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USDOS – US Department of State

Country Report on Terrorism 2019 - Chapter 5 - Revolutionary Armed Forces of Colombia (FARC)

Aka FARC; Fuerzas Armadas Revolucionarias de Colombia

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 November 2016, after four years of negotiation in Havana, Cuba, 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. In 2019, roughly 13,000 FARC ex-combatants and former militia members continued to participate in social and economic reincorporation activities under the 2016 accord. Up to 1,500 FARC guerrillas chose not to participate in the peace process and around 250 have since abandoned the process. FARC dissidents have recruited an estimated 1,000 new members, largely minors, since the signing of the peace accord. Altogether, these individuals are often referred to by the United States as FARC dissidents and as the residual organized armed group by the Colombian government.

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 July 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 August, former FARC commanders Iván Márquez and Jesus Santrich appeared in a video calling for a return to arms against the Colombian government.

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.

ecoi.net summary:

Brief description of the Revolutionary Armed Forces of Colombia (Excerpt of chapter 5 of the country report on terrorism 2019)

**Countries:**

Colombia, Venezuela

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Austrian Red Cross Austrian Centre for Country of Origin and Asylum Research and Documentation (ACCORD)	Wiedner Hauptstraße 32, 1041 Wien T (Telefon) +43 1 589 00 583 F (Fax) +43 1 589 00 589 info@ecoi.net	Contact Imprint & Disclaimer F.A.Q. Data Protection Notice
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