

Revolutionary Armed Forces of Colombia

Aka FARC, FARC-EP; *Fuerzas Armadas Revolucionarias de Colombia-Ejército del Pueblo*

Description: Founded in 1964 and designated as an FTO on October 8, 1997, the Revolutionary Armed Forces of Colombia (FARC) was Latin America's oldest, largest, and best-equipped terrorist organization. The FARC was responsible for large numbers of kidnappings-for-ransom in Colombia and held as many as 700 hostages. In 2016, after four years of negotiation in Havana, the Colombian government and FARC reached a peace agreement, later approved by Colombia's Congress, setting into motion a disarmament, demobilization, and reincorporation process. In accordance with the peace agreement, the vast majority of FARC combatants disarmed and demobilized between December 2016 and August 2017 under UN supervision, with roughly 7,000 FARC members turning in more than 8,000 weapons.

As of December, roughly 13,000 FARC ex-combatants (including former rank-and-file guerrillas and militia) continue to participate in the reintegration process based on the 2016 Peace Accord.

Following the 2016 Peace Accord, FARC dissident groups have seen a resurgence in some areas of Colombia by filling the void left by FARC ex-combatants who permanently left the battlefield.

Activities: Over the years, the FARC has perpetrated many high-profile terrorist acts, including the 1999 murder of three U.S. missionaries working in Colombia as well as multiple kidnappings and assassinations of Colombian government officials and civilians. In 2008 the Colombian military conducted a dramatic rescue of 15 high-value FARC hostages, including U.S. Department of Defense contractors Marc Gonsalves, Keith Stansell, and Thomas Howe, who were held captive for more than five years, along with former Colombian presidential candidate Ingrid Betancourt.

There have been reports of continued extortion and violent criminal activities by FARC dissidents not participating in the peace process. In 2019, former FARC commanders

Iván Márquez and Jesús Santrich appeared in a video calling for a return to arms against the Colombian government.

In 2020, FARC continued to commit attacks throughout the country, including bombings, violence against civilians, kidnappings, attacks against utilities infrastructure, and attacks against military and police facilities.

Strength: Before the peace accord, the FARC was estimated to have 7,000 armed members, with several thousand additional supporters.

Location/Area of Operation: Colombia and Venezuela

Funding and External Aid: Before the peace accord, the FARC was primarily funded by extortion and international drug trade. FARC dissidents continue such activities.