

## Spotlight on Colombia

In the light of the visit by President Santos to the UK we thought it useful to share some of our research and activities in relation to Colombia.

- [The Belfast Guidelines on Amnesty and Accountability](#) project, led by [Prof Louise Mallinder](#) and Prof Tom Hadden has authoritatively discussed the relevant international law standards on this topic and have been used in negotiations in Havana. Prof Mallinder also visited Bogota to give a plenary at the Second Forum for the Culture of Peace and Transitional Justice: Justice (a joint conference of the Fiscalía, Vivamos Humanos, Universidad de los Andes, Organisation of Iberoamerican States, Centre for Historical Memory). This programme of conferences was designed to gather the views of victims and civil society to feed into the peace negotiations in Havana. While she was in Bogota, Louise also met with representatives of the Office of the President, the Ministry of Justice transitional justice programme, the National Prosecution Service office and the Commission for Peace. In the conference and meetings she discussed Northern Ireland's experience of transitional justice. Prof Louise Mallinder contributed to Justice in Conflict '[Weighing Punishment and Peace: The Case of Colombia](#)'.
- [Prof Monica McWilliams](#)' published work often focuses on the role of women in peace processes. In September 2016, Prof McWilliams visited Bogota to speak at the 'Women for Peace' conference at Universidad de la Salle and was invited to the signing of the Peace Accords.
- [Prof Brandon Hamber](#) was involved in a 2013 International Peace Conference in Derry/Londonderry, where proposals which could help bring peace to Colombia were presented. [The Derry Proposals](#) for Colombian Peace are based on lessons learned in Northern Ireland through the Good Friday Agreement and were formally presented to Deputy Head of Mission of the Colombian Embassy, Juan Manuel Uribe by Ariel Sanchez Meertens, a native of Colombia and former Research Fellow at INCORE. In early September 2015 the Chair of Peace, Prof Hamber, undertook a visit to Colombia. At the time, the Colombian government and Revolutionary Armed Forces of Colombia (Farc) were in the midst of negotiations to end a conflict that has spanned some 50 years. Professor Hamber was invited to Colombia at the request of the City of Valledupar (Mayor Fredys Miguel Socarras Reales), one of the cities (some 1.5 hours north east of Bogota by plane) that was most affected by conflict. Under the leadership of Mayor Fredys Miguel Socarras Reales, a series of conferences, presentations, and workshops is being organized, which will focus on preparing the regional implementation of the peace. Professor Hamber addressed a range of community members (about 150-200) over a two-day process to discuss comparative peace lessons at a community level. He also met with the Mayor. After the community engagements he spent some days in

Bogota meeting some key players in the peace process and sharing lessons with them and different civil society members. The trip ended with a presentation to about 200-300 training lawyers at Libre University in Bogotá as part of conference on Reconciliation, Civil Law and Commissions. Again the focus was on comparative lessons from Northern Ireland.

- [Professor Bill Rolston](#) visited Colombia on a Leverhulme fellowship in September 2015 and attended a conference in the Centre for Historical Memory, Peace and Reconciliation on the day that mechanisms of transitional justice (including truth commission) came out of negotiations in Havana. Prof Rolston's article 'Picturing Peace: Murals and Memory in Colombia', Race and Class (with Sofi Ospina) is due to be published In January.
- Several colleagues have written on the Colombia process, notably [Prof Fionnuala Ní Aoláin](#): [Implications for Colombia's Peace Process from a Feminist Perspective](#) & [FARC Peace Talks: Northern Ireland Could Hold Answers, Analysts Say](#)
- [Prof Cath Collins](#) is a specialist on transitions in Latin America, has lived and worked in the region, and is a fluent Spanish speaker. In September 2013 Prof Collins attended the Latin American Political Science Association conference in Bogota, Colombia to present on head of state human rights prosecutions in Latin America. [Transitional Justice in Latin America: From Impunity towards Accountability](#), Collins, Skaar and Garcia Godos (2016) on Colombia includes a chapter co-authored by Camilo Sanchez (DeJusticia).
- [Dr Catherine O'Rourke](#)'s book [Gender Politics in Transitional Justice](#) has been reviewed as "... a rich resource that offers both an introduction to the feminist literature on transitional justice and a comparative study of transitional justice processes in Chile, Northern Ireland and Colombia". To inform the 2015 UN Global Study on 1325, Dr O'Rourke co-authored (with Christine Bell and Sissela Matzner) '[A Chronology of Colombian Peace Processes and Peace Agreements](#)'. In May 2015, Catherine travelled to Bogota to present her research on gender and transitional justice, in order to inform ongoing discussions about accountability options in the FARC peace negotiations, at the invitation of Universidad de los Andes and Universidad Nacional. This involved two separate presentations at each respective university and an informal 'conversation with' session with local transitional justice actors convened by 'Rodeemos el Diálogo'.
- We have two PhD candidates who are working on the Colombia process and are at an advanced stage of their research:
  - [Daire Magill](#) – PhD: 'Resilience and inclusiveness: examining the links'. On Friday 2nd September 2016, Daire presented 'Different violence, different justice? Taking Structural Violence Seriously in Post-Conflict and Transitional Justice Processes' at the Universidad del Rosario, Colombia.
  - [Isabelle Flisi](#) – PhD: 'Returning to the civilian life: gender norms and dynamics of child soldiers' transition'. The research analyzes reparations and reintegration programmes for former child soldiers with a gender approach. Isabella previously pursued the PhD worked in Colombia for six years with different international organizations. Isabella wrote one article on the reintegration of former

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combatants in Colombia that will be published in the journal Gender & Development in November 2016.

- [Prof Rory O'Connell](#), [Dr Khanyisela Moyo](#), and PhD candidates Amaya Alvarez & Daire McGill visited Colombia in 2015 as part of an Essex University organised British Council funded workshop for early career researchers, focusing on land redistribution and economic and social issues in transitional justice.
- Dr Khanyisela Moyo attended the Colombian Researcher Links workshop in 2015 where she presented, 'Can land tenure reform be situated within the field of transitional justice? If so, to what extent have contemporary transitional land tenure reforms in Colombia and Zimbabwe promoted women's access to land?'
- TJI scholars, including Prof Fionnuala Ní Aoláin and Prof Brandon Hamber have worked closely with the UN Special Rapporteur on Truth, Pablo De Greiff, himself a Colombian.
- In August 2015, we hosted Prof Farid Benavides from the Universidad de los Andes in Colombia at our Jordanstown campus. Farid is Associate Professor and Director of Criminal Law, Criminal Process and Criminology in the Law Faculty of the Universidad de los Andes, Bogota, Colombia. Farid has been working on a handbook on international criminal law as part of a project on new developments in international law. 'I chose Belfast and Ulster University for its prestigious Transitional Justice Institute and also because I am starting a project on political crimes in Colombia, Northern Ireland and Spain', Farid Benavides.
- In February 2015, we welcomed Rosa Emilia Salamanca and Andrei Gomez Suarez for their fascinating TJI & INCORE seminar on 'Peace, Justice & Memory in Colombia Today'.
- We have also welcomed participants from Colombia to different [TJI programmes](#) including: our annual international summer school on Transitional Justice, and our masters programmes on Human Rights and Transitional Justice, Gender, Conflict and Human Rights.