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**Three Presidencies:** Presidential Influence, Internal Displacement, and Violence Trends in  
Colombia

Yvette Andrea Ramirez

A Thesis Submitted to the Department of International Studies in partial fulfillment for the  
requirements for the degree of Master of Arts

May 31, 2023

University of San Francisco

Master of Arts in International Studies

Advised by: Ilaria Giglioli



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**Three Presidencies: Presidential Influence, Internal Displacement, and Violence Trends in  
Colombia**

In Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements for the Degree

MASTER OF ARTS  
in  
INTERNATIONAL STUDIES

by **Yvette Andrea Ramirez**  
May 31, 2023

UNIVERSITY OF SAN FRANCISCO

Under the guidance and approval of the committee, and approval by all the members, this  
thesis project has been accepted in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree.

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*Esta tesis está dedicada a el pueblo colombiano.  
Colombia, tierra de mi padre y de mis abuelos.  
Tierra linda y querida.*

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### **Abstract**

Internal Displacement has become one modern day's humanitarian crisis. The number of internally displaced persons have increased to alarming numbers in different corners of the globe. Colombia has been one of the center points of internal displacement in contemporary history. IDPs fled violence that is sourced in armed conflict mainly from the guerrilla group known as the FARC, as well as climate induced displacement in rural areas, leaving behind their homes and main source of livelihood. Victims of displacement endure a lengthy resettlement process and IDPs become marginalized in resettlement. Due to the severity of internal displacement, as a country Colombia has established laws to extend protection to the masses of Internally displaced persons and to mobilize a possible solution to the crisis, such as Law 387 of 1997 and Law 1448 of 2011. With the international community witnessing the increased forced displacement and the number of deaths, peace negotiations began and culminated with the 2016 peace agreement between the Colombian government and the FARC. By this time loss had become a part of life for many IDPs. The issue had been continuous under three presidencies over twenty years. Through a qualitative analysis of the former presidents and their political discourses during this timeframe. This thesis examines how the voices of these political figures have influenced the journeys of IDPs and their intended return to their home in the rural areas of the country. State power is limited in rural areas and in it is in these same spaces that security and peace is not guaranteed for IDPs. A power vacuum allows for violence to continue even when peace has been negotiated. Thus, preventing most IDPs from taking the journey back.

*Monólogo de Alguien Sin Voz*  
By: Darío Jaramillo Agudelo

*Mi tierra ya no es mi tierra.*

*Fui expulsado de ella, salí a medianoche sin rumbo,  
salvando la vida como si mi vida valiera alguna cosa.*

*El resto lo perdí, la casa, los muebles,  
las fotos y las cartas que me conectaban con los muertos de mi sangre.*

*Todo quedó abandonado,*

*De alguna manera muerto,*

*muerto como yo que comencé a morir entonces.*

*Salí con las manos vacías, sin tiempo para llorar,  
también sin pasado salí de esta tierra que ya no es mía.*

*El espejo de esta casa se niega a reflejarme,*

*nadie me reconoce.*

*Sin lugar y sin pasado*

*esta tierra no me reconoce*

*Ya no hay casa.*

*En el lugar habitan gentes que llegaron de ninguna parte.*

*Ahora soy nómada, una planta sin raíces,*

*un hombre sin nombre y sin memoria.<sup>1</sup>*

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<sup>1</sup> “16 Poemas sobre la Violencia en Colombia.”: the title translates to the 16 poems on violence in Colombia, written by a famous author of many poems in a public news source called Semana.



## 1. Introduction

Words can be used as powerful weapons of resistance. Words can convey a message. It can be a message of peace and encouragement. In Colombia, words have been a source of help and a source of hindrance. For years, the people in Colombia had to forego their homes. Not out of free will, but as an obligation. People were essentially pushed out by forces. The masses had to leave behind lands and homes just to escape life-threatening violence. This was a reality for people that had to undergo forced displacement. Between the years of 1995-2008, guerilla and paramilitary groups had been increasing their influence over territories and getting control of land that was deserted by *desplazados*<sup>2</sup> translating to the displaced. Overtime, the internal displacement of the masses of Colombians that once lived in rural regions would turn into one of the most notable humanitarian crises of our contemporary history.

This paper aims to answer the question, how does presidential influence help to the fulfillment of commitments made by the state to victims of internal displacement? I hypothesize that through the examination of internally displacement people Colombian legislation passed and an examination of concurrent presidencies and their influence, that the state government should have the capacity to carry out their obligations to displaced people, whether this be in urban or rural settings in order to promote security and stability to Internally Displaced People.

The poem in the introduction encapsulates sentiments experienced by victims of internal displacement. The movement of people was not a novelty to the international community. Displacement has occurred in multiple locations in the world. According to the UNHCR, a UN Refugee Agency, the countries that host the largest groups of internally displaced people are Colombia, Syria, Yemen, Ethiopia, Afghanistan, and the Democratic Republic of Congo. These

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<sup>2</sup> Alsema and Alsema, "Colombia Has Highest Number of Internally Displaced People."

populations of IDPs also account for sixty percent of all displaced people on the global level<sup>3</sup>.

One of the major contributors to the numbers of internal displaced people is violence. A clear example of this is found in Colombia. The humanitarian situation has deteriorated year to year. The largest number of recorded IDPs was in 2016. The World Bank provided data that showed the numbers reaching 7,246,000<sup>4</sup>. That same year the total population in Colombia was 47,625,000. Just to give a perspective on what percentage of the population was in the group of IDPs. Conflict-driven migration became a problem. Populations that had settled in rural lands were the most impacted.

The migration for communities of IDPs was mainly centered in the violence that had grown and expanded from paramilitary groups and *guerrilleros*. The crimes committed by the terrorist groups included kidnappings, torture, and murders. After more than fifty years of conflict, the count of murdered people totaled to 260 million<sup>5</sup>. The heinous crimes also included drug trafficking and recruitment of children. Because these groups had grown in numbers, there was more territory coverage and a great amount land was possessed thus pushing millions of individuals, families, and communities out creating a mass exodus.

The Colombian government created programs and care processes as well as laws that aimed to assist in resettlement. Over the last twenty years, three different presidents have taken the lead on internal displacement while simultaneously addressing transnational migration from Venezuela. Colombia has had a historic influx of Venezuelan refugees, fleeing from the catastrophic effects of the Maduro government and leadership. The onset of these mass migration

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<sup>3</sup> United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees, "Global Trends."

<sup>4</sup> "Internally Displaced Persons, Total Displaced by Conflict and Violence (Number of People) - Colombia | Data."

<sup>5</sup> BBC News, "Colombia Farc: Former Rebels Charged with War Crimes."

problems proved to be paradoxical for the heads of state in Colombia As, the numbers of displaced persons increased, fear was spreading throughout the country.

Many questions have surfaced about continual events and effects from internal displacement. Internal displacement is movement of people limited to the borders versus the movement of people to another country's border. Because it is situated between borders, internal displacement has been left at the hands of the national government. That is not to say that the international community is unaware and standing idly by. On the contrary, international intervention has been a main component in bringing awareness to the gravity of this.

Because much of the violence that has transpired, has resulted in the rights of millions of people being violated, it could not be ignored by the rest of the world. That is why many International Organizations (IOs) and Non-Governmental Organizations (NGOs) have provided guidance and suggestions to the government of Colombia on how to proceed in looking for resolutions and reparations to IDPs. Though, because of state sovereignty, the hand of the international community is limited unless otherwise permitted by the country.

### *Conflict History*

Modern Day, Colombia is country known for its beautiful green mountains, specialty coffee, biodiversity, and diverse culture. In more recent years, Colombia has gained popularity in pop culture, with numerous series and films covering a variety of subjects in the country. Much is known about this country located in South America, bordering Panama, Ecuador, and Venezuela. Countries that are historically connected. Like most of its neighbors, Colombia went through European colonization. Colombia experienced multiple civil wars since the 1800s. After battling with Spanish forces, independence from Spanish rule in 1819, then its time of being

under the leadership of Simon Bolívar, as the Federation of *Gran Colombia*<sup>6</sup>, to being official recognized throughout the world years later as *Republica de Colombia* (Republic of Colombia). In this time Colombia was establishing itself as democracy and asserting its position in the world. Although this was freedom from the Spanish colonization, it would mark the beginning of the internal conflict to come.

There was a constant divide between the government and the people. Political and social conflict was at the root of the violence. Colombia is known for its natural wealth, and it exceeds the natural wealth of many of its geographic neighbors. This spike in wealth left an economic gap. Colombia's rural areas were 65% below the poverty level while the urban areas were only at 30% below<sup>7</sup>.

### *Colombian Civil War*

The economic inequality contributed heavily to violence. From 1948-1958, violence erupted, and this decade was named *La Violencia*. In the decade of violence, bloodshed was experienced by the Colombian population of that time. Political tensions were high between the government and the opposition movement and the outcome was the loss of an estimated 200,000 to 4000,00 lives<sup>8</sup>. Violence began with the *Bogotazo*, a street riot in the capital city of Bogota. Bogotazo was an outcome of the murder of Jorge Eliecer Gaitan. Gaitan was running for presidency while being a leader of the Liberal Party. During this time paramilitary movements occurred and rose from anarchy as a reaction to the government's lack of support for the Colombian people<sup>9</sup>. Colombia established itself as a democracy, however, there was a power struggle between the conservative political parties and the liberal political parties.

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<sup>6</sup>BBC News, "Colombia Profile - Timeline."

<sup>7</sup>"Justice For Colombia - Justice for Colombia."

<sup>8</sup> Pike, "La Violencia (1948-66)."

<sup>9</sup> Turel, "Colombia's 'La Violencia' and How It Shaped the Country's Political System."

The economic and social classes were the driving forces in party affiliations<sup>10</sup>. The conservatives were considered the elites and liberals pushed back on this by mobilizing the common folk to fight against those conservatives in power, causing civil unrest and potentially internal armed conflict.

### *FARC/ELN/paramilitary groups*

This marked the birth of paramilitary groups and what is now known as guerrillas. In 1964, Colombia's internal conflict began. Fighting erupted between two guerrilla groups: FARC, *Fuerzas Armadas Revolucionarias de Colombia* (Revolutionary Armed Forces of Colombia) and ELN, *Ejercito de Liberación Nacional* (National Liberation Army). Both paramilitary groups would carry out violent attacks and murders towards civilians and were classified as foreign terrorist organizations by the U.S. State Department. The formation of FARC was led by Manuel Marulanda Velez in 1964. Because FARC was an opposition to the government at the time, the government took an aggressive stance against it. Opposition groups like FARC were deemed to be communist causing an attack to be made against them forcing the men that were part of the group to flee and create what is now the FARC<sup>11</sup>.

In a post-Cold War era, drug trafficking and cartels were embedded in the armed conflict. Colombia became a hotspot for illegal drug trade. The term 'narco-guerrillas' was used as a suggestion of the linkage between illicit drug production and trafficking and the armed violence that was already established. The presence of armed groups and guerrilla in spaces where the government was the main reason that displacement and migration began in the timeframe of *La Violencia*. Escalated violence pushed people out.

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<sup>10</sup> Ibid.

<sup>11</sup> Afp, "Timeline of the Colombian Conflict."

The FARC carried out thousands of kidnappings and murders from the moment of its formation. It was also notorious for carrying out a hijacking of a commercial flight to kidnap a senator in 2002 and its connection with the disbursement and trafficking of cocaine and other illegal narcotics. One of the issues with these paramilitary groups is their choice in the location. FARC is centralized in rural areas. They exercised the most power in those areas, because of this reason people in these rural areas were forced to flee. The state of Colombia waged a war against drugs and looked for external support.

Violence, chaos, and the lawlessness of violent paramilitary groups are the main forces of demobilization of people and their forced migration to urban areas. These people fear for their lives and security. Because of the increase in this type of violence, there was also an increase in the number of people fleeing their homes in search of a better and more secure life.

This demobilization led to the internal displacement of millions of people from the start of the armed conflict in the mid-twentieth century until today, creating one of the largest humanitarian crises in history. These people have gone from having a settled life in rural communities, to having to live a life in urban settlements. The government tends to be absent and away from rural areas because of their concentration and focus on the bigger cities. When people are forced to migrate to these new urban areas in the bigger cities, this is a chance for people to start over and rebuild faith in their country and government.

This is not the reality for many of the Internally Displaced Persons (IDPs). Unlike refugees who have also forced migrated and fled their homes, IDPs do not get very much attention from international organizations but instead rely on their government in this case. The Colombian government has lacked in giving attention to the internally displaced, more specifically in the last few years with the influx of Venezuelan refugees. With the assistance of

Colombian government falling short of their own, this also shed light on the Colombian indigenous people and Colombians of African descent<sup>12</sup>. They are unequivocally the groups of IDPs that face the most inequality.

### *Plan Colombia*

In the early 2000s, Violence was not just about guerrillas but also drug cartels. Since the 1980s, Colombia was the center of the illegal drug trade. FARC was at war with other paramilitary groups over territories that were filled with coca fields<sup>13</sup>. The fields were located in rural areas of the country. Fighting over drugs and land was the driving factor that forced people out of their homes in rural lands. FARC desired to expand its reach but in order to do so, it began to tax drug cartels in their production of their drugs. Because the production of drugs was set in rural areas, where there was governmental oversight, FARC was able to monetize the use of this land.

Drug trafficking became a growing concern due to the rapid growth of its network. So much that the U.S. government feared that drug trafficking would reach U.S. borders and become another problem. Drug cartels were powerful and threatening. In Colombia, cartels also had power and did not fear the state or the law. The state at this time was vulnerable. The combination of the fragility of Colombia as a state and the fear of drug trafficking growing in the U.S., led to the creation of Plan Colombia. The U.S. committed to aiding Colombia in combating drugs and violence. The commitment was to send military assistance to train law enforcement as well as provide economic support for further development of these forces and the development of farmers in the rural areas to grow crops outside of coca plants. However, the growth of coca

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<sup>12</sup> Mooney, "The Human Rights Situation in Colombia: Afro-Colombians and Indigenous People," July 28, 2016.

<sup>13</sup> "The FARC and Colombia's Illegal Drug Trade."

plants continued to happen even after Plan Colombia was implemented.

### *Possible Peace*

A glimpse of hope was given to IDPs and the people of Colombia with the 2016 Colombian Peace Accord between the Colombian government and FARC. This agreement intended to culminate decades of conflict and the violations of human rights. This was a historical moment and offered a future with sustainable peace. The Peace Accord dissolved the and disarmed the FARC. It also aims to reverse the causes of the violence and conflict while also addressing the issues of organized crime<sup>14</sup>. FARC was demobilized and many of their member even intended to reintegrate into Colombian society. After dominating for over five decades, FARC abandoned those rural areas leaving room for the Colombian government to intervene peacefully.

The year 2016 was a monumental year for Colombia. It marked the beginning of a possible new beginning for many people in the Latin American country. Colombia had been the epicenter of widespread violence for over fifty years. In 2016, a peace agreement that would allow the end of fighting between FARC and the government of Colombia<sup>15</sup>. This monumental agreement would serve as an apparatus of peace to those that have fallen as victims of conflict-induced displacement. The peace agreement allowed for committees to be established to bring justice by permitting those who have been held responsible of committing crimes to trial. These committees will expose the accused while trying to bring reconciliation to IDPs.

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<sup>14</sup> Washington Office on Latin America (WOLA) and Isacson, "A Long Way to Go: Implementing Colombia's Peace Accord after Five Years - WOLA."

<sup>15</sup> Piccone, "Peace with Justice: The Colombian Experience with Transitional Justice."



## 2. Literature Review

### 2.1 Internally Displaced People

In the most recent years, there has been an increased interest in the concept of displacement. With the rise of violence and conflict in many parts of the world, there has been an increase of people having to flee their homes. The displacement of people has become a global crisis that is continually affecting countries in multiple parts of the world<sup>16</sup>. Being internally displaced means that a person is forced to migrate within the borders of their country due to violence and the violation of human rights<sup>17</sup>. The subject of internal displacement came about in the 1990s<sup>18</sup>. It was unclear to states and the international community at the time.

According to the UNHCR and the UN Guiding principles of Internal Displacement,

“Are persons or groups of persons that have been forced or obliged to flee or to leave their homes of habitual residence, in particular as a result of or in order to avoid the effects of armed conflict, situations of generalized violence, violations of human rights, or natural or human-made disasters.”<sup>19</sup>

The term originated without a universal definition as well as the lack of a legal definition. It was developed under the *Kampala Convention* in 2009, is a treaty of the African Union. It addresses issues that cause displacement. The United Nations later developed the *Guiding Principles on Internal Displacement* in 2006. This list of principles does not offer an exact definition of Internal Displacement but instead gives the guiding principles to those who fall under the UNHCR’s definition of being internally displaced. Internal displacement was conceptualized after the international community became concerned of the political effects and

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<sup>16</sup> Brinkman, Cohen, and Deng, “Masses in Flight: The Global Crisis of Internal Displacement.”

<sup>17</sup> Deng, “INTERNAL DISPLACEMENT: A GLOBAL OVERVIEW.”

<sup>18</sup> Internal Displacement Monitoring Centre (IDMC), “The Last Refuge: Urban Displacement in Colombia.”

<sup>19</sup> Handbook, “IDP Definition.”

the morality behind the internal displacement<sup>20</sup>. There is little information on where the term originated. Although, they are commonly referred to as refugees but cannot be categorized as such due to the legal definition of a refugee<sup>21</sup>. For this research, I will use the UNHCR definition of IDPs and the discussions surrounding the theme.

Those that are displaced are called Internally Displaced Persons or IDPs. At an international level IDPs lack recognition. Political scholars look through a broader lens seeing mobility over borders instead of the migration within a single country's borders, there is a gap in the political theorist debates. Political theorists focus on refugees rather than assessing IDPs. The responsibility of the issues concerning IDPs are expected to be handled by local governments. It is a national matter that international organizations and non-governmental organizations have no jurisdiction over unless permitted by the local governments.

It is important to note the difference between both refugees and IDPs. There is an exclusion because of the lack of an authoritative definition. Refugees are people that are forced to leave their homes and communities because of violence, a natural disaster, or persecution. This definition was given under the UN's *1951 Convention* and the *1967 Protocol* Relating to the Status of Refugees. However, a part of the scholarly debate has brought up the evolution of the term 'refugee'. Regionally, the definition has become much broader<sup>22</sup>. In parts of the Global South, such as Africa and Latin America, the definition has been adapted to what those regions' principles on humanitarianism are, therefore having a more realistic definition of a refugee according to the issues being experienced in the region as well<sup>23</sup>. In other words, the definition of a refugee should be more sensitive and flexible, geographically speaking.

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<sup>20</sup> Draper, "Justice and Internal Displacement."

<sup>21</sup> Fagen, "Refugees and IDPs after Conflict."

<sup>22</sup> Arboleda, "Refugee Definition in Africa and Latin America: The Lessons of Pragmatism."

<sup>23</sup> Ibid.

The main difference between refugees and IDPs is one is a foreigner because they are outside of their country meanwhile the other remains inside. This gives refugees a place in the international order that is covered under international refugee law and it drives a divide between these terms<sup>24</sup>. The discourse surrounding IDPs is more of the international acknowledgement, further allowing for the international community to see what can be done to aid this group of people.

Internally Displaced people in Colombia is a subject on its own and it is vast. The vast amount of scholarship and academic covering IDPs zones in on the internal displacement that has occurred from the period of the late 1990s until 2016, right before the peace accord was signed. The conflict-induced displacement is categorized in stages<sup>25</sup> as follows:

1. Pre-expulsion threats and vulnerability
2. Expulsion
3. Migration
4. Initial adaptation
5. Protracted Resettlement
6. Return to their community

This list serves as a display of the transitions each individual IDP must endure. The first stage of pre-expulsion and threats is the interactions that these people with paramilitary members. The people are forced into working for these groups because of the threat of violence against their life and or family. Some threats are also aimed to frighten IDPs into the possibility

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<sup>24</sup> Barutciski, “Tensions between the Refugee Concept and the IDP Debate | Forced Migration Review.”,11-14.

<sup>25</sup> Shultz, “Internally Displaced ‘Victims of Armed Conflict’ in Colombia: The Trajectory and Trauma Signature of Forced Migration.”

of death. This then leads them to the next stage of Expulsion. This is the turning point where forced displacement becomes reality. Being expelled from their home and suffering the loss that comes with this, it is a challenge. Migration is the movement of these people from rural to urban. The resettlement in urban cities is the end goal for people. The migration to urban areas is a search for security for IDPs. Migrating is the pivotal part where IDPs and their families find themselves trying to assimilate to their surrounding urban areas.

The next stage is the initial adaptation stage. It is in this stage where IDPs are now becoming a part of the urban community. Most of the IDPs settle in *comunas* or communes. Being fully installed in these communes means that IDPs have made it on the *Registro Unico de Victimas* (RUV). The registry is dedicated to any person that has been forcibly displaced in the country. It also requires that a person declares that they are a *desplazado* or a displaced person publicly to a city council. After this important step, an IDP is then directed to *Unidad de Atención y Reparación Integral de las Víctimas* (UARIV). Once this has been completed, as an IDP, you are eligible to have governmental aid in health, education, housing, and food benefits<sup>26</sup>.

Protracted resettlement can be the destination for some IDPs. IDPs have already been in urban settlements while also accessing the services extended from the cities they reside in and the government. Governmental assistance is easier to obtain while in urban spaces. Once inside these settlements the assimilation begins. Opportunities for livelihood are taken, IDP children register into school. In this stage of the process, IDPs integrate into society. It is protracted because the time in this stage is undetermined. The final step is the return to rural communities. Many IDPs have a connection to their home in rural communities, where they aim to return. With the proper steps given to them by the government and the land restitution laws that have

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<sup>26</sup> “Desplazados en Colombia [Beneficios, Ayudas, subsidios y Más].”

passed, IDPs can gain the confidence to make that journey back.

Now that forced displacement has become the center of scholarly debates, more research has been uncovered and done. So much so that it covers a lot of ground. Scholars now have drawn attention to what happens after IDPs resettle. The resettlement of IDPs is only a part of their journey. A gap exists in the return to their initial homes. Because many chose to only resettle once, there is only a small amount of research that interacts with the decision to return.

### *2.1a. Categories of IDPS*

People are very connected to land. The term land is suggested as something outside of physical geography. Rather, it has a deep meaning that can be connected to variety of dimensions such as the cultural, social, and geopolitical<sup>27</sup>. Indigenous studies regard land as something beyond territory<sup>28</sup>. Land is important to human connection, and the removal of people from land can have detrimental consequences. In the case of Colombia, a country that one third of the land is owned by ethnic groups<sup>29</sup>. The settlement of people on those lands is significant to the way of life of many of these groups who are composed of:

#### *I. Indigenous people*

The term indigenous, falls under identity, and is attached to historical settlement of the land<sup>30</sup>. Indigenous people in Colombia, like most countries have existed for thousands of years. They are key protagonists in the history of Colombia. But like most indigenous and The Colombia indigenous population can draw parallels to many of the indigenous communities around the world. Much of the indigenous population in Colombia faced the

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<sup>27</sup> Teves, Smith, and Raheja, *Native Studies Keywords.*, 71.

<sup>28</sup> *Ibid*, 72.

<sup>29</sup> “Colombia’s Indigenous Groups | Colombia Country Brand.”

<sup>30</sup> Béteille, “The Idea of Indigenous People.”, 188.

effects of European colonization. Colonization was able to decimate some of the indigenous populations, but some were able to survive and are still in existence today, which are situated in *La Guajira*, *Nariño*, and *Cauca*<sup>31</sup>. Colombia being ethnically diverse, called for an organization to be created to protect and represent the different ethnic groups called *Organización Nacional Indígena de Colombia* or ONIC.

## II. *Afro-Colombians*

Also known as *Afrodescendientes* This is another group that is disproportionately affected by forced displacement<sup>32</sup>. Colombians of African descent have ancestors that came to Colombia as slaves during European colonization. The first location where African slaves were brought to Cartagena, a coastal city in Colombia. In a historical context, African slaves served as a replacement for the indigenous population that was destroyed by colonists<sup>33</sup>. Throughout history and in more contemporary times, Afro-Colombians have been marginalized. Marginalization of Afro-Colombians has affected their access to basic services and resources, according to the website, [minorityrights.org](http://minorityrights.org). The regions and spaces where Afro-Colombians reside, have been severely tainted with violence. Marginalization of Afro-Colombians has also been linked to racial discrimination that has existed since the time of Colonization. The Eurocentric approach to the categorizing of people based on their skin color is linked to the legacy of slavery<sup>34</sup>, Afro-Colombians continue to face ethno-racial inequalities in urban and rural settings.

## III. *Campesinos*

The term *campesinos* translates to peasant farmers. The historical definition is traced

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<sup>31</sup> Ibid, “Colombia’s Indigenous Groups”.

<sup>32</sup> Mooney, “The Human Rights Situation in Colombia: Afro-Colombians and Indigenous People.”

<sup>33</sup> Minority Rights Group, “Afro-Colombians - Minority Rights Group.”

<sup>34</sup> Herrera, “A History of Violence and Exclusion: Afro-Colombians from Slavery to Displacement.”

back to the medieval times, where ‘peasant’ was used in a derogatory manner, to categorize people as being rural poor or people who had rural residency<sup>35</sup>. Campesinos in Colombia, and in many other countries are agriculture laborers. Because many *campesinos* and their families live out in the more rural parts, they form a part of the internally displaced people. According to *La Comision de Verdad* along with *El Ministerio de Agricultura*, *campesinos* and *campesinas* and their communities are responsible for producing 70% of the country’s food. Much of this community is of indigenous descent and has owned land that has been passed down through multiple generations in their families. Many of these families have endured many struggles and forced displacement has been the greatest. The campesino communities in rural parts of Colombia have struggled to gain the acknowledgement from the government of the negative impacts of the ongoing violence that is situated in their lands and territories.

Researchers and scholars have also discussed and written about resolutions for the problem of forced displacement. There is an extensive amount of literature of intervention as a resolution. That can be problematic in that, displacement can be internal and confined to borders excluding the international community from having a contribution to the resolution. It can be assessed by those outside of the borders allowing for international contribution. Although, contributions have also been interpreted as criticisms of how a state is handling the crisis internally.

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<sup>35</sup> Edelman, “What Is a Peasant? What Are Peasantries? A Briefing Paper on Issues of Definition.”, 15-19.

### *2.1b. Normative Theory*

Normative theory has a space in the internal displacement discourse. Normative thinking incites people to think about principle in behavior and conduct. It gives the idea of having a set of norms that should be followed by individuals or collectively<sup>36</sup>. Normative theory evokes the conversation of ethics. Ethics in Internal displacement bring up the question of morality and principle. Further adding to the conversation of what is morally right and acceptable. Because socially violence is unacceptable, some scholars have to turned to ethics to explain ethical reasoning.

The different voices in academia, offer us a variety of perspective from the politicizing of displacement, the legal discourse and rational in regard to the human rights violations of displacement, to the socioeconomic inequalities and the psychological effects and trauma IDPs of all ages endure throughout their life. Research also reflects the main groups that are targeted and affected. Afro-Colombians and the different Colombian indigenous groups.

In researching internal displacement and IDPs, there is limited literature on the exact definition of IDPs. Because it is a more recent term and the IDPs are not necessarily covered by international law. Internal displacement comes from human rights discourse and it important to my research, because it addresses the absence of the state and the lack of contact with the international community.

### *2.2 Violence as a cause for displacement*

Another critical dialogue surrounding internal displacement are the driving forces behind it. Throughout the world, displacement has become more of a common topic in politics and the discourse surrounding migration. In the case of forced displaced is caused by unfavorable

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<sup>36</sup> Buckler, "Normative Theory.", 156



conditions or circumstances. This forced displacement of people can be attributed to specific driving forces. These driving forces have been discussed in academia by scholars since the rise of forced displacement and it is not a new theme in international literature<sup>37</sup>. The issue of forced displacement is deemed also as humanitarian crisis that has required national and international intervention due to the gravity of the matter that mass populations that it affects<sup>38</sup>. Forced displacement is taken up by two categories at the international level also termed as refugees and internal or national displacement as IDPs, as previously defined. These two groups of people have experienced different driving forces.

### *2.2a. Armed Conflict*

In the country of Colombia, the internal displacement is primarily driven by armed conflict. Violence is a common component of daily life. It began with the struggle of people having control over the state and over land. Armed conflict has transitioned in Colombia. Different forms of systems of violence have existed in this country and violence is rooted in conflict. What started as violence with violence stemming from the discontent of the people in Colombia as it was explained in the first section of this paper.

Although, there are groups and one group specifically that is a cause for displacement, the displacement does not happen in masses<sup>39</sup>. Rather, it is individual. Individual families are forced to flee. Many of the people that are forced out live in rural lands. On rural lands, homes are scattered and separated from communities at times. Therefore, allowing victims of violence to leave alone or with family. Armed violence is the main source for the protracted instability

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<sup>37</sup> Helton, "Forced Displacement, Humanitarian Intervention, and Sovereignty.",61.

<sup>38</sup> Ibid.

<sup>39</sup> Ibáñez, "Forced Displacement in Colombia: Magnitude and Causes."

and conflict that people from rural communities, face<sup>40</sup>.

The armed groups responsible for the continuous violence fall under two categories: *guerrilleros* and *paramilitares*. The term *guerrilleros* comes from *guerilla*. There have been a variety of ways that this term has been defined. The Guerrilla is a group that practices a type of warfare violence that falls within a normative set of rules within laws of war as well as international diplomacy, according to the U.S. Department of Justice Office Justice Programs.

Guerrilla organizations are a threat to internal security and have plagued the country of Colombia for decades. One of the most prominent guerrilla groups, is *Fuerzas Armadas Revolucionarias de Colombia*, commonly known by the acronym of FARC. It originated in the 1960s, after *La Violencia*. After this time there was an increase in the rise of self-defense groups. The location of these small groups was mostly in an area that is to the south of Tolima in a region named Marquetalia. Other regions, Sumapaz and Ariari. The groups began to assert themselves as a sort of power and command in these areas so much that they were called independent republics<sup>41</sup>. as a form of resistance to the governmental forces, such as the Colombian army. Once the groups were able to push out the army, the groups came to be known as a *Bloque Sur* or Southern Block<sup>42</sup>. The groups then became the FARC. The FARC also had major support from the Communist Party in Colombia and the guerrilla movement grew. This growth called for the first Guerilla conference in 1965.

The FARC was one of the guerrilla groups involved in the violence. Since 1964, the National Liberation Army or Ejército Nacional de Liberación (ELN). In the conflict, the ELN

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<sup>40</sup> Osorio and Culma, “Beyond Displacement by Armed Conflict: The Relationship between Environmental, Economic and Armed Displacement in Colombia.”

<sup>41</sup> Sanchez, Solimano, and Formisano, “Conflict, Violence, and Crime in Colombia.”, 121

<sup>42</sup> Ibid, 123.

was known as a Marxist and Leninist group that led with communist ideologies<sup>43</sup>. With more guerrilla organizations contributing to the dynamics of violence in the country. Scholarship on the topic of *guerrilla* warfare branches out into other subtopic such as narco-terrorism, terrorism, and other crimes<sup>44</sup>.

The guerrilla organizations synthesized power in regions where the government had a scarce hand and lacked oversight. Colombia's geography includes land that is extensive<sup>45</sup>. From this point on the guerrilla movement evolves, and the violence increases. Because many of these groups exist in places where the government has little to no control, groups such as the FARC, thrive and grow in numbers. Armed conflict is weaponized and used as a fear tactic to force people to flee or people are forced to join and work for the violent groups. IDPs in Colombia have had to face the tough decision between both. These decisions also leave IDPs with the option of facing death consequently.

### *2.3 Presidential Influence and Narratives in Colombia on Internal Displacement*

The influence that presidents have had in state matters is important to note. Presidential narratives have an impact on the public's opinion. Influence of a presidential narrative is evident through policymaking. Governmental outputs of policymaking processes, are rooted in preferences expressed by presidents<sup>46</sup>. In the case of Colombia, like in most countries, the presidential agenda is directly influenced by their political affiliations. Presidential influence as a theory can be utilized to measure how presidential rhetoric affects public opinion<sup>47</sup>. Presidential

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<sup>43</sup> BBC News Mundo, "Atentado en Bogotá: cómo es la guerrilla del ELN autora del atentado con carro bomba que dejó 21 muertos en Colombia."

<sup>44</sup> Osterling, *Democracy in Colombia: Clientelist Politics and Guerrilla Warfare.*, 19.

<sup>45</sup> Osterling, *Democracy in Colombia: Clientelist Politics and Guerrilla Warfare*, 19-20

<sup>46</sup> Gleiber and Shull, "Presidential Influence in the Policymaking Process."

<sup>47</sup> Oliver, Hill, and Marion, "When the President Speaks...."

speeches have an important role in governance<sup>48</sup>.

Colombia as a nation that has experienced continual violence leading to the humanitarian crisis of internal displacement, Colombian presidents have taken a more authoritarian approach in that presidents aim to centralize power through the use of establishing order in their agendas, causing a form of power overreach<sup>49</sup>. How presidents address the state in times of crisis in Colombia is reviewed by the Colombian Constitutional Court<sup>50</sup>. In Colombia much of what has been covered through academia and scholarship on the subject of presidential influence has been on recent presidencies addressing the issues of internal displacement, armed conflict and drug trafficking.

#### *2.4. Human Rights Law and Laws for IDPs in Colombia*

At an international level, laws have been used as a way to create order and regulate different populations. A well-known term serves as a definition of what ‘rule of law’ which in this case summarizes the importance of laws. “The Rule of Law is one of the ideals of our political morality and it refers to the ascendancy of law as such and of the institutions of the legal system in a system of governance.”<sup>51</sup> Greek Philosophers Aristotle and Plato spoke about the law being the supreme reigning power<sup>52</sup>. Spaces exist in which comparative perspectives where scholars discuss the rule of law and the role of law in relation to those that are refugees and asylum seekers. It measured at an international level because rule of law has been implemented because of refugees and asylum seekers<sup>53</sup>. This gives much more attention to those who identify

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<sup>48</sup> Eshbaugh-Soha, “The Politics of Presidential Speeches.”, 1-21.

<sup>49</sup> Katz, “Taming the Prince: Bringing Presidential Emergency Powers under Law in Colombia.”

<sup>50</sup> Ibid.

<sup>51</sup> “The Rule of Law (Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy).”

<sup>52</sup> “Constitutional Rights Foundation.”

<sup>53</sup> Kneebone, *Refugees, Asylum Seekers and the Rule of Law: Comparative Perspectives*, 32.

as refugees and asylum seekers rather than IDPs. Much of what is written with rule of law, is under an international lens

The literature on laws is endless and ongoing because new laws constantly introduced to courts, nationally and internationally. Constitutions have been amended on multiple occasions, leaving space for academia to debate and discuss. Laws serve as a resolution and form of dialogue between victims in communities and those in governance<sup>54</sup>. The enactment of laws has been instrumental in giving voice to people and recognizing the rights of every human being as it is in the United Nations, *Universal Declaration of Human Rights* (UDHR).

*“Whereas recognition of the inherent dignity and of the equal and inalienable rights of all members of the human family is the foundation of freedom, justice and peace in the world, Whereas disregard and contempt for human rights have resulted in barbarous acts which have outraged the conscience of mankind, and the advent of a world in which human beings shall enjoy freedom of speech and belief and freedom from fear and want has been proclaimed as the highest aspiration of the common people, Whereas it is essential, if man is not to be compelled to have recourse, as a last resort, to rebellion against tyranny and oppression, that human rights should be protected by the rule of law, Whereas it is essential to promote the development of friendly relations between nations, Whereas the peoples of the United Nations have in the Charter reaffirmed their faith in fundamental human rights, in the dignity and worth of the human person and in the equal rights of men and women and have determined to promote social progress and better standards of life in larger freedom, Whereas Member States have pledged themselves to achieve, in co-operation with the United Nations, the promotion of universal respect for and observance of human rights and fundamental freedoms, Whereas a common understanding of these rights and freedoms is of the greatest importance for the full realization of this pledge, Now, therefore, The General Assembly, Proclaims this Universal Declaration of Human Rights as a common standard of achievement for all peoples and all nations, to the end that every individual and every organ of society, keeping this Declaration constantly in mind, shall strive by teaching and education to promote respect for these rights and freedoms and by progressive measures, national and international, to secure their universal and effective recognition and observance, both among the peoples of Member States themselves and among the peoples of territories under their jurisdiction.”*

Source: United Nations, *Universal Declarations of Human Rights*

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<sup>54</sup> Uitz, “The Perils of Defending the Rule of Law Through Dialogue.”

The purpose of human rights is to protect people and their autonomy<sup>55</sup>. Human rights are a part of the conversation in countries around the world. This discussion dates to *Les Droits de L'Homme*, the French Declaration of the Rights of Man and Citizen in 1789<sup>56</sup>. Before this time, what was more recognized was men and their natural rights<sup>57</sup>. Men and Natural rights were a part of 'Enlightenment'. During this period, natural rights were observed as coming from natural laws. Thomas Aquinas was known for influencing the statement of natural laws being in the hands of human beings and their will and disposition.

However, this concept of natural law can be disputed in that it might not have use for modern application. The way it was defined by Aquinas, it cannot be applied to what we know to be discussed in human rights. Politics of human rights, in language and logic allow for a form of legitimization and power of those who are more dominant<sup>58</sup>. Many new perspectives such as feminist and environmental lenses have been important in the application of human rights. In the past schools of feminist thoughts have been underrepresented internationally<sup>59</sup>.

Significant progress has been made with human rights being advocated amidst the different crises. The field of Human Rights is a broad field, where human rights are fought for at international level. As mentioned, the UN has created multiple conventions to cover human rights violations. Internal displacement calls for a state to take responsibility for the crisis under its own government. In the creation of the *Guiding Principles on Internal Displacement*, IDPs have should have the same access to rights that any human does and under international humanitarian law (IHL), they are also able to access the protections offered by IHL<sup>60</sup>.

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<sup>55</sup> Nickel, "On Human Rights.", 461-64

<sup>56</sup> Griffin, *On Human Rights*, 9.

<sup>57</sup> Ibid, 9-10.

<sup>58</sup> Baxi, *The Future of Human Rights*.

<sup>59</sup> Tickner, "Revisiting IR in a Time of Crisis.", 538

<sup>60</sup> OHCHR, "About Internally Displaced Persons."

International standards are set in this manner. Rights of IDPs do not change; rather, they are victims of the circumstances. Literature in Human Rights, points to the UN providing the legal framework for countries to follow. The direct link to displacement in Colombia is armed conflict and the rights of IDPs being consistently violated by non-state actors perpetuating the violence.

IDP protection and return is at the center of the application of humanitarian laws. Some scholars have suggested a possible theoretical exploration into the apparatus of the *Guiding Principles*. The newly developed policies and laws surround the IDP return<sup>61</sup>. The UN Commission on Human Rights placed IDPs rights on the global agenda. International conferences put forth the treatment and recognition of IDPs in the international community<sup>62</sup>.

### 3. Methodology

Internal displacement in the hands of the national government, has left millions of people looking for support from the government. The influence that the presidents have are imperative to victims of displacement. When there is the absence of the state and the hesitation to carry-out measures of security and protection, then internally displaced people remain unprotected and left to be an oversight of the government. Abandoned land by IDPs and territories that have been long neglected give more space to armed groups to continue criminal activity and prevent the return home for IDPs that already feel marginalized in their own country. Even though the government offers reforms and peace agreements, it can have a heavy price tag and leave nothing but empty promises and distant resolutions.

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<sup>61</sup> Cantor, *Returns of Internally Displaced Persons During Armed Conflict: International Law and Its Application in Colombia*,4.

<sup>62</sup> Ibid.

Colombia needed to respond to the crisis of internal displacement. Because now there is an in-depth focus in Colombia for IDPs internationally, along with the intensity of violence in Colombia, the country decided to put Laws in their country that offered protection to those that fled. Legislation was passed by the Colombian government as a response to the increased internal displacement. The institutional response in Colombia is viewed as stronger response in comparison to other countries with the same crisis of displacement<sup>63</sup>.

Assessing legality trends of IDPs in conversation with the presidential influence provides an understanding of the dynamics between the government and its ability to respond to human rights violations. Passing these types of laws in Colombia that would serve as a resolution can be a reflection of how prioritized Internal Displacement is in the country. The state taking ownership and addressing the IDP crisis would also reflect the presidential agenda on the matter. Colombian laws serve as a written form of what the Colombian presidents mentioned in this paper, have committed to doing on the matter of internal displacement. Examining the two major laws passed during the twenty year timeframe used for this research paper, is essential to understanding how these presidents influenced internal displacement trends. The legal framework can work in cooperation with presidential speeches.

### *3a. Colombian IDP Laws and the 2016 Peace Accord examination*

Law 387 of 1997 | *Ley 387 de 1997*

*Por la cual se adoptan medidas para la prevención del desplazamiento forzado; la atención, protección, consolidación y estabilización socioeconómica de los desplazados internos por la violencia en la República de Colombia.*<sup>64</sup>

The statement above is the opening statement on the legal document of *Ley 387, Unidad*

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<sup>63</sup> Cardona-Fox, *Exile within Borders: A Global Look at Commitment to the International Regime to Protect Internally Displaced Persons*, 71.

<sup>64</sup> Ley 387 de 1997



*Para Las Victimas*, or Law 387, Unity for The Victims the statement translates to: by means of which measures are adopted for the prevention of forced displacement, and for assistance, protection, socioeconomic consolidation and stabilization of persons internally displaced by violence in the Republic of Colombia.<sup>65</sup>

Law 387 was passed on June 18, 1997 after much of the country had observed the millions of displaced people. It was also considered to be the ‘pioneer law’ for combating internal displacement<sup>66</sup>. Law 387 set the foundation for the creation of the UN’s *Guiding Principles* because those were adopted the following year. IDPs were a topic of interest in the international arena. One of the main goals of Law 387 was to respond and to be utilized as an instrument for protection of IDPs. Which is not something that is present for IDPS. As highlighted at the start of the law, IDPs were in need of socioeconomic stability.

Although Law 387, was passed before the timeframe, once the law was enacted, Colombia was seen as an example to the world of what a swift institutional resolution to internal displacement<sup>67</sup>. On paper, Colombia the legislation implemented and instituted for IDPs has surpassed that of any other country in the world and it offers protections in its legal framework<sup>68</sup>. The first presidency dated from 2002-2006, state presidency was a priority. The state’s presence was promoted through a democratic security policy. Law 387, was the foundation that was established. It would serve as the principle framework for the presidencies that followed. It was the initial response and because the crisis was heightened in the early 2000s, it was

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<sup>65</sup> United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees, “Law 387 of 1997.”

<sup>66</sup> Carneiro, “Displacement in Colombia: IDPs, Refugees, and Human Rights in the Legal Framework of the Peace Process.”,5.

<sup>67</sup> Cardona-Fox, *Exile within Borders: A Global Look at Commitment to the International Regime to Protect Internally Displaced Persons*, 2019,70.

<sup>68</sup> *Ibid*,70.

important for Law 387 to continue to be a part of the presidential agenda. Later in 2011, the government in Colombia passed *Ley 1448 de 2011*. Fourteen years after the first law was passed.

LEY 1448 DE 2011 | Law 1448 of 2011

*"Por la cual se dictan medidas de atención, asistencia y reparación integral a las víctimas del conflicto armado interno y se dictan otras disposiciones."*<sup>69</sup>

Regulated by National Decree 4800 of 2011, Regulated by National Decree 3011 of 2013

By which measures of attention, assistance, and integral reparation are set forth for the victims of the internal armed conflict and other provisions are established.<sup>70</sup>

Law 1448 was passed on June 10, 2011. The state needed to keep durable solutions to respond to internal displacement. In 2011, the nation of Colombia had seen the first institutional response through Law 387. Law 1448 came after much lobbying and as a response to being in international compliance. Law 1448 passed during the presidency of Juan Manuel Santos. It was officialized in a ceremony which counted with the presence of UN secretary General Ban-Ki Moon. With enough representatives present for this momentous occasion, it was evident that the international community backed Santos and the response of the state via Law 1448. The Law was also timely with the initial stages of peace negotiations between the state and the *guerrilleros*. Both the passing of Law 1448 and negotiation talks under Santos's administration made this complex law significant to the country.

It is crucial to note the timing of Law 1448. Violence was still present and measures were taken by the state to further demonstrate its presence in the conflict. Under Law 1448, victims had the possibility of reclaiming land they once owned and were forced to abandon due to forced abandonment. Law 387 was the first comprehensive law passed while Law 1448, offered

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<sup>69</sup> Ley 1448 de 2011

<sup>70</sup> LAW 1448 OF 2011:

<https://en.unesco.org/creativity/sites/creativity/files/law1448v18jun20.pdf>

the official legal framework needed for implementation. Law 387 offered the base needed for Law 1448, while Law 1448 was paving the way for the 2016 Peace Agreement.

Law 1448 like 387, were reparations offered by the state to the victims of displacement. Establishing these state mandates, that protected IDPs demonstrated that internal displacement was showcased as Colombia tackling internal displacement through transitional justice. Internal displacement fostered an environment in which human rights were constantly violated. The government in Colombia was once again taking the initiative on carrying out reparations by passing laws that gave IDPs access to governmental assistance and legal aid in reclaiming land. Policymaking was at the forefront and Law 1448 permitted bureaucratic models in the form of programs to aid the IDPs. These laws outline the land restitution policy and how the state's intentions on implementations of the articles under the laws<sup>71</sup>.

#### *2016 Peace Accord examination*

Peace agreements have been drafted to outline terms and conditions that need be met to restore peace and stability between parties. From the years of 1990-2022, out of one-hundred fifty peace processes, forty-four have become peace agreements<sup>72</sup>. Peacebuilding after major conflicts, such as civil wars, was the end goal. Two phases exist in peace agreements, the first the pre-negotiating phase and the negotiation phase<sup>73</sup>. In the Americas, Colombia has become a model in peace-building efforts of the advancement of the peace agreement since its initial establishment<sup>74</sup>.

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<sup>71</sup> Buchely, "Peace, Land, and Bureaucracy in Colombia: An Analysis of the Implementation of the Victims and Land Restitution Law from a Multiscale Perspective of State Bureaucracies."

<sup>72</sup> "PA-X: Peace Agreements Database."

<sup>73</sup> Abu-Nimer, *Reconciliation, Justice, and Coexistence: Theory and Practice*.

<sup>74</sup> "Americas."

The country had experienced ongoing conflict for decades allowing for the notion of peace to be impossible. In 2016, things had shifted the ongoing violence had heightened to exasperated levels. In a longstanding conflict such as the one in Colombia, peace is something that needs to be negotiated. In the past peace process have concentrated in interventions involving the United Nations<sup>75</sup>.

The agreement is a 310-page document that highlights the bilateral ceasefire between the state and the largest and longstanding armed guerilla group FARC. Rebel groups like FARC, have obtained power through the monopolization of drug trafficking. Drug trafficking was an economic win for FARC, when rebel groups have made a profit, it creates an environment in which these groups resist any peace negotiations<sup>76</sup>.

Peace negotiations that led to the 2016 Peace Agreement was dealt with at a domestic level. There have been arguments in which peace processes have been delayed and difficult to reach because the of state and local government limitations with insurgent groups bringing forth ‘sub-state agreements’<sup>77</sup>. Armed conflict and internal displacement fall under the category of intrastate. When conflict falls within borders, the expectations can be that it will be resolved overtime, as long as the borders remain honest and intact, so that the conflict will not leave those borders<sup>78</sup>. Time did not solve this intrastate conflict. Instead, an agreement was reached.

The 2016 Peace Accord is composed of these sections:

1. Towards a New Colombian Countryside: Comprehensive Rural Reform
2. Political Participation: A democratic opportunity to build peace
3. End of the Conflict

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<sup>75</sup> Darby, Mac Ginty, and Mac Ginty, Eds., *The Management of Peace Processes.*, 1-15.

<sup>76</sup> Joshi, Melander, and Quinn, “Sequencing the Peace.”

<sup>77</sup> Forster, “Peace Agreements.”

<sup>78</sup> Evans, “Cooperative Security and Intrastate Conflict.”

4. Solution to Illicit drugs problem
5. Agreement regarding the Victims of the Conflict: “Comprehensive System for Truth, Justice, Reparations, and Non-Recurrence,” including Special Jurisdiction for Peace; and Commitment to Human Rights
6. Implementation, verification, and public endorsement

Peace negotiations do not come without obstacles particularly. Peace agreements have intention creating sustainable peace but run the possibility of disintegrating before implementation<sup>79</sup>. Part of the terms in the peace negotiations, included former fighters integrate into society by providing them with governmental assistance. In literature about the integration of ex-combatants, it is said that agreements that allow the integration of ex-combatants carry a stigma<sup>80</sup>. There are scholars that discuss the problem with ‘social integration’ being the lack of clarity when defining what is social integration<sup>81</sup>. It can be a long process to socially integrate ex-combatants<sup>82</sup>.

With the enacting and implementation of the 2016 Peace Accord, the state of Colombia can provide the possibility of regaining peace and stability in the country. In examining the significance of this document, it showcases the priority that peace has on the state agenda. After over fifty years Colombia has found a resolution to the armed conflict and violence. The beginning stages of second presidency examined violence is still at an all-time high but resolutions and measures are on the horizon for the country during this time.

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<sup>79</sup> DeRouen et al., “Civil War Peace Agreement Implementation and State Capacity.”

<sup>80</sup> McMullin, “Integration or Separation? The Stigmatisation of Ex-Combatants after War.”

<sup>81</sup> Hazen, “Social Integration of Ex-Combatants after the Civil War.”

<sup>82</sup> Ibid.

### 3b. Colombian Presidential Speeches Examination

Presidential speech examination includes an independent variable (IV) and a dependent variable (DV). The independent variable is the presidencies, and the dependent variable would be the number of IDPs during those presidencies. What is specifically being tested as the influence of the Presidents over the increase or decrease of IDPs, while considering the added factor of violence that causes the displacement.

In selecting the time frame for my research, I focus on the span of twenty years' worth of presidencies, from 2002-2022. This in turn covers three different presidents that served either single term or two for each president. The three Colombian presidents will be the following:

Table: The organization of the analysis of the three presidential terms

President	Terms	Tenure	Laws enacted	Name	Year
Álvaro Uribe Vélez*	2	Aug.2002- Aug.2010	Law 975	Justice and Peace Law, Disarmament, Demobilization, Reintegration	2005
Juan Manuel Santos	2	Aug.2010- Aug.2018	Law 1448	Victims Law and Land Restitution	1448
			2016 Peace Accord	Peace deal between FARC and Colombian Government	2016
Iván Duque Márquez	1	Aug.2018- Aug.2022			

Under the investigation additional aspects such as the laws and policies that were enacted during their presidencies will also be analyzed. The Laws correspond to the commitments and initiatives mentioned in the presidential speeches. The speeches will be analyzed for keywords and repetition to reveal key policies and themes that fall within the parameters of the ongoing armed conflict. The armed conflict can also be a variable, the higher the conflict, the higher the

levels of internal displacement is a hypothesis that is going to be tested. The presidencies fall in the middle, where their influence can affect the levels of violence and displacement either negatively or positively.

When selecting speeches for this research, the goal was to locate speeches that mentioned the issues and themes relevant to the research questions. Speeches that addressed and mentioned a commitment towards solutions for internal displacement and the victims, armed conflict, violence, terrorism, peace, any of the groups of IDPs, i.e., *campesinos* are a part of the selection. What the head of states in Colombia had to say serves to view that president's agenda while in office, it allows framework for the public agenda and public opinion<sup>83</sup>. One of the most popular newspapers from its creation in 1911 in Colombia is *El Tiempo*. *El Tiempo* reported on all political events and was a main source of news. Presidential speeches were documented and discussed in *El Tiempo*. There is an extensive archive of all presidential elections and speeches. Newspaper article archival access will be an additional method that I will be utilizing for Research.

The data collection will be of the numbers of Internal Displaced People accounted for by two different sources. One source will be accessing the data offered by the Colombian governmental website, RUV, *Registro Unico de Victimas*, the registry used in Colombia for people who claim to be victims of forced displacement, and the final data source is the UNHCR. The UNHCR, a UN Refugees Agency, has datasets of refugees and IDPs, as a global number and as a national number. Every country that is experiencing a refugee or internal displacement crisis has data available to analyze. Displacement under different causes is also a category within the datasets. The numbers are displayed by year. Data for this research will from 2002-2022,

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<sup>83</sup> Cohen, "Presidential Rhetoric and the Public Agenda.", 87.

in correspondence to the years of analysis for the presidents.

In this methods section, the methodology will be organized as follows: The name of each Colombian president, the terms served, their political background information including the laws and policies passed during their time in office, an excerpt from a speech given by each president, an analysis of the speech, data found that corresponds to the number of internally displaced persons and a cross-examination detailing the connection between IDP data collected with the presidential discourse and how the issue of displacement was addressed.

The cross-examination of the speech analysis and trend of violence of each presidential term will serve as an indicator of whether each president has failed or succeeded in relation to commitments made to the IDPS, and it can also with the numbers of IDPs, can determine whether the movement of people has increased or decreased demonstrating that lack of stability that the state has been able to provide for people to either stay in rural communities or flee. My hypothesis is that through the trends of violence that have long plagued Colombia, the state has failed to fulfill the commitments made through their influence, causing instability in the IDPs. My hypothesis is also that the state is limited even through implementations policies and laws that favor IDPs.

*“Colombia is paradoxical – on the one hand it has produced legislation that is quite liberal and makes the government appear to be very responsive with a normative and institutional framework, and yet the problem continues and worsens.”*<sup>84</sup>

– Dr. Francis M. Deng, Representative of the UN Secretary General on Internally Displaced Persons.

For a better understanding of the power of the state in Colombia, an analysis on the Victims and land restitution laws that have passed will be a part of the research. With the

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<sup>84</sup> Sánchez-Garzoli, “No Refuge: Colombia’s IDP Protection Vacuum.”



implementation of the laws, the rights of IDPs are visible and clear, offering IDPs a safe passage to gain what was once theirs. However, there are complexities behind these laws, where the government cannot ensure that these rights are respected in every space, more so in rural areas and communities. The state-building efforts of the Colombian government have caused exclusion for IDPs and the people in those rural communities<sup>85</sup>.

It is important to also see that certain topics and themes were addressed a form of response to international intervention and guidance. Because people under forced displacement in Colombia were mobilizing within the borders, the matter was national. But it goes without saying that it became a crisis thus, drawing the attention of the international community. Furthermore, the concern became that of great magnitude. Following, the need for guidance and suggestion from international organizations. The rights of IDPs were called into question, allowing for international organizations to begin to advocate and call for the Colombian government to address and resolve the crisis.

As mentioned before the first presidency that will be discussed, peace negotiations between FARC and the prior president Andres Pastrana, had been initiated. The beginning stages of a peace agreement began in 1999. Dialogues began with the president appointed High Commissioner of Peace, Victor G. Ricardo and the then leader of FARC Manuel Marulanda Velez (commonly known as *Tirofijo*, translate to straight shooter)<sup>86</sup>. The initial idea of the peace process did not begin because of either party involved. Rather, 1997, it was brought on by the United Nations Development Program (UNDP).

Many credit the lack of peace negotiation to the corruption in the Colombian Government

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<sup>85</sup> Washington Office on Latin America (WOLA), “A Long Way to Go: Implementing Colombia’s Peace Accord after Five Years - WOLA.”

<sup>86</sup> “Peace in Colombia? Lessons from the Failed 1999-2002 Talks.”

from prior decades, that was being paid by the *narcos*, the drug trafficking by cartels. With the displacements and killings skyrocketing, intervention was needed<sup>87</sup>. The peace process and negotiations took three years. The U.S. was also a part of the intervention and ultimately the peace negotiations failed to be completed and no agreement was met.

### *3c. Colombian Presidential Cases Studies*

Alvaro Uribe Velez  
First presidential term: 2002-2006

President Alvaro Uribe started his political career in his home department of Antioquia, Colombia. His starting point was as secretary general of the Ministry of Labor from 1977 through 1978. In 1982 he became mayor of his hometown, Medellin. He was governor of Antioquia from 1995-1997. He was initially part of the Liberal party that had traditional and conservative ideologies. He ran for office as independent after he broke off from the Liberal Party.

His long trajectory in politics landed him the presidency of Colombia. His first year in office was crucial because terrorist guerrilla groups were widespread in committing political assassinations<sup>88</sup>. Uribe was elected during an intense political time. Violence by FARC plagued the country in both rural villages and urban cities. U.S. and Colombia became partners in Plan Colombia, the war on drugs. FARC was in partnership with the cartels. His presidency marked a time of polarization in Colombia.

His aggressive approach began with *Plan Colombia*. With Plan Colombia, Uribe was able to fight the grasp that FARC had in cities and towns. His goal in strengthening the state, resulted in FARC forces being pushed out of urban spaces and into rural areas. Thus, pushing the

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<sup>87</sup> Richani, "Third Parties, War Systems' Inertia, and Conflict Termination: The Doomed Peace Process in Colombia, 1998-2002."

<sup>88</sup> Zacharia, "Alvaro Uribe: 'I Did It Because It Was a Necessity.'"

violence into rural lands where farmers and their families reside. Uribe was also assertive in finding ways to end the violence and set the political stage for national intervention against terrorist acts committed by non-state actors. Uribe was known as an assertive figure that was able to confront the situation of IDPs head-on. His tactic was aggressive and promoted a democratic security policy<sup>89</sup>.

### *Speech*

From his installment as the newly elected president of Colombia, Álvaro Uribe gave his initial speech called *a Discurso de Posesión* on August 8, 2002.

*“Nuestro concepto de seguridad democrática demanda aplicarnos a buscar la protección eficaz de los ciudadanos con independencia de su credo político o nivel de riqueza. La Nación entera clama por reposo y seguridad. Ningún crimen puede tener directa o ladina justificación. Que ningún secuestro halle doctrina política que lo explique. Comprendo el dolor de las madres, de los huérfanos y desplazados de la Patria, en su nombre revisaré mi alma cada madrugada para que las acciones de autoridad que emprenda tengan la más pura intención y el más noble desarrollo. Apoyaré con afecto a las Fuerzas Armadas de la Nación y estimularemos que millones de ciudadanos concurren a asistirlos. Ello aumenta nuestra obligación con los derechos humanos, cuyo respeto es lo único que conduce a encontrar la seguridad y por su conducto la reconciliación.”<sup>90</sup>*

In this excerpt of his inaugural speech, Uribe asserted his position on domestic terrorism and armed conflict. In the first part of the excerpt, Uribe uses appeal to emotion. Key words and phrases that he uses include combatting terrorism and violence, enforcing security that would lead to reconciliation.

### *Data collected*

During the first presidency, much of data on the number of IDPs in Colombia that was sourced for the years of 2002-2006, came from the Colombian government’s website data

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<sup>89</sup> Bérubé, “Colombia: In the Crossfire.”

<sup>90</sup> Tiempo, “DISCURSO DE POSESIÓN DEL PRESIDENTE ALVARO URIBE VÉLEZ.”

collection section. The numbers reported were taken by the amount of people who had claimed forced displacement and considered themselves as IDPs. Because most of the data at the time was newer, much of it was not accessible. Only the years 2002, 2004 and 2006 were available with numeric data of IDPs under the Uribe presidency. The total number of IDPs reported totaled to 656,710<sup>91</sup>. A high number of displacement victims fled from vulnerable departments in rural Valle del Cauca, Sucre, Bolivar.<sup>92</sup>seen in Table B1. Table B2, shows the breakdown of IDPs between those three years. This data source will be different from the next years of data collected. It is still significant to my research and hypothesis of presidential influence over the country and the number of IDPs. To mitigate this, I am dividing the tables by the sources where the data was gathered.

Number of victims from vulnerable departments in rural Valle del Cauca, Sucre, Bolivar.<sup>93</sup> Referencing Table B2, shows a decrease in the amount of IDPs between 2002, 2004, 2006, reflective of the start, middle and end of Uribe's first presidential term. Uribe's inaugural address signaled that there would be a push for change in the armed conflict and internal displacement in Colombia. Populations in rural areas were vulnerable. Table B, shows the victims of the violence in rural departments, where people remained. Before the Uribe's presidency, peace negotiations failed. It was evident that the violence sourced in armed conflict, was nearly impenetrable and stronger.

However, the government under the guidance of Uribe conflict termination was a part of the narrative on building a more secure Colombia. In his first year, the number of internally

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<sup>91</sup> "Colombia: Nuevos Desplazados Disminuyeron de 424 Mil En 2002 a 69 Mil Este Año - Colombia.": The numbers recorded here were taken from the source:

<https://petro.presidencia.gov.co>

<sup>92</sup> "Colombia 2002-2006: Situación de Derechos Humanos y Derecho Humanitario."

<sup>93</sup> "Colombia 2002-2006: Situación de Derechos Humanos y Derecho Humanitario."

displaced persons had decreased, making optimistic strides for his presidency. After over five decades of conflict, Uribe through his leadership was able to put into motion a war against violence and terrorism<sup>94</sup>. Numbers were still high. The complexities of the violence still presented themselves as difficult. His presidency from 2002-2006 was successful in promoting the initial stages of stability for IDPs through his rhetoric and actions. Uribe's success was in his strategy. Because violence was still at large, most IDPs resettled in urban communities. Human rights violations were still occurring under Uribe. The trends of violence were pointed toward the state's responsibility. According to the data above, kidnappings were a part of the criminal activities that contributed to the violence. Extortion was a new strategy that was being implemented.

To challenge the violence, Uribe in his inaugural speech committed to supporting the National Armed Forces of the country. The first term of his presidency, mass detentions and arbitrary arrests took place. Uribe's actions drew the attention of the UN High Commissioner. The occurrences were a concern amongst the national and international community. Uribe reciprocated in an aggressive manner to the disapproval he was receiving from local NGOs, claiming that, "politicking was done at the service of terrorism"<sup>95</sup>.

Nevertheless, he earned the approval of the people through the success of decreasing violence. The violence in rural spaces surpassed the violence in urban communities. Those who benefitted were outside of the rural areas. Most criminal and human rights violations affected those communities, making it more viable for people to have to forcibly flee and seek protection elsewhere, creating more statelessness in the population and therefore, not fulfilling the

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<sup>94</sup> López and Cristina, "Los Soportes de La Popularidad: Cómo Los Columnistas Refieren El Caso Del Presidente Álvaro Uribe Vélez."

<sup>95</sup> Leech, "Colombia: The Successes and Failures of President Uribe - Colombia."

commitment of security for the populations that lived in rural areas and those who fled those areas. Security improved for most of the people in Colombia, giving Uribe the approval needed to run for a second term.

Alvaro Uribe Velez

Second presidential term: 2006-2010

*Speech excerpt*

*Hemos utilizado la Seguridad Democrática para proteger los ciudadanos en todas las partes del país, a fin de que no los sigan desplazando. Para proteger a los colombianos, a fin de que no tengan que irse forzosamente al extranjero.*

*No hemos frenado el desplazamiento interno, pero hay una gran reducción que se ha venido presentando año tras año. En el 2002 Colombia tuvo 424 mil desplazados. En el 2003, 220 mil. En el 2004, 162 mil. En el 2005, 159 mil.*

*Estas cifras no son cifras caprichosas del Gobierno. Si algo caracteriza a la democracia colombiana, es independencia institucional que no permite mentir con las cifras.*

*Quisiera poder decirles hoy a los colombianos, desde esta Universidad Colegio Mayor de Cundinamarca, que está frenado el desplazamiento. No está frenado, pero sí sustancialmente disminuido. La lucha tiene que ser hasta frenarlo”<sup>96</sup>*

This excerpt from the speech given by Uribe, was name “*Conservatorio sobre Desplazamiento y Reinserción*” in 2006. His presidency had tenure with the population, because of the evidence from data on IDPs, he continued to move forward with democratic security policy. One of two important policies that came into effect under his government.

Uribe was re-elected in 2006 to serve his second consecutive terms. He was able to cut

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<sup>96</sup> “PALABRAS DEL PRESIDENTE URIBE EN CONVERSATORIO SOBRE DESPLAZAMIENTO Y REINSERCIÓN.”

down on the amount of IDPs. His commitment to promote democratic security policy, helped Uribe to gain the popularity needed to continue. During this term *Desarme, desmovilización y Reintegración* (Disarmament, Demobilization and Reintegration) (DDR) was the goal. DDR process was being used to move forward with disarming, demobilizing and reintegrating armed groups throughout the country, which was still dealing with the conflict and the consequences of conflict<sup>97</sup>. DDR began to strengthen at the beginning of Uribe's first term. DDR under the Uribe administration was termed as the Justice and Peace Law.

The excerpt above, was taken from one of the speeches he gave at the *Universidad de Cundinamarca* in 2006. Uribe brought into his discourse data and numbers of internally displaced people. He once again included democratic security in his discourse as this is one of his main goals, making it a repeated theme as seen in both speeches. In this term his presidency was able to push for the legal framework that would require the demobilization of paramilitary groups specifically. Congress approved and later ratified by the government, Law 975 of 2005. Law 975 promotes Justice and Peace Law, Disarmament, Demobilization, Reintegration. While this was a solution; the Law did not bring change to the violence trend. An advancement was made through this law to hold those committing systemic human rights violations and against international humanitarian law<sup>98</sup>. It was heavily critiqued in its application, allowing for it to be flawed.

### *Data*

In comparison to Uribe's prior term, Table C1, the number of internally displaced people

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<sup>97</sup> Derks, Rouw, and Briscoe, "The Community Dilemma: DDR and The Changing Face of Violence.", 7.

<sup>98</sup> Amnesty International, "Colombia: The Justice and Peace Law Will Benefit Human Rights Abusers: Amnesty International Press Release."

increased from 2009-2010<sup>99</sup>. The data collected was found through the UNHCR Refugee statistic website. As mentioned earlier on, Uribe had aggressive tactics towards the violence that did not necessarily favor IDPs. The problem of violence by FARC and other armed groups was simply removed from the cities where the government had control and the ability to respond to violence to rural villages where people were left vulnerable and at the hands of those committing violence, thus continuing the violation of human rights abuses. This in turn forced people to flee from those FARC-controlled areas to safer ground in major cities. Uribe was losing favor in presidency due to the lack of results from his commitments on violence and towards IDPs. Uribe was not able to pass any major laws in favor of IDPs. He was using his approach of democratic security policy through Plan Colombia.

Between the years 2009 and 2010 marked the end of the Second and final presidential term for Uribe. Violence trends were still active. The data shows an increase of approximately 280,000. The downward trend of internal displacement in the beginning and first presidential term for Uribe had changed. Showing that the ‘democratic security policy’ to be ineffective according to the data above<sup>100</sup>. The commitment to ensure a more secure path for IDPs was also not advancing as quickly as the amount of violence. Uribe’s eight years of leadership enacted important policies during the existing trends of violence. The cross examination of data to the presidential stance and position has had a limited influence over the commitments made towards improving the number of IDPs. The numbers also showed that people continued to leave rural areas and resettle elsewhere.

Juan Manuel Santos

First presidential term: 2010-2014

After Uribe ended his presidential term, the country voted in a new president.

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<sup>99</sup> United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees, “Refugee Statistics.”

<sup>100</sup> Hansen and Romero Penna, “The Failure of Colombia’s ‘Democratic Security.’”



Juan Manuel Santos won the election in 2010 continuing his leadership and president and head of state of Colombia. The start of his political career was serving as Minister of foreign trade to later being the Minister of finance, and Minister of Defense under Uribe's government. Santos was a member and co-founder of the Social Party of National Unity or the Union Party for The People. This party formed in 2005, was known as the Uribistas or congressional supporters of Uribe and his government. Santos was the presidential candidate for the Union party for The People. Eventually many of the Uribistas left this party to form their own. Former President Uribe was in disagreement of how Santos was running the country once he was in office. Uribe was very critical of the approach Santos was taking on peace talks with FARC.

### *Speech*

President Santos's inaugural speech given in 2010:

*“Pondremos en marcha una estrategia integral de seguridad ciudadana para que los centros urbanos sean espacios sociales, de convivencia, donde los niños, las mujeres, los ancianos, puedan jugar, caminar y vivir tranquilos, ¡sin temor ni zozobra!  
El campesino, los desplazados y las tierras Y quiero que me escuchen en los campos –en las montañas, en las llanuras, las selvas y las costas de nuestra tierra– los campesinos de Colombia.*

*VAMOS A DEFENDER AL CAMPESINO COLOMBIANO, vamos a convertirlo en empresario, a apoyarlo con tecnología y créditos, para hacer de cada campesino un próspero Juan Valdez.*

*Porque ese campesino es la persona capaz de alimentar a Colombia y de ayudar a sustentar a un mundo ávido de alimentos. Los fenómenos del narcotráfico, del terrorismo, de la violencia, que ha sufrido nuestro país, hicieron que buena parte de las mejores tierras terminaran en manos de agentes de la violencia.*

*¡ESO LO VAMOS A REVERSAR!*

*Presentaremos al Congreso un proyecto de Ley de Tierras, y aceleramos los mecanismos de extinción de dominio, para que las tierras que el Estado les ha incautado a los criminales, y las que les vamos a incautar,*

*REGRESEN A LAS MANOS CAMPESINAS, A LOS QUE DE VERDAD LAS TRABAJAN CON VOCACIÓN Y SUDOR.*

*Con campos más seguros, promoveremos el retorno a sus parcelas –como ya se viene cumpliendo, con acompañamiento integral del Estado– de los desplazados y víctimas de la violencia.”<sup>101</sup>*

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<sup>101</sup> “Discurso completo de posesión de Juan Manuel Santos.”

In this speech Santos used keywords when addressing IDPs. He mentioned one of the groups within the IDP population, *campesinos*. He expresses his goal to fully support the farmers of Colombia through mechanisms that would allow land to go back to *campesinos*. He acknowledges the role of *campesinos* and agriculture in Colombian society. He also notes high level of the phenomena of terrorism, violence, drug trafficking that the country has suffered. Land in Colombia has ended up in the hands of agents of violence. He plans to secure these lands to ensure a safe return and the reclaiming of farms.

Santos equates, safe rural lands with a possible return, along with integration of victims of displacement. With the language used in this speech, the commitments are made. With the help of policy that will be enacted throughout his first term.

During the first term, one of the major laws as a response to the IDP conflict was Law 1448 of 2011. Deemed as an act of ‘goodwill’, Law 1448 had the purposes of the showing acknowledgement to victims of Colombia’s long-term armed conflict<sup>102</sup>. Continuing to address the trends of violence such a killings, kidnappings, and other illegal criminal activities from FARC and any paramilitary group. Law 1448 set out to provide a resolution for victims<sup>103</sup>. As a part of his efforts in his first term, land restitution was a part of the Victims law<sup>104</sup>.

### *Data*

Table C2: Numbers of IDPs during the Santos presidency, first term between 2010-2014<sup>105</sup>. Which saw the exit of President Uribe and the start of Santos’s administration. In accordance with the data gathered from the end of the prior presidency the UNHCR provided the

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<sup>102</sup> “The Victims and Land Restitution Law in Colombia in Context | Transnational Institute.”

<sup>103</sup> “Colombia: Improved Government Response yet to Have Impact for IDPs.”

<sup>104</sup> “Colombia: Victims Face Reprisals for Reclaiming Land.”

<sup>105</sup> United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees, “Refugee Statistics.”

data from 2011-2014. Table C2 shows the continual gradual increase of IDPs. This can be due in part to the violence more vulnerable spaces and the ongoing fleeing of people. In correlation to the data presented during his presidency; the internal displacement numbers increased every year by approximately 170-340 displacements per year. The increases were evidently less than prior years recorded. The speech covered the topic of ‘return’, the number did not correlate to that of safety in those spaces still. The exodus of people was still at large as data shows.

Juan Manuel Santos

Second presidential term: 2014-2018

*Speech*

*“Todos los que participaron de manera directa o indirecta en el conflicto armado, y cometieron delitos con ocasión de éste, pueden someterse a esta justicia transicional, incluyendo los agentes del Estado y, en particular, los miembros de la fuerza pública. Tampoco habrá posibilidad de que nadie se acoja a este sistema de justicia si no ha dejado antes las armas. ¡Así de claro! Y a quien reincida le caerá todo el peso de la ley. Lo que logramos hoy, lo que anunciamos hoy, es una gran noticia para Colombia y también para el mundo. Esta es la primera vez que un gobierno y un grupo armado ilegal, en un acuerdo de paz y no como resultado de posteriores imposiciones, crean un sistema de rendición de cuentas ante un Tribunal nacional por la comisión de crímenes internacionales y otros delitos graves.<sup>106</sup>”*

Santos's speech about the Process of Peace was described as ‘historic’ in June 2015. The speech was given months before the final agreement was made between both FARC and the government. The deal was in its final stages by September<sup>107</sup>. A keyword in this speech is transitional justice. The state needed to obtain the trust of the victims, the need to further strengthening human rights was a part of transitional justice and essential to move forward.

Santos also made it clear that all arms and weapons must be laid down, so that violence could be put to rest. Lastly, the excerpt included also highlights that Santos already had optimism

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<sup>106</sup> Tiempo, “El Histórico Discurso Del Presidente Santos Sobre El Proceso de Paz.”

<sup>107</sup> United States Institute of Peace, “Q&A: Colombia Breakthrough a World Model for Peace Talks.”

in the peace agreements and negotiations. He pointed out that this is the first time any government and an armed group came to an [peace] agreement. Moreover, creating a national Tribunal for the commission of international crimes that would bring those that are responsible and hold them accountable. The next year the peace negotiations would be finalized and signed by both parties.

### *Data*

Data for the second term of Santos's presidency 2014-2018, begins in 2015 and ends at 2018 in Table C2. IDP population number in the first years of 2015 to 2016. Shows an increased number of about 1 million. While the number is high between those years. The monumental 2016 Peace Agreement was signed policy was formalized in 2011. The decrease in the data begins in 2017, post-agreement. The Peace Agreement was a process in its initial stages in 2016. The difference between 2016 and 2017, according to the data is 737,000 people. This can be an immediate effect of the peace agreement. FARC had been dismantled. FARC was the most powerful armed group in rural areas and part of dismantling included members of the FARC to also leave the rural area and laying down arms. This decrease in IDPs is an explanation of the mobilization of peace and the demobilization of FARC.

Santos was able to deliver a level peace to the country through a peace deal in his last term as president. His influence and political tactic aided in the fulfillment of the commitment of peace to Colombia. As a result of this the displacement numbers changed in comparison to prior efforts from earlier in his first term and the Uribe administration. Santos was awarded the Nobel Peace prize, gaining the recognition that he was able to bring peace to Colombia after over fifty years of conflict and civil war, from the international community. Santos's success story was his

administration's proactivity to secure peace and bring stability. In comparison to Uribe, Santos's approach was geared towards addressing the issue of internal displacement. Based on the data gathered under Santos, his presidency was effective in ending a fifty-year period of violence.

Outcomes of the peace deal were immediate in decreasing internal displacement, additional outcomes such the electorate vote on the peace deal, the presidential influence over the people of Colombia overall would be circumstantial based on the years of implementation of peace. With FARC being the first armed group to sign the deal, the state would propel the peace to be signed by the next powerful armed group, ELN.

### Ivan Duque Marquez

Presidential term: 2018-2022

From a young age, Ivan Duque Marquez, who is known as Ivan Duque, was interested in politics. His family's involvement in politics nurtured that interest. His political background started in 2000 as he was an advisor in the Ministry of finance. Duque to leave to Washington D.C. to fulfill his role of senior advisor at the Inter-American Development Bank from 2001 until 2010. From 2011 to 2013, he served as the head of Culture, Creativity and Solidarity Division at Inter-American Development Bank<sup>108</sup>.

He was an advisor to former president Uribe. Duque's political party, Democratic Center Party, a party that broke off from former president Santos's party. Because of Santos's approach to the FARC and his peace negotiations. Duque formed a part of the congressmen that were part of the Urbista movement. Duque called himself 'an extreme centrist'<sup>109</sup>. He was a senator from 2014-2018. He resigned his position as senator to run his presidential campaign, which he was

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<sup>108</sup> "Iván Duque."

<sup>109</sup> Wallenfeldt, "Ivan Duque | Biography, Education, & Age."

nominated for in 2017 by his political party and was elected to office in 2018<sup>110</sup>.

*Speech excerpt*

Duque's Inaugural speech was given in 2018:

*Esa es la base de pensar en un Acuerdo por la Legalidad. Quiero una Colombia donde todos podamos construir la paz, donde se acaben esas divisiones falaces entre amigos y enemigos de la paz, porque todos la queremos. Por el respeto a Colombia y por el mandato ciudadano que recibimos, desplegaremos acciones para asegurar a las víctimas verdad, justicia proporcional, reparación y no repetición. También corregiremos fallas estructurales que se han hecho evidentes en la implementación. Las víctimas deben contar con que habrá reparación moral, material y económica por parte de sus victimarios y que no serán agredidas por la impunidad.*

*Creo en la desmovilización, el desarme y la reinserción de la base guerrillera. Muchos de ellos fueron reclutados forzosamente o separados de su entorno por la intimidación de las armas. Estoy convencido y comprometido con buscar para la base de esas organizaciones, oportunidades productivas y velar por su protección. También nos esforzaremos por la provisión de bienes públicos en todas las regiones del país, empezando por las que han sido golpeadas por la violencia.*

*Colombianos, la Paz la tenemos que construir todos y para ello debemos tener claro la importancia de contar con una cultura de legalidad sustentada sobre el Estado de Derecho. Sólo una sociedad donde la seguridad y la justicia garantizan la aplicación de la ley, logra derrotar la violencia.*

*Ha llegado el momento de evitar que los grupos armados ilegales que secuestran y trafican drogas pretendan ganar beneficios mimetizando sus delitos con causas ideológicas. Sencillamente debemos dejar claro que en adelante en nuestra Constitución el narcotráfico y el secuestro no son delitos conexos al delito político ni mecanismos legítimos para financiar y promover ninguna causa. Hoy mismo le cumplo a Colombia y llevaré esta iniciativa ante el Congreso de la República.*

*Construir la Paz requiere que derrotemos los carteles de la droga que amenazan distintos lugares del territorio. Vamos a ser efectivos en la erradicación y sustitución de cultivos ilícitos de la mano de las comunidades, en la puesta en marcha de proyectos productivos y en romper las cadenas logísticas y de abastecimiento de las estructuras del narcotráfico. No vamos a permitir que los “disidentes”, los “combos”, los “clanes”, las mal llamadas “oficinas” sigan haciendo de las suyas en la Costa Pacífica, en nuestras fronteras y en nuestras regiones más apartadas. Velaremos por la sanción efectiva de quienes pretendan reincidir o burlarse de las víctimas ocultando armas o recursos necesarios para la reparación.*

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<sup>110</sup> Ibid.

*Durante los primeros 30 días de nuestro gobierno vamos a realizar una evaluación responsable, prudente y completa del proceso de conversaciones que durante 17 meses se ha adelantado con el ELN<sup>111</sup>.*

### *Cross examination of speech*

Duque's inaugural speech addressed IDPs under victims. Duque emphasized his commitment to bringing peace to Colombia. Peacebuilding was a continuous and promoted effort. The Peace Accord had been implemented for two years. One of the major themes in the agreement was the integration of former members of FARC into society after its agreement to demobilize. The integration allowed for the ex-combatants to have limited liberty. The removal of combatants from rural communities was an advancement for the state and its commitment to peace.

In this speech, Duque refers to the criminal activity still occurring in Colombia as being committed by illegal armed groups that have not signed a peace deal with Colombia. Consequently, threatening the viability of having peace in its entirety, as written in the peace document. *Campesinos* and their importance to the agro-industrial society are highlighted. Duque commits that his leadership will accomplish a review of the conversations that have been in development with the ELN, the paramilitary that still has influence in those space where the state is limited in reaching.

### *Data*

For the years 2019-2022, the data collected reflected the IDP numbers in the time after the 2016 Peace Accord was signed. it should be noted that the data of Table C4 begins in 2019<sup>112</sup>

Between 2019 and 2020 the number of IDPs gradually increased by an approximate 300,000.

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<sup>111</sup> Casa Editorial El País Cali, "Este Fue El Discurso de Posesión Del Presidente Iván Duque,"

<sup>112</sup> United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees and United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR), "Refugee Statistics."

President Duque had a strong criticism of Santos' and the 2016 Peace Agreement. Between 2020-2022, the data from table C4 shows decrease by less than 100 IDPs recorded. In comparison to prior years there was not a significant change to the numbers. The minimal fluctuation in these years reflects the presidential activity in Colombia.

The data years for Duque's presidency also fall under the time of the COVID-19 pandemic. COVID-19 became a factor in the movement of people throughout the world and Colombia, like many other countries, declared a state of emergency. Duque's administration needed to gear its attention towards containing the spread of the virus.

#### *Cross-examination of Speech*

The commitments made to continue to fight violence and the ongoing application of the terms and agreement from the peace accord, connect the diminishing IDP numbers. The data can account for those that have needed to resettle but have been a lot less than the past decade. The trends in violence have decreased because of Duque's government and their commitment to the communities of victims. Duque's influence and narrative was again like the prior presidents, one of finding solutions to violence.

#### **4. Findings**

Per my examination of Colombian Laws directed towards forced displacement, Law 387 of 1997 was the stage of resolution efforts for the IDP population. Although, it was before the twenty-year span for this research paper, it still was a part of the legal framework for the state of Colombia. Law 387 influenced politics in Colombia and its approach to IDPs and was a precursor to Law 1448 of 2011. Law 1448 was more effective in its implementation because of



the decrease of the number IDPs. Both laws were Colombia's as an acknowledgement that forced displacement was a humanitarian crisis. This paper has found that legal examination of Law 387 and Law 1448, proves the state's presence and effort to bring a resolution to IDPs by providing programs and measures to ensure stability.

Per my examination of the 2016 Peace Agreement, the state was able to secure peace negotiations with FARC and an agreement that would ensure the future peace of Colombia. The document is an instrument that had Law 1448 of 2011 as a foundation.

The presidential influence and speech examination showed the differences between the various ways the three presidents approached armed conflict and resolving internal displacement. Alvaro Uribe's presidency lasted for two consecutive terms. In both terms Law 387 was already present. And as the data showed, the number of IDPs was at its highest due to the trends of violence peaking in the country. In the speech excerpt IDPs were part of the presidential agenda. His tactics and strategy to force violence and FARC as perpetrators, to move out of cities, created higher numbers of IDPs in the country. His influence negatively impacted the IDP numbers.

Juan Manuel Santos's presidency was over two consecutive terms. Data from UNHCR, showed fluctuations both positive and negative. The numbers showed increase and decrease reflecting the slow progress towards peace. The initial years showed high numbers and this carried through the rest of Santos's time as president. Even with the passing of Law 1448, the numbers increased. His influence and his tactic in addressing the problem was more affirmative and allowed for peace talks. In the last couple years of Santos being in office the peace agreement was past and began to be enacted. His last year as president, showed a major difference in number than his prior term. His influence was more positive and in response this

helped in decreasing the problem of forced displacement. He was able to pass a major legislation and a peace agreement. He left office setting the stage for his successor.

Per the examination of President Ivan Duque, IDP data showed the numbers going in a downtrend. The fluctuation was seen after 2018. His first full year as president was in 2019, where the number of IDPs was the lowest it had been. His leadership was experiencing the aftermath of the 2016 Peace Agreement while also experiencing a global crisis. As a president his influence had an impact but the data shows that due to Santos's influence in the enactment of the 2016 Peace Accord.

The data collected and the speech analysis offered a channel of assessment of the connection between the state, presidential influence through discourse over internally displaced people and the trends of violence. Through the different presidencies, the violence trends remain the same. Some presidents accomplished more in addressing internal displacement and human rights violations. Gaining international recognition as Santos did. Uribe, had the possibility of succeeding but in the end failed. Duque was able to continue where Santos left off, but because the 2016 Peace Accord was only signed by FARC, other groups resurged, and there was pushback due to the amount of impunity, even with trials and truth commissions coming into the equation. IDPs encounter challenges that can make this return and reintegration dangerous and allow for a protection vacuum.

## **5. Analysis**

Colombia as a country has struggled to establish peace and security within its borders throughout its history. My research question of presidential influence help to the fulfillment of commitments made by the state to victims of internal displacement, revealed that there are correlations between presidential influence in Colombia through IDP law

examinations and presidential speech examinations. The three chosen presidencies gave evidence to the trends of violence in the country. In each presidency there were political moves made towards progress. This was more evident in one presidency over the others. However, across the first presidency and a half the data gathered which is not constant with my hypothesis due to the decrease of IDP numbers. Presidential influence is the strongest through the legislation passed during the time that specific president was in office.

Each president had included in their speech: peace and victims of internal displacement. Verbally they were included, but the data found aligned with my hypothesis. The state showed its presence through legislation, and this solidified presidential influence. How presidents responded through their leadership affected the number of IDPs. Law 1448 of 2011, was evidence that the state was making an effort and responding but with legislation, the timeframes can differ. The enactment of laws is a process and this in turn can affect issues like internal displacement. And through the presidencies FARC and other paramilitary groups continued to incite violence and causing the influx of IDPs to urban cities where the government was more present and had more power versus rural areas, where a power vacuum existed.

FARC was a very powerful armed group that had monopolized the economic situation in rural regions in Colombia. The government did not have power and before Uribe took office Plan Colombia and the partnership with the U.S. was beneficial and its longevity allowed for Uribe to utilize it as a way of waging war on FARC. Democratic security policy was emphasized across the presidencies. Democratic security was a way of assuring the Colombian population that peace and stability were higher up on the political agenda. Because FARC was powerful, they did not give peace negotiations importance with Uribe.

Santos was successful in bringing FARC to the table. Santo's presidency saw large amounts of IDPs but it was through his proactivity towards peace that created the ideal environment for peace. His presidential influence marked a change in direction for the country. People were continuing to flee the ongoing violence amidst the peace negotiations. Because unfulfilled commitments had been a part of the presidential influence over the country at the time. There was a distrust of the state by the IDP population in that they were still experiencing violence. It was going to take more than just disarmament of the FARC and other groups to end the violence.

Santos' presidential influence seeped into Duque's presidency from 2018-2022. Duque was critical of Santos being that his political background leaned more toward *Urbista*, therefore he was critical also of the 2016 peace agreement. Duque during his time also committed to continuing peace but there were certain things in the peace agreement that he aimed to amend. I believe that the decrease in numbers of IDPs was caused by the 2016 Peace Agreement and the increase in his last years in office was due to the rise of other paramilitary groups.

The disarmament of FARC left a vacuum in the areas it once held control over. Now, the members FARC under the peace agreement have had the chance to be re-integrated into society and live a civilian life. This is one of the aspects critiqued and hence, creating an increase in forced displacements. IDPs again were lacking the security promised and committed to them. Presidential influence in this case can be attributed as a cause of the states absence and the lack of responsibility it takes.

What presidents do while in office affects not only the present but also the future as it seen with these presidencies. Trends of violence continued parallel to legislations passed and through establishment of the 2016 Peace Agreement. Presidents and the state government have a

limited reach in the areas where armed conflict reigns. The data presented in this research paper allows for the reader to draw a link between what is done in office and under a particular leadership and how that can change the data. The only break Colombia has seen came from one president and his influence over the country, while the other presidents examined had challenges and shortcomings in putting into place resolutions to solve the humanitarian crisis plaguing the country.

Moreover, putting the president side by side, the violence was changing while the politics remained the same. Political climate in Colombia has been dictated by the actions and laws created. It was only then that numbers changed but the changes were consistent with the violence. Much of what has been said, left a skeptical attitude. The commitments were the same as found on the excerpts but the execution was different. Because force displacement was so significant to Colombia and the world the issue of it had to be politicized by these politics. Passion and the desire to rid the country of violence was the common denominator. In this paper my hypothesis did show evidence of how there has been impact through presidential influence. their influence.

## **6. Research Limitations**

This thesis includes limitations. During the time of research, there has been a travel limitation. Traveling to Colombia would have offered a different perspective and more so, an approach of being 'in the field' could have provided a more local context on the issue. The funding for travel and timeframe for research was a part of the limitation. To further develop the argument and answer the research question(s), an ongoing investigation is required. Because the situation of peace in Colombia is still continuous, the research can also be continuous. The

humanitarian crisis can improve or worsen. Therefore, limiting my research to the analysis and observations made during the time of this thesis.

The topic of IDPs is multi-faceted and it is a broad theme to cover. What is discussed and argued in this thesis is just one portion of the multiple complex issues surrounding forced displacement. Some portions of the topic of IDPs such as gender and the impact sustained by that group should be researched further. Much of the citations and documents read are primarily in Spanish, leaving it up to the thesis researcher to translate from Spanish to English. The data used from UNHCR, is external as opposed to the data collected from the local government in Colombia. To mitigate these differences, I separated both keeping the data from the first presidency as a stand-alone table in the appendix. The data cannot and does not account for the timeframe of processes. For example, governmental programs, a time delay between the moment you sign up to fully being registered, can account for a time lag and thus a possible difference in numbers of IDPs<sup>113</sup>. Data can be inaccessible for specific years as well.

## **7. Recommendations for Future Research**

My research is limited to the past years of 2022. Colombia since then has elected a new President, Gustavo Petro. Petro is Colombia's first leftist president<sup>114</sup>. He is also a former member of a paramilitary group 19 de Abril (M-19)<sup>115</sup>. Gustavo Petro has a differing political background than his predecessors. As the first leftist president, his political agenda will have

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<sup>113</sup> Ham, Garcia, and Dedios., "Social Protection Responses to Forced Displacement in Colombia."

<sup>114</sup> "Five Figures That Sum Up Gustavo Petro's First Six Months."

<sup>115</sup> Wallenfeldt, "Gustavo Petro | President of Colombia."

different focuses. His political ideologies run the risk of being influenced by his time as a member of a paramilitary group. But this same political background can offer an alternative. Petro has a more focused and aggressive approach toward rural reforms. Recently rural reforms have been. These reforms offer security and stability to rural communities. This can foster the right environment for a mass return, changing the number of IDPs reported. He can also continue Santos's legacy of peace since it was not part Duque's focus. There are other social, economic, political matters he has pushed for. Another possible starting point can bring into the discussion the possible influence of social media on the Internal Displacement crisis. Social media is powerful tool that mobilizes people and spread activism. The more people talk about a social matter on social media, the more attention it can get, warranting a response to create a resolution.

My research barely grazed the surface of the topic of COVID-19 and its impact on presidential impact therefore impacting the IDP community. COVID-19 is still fairly new and more research needs to be developed further to understand the trends occurring and how there can be a causal link between the themes in my research. The research for this paper remains open-ended and can be continued after 2022, when the political climate changed nationally and internally.

## **8. Conclusion**

To conclude this paper, it is evident that presidential influence has had its say in how politics are exercised. Presidents have power over how certain topics and themes are received. For the years of 2002-2022, three presidents led the country through the non-stop violence

stemming from FARC and other paramilitary groups. These *guerrillero* and *paramilitares* groups have had control and the upper hand since their creation in the middle of the 20<sup>th</sup> century.

Monopolized power in rural areas where the state presence did not exist was the driving factor of forced displacement. The influence of presidents in these spaces did not have an effect.

Presidents and their influence could not guarantee and hence not fulfill the commitments of peace stability and security. IDP data in this research showed continual increase before a mass decrease. This was an indicator that FARC had continued to carry out violent acts and push people out. The state was failing the IDP community, and the influence of presidents was having serious implications. Not to disregard the governmental action in urban areas was not a part of the positive impact. Progress was made in these urban spaces, but people still resided in rural communities where there was a distrust and a lack of state presence.

Much of these presidential narratives were solutions towards a path to peace but only a few were beneficial to IDPs. One of three presidents was able to negotiate with one of the most violent armed groups in history. But that negotiation does not come without shortcomings. When the state should take responsibility for its internally displaced people. Already marginalized by resettling, the state must commit to providing stability and security. If not these IDPs remain nomads and invisible. In Colombia, there is still violence after peace.

Internal displacement is not something that can be resolved by one or two leaders. The mass movement of people will take time. Under new leadership it is possible to see change in the numbers and if data is gathered after this presidency, the possibility of a decrease exists. However, with the power vacuum left behind in rural communities, other paramilitary groups are rising. The state's presence is needed in order for these groups to retreat and presidential influence can have the final say in the security threats that their country faces. This is the hope for Colombia,



that moving forward peace will continue to grow and spread to the communities that decades ago experienced it.

## 9. Appendix A

Table 1: Format of Presidential Case Studies Examination in the methodology section

President
Term: Years
Background
Speech: <i>Excerpt</i>
Speech analysis
Data found
Cross-examination

## 10. Appendix B

Data source: Colombia Government website, differing from other IDP data gather

Table B1: Number of victims from vulnerable departments in rural Valle del Cauca, Sucre, Bolivar.

Kidnappings/deaths at the hands of:	Average number of victims:
Paramilitary Groups	4,240
Guerilla	1,588

Table B2: Data collected by the Colombian government during a part of Uribe's presidency.

Year	# of IDPs
2002	424,520
2004	162,892
2006	69,298

## 11. Appendix C

Data source: UNHCR Insights

Table C1: Number of Internal Displaced People in Colombia as reported by UNHCR Data, Displaying the number of IDPs in the years of 2009-2010.

Year	# of IDPs
2009	4,916,000
2010	5,196,000

Table C2: Numbers of IDPs during the Santos presidency, first term between 2010-2014. Numbers reported by the UNHCR.

Year	# of IDPs
2011	5,281,000
2012	5,455,000
2013	5,700,000
2014	6,044,000

Table C3: Years of Santos's second presidential term and the number of IDPs for those years.

Year	# of IDPs
2015	6,270,000
2016*	7,246,000
2017	6,509,000
2018	5,761,000

Table C4: shows the years 2019-2022 of Duque's presidency, without the first year of 2018, seen in the prior table.

Year	# of IDPs
2019	4,922,000
2020	5,253,000
2021 & 2022*	5,235,000

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