

21 KEY POINTS TO LEARN ABOUT THE TRUTH COMMISSION



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**Francisco de
Roux**

President

*Commission for the
Clarification
of Truth,
Coexistence, and
Non-Repetition.*



**21 key points
to learn about
the Truth
Commission**

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“Every Colombian man and woman must be part of the process of clarifying the truth about Colombia's internal armed conflict” This task entails great responsibility, on which we all need to focus our hearts and our decisions to understand what happened to us and say “no more!”. The pain eight million victims experienced cannot continue”.

1



Why is a Truth Commission necessary in Colombia?

IN COLOMBIA, WE ARE BUILDING A PATH to conclusively end the armed conflict and to bequeath future generations a nation in which they can coexist and in which human dignity is respected. In this journey towards the future, it is necessary to learn what happened during the years of war to collectively inquire about the brutality we have lived through, to find explanations for the complexity of the conflict, and to learn other ways of settling political differences without hurting or killing each other.

2

What is the Commission for the clarification of truth, coexistence, and non-repetition?

THE COMMISSION IS AN INSTITUTION OF THE COLOMBIAN STATE, of constitutional rank, extrajudicial and independent from the government. It must report back to the citizenry every six months. It works closely with institutions to guarantee victims and Colombian society's right to the truth.



3

What is the Commission's task?

TO LISTEN TO THE VICTIMS, witnesses and those responsible for the armed conflict in every sector, region and social condition in the country, in order to gain a broad and comprehensive narrative of the events and contexts that explain half a century of war. The final report will include historical, ethical and social conclusions and will be delivered to the country at the end of the three years of work, aiming to lay the foundations of non-repetition.

4

What is the final report?

IT IS AN ENCOMPASSING ACCOUNT that explains what happened during the conflict, why it happened, what consequences it cast on the communities, and what must be done for this experience not to repeat itself. This report will be available in different presentation formats, with communication and pedagogical tools to facilitate understanding by every public.

5

How long does the Truth Commission last?

AFTER SIX INITIAL MONTHS TO PREPARE ITS METHODOLOGY, the Commission will have three years of mandate starting on November 28, 2018. During this time, it will encourage every citizen to participate and reflect on what needs to be transformed to avoid a repetition of the conflict. At the end of the three years, it will have established an independent committee to monitor the recommendations made by the Commission in the final report.

6

What are the Truth Commission's objectives?

TO CONTRIBUTE TO CLARIFYING THE TRUTH of what happened in order to offer a broad explanation of the conflict's complexity; to encourage recognizing the gravity of what happened to us as a society, victims' dignity and individual and collective responsibilities; to foster coexistence in territories; to lay the foundations of non-repetition.



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What does clarifying the truth involve?

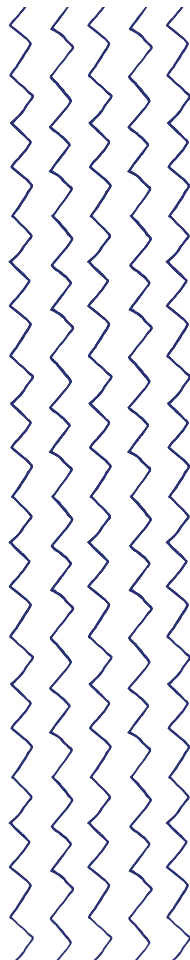
IT INVOLVES EXPLAINING the most serious patterns of violence that occurred within the framework of the war. The Commission will listen to as many victims as possible, to witnesses and to those responsible for the events. The testimonies and accounts given to the Commission will be contrasted with other sources: archives, documents, databases and all information that exists about these events, aiming to reach accurate and thorough explanations.

8

What does recognition consist of?

RECOGNITION IS A WAY OF RESTORING the human dignity of the victims of the armed conflict. To achieve this, *Meetings for the Truth* will be held. These will be acts of both public and private recognition that will serve to attain a collective understanding of what happened.

The Commission will also promote voluntary recognition of responsibilities by those who participate directly or indirectly in the conflict. The ultimate goal is to question the normalization of every type of violence and to promote peaceful conflict resolution.



9

How can we foster coexistence in the territories?

IN ORDER TO PROMOTE COEXISTENCE in the territories, it is imperative to build spaces between groups and people that have maintained deep differences, in order to find ways to settle disputes peacefully. The Commission will recognize existing efforts and contribute to strengthening them inasmuch as they help increasing collective trust, healthy public debate, pluralism, solidarity, social equity and well-being, among other values.

10

How will the foundations of non-repetition be built?

COLOMBIA IS UNDERGOING AN EXCEPTIONAL PERIOD of transition between a prolonged war and building a country at peace. It is necessary for all of society to find explanations about the violence it experienced during these years and to envision the changes needed to keep this from repeating. It is also necessary for the new generations to know their history and to reflect upon it.



11

What is the Truth Commission's mandate?

TO IDENTIFY AND UNDERSTAND the most serious acts of violence committed in the internal armed conflict, especially those that occurred repeatedly, which, because of their characteristics, can be grouped by patterns. For this reason, it is possible to establish the collective responsibilities of those who committed them.

To identify and understand the devastating impact of war on human, family, social and political levels to determine how the conflict affected the most vulnerable groups.

To identify and understand the history, context, causes and all the factors that facilitated the conflict's origin and persistence.

To identify and understand paramilitarism, drug trafficking and forced land dispossession as phenomena that contributed to the conflict's persistence.

To identify and understand the rise of exemplary processes of resistance and strengthening of the social fabric and institutional-ity despite the intense conflict.

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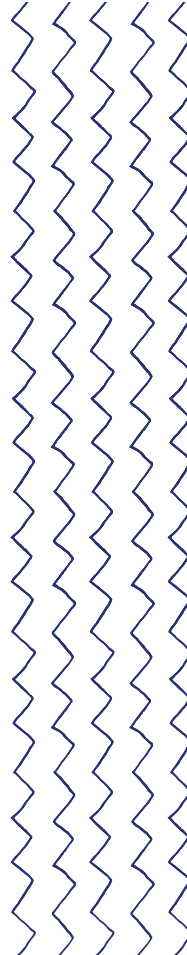
What are the differential focuses?

THE TERRITORIAL FOCUS POINTS to a fundamental guide in the Commission's way of acting; the commissioners will be working from within the territories, and not just from Bogotá. The gender focus will seek to identify the conflict's impact on the victimization of women and on sexually diverse populations. The ethnic focus will have a special chapter that allows these populations to narrate their experiences of the conflict from their own worldview. The Commission will also integrate other focuses, including psychosocial, generational, and cultural dimensions.

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Will the victims receive support to tell the truth?

FOR THOSE WHO HAVE LIVED THROUGH THE CONFLICT, remembering means reliving a painful experience. It is therefore necessary to have psychosocial support teams available in the settings where truth recognition is occurring, to help give the experience meaning and to advance in rebuilding lives and the social fabric. The Commission must ensure that this experience fosters social strengthening and avoids greater individual or collective harm.



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Will the truth open wounds wider?

MANY COUNTRIES' HISTORIES, including Colombia's, show that ignoring the past keeps wounds open and feeds disregard for life. This makes it necessary to assume the truth with the will to transform the conditions that made the conflict and its escalation possible. Facing what happened during the conflict will allow us to learn as a society.

15

How will the Commission work in the territories?

THE COMMISSION WILL SET UP MOBILE WORK GROUPS charged with reaching the locations where the victims live. It will have offices in more than 20 cities or municipalities, in 11 territories within the country, as well as Colombian exiles.

1. Caribbean and Insular
Commissioner Marta Ruiz
2. Antioquia and Coffee Region
Commissioner Alejandro Valencia
3. Magdalena Medio
Commissioner Lucía González
4. Northeast
Commissioner Saúl Franco
5. Central Andean
Commissioner Carlos Ospina
6. Pacific
Commissioner Ángela Salazar
7. South Andean
Commissioner Alejandra Miller
8. Bogotá
President of the Truth Commission
Francisco de Roux
9. Orinoquía and Amazonía
Commissioner Alfredo Molano
10. Ethnic territories
Commissioner Patricia Tobón
11. International
Commissioner Carlos Martín Beristain

The Commission has defined eleven territories from where it intends to have places for meeting, not only with victims, but with the various actors of the conflict.



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Will citizens be able to contribute to telling the truth?

PEOPLE, ORGANIZATIONS, COMPANIES AND INSTITUTIONS may contribute testimonies, documents, databases, files and information that help clarify the forms of violence and their impacts. They may also contribute to establishing responsibilities, recognizing victims, and developing coexistence initiatives.



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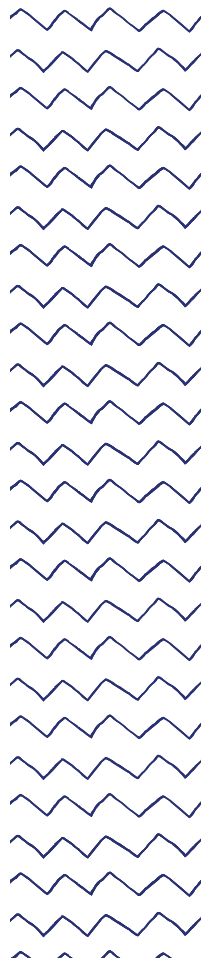
How will the Commission know that a person's testimony is true?

THE COMMISSION WILL LISTEN to victims affected by the conflict, to those who directly or indirectly participated in it, whether as former combatants or the people responsible, and to common civilians and citizens. However, it will compare the provided information to other testimonies and documents. It will not create a narrative with the contrasting versions or opinions of the different parties in the conflict, but rather establish verifiable facts and find truthful explanations.

18

How is the Truth Commission different from the Special Jurisdiction for Peace (JEP, for the Spanish original)?

THE MOST IMPORTANT DIFFERENCE is that the Truth Commission is an extrajudicial entity, which means it does not rule or impose penalties. However, the Commission will work in coordination with the JEP and the Search Unit for People Presumed Missing (UBPD, for the Spanish original) because it is part of the Integrated System of Truth, Justice, Reparation and Non-Repetition (SIVJNR, for the Spanish original).



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If a person is mentioned during some testimony given to the Truth Commission, can it be investigated by the JEP?

THE COMMISSION MAY NOT TRANSFER any statements it receives to any legal authority, including the Special Jurisdiction for Peace.

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Will the Truth Commission be able to withhold the identity of people giving their testimonies?

THE COMMISSION MAY RESERVE THE SOURCE of information and take actions to guarantee confidentiality. It must also assess the security conditions of those who participate in the exercises to search for and build the truth. The confidentiality of the victims and witnesses' version is key to their protection.



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Will the Commission have access to confidential files?

BY CONSTITUTIONAL MANDATE, THE COMMISSION has access to all the information it needs from official institutions, including confidential files, as long as it guarantees confidentiality. It must also have access to files on illegal armed groups.

The commissioners

The Commission is comprised of eleven individuals who act as a collegiate body. They have a full-time, exclusive task.

They were chosen by an independent government jury and the parties through a public bid under criteria of experience, commitment and knowledge of the Colombian armed conflict. These are the members:



Francisco José de Roux.

Ethics

Priest and former provincial Jesuit, philosopher and economist. Founder of the Program for the Development and Peace of Magdalena Medio, as well as the first peace lab in Colombia, and former director of the Cinep, among other activities. He is the Commission's president.



Alejandra Miller.

Feminism

Leader of Colombia's feminist movement. Economist and Master of Political Studies; researcher and university professor, former secretary of the Cauca government and member of the Women's Peaceful Route.

Alejandro Valencia Villa.

Rights

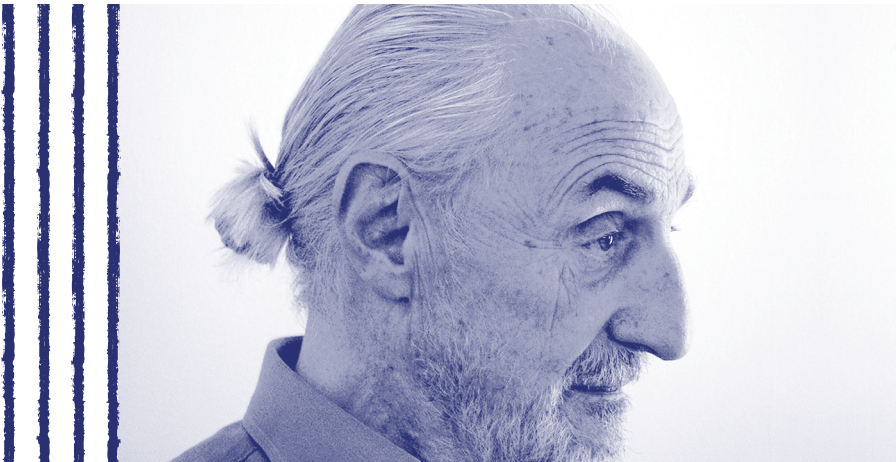
Attorney with nearly thirty years of experience in promoting and defending human rights, with vast experience in topics of historical truth. He has consulted for multiple truth commissions around the world.



Ángela Salazar.

Popular wisdom

Native of Chocó residing in the Urabá region of Antioquia. She has been the leader of the women's movement, coordinator and volunteer spokesperson of the Departmental Roundtable of Victims of the Armed Conflict in Antioquia, responsible for the work with victims in the Urabá region.



Alfredo Molano Bravo.

Colombia in-depth

Sociologist, Dr. Honoris Causa, columnist, chronicler and writer of nearly twenty books about the origins and impact of the Colombian armed conflict.



Marta Ruiz.

Words

Journalist with over fifteen years of experience covering the internal armed conflict, both in newspapers and on television. Her work has deepened the analysis on topics of rural development, the dynamics of war, defending freedom of expression and the right to information.

Carlos Martín Beristain.

Empathy

Spanish doctor and psychologist with extensive experience on psychosocial care of victims around the world, and consultant to various truth commissions in various countries. He coordinated Guatemala's Recovery of the Historical Memory Report (REMHI, for the Spanish original).



Lucía González.

Culture

Architect, former director of Medellín's Memory House Museum. She has extensive experience in developing projects related to culture and social transformation. She has also led public and private cultural and social entities.



Carlos Guillermo Ospina.

Reason

Retired Army Major, attorney and professional in military science, law and business administration, with a specialization in military security and intelligence administration. He has led the Colombian Association of Military Victims of the Armed Conflict since 2013.



Patricia Tobón Yagarí.

Territory


Native of the Emberá ethnic group and attorney specialized in constitutional law. She has documented human rights violations in indigenous territories in the country that have been affected by the armed conflict, as well as patterns of discrimination against ethnic groups.

Saúl Franco.

Thought

Doctor with a degree in public health with over forty years of experience as university professor researching violence and the armed conflict and the impact on the lives and health of people and communities.

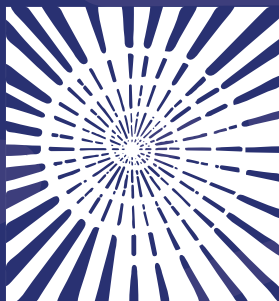




Truth gives us dignity
and commits us
to building a future together

“I always say we are all victims of the conflict in this country because the war made us distrustful of one another. We must recover that trust.”

Ángela Salazar,
Commissioner
Truth Commission



COMISIÓN DE LA
VERDAD

Commission for the Clarification of Truth,
Coexistence, and Non-Repetition.

October 2018