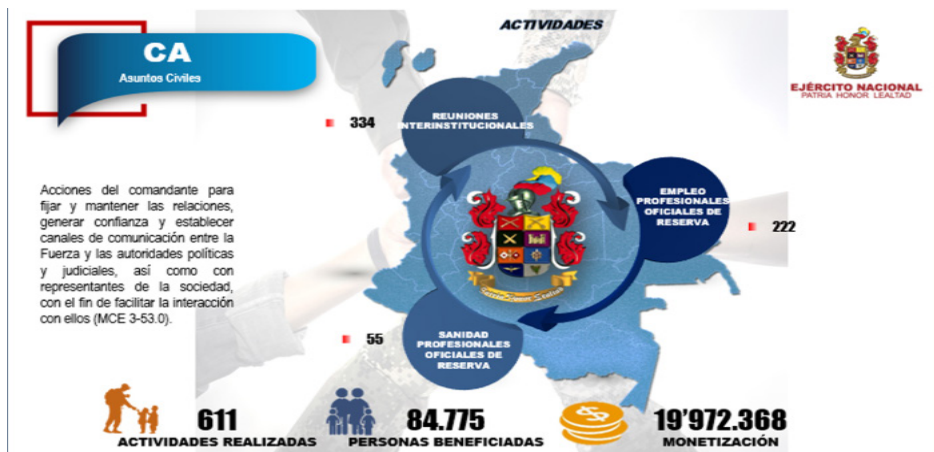
Figure 9. CMC Activities



Source: COGFM (n.d.)

Civil Affairs made 55 professional reserve officers available to support medical activities required in areas with the highest infection rates, including specialists, doctors, and nurses. Additionally, about 222 officers from other disciplines assisted in coordinating the dissemination and delivery of groceries and provisions, among other tasks, while also conducting approximately 334 inter-institutional meetings to monitor the progress of contagion figures.

Figure 10. Civil Affairs Activities



Source: COGFM (n.d.)

The National Navy delivered 4,810,874 liters of water and transported approximately 768 tons of food. Similarly, the Air Force delivered 1,381 tons of food, 2,700,000 liters of water, and 158 tons of medical supplies, transported COVID-19 tests, and conducted 3,654 humanitarian flights. They also provided nearly 226,609 grocery items and essential resources to the most affected families, utilizing over 772 flight hours.

Finally, the San Roque plan demonstrated that it is both possible and viable to unify the capabilities, missions, and efforts of the Military Forces and the institutions to ensure the stability and peace of the communities without neglecting the constitutional missions.

Providencia

In November 2020, the Institute of Hydrology, Meteorology, and Environmental Studies of Colombia (IDEAM, by its Spanish acronym), after evaluating the impact of Hurricane IOTA, recommended that the national government declare a disaster situation to facilitate the crisis response process (La República, 2020).

After the evaluation, approximately 95% of the island of Providencia was compromised, around 2,000 houses were destroyed, and there was no access to drinking water. In addition to the environmental damage, the infrastructure of schools, hospitals, and businesses was also impacted. The UNGRD responded to the public calamity with humanitarian aid, addressing health, energy, communications, water, supplies, food, and hygiene kits, among other essential items for the islanders.

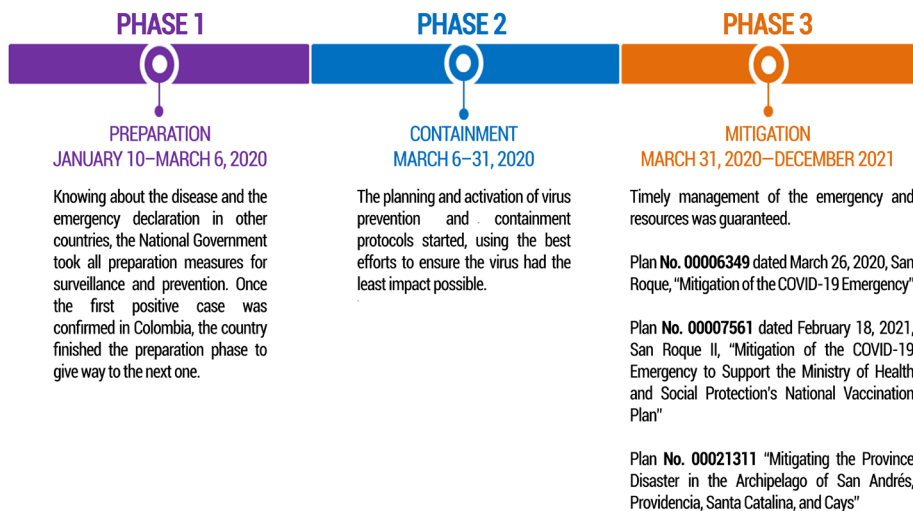
For this reason, President Iván Duque, through Decree 1472/2020, declares a disaster in the Province of Archipiélago de San Andrés, Providencia, and Santa Catalina, including its keys, for a period of twelve months, extendable for an equal duration. Following the passage of Hurricane Iota, "the efforts of local and state entities, the Military Forces, and other institutions contributed, within their roles, to address the emergency that arose." (DAFP, 2020).

Declaring a state of emergency, as contemplated in Article 215 of the CPC, in response to situations that constitute a serious public calamity due to shortages, basic sanitation issues, hospital overloads, or the occupation of maximum capacity in hospital centers, undermines the institutional stability and security of the State.

Faced with this declaration of emergency, the National Army, in compliance with the provisions established during the conduct of ULOs and in order to participate jointly and inter-institutionally, directly supported the UNGRD, which led activities together with civil authorities. Based on the results of this interagency coordination,

a strategy was formulated through a plan to assist civil authorities. Three phases were established to facilitate the performance of activities that ensured institutional support compliance (Figure 11).

Figure 11. *Disaster Response Phases. Providencia*



Source: Ejército Nacional (2021).

Phase 1. Preparation and Planning: Prepare personnel, material, equipment, and air support; coordinate with civil authorities to perform stability and DSCA tasks; strengthen institutional coordination; and participate in a unified command post to control the situation.

Phase 2. Conduct of the Operation: Provide primary care through the Military Health Division (DISAN, by its Spanish acronym), comprehensive action, Strategic Communications Division (DICOE, by its Spanish acronym), disaster response battalion, search and rescue platoons, skid steers, dump trucks, heavy machinery, with the following missions:

- Establish a unified command post in the territory to facilitate inter-institutional coordination.
- Execute stability and DSCA tasks (provide support to national civilian law enforcement institutions, assist in internal incidents regardless of cause, size, or complexity, and deliver other designated support) as ordered by MFE 3-28.

- Perform tasks related to debris removal, adaptation of essential sanitation services, medical care services, adaptation of roads and infrastructure, restoration of communications, and development support days.
- Maintain communications throughout the humanitarian assistance mission, providing real-time reports to the PMU-COING in Bogotá.

Phase 3: Transition. Complete the plan and stabilize the disaster situation in Archipiélago de San Andrés, Providencia, Santa Catalina, and its keys. The National Army is recognized for its disaster response, national cooperation, and comprehensive action operations. Its units remain committed without any new developments in personnel, materials, or equipment.

Figure 12. *Reconstruction of Providencia and Santa Catalina*



Source: Ejército Nacional (2021).

Decisive points: 1) reconstruction of infrastructure (roads, sanitation services, drinking water supply, restoration of public services); 2) comprehensive action, vaccination, medical and psychological care days; and 3) redeployment of the allocated units. In providing such complex support to the civil authority, not only due to the mobilization of resources but also due to the maritime distance from San Andrés and Providencia, activities and units were organized following the doctrinal steps for this type of event.

Organization Processes in ULOs

The concept of ULOs involves conducting military operations in a joint, coordinated, and inter-institutional manner. It is essential to enhance stability²⁷ and DSCA²⁸ as a critical task. When a state possesses an army and coordinated institutions with strategic capabilities, it becomes easier to support civil authorities in mitigating and managing development issues, increasing economic flows, and establishing itself as a regional power in line with the objectives of DSCA tasks (MFE 3-28, 2016).

In this natural disaster case, the CGFM first uses the capabilities of the Engineering Command through the special brigade of engineers, military health, strategic communications, comprehensive action, and development to support provincial authorities and contribute to the National System of Disaster Risk Management.

For the Military Forces, this was perhaps the most significant challenge they have faced in these 50 years of internal conflict. The context was highly complex due to the arrival of COVID-19 in Colombia, along with the economic, social, environmental, and infrastructure crises affecting the Raizal community and the inhabitants of San Andrés Island.

The biggest challenge was containing the pandemic among ministries, institutions, and military forces. All state capacities collaborated to ensure the island's stability. The situation was complex, but military engineers, Army Aviation, the Air Force, and the National Navy devised a fieldwork plan that allowed them to meet the proposed objectives within the first hundred days.

Therefore, the Military Forces developed contingency protocols to support the vulnerable population in a joint and inter-institutional effort with the Colombian Civil Defense, the Official Fire Department, the Governor's Office, and the UNGRD. Cleaning and debris removal work began in the affected areas (CGFM, 2020).

The National Army deployed personnel from Comprehensive Action Battalion No. 8 (BAAID8), who, with their comprehensive action capabilities, quickly provided assistance to civil authorities. They organized the affected personnel, initiated cleaning campaigns, and distributed messages through flyers, public address systems, and an institutional radio station.

²⁷ Stability tasks reestablish civil security, civil control, and essential services and support security cooperation, government, and economic and infrastructure development (MFE 3-28, 2016).

²⁸ Provide support to national civilian law enforcement institutions, provide means to address chemical, biological, radiological, and nuclear incidents, assist in internal incidents regardless of cause, size, or complexity, and provide other designated support (MFE 3-28, 2016).

During 2020 and 2021, nearly 1,471 activities supported civil authorities in military information support operations (MISO): 420 messages broadcast through public address systems, 58 talks and conferences, 88 activities conducted at intersections and traffic lights across the island, and 105 checkpoints where information was provided to islanders regarding road conditions and technical issues.

In addition to the COVID-19 prevention campaigns, flyers facilitated communication during the crisis due to the lack of media in the area. Civil Affairs (CA) organized 99 park movie activities, a concert, 18 sporting events, 20 conservation activities for parks and monuments, primarily those affected by the hurricane, three recitals, 109 mural painting events, 50 circus shows, five activities with ethnic groups, and 41 community workshops.

These activities resulted from civil-military cooperation (CMC) aimed at strengthening relationships with the community. They included 11 health days, support for the development of 36 production projects, 76 environmental initiatives, six partnerships with private companies to benefit the most affected communities, a farmers' market, and 83 inter-institutional meetings.

All of the above was coordinated with the institutions and the Raizal. Public Affairs (PA) conducted 68 radio broadcasts, disseminated 45 spots from companies and institutions present on the island, produced eight magazines, created four informative videos, shared 37 environment-related posts, and published 18 tweets on the institutional account. In 2022, approximately 216 activities were conducted under the leadership of the regional authorities, who, after stabilizing the crisis on the island, resumed their functions alongside the Military Forces.

Discussion and Inferences about DSCA Paradigms

There are various definitions of paradigm in scientific research and experimentation, so we will explore Kuhn's theory (1971)²⁹ and Capra's (2003) interpretation of the social paradigm:

Social paradigms are usually stable over time, are difficult to change, and can also vary from one community or society to another. This means that what is socially acceptable for one group may not be so for another.

²⁹ In *The Structure of Scientific Revolutions*, published in 1971, Thomas S. Kuhn argued that the paradigm determines the types of experiments scientists perform, the types of questions they ask, and the problems they consider important.

During the investigation for this chapter, it became evident that certain political, academic, and social groups resist questioning the relationships between civil authorities and the Military Forces in addressing daily issues related to maintaining public order, as well as the challenges that arise daily due to the armed conflict in a territory as vast as Colombia.

Fear, lack of communication, and perhaps a maturation process in the understanding of military capabilities supporting civil society are prominent, possibly due to the military thought and education of the early and mid-20th century. Due to a short-sighted perspective, the military did not engage with civil society to clearly communicate its capabilities—not just those involving the use of force and strategic deterrence, which are usually displayed in parades, but also the unseen aspects that are essential for achieving DSCA objectives.

The military capabilities that serve and assist society in governing remote regions, where state presence is lacking compared to cities, are largely unknown to national public opinion.

These collaborations of all kinds, ranging from guaranteeing security to supporting the needs of communities and providing possible solutions for small infrastructure adaptation projects, are carried out jointly by community action boards and small Army units present in the regions. They stem from verbal cooperation agreements between a commander, who may be a lieutenant or a sergeant, and are conducted quietly throughout the country.

We must also consider the infrastructure projects contracted with the Army Engineering Command, which provides roads, aqueducts, streets, and environmental sanitation projects while restoring hydraulic sources for municipalities, governors' offices, or at the central level in hard-to-access areas, as well as support for civilian contractors (Ejército Nacional, 2022).

However, academic, political, and journalistic circles show little interest in understanding this type of collaboration between the military and civil authorities, as well as the civilian population. They perceive the actions of the Military Forces more as a threat to democracy and state stability than as a practical advantage backed by evidence.

The short-sighted vision of jurists, sociologists, and academics in other disciplines, whose theses have allowed politicians to demean military action in the Colombian conflict, may create and anticipate possible coups d'état and saber-rattling based on statements by military commands regarding issues that are part of the national reality, which are also viewed as political statements by certain interests.

Statements deemed political are baseless because certain actors perceive as an absolute and immovable truth that general military thought and culture operate solely under a non-existent national security doctrine, which targets an internal enemy for its political ideology. They clarify that security forces do not seek political ideology but rather resort to violence, which is a crime that deliberately undermines democracy and the constitutional order of nations.

The thoughts and absolute truths regarding power relations with the military, posited by some politicians, serve as a paradigm because they embody a truth that has endured over time and is socially accepted by a group—specifically, society—that directly benefits from it. However, this is not applicable to academia, certain political parties, and NGOs.

The evidence establishing this paradigm primarily arises from understanding, on the one hand, why soldiers are distinct citizens within society and the necessity for this distinction in order to serve as the defenders of culture and democracy and, on the other, the principles governing the relationship between politics and the military. It is important to recognize that conflicts are political events in which the military is involved.

Moreover, there is the historical aspect regarding Latin America's dictatorships in weak democracies, which viewed the military as a solution to the violence and insurrections of the 1960s and 1970s. However, these actions yielded no positive outcomes; instead, they tarnished the core identity of military institutions through abuses and undemocratic behaviors that severely violated human rights.

However, this paradigm is challenged not only by a careful historical review of events in Colombian history but also by the educational background of the Military Forces and the Police, along with statistics on education and training, which are often overlooked in academic discussions that criticize the Military Forces and fail to recognize the support they provide to civil authorities.

Military Education as a Guarantee of the Constitutional Rights of Colombians

Military education has been a pillar since the military reform of 1907 during Rafael Reyes' administration, particularly with the establishment of the Military School of Cadets, the Naval School, and the Higher School of War. These institutes focus on the education and professional development of officers, advancing knowledge not only in the use of weapons but also in the study of military sciences, which evolve and adapt daily as a social science.

This education emphasizes not only the use of combat capabilities but also the support elements and services for combat that align with DSCA, rather than being isolated or solely based on military doctrine. This approach is backed by academic preparation validated and endorsed by the MEN, through high-quality certified programs recognized by academic peers from various universities, which have accredited the curricula in the training schools. This follows an educational framework for security forces and a policy for security forces education (PEFuP) as outlined by the MDN in 2021. Additionally, all programs hold qualified registrations from the MEN.

The development of this educational policy for security forces serves as a crucial tool for structuring military doctrine within institutions. It focuses on the professional and technical training of officers, non-commissioned officers, and soldiers across all forces, thereby reinforcing civilian control of military institutions.

The Paradigm of Civil Control of the Military

The control exercised by the president of the republic, the minister of defense, and the CGFM is absolute and permanent. The inclusion of a civilian minister of defense represents one of the greatest successes of the national governments, in addition to viewing security forces as an element of development and a reliable alternative, due to two fundamental aspects: first, clear defense policies guiding the forces, and second, their continuous use in addressing multiple threats and security challenges currently faced by Colombia.

The military forces in this country may serve as the best example of institutions dedicated to the State rather than specific administrations. They maintain an unrestricted balance between institutional integrity and authority, with a clear delineation in controlling the legitimate violence of the State. This balance is grounded first in a solid military education, as previously mentioned, and second in the continuous performance of tasks by troops and commanders at all levels oriented toward the service and security of communities. This situation surpasses the constitutional perspective regarding the defense of territory and sovereignty, aligning more closely with safeguarding the internal constitutional order.

In the field of sociology, authors such as Feaver (1996) view harmonious relations between the civil government and the military as a total threat based

on agency theory.³⁰ The author emphasizes that ensuring military personnel can perform tasks ordered by civilians and maintaining adequate security levels against external enemies does not guarantee they will refrain from carrying out coups d'état; the overarching issue of civil control remains unresolved (Feaver, 1996).

However, Feaver's statement also includes numerous suggestions for military control and monitoring tools to mitigate the risk of betrayal. This author believes that control tools undermine civil and military relations, which contrasts with Huntington (2000), who discusses professionalism in his book, *The Soldier and the State*.

If we analyze what the two authors state in the Colombian case, Huntington's arguments resonate more strongly, as he presents compelling reasons for the favorability of the Military Forces in relation to the civilian population amidst the Colombian conflict. This author views the use of the Military Forces as more of an alternative solution than a problem.

This refers to the term "unified action," defined as the synchronization, coordination, and integration of activities between governmental and non-governmental entities alongside military operations, enabling the achievement of unified effort (MFC, 1.0). This concept originates from military doctrine rather than politics or law.

This concept is evident in everyday national life concerning public security, including the activities of prevention, detection, and neutralization of threats posed by organized crime and national or transnational crimes. These threats endanger the well-being of the civilian population, the prosperity of communities, infrastructure, and the associated services of the State (MFC, 1.0).

Unified action and coordination mechanisms within the constitutional framework of harmonious collaboration between institutions, as found in the regulatory development of Law 4/1991 and the articles previously mentioned regarding public order management, serve as the control element that, in this context, extends from the municipal level to the presidential level, via security councils and public order committees.

It is clear that the use of force in all national military operations against criminal structures is not a secret and is known daily and immediately to the minister of

³⁰ Agency theory suggests it can explain the strategic interaction between civilians and the military by proposing an assertive delegative system. Under such a command, the military cannot make decisions without the permission of the civil authority already under delegated command, despite being subordinate to civilians (Feaver, 1996).

defense, who conducts the necessary monitoring. This complements the oversight exercised by public opinion, which remains visible due to the media.

This control exercised by the media is vital and transparent, as it illustrates the actions of security forces, which are often questioned but, in many cases, also praised. This situation is natural and is considered in theoretical discussions as friction by Carl Von Clausewitz, reflected in incidents that influence ground maneuvers.

All tactical actions on the ground are deemed legal and legitimate. However, in cases of doubt, the MDN, the General Command, and the Forces particularly welcome inquiries from the State's investigation institutions to assess and take legal actions, whether through military criminal justice or ordinary justice. This ensures transparency and shows civilian control.

The potential excesses of security forces are often generalized by political and opinion sectors. However, it is sufficient to consider the number of military members prosecuted due to operations and tactical actions on the ground, including the 1,995 soldiers who appeared before the JEP in 2019 (Ugarriza, 2019).

If we compare this figure with the 245,000 men that the Army has had on average in Colombia since 2000, we will find that the number of military personnel involved in illegal actions that must be resolved in judicial courts is 0.8 %. Similarly, if we analyze figures from 2014³¹, only 960 soldiers were under arrest, representing 0.3 %, an insignificant number in a conflict as complex as the Colombian one.

Judicial action and oversight of potential excesses by the Military Forces contribute to the legitimacy of civil control over the military establishment. This control focuses on the State's responses to security challenges from a multidimensional perspective, aimed at consolidating state legitimacy and the democratic system, while consistently respecting human rights and upholding the rule of law (MDN, 2019).

Given that civilian control of the military apparatus in the Colombian state serves as a paradigm, a small portion of society expresses distrust toward military institutions and calls for greater oversight, as well as the dismantling and elimination of certain tasks. In contrast, the majority of society supports and trusts this institution without reservation, based on the clear facts outlined below.

Society supports the Military Forces not solely because they are a military apparatus but due to the proven collaborative efforts they engage in with state

³¹ In a document of more than a hundred pages that the Attorney General's Office submitted to Congress at the request of Representative Alirio Uribe (Polo), all the investigations that the ordinary justice system carried out against members of the public force from 2000 to 2014 are recorded (Semana, 2014).

institutions to combat the tangible threats present in society. This support is not based on political, ideological, or academic theories derived from books that evaluate them according to the military practices observed in other countries, which have not experienced the same dynamics of internal and transnational threats that Colombia has faced.

This paradigm is transformed by joint, coordinated, and interagency efforts, which focus on securing and clearing large areas of the country from threats. It involves executing stability tasks aimed at establishing security and supporting institutions, conducting operations against kidnapping and extortion, and collaborating continuously with security forces in the fight against terrorism. It also includes humanitarian and civic assistance programs, highlighted by three clear and recent examples of significant impact through crisis responses and limited contingency operations in close collaboration with the UNGRD.

Another positive element is the dedication and coordinated efforts of the Military Forces alongside the judicial institutions in the country, ensuring security in their actions. For instance, the support outlined in the Single Judicial Police Manual (FGN, 2020) facilitates operations against various types of crimes in areas where judges and prosecutors face security challenges in fulfilling their constitutional duties. This is why it is common to see in the news that the FGN conducted arrests, raids, and seizures with the assistance of the Military Forces and the support of civil institutions responsible for law enforcement.

Conclusions

This chapter analyzes the role of military institutions in Colombia, contrasting it first from a differential perspective, based on the fact that the military are distinct citizens due to their mission-driven performance and daily life, the ongoing requirements for their training, education, and discipline, as well as the institutional principles and values—factors that would be very challenging to homogenize with the ordinary citizen.

Concepts of political relations with the military are consistently shaped by political initiatives that are undertaken by the military, not because the military dictates the State's operational line, but because politicians choose to utilize state force legitimately through the military.

Reference is also made to a historical period when the military rose to power over nations in Latin America. This fact should not be overlooked; however, we

cannot establish a regional historical perspective and behavior pattern based on suspicions stemming from political ideologies and approaches without examining the control and management of civil authority over the Military Forces in Colombia.

The brief experience of a military administration in Colombia, as analyzed by historians, demonstrates that the country is not conducive to military rule. Through civilian political maneuvers, a military government, led primarily by civilians, was implemented and dismantled, without the military establishment permitting a continuation of an army general in power, ultimately paving the way for civil government as outlined in the Constitution of 1886.

Likewise, the cultural process of antimilitarism was analyzed not only in the country but also worldwide. It originated from ideologies and propaganda in the 1960s that came from totalitarian communist government systems, which were perceived as more democratic and egalitarian at the time. However, history revealed that they were not, and in fact, restricted all civil liberties and freedom of expression.

In the national context, civil society faced threatening conditions in the 1980s and 1990s due to subversive groups funded by drug trafficking, which generated ungovernability and threatened society as a whole. It was the Military Forces, through their operations in coordination with judicial authorities, who restored governability and peace in many regions of the country.

This was achieved under the DSCA precept, which, although not referenced in the Army doctrine prior to the Damasco project, was applied and yielded results. Based on constitutional duties, as of 2016, the doctrine has clear, specific, and regulated foundations established for the Military Forces in the 2018 Joint Doctrine Manual.

DSCA serves as a paradigm that, for certain groups in society, is seen as valid due to the fear of granting excessive powers to the military. Nonetheless, this paradigm is challenged by the institutional and legal structure of the State, which defines it through civil control of security forces managed by those responsible for public order: the president, governors, and mayors, rather than military commanders.

Military commanders deploy their capabilities to serve civil authorities at all levels, evaluating public order and collaborating harmoniously with all state institutions. The Military Forces ensure security conditions that enable other state institutions to fulfill their constitutional missions.

The results presented in three public-order situations, where the actions of the Military Forces were explained in detail, demonstrate that achieving them

would have been impossible without control by and ongoing coordination with civil authorities—primarily the MDN, MinInterior, MinSalud, and other institutions.

The DSCA paradigms can only be addressed with an understanding of two key factors: the principles of military education and the processes of planning, analysis, and delegation of responsibilities that take place between civilians and the military at the municipal, provincial, and national levels.

These levels of permanent coordination are controlled not only by judicial authorities and regulatory agencies but also by the press, which informs and updates citizens daily on the use of security forces. However, the most crucial aspect that challenges all paradigms and doubts surrounding the DSCA in Colombia is public opinion in the regions, where the Military Forces and soldiers are viewed as trustworthy and respectable amid a historical conflict. Thanks to what the soldier represents, the National Constitution has been observed.

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Epilogue

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The Military Forces of Colombia, in accordance with their constitutional mission to defend national sovereignty, independence, territorial integrity, and the constitutional order, have continually incorporated transformation processes to anticipate and provide adequate responses to changes in the strategic environment. They strive to address the challenges involved in enforcing defense and national security policies, particularly regarding environmental protection and the need for peacebuilding. All of these efforts aim to ensure the maintenance of the necessary conditions for exercising public rights and freedoms.

This research presented the enclaves of environmental protection, along with the contributions and challenges faced by security forces in minimizing the ongoing damage inflicted by criminal groups seeking to establish an illicit economy. Therefore, a more detailed description of the pathways connecting environmental management and peace is necessary, as well as more substantial empirical evidence regarding the context in which these pathways function most effectively or, at the very least, have some potential for activation. This represents a significant challenge, as the paths discussed in this text may be profoundly intertwined.

In this framework, this research described transformation efforts that have been institutionalized in rigorous practices to achieve and sustain a shift in emphasis in strategic and budgetary planning. It ensures that the planning processes for environmental defense and peacebuilding are conducted jointly by the Military Forces, the National Police, and civil authorities to create precise and detailed roadmaps that outline the actions necessary to strengthen capacities toward achieving the stated objectives.

The armed conflict has impacted the environment, generating multiple effects, both direct and indirect. Various scenarios have been identified that need to be

addressed, especially after the peace agreement between the Government and the FARC-EP. From this agreement emerged elements that are crucial for considering environmental protection in the post-agreement period and the new threats posed by dissident armed actors who still maintain control over certain territories. Additionally, there are legal concerns that can be addressed through transitional justice, focusing on the investigation, punishment, and remediation of environmental damages.

Finally, this research presents a preliminary diagnosis of the processes engaged by security forces in their mission to support environmental protection and peacebuilding. Overall, each chapter determines the methodologies that have facilitated a positive response in enhancing and supporting operational practices for environmental protection, fulfilling SDGs, and fostering peace.



EDITORIAL **ESDEG**

Security Forces, Environmental Protection, and Peacebuilding within the Human Rights and IHL Framework

This interdisciplinary research examines the complex relationship between environmental protection, government policies, and armed conflicts, with a focus on emerging threats, including the exploitation of natural resources for war purposes. The sociolegal analysis reveals the diverse problems associated with conflict dynamics, highlighting both direct and indirect impacts on human rights and the environment. The book emphasizes the necessity for national defense policies and strategies that address environmental challenges cohesively, considering them an integral part of the strategic context. The research underscores how environmental degradation affects human security and enables the actions of criminal actors, requiring a coordinated response to counteract the destabilization of the country. Utilizing a qualitative and interdisciplinary approach, it analyzes the environment as a victim and its role in post-agreement processes, emphasizing the need to recognize it as a rights-holder. This descriptive study employs interpretive hermeneutics to analyze primary and secondary sources, shedding light on the challenges associated with consolidating territorial peace and multidimensional security in Colombia.



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