METHODOLOGY

FOR THE CLARIFICATION OF THE TRUTH

LEGADO

COMISIÓN DE LA
VERDAD

SYSTEMATIZATION OF THE INVESTIGATION METHODOLOGY FOR THE CLARIFICATION FROM THE TRUTH COMMISSION

To the victims, perpetrators and those who with their stories, reports, data and participation in the hearing and dialogues spaces carried out by the Truth Commission contributed with their voices to the communication of a comprehensive account and to clarify the truth of what happened during so many years of violence, because silence is not the answer, only preserving and exposing the truth, even if it hurts, provides us with the necessary steps to walk the path towards the non-repetition.

Special gratitude to the more than 500 researchers, documenters, analysts, and collaborators of the Commission involved in the implementation of the investigation route who worked day by day during the four years of the mandate to achieve the written texts of the Final Report by and for the victims, and especially to their families who, due to the effect of the pandemic, welcomed and opened spaces in their homes so that the work would not stop and who from that place also contributed and were part of the construction of this story that today calls for a Great Peace.

LEGADO
COMISIÓN DE LA
VERDAD

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LUIS FERNANDO MEDINA MEJÍA
DESAPARECIDO EN SARAVENA EL 13 DE OCTUBRE DE 1998

LEIDY YULIETH MOJICA PARRA
DESAPARECIDA EN SARAVENA, ARAUCA, 15 DE MAYO DE 1991

HERMANOS

PEDRO MARTINEZ LUNA
DESAPARECIDO EN SARAVENA
EL 2 DE DICIEMBRE DE 1998
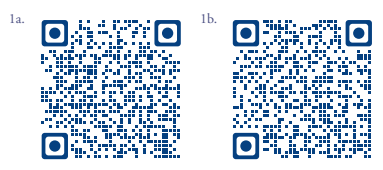
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Photography: Truth Commission

METHODOLOGY FOR THE CLARIFICATION OF THE TRUTH

INTRODUCTION
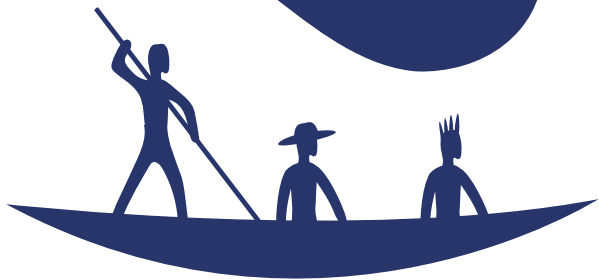
After more than five decades of armed conflict, the Colombian society needs to know the truth about what happened. This truth is a right of the victims to understand what, how and why it happened, and who was responsible. And it is also the right of citizens to have guarantees to live in a full democracy, where differences are dealt with peacefully.

Getting to the truth of such a complex conflict, which lasted so long and involved so many actors, may seem an unattainable task. But the Commission's objective was not to place an absolute and definitive account on the table, but rather to build a narrative that reveals the dynamics, patterns, perpetrators, and factors that led to the persistence of the armed conflict, so that it can form the basis for a broad dialogue in society.

As an essential value for democracy, the Commission considers the truth to be a public asset[1], a tool that does not anchor the country to the past but promotes reflections in the present to heal individual and collective wounds and make timely decisions on the road to peaceful coexistence.

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[1] La Comisión de la Verdad de Colombia (Parte 1)
La Comisión de la Verdad de Colombia (Parte 2)
(Colombia´s Truth Commission (Part 1 and 2)

This task was not easy either and required the Commission to listen to many actors, mainly the victims in different territories, but also the perpetrators and other sectors of society. In addition to the broad, plural, and active listening exercise, it was also necessary to receive an accumulation of memory produced over the years. Reports, documents, and archives compiled by individuals, organizations and agencies reached the hands of the Commission to contribute new perspectives to the account.

The listening and gathering of inputs were complemented by a thorough process of analysis and contrasting of the information. This was followed by reflection on how to portray this research, with different magnitudes, testimonies, contexts, and patterns, so that it could be understood, adopted, and placed at the center of the national dialogue. The impact of the Commission's story on the construction of a society that coordinates peaceful coexistence around the truth depends on the smooth flow of this route.

BACKGROUND

On September 26th, 2016, after more than four years of negotiations, the Colombian Government and the FARC-EP signed the *Agreement for the Termination of the Conflict and the Construction of a Stable and Lasting Peace.* The objective of the Agreement was to put a bilateral end to more than 50 years of armed conflict and begin the transition towards a country in peace.

It was necessary to begin by recognizing that, during this long-lasting armed conflict, the human rights of part of the population were violated: people disappeared, kidnapped, murdered, forcibly recruited, mutilated, displaced, among other events. If society wanted to look forward, the rights of the victims, the perpetrators and also those of the rest of the citizens who were impacted in different ways, had to be recognized.

Point 5 of the Peace Agreement on the victims of the conflict recognized the severity of what happened and the need to seek the truth. It states: "Clarifying what happened throughout the conflict, including its multiple causes, origins and effects, is a fundamental part of satisfying the rights of the victims, and of society as a whole»[2]. Achieving a broad understanding of what happened is one of the pillars for moving towards coexistence and non-repetition of the conflict.

[2.] National Government and FARC-EP. *Acuerdo final para la terminación del conflicto y la construcción de una paz estable y duradera.* (Final agreement for the termination of the conflict and the building of a stable and lasting peace) December 2016. p. 124.

INTRODUCTION

Within the framework of the transitional justice model, it was agreed to create the *Sistema Integral para la Paz* (Comprehensive System for Peace (SIP[3] from its name in Spanish)) to guarantee the right to truth and counteract impunity. This system has three agencies: the *Jurisdicción Especial para la Paz* (Special Jurisdiction for Peace (JEP[4] from its name in Spanish)), of a judicial nature, the *Unidad de Búsqueda de Personas dadas por Desaparecidas* (Unit for Search for Missing Persons, UBPD[5] from its name in Spanish) and the *Comisión para el Esclarecimiento de la Verdad, la Convivencia y la No Repetición[6]*; estas últimas, de carácter extrajudicial. El eje articulador de las tres entidades es la verdad: (Commission for the Clarification of Truth, Coexistence and Non-Repetition) the latter of an extrajudicial nature. The coordinating axis of the three agencies is the truth: the JEP seeks the judicial truth, the Commission seeks the historical truth, and the UBPD seeks the truth about the persons who went missing during the conflict.

This is how the Commission was born, created by Legislative Act 01/ 2017[7] and regulated by Decree Law 588/ 2017[8]. Initially, its mandate ended in 2021. At the end of that year, it was to deliver and share its Final Report. However, as a result of the Covid-19 pandemic and the obstacles that the confinement posed for the work in territories and the listening process, in August 2021 a group of academics and organizations of victims and human rights defenders asked the Constitutional Court to extend the mandate of the agency to satisfy the rights of the victims, as the Commission had only operated normally for 40% of the time of its mandate[9]. The Court, in Ruling C-337/ 2021, determined the extension of the agency's mandate for nine more months. The new deadline indicated that the Final Report was due on June 28th, 2022, and then two months would follow, until August 28th, for the release, dissemination, and acceptance of the report.

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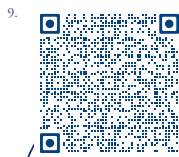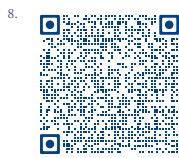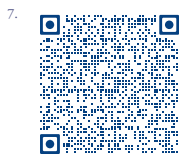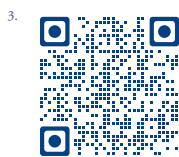
3. For further information: *Formación Sistema Integral para la Paz* (Generation of the Comprehensive System for Peace)
4. For further information: JEP (Special Jurisdiction for Peace)
5. For further information: UBPD (Unit for Search for Missing Persons)
6. For further information: Comisión de la Verdad (Truth Commission)
7. *Whereby a title of transitory provisions of the constitution is created for the termination of the armed conflict and the construction of a stable and lasting peace and other provisions are issued.* Congress of the Republic. Acto Legislativo N°. 01 del 4 de abril de 2017. p. 1. (Legislative Act No. 01 of April 4/2017, p.1)
8. *Whereby the Commission for the Clarification of Truth, Coexistence and Non-Repetition is organized. Office of the President of the Republic.* Decreto Ley 588 de 2017. p. 1. (Decree Law 588/2017. p. 1.)
9. *By means of an order dated July 14th, 2021, the proceedings Magistrate decided to admit the complaint filed under number D-14.338. (...) The plaintiffs (...) point out that the work of the CEV «depended largely on territorial work, [and on] direct contact with individuals, communities and groups». However, «out of a total of 1,096 days of the CEV's existence (2020 was a leap year), only 440 days passed normally, approximately 40%», and, although during the pandemic period the CEV «has not permanently suspended its functions, it has had to adjust its work and methodologies to a context adverse to its mandate». These circumstances represent «a sudden and unforeseeable change of factual conditions" that «make it impossible to comply with all the objectives, functions, and mandate of the CEV based on its guiding criteria for reasons of force majeure».* Constitutional Court. Sentencia C-337/21. (Ruling C-337/21) Point 80.
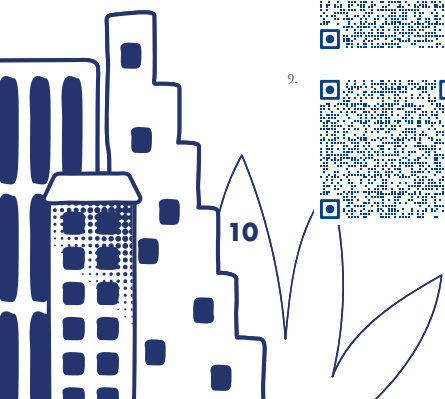
ETHICAL-POLITICAL PRINCIPLES

The Commission was given the task of guaranteeing the right to the truth for the victims and the rest of society. That truth is an essential public asset for democracy and for the good living of current and future generations. Based on this understanding, the Commission formulated a series of ethical-political principles that guided its way of working[10]:

1. Victims are the core, and a broad, inclusive, pluralistic, and balanced participation must be ensured, allowing for the fulfillment of their right to the truth.

2. Equity, equality, and non-discrimination must prevail over bigotry for reasons of ethnicity, race, gender, sexual orientation, origin, beliefs, diversity of thought, inter alia.

3. It is essential to recognize the human dignity of the victims, the perpetrators and society as a whole.

4. Impartiality and the absence of bias, preference or prejudice in the actions and decisions of the Commission.

5. Transparency must govern the actions of the Commission through clear rules for the exercise of its functions and accountability to the public.

6. Acknowledgement of the plurality and cultural diversity of Colombian society as a whole.

[10.] Comisión de la Verdad. *Plan de Acción 2019*. p. 4. (Truth Commission. Action Plan 2019. p. 4.).

Photography: Truth Commission

MANDATE

Article 11 of the decree that created the Commission determined that this agency was to clarify and promote the recognition of [11]:

[11]
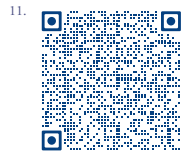
[11] For further information: Mandato y Funciones - Comisión de la Verdad Colombia (Mandate and Roles - Colombia Truth Commission)

1. The actions and facts that constitute serious violations of human rights (HHRR) and serious breaches of international humanitarian law (IHL), specifically those that reflect patterns or have a massive character and took place during the armed conflict, as well as the complexity of the contexts and territorial dynamics wherein they occurred.

2. The collective responsibilities of the State, including the Government and other public authorities; the responsibilities of the FARC-EP, the paramilitaries and any other group, organization, or institution, national or international, that has had any participation in the conflict, for the actions and facts of point 1 above.

Photography: Truth Commission

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3. The human and social impact of the conflict on society, including the impact on economic, social, cultural, and environmental rights, and the distinctive ways in which the conflict affected women, children, adolescents, youth and the elderly, and people on the basis of their religion, opinion or beliefs, people with disabilities, indigenous peoples, peasant communities, Afro-Colombian, Black, Palenquero and Raizal populations, the Roma people, the LGBTIQ+ population, displaced and exiled people, victims of the conflict abroad, human rights defenders, trade unionists, journalists, farmers, ranchers, traders, and businessmen, inter alia.

4. The impact of the conflict on the practice of politics and the operation of democracy as a whole, including the impact on political and social parties and movements, particularly those of the opposition.

5. The impact of the conflict on those who participated directly in the conflict as combatants and on their families and surroundings.

6. The historical context, origins, and multiple causes of the conflict, considering as input the previous reports that delved into the conflict in Colombia.

7. The factors and conditions that contributed to the persistence of the conflict, considering as input the reports underlined above.

8. The development of the conflict, especially the actions of the State, the guerrilla groups, the paramilitary groups, and the involvement of different sectors of society.

9. The phenomenon of paramilitarism, specifically its causes, origins, and ways of manifesting itself, its organization, and the different forms of collaboration with it, including its financing, as well as the impact of its actions on the conflict.

10. Forced displacement and land dispossession, and their consequences.

11. The relationship between the conflict and the growing of illicit crops, the production and commercialization of illicit drugs, and money laundering resulting from drug trafficking.

12. The processes of strengthening the social fabric in the communities and the experiences of individual or collective resilience.

13. The processes of positive transformation of organizations and institutions throughout the conflict.

Fotografía: Comisión de la Verdad

MISSION OBJECTIVES

The Agreement and the regulatory decree of the Commission defined the four mission objectives: clarification, recognition, coexistence and non-repetition[12].

The objective of clarification is to offer a broad and deep explanation of the armed conflict that complies with the thirteen points of the Commission's mandate, in terms of contexts, actors, impacts on different sectors, experiences of resistance, territorial dynamics, including other criteria. This explanation, communicated in a broad and in-depth manner and added to a pedagogical and participatory strategy, should promote understanding, ownership, and dialogue by society.

The objective of recognition has three levels. The first is the recognition of the victims as citizens whose rights were violated, but also as key political subjects for the transformation of the country. The second is the voluntary recognition of the individual and collective responsibilities of those who participated directly or indirectly in the conflict. And the third is the recognition by society of human rights violations and serious breaches of international humanitarian law (IHL) as something that must be rejected by all and cannot be repeated.

The objective of coexistence is not simply to share the same space, but to generate the conditions for conflicts to be resolved peacefully, and for respect and tolerance to be non-negotiable values. In order to find ways of dealing with them without violence, meetings between individuals and groups that have had conflicts were promoted.

The objective of non-repetition is built on the basis of the other three objectives. The country is going through a time of transition, wherein it is necessary for society to know and understand what happened during the armed conflict and based on this, to reject violence, find other ways of resolving political differences and move towards a new horizon.

This document will describe how the Commission developed the clarification of the truth, how the investigation was carried out. After setting out the horizon that this truth should have by mandate, questions arise such as: who did they listen to? what territories did they prioritize? how did they include the testimonies of people with some degree of responsibility in the events? How did they contrast so much information? how did they turn it into a narrative understandable to the majority of society?

METHODOLOGICAL ROUTE

The Truth Commission's research went through a path with multiple transformations. After a period of readiness (2018) focused on the detailed study of research on the armed conflict (state of the art), experiences of other commissions in the world and the development of methodologies, tools and approaches for plural listening, a research team was integrated marked by two strands: on the one hand, professionals from each region with long experience in research on the conflict and field work at the local level, and on the other hand, national teams with expertise in the investigation of conflict.

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12. For further information: EN LOS TERRITORIOS | Objetivos - Comisión de la Verdad Colombia (IN THE TERRITORIES | Objectives - Colombia Truth Commission)

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The Commission considered that its approach should be based on what was told by the victims and the communities in the territories and ensure that the explanations arising from the investigation were based on a socially shared truth. In other words, a truth built with the people and not upon them.

The methodology was redesigned in two stages[13]. The first emerged after the initial research proposal on five national theme lines that were nourished by the research work carried out in the territories (2019-I). These lines integrated the mandate and proposed hypotheses and research questions based on the state of the art on the conflict, namely, they followed a deductive model. However, for the Commission it was clear that it was necessary to start from plural listening. Therefore, the redesign involved the reorganization of the national teams into ten thematic research cores (2019-II) that gathered the most frequently mentioned conflict issues by the communities in participation exercises carried out in the regions (wind maps) and community diagnoses. Thus, the territorial and national teams integrated the analysis by thematic cores into their corresponding research.

The Commission's work was carried out through two main strategies: the clarification of the causes, patterns, contexts, and factors that have allowed the conflict to remain; and social dialogue as a national and territorial deployment to mobilize sectors and society in general around the search for truth. The first one integrated the process of research and knowledge management that was produced, used, and transferred during the years of the mandate; and the second one focused on the processes of recognition, broad spaces for listening, strengthening the social fabric for coexistence in the territories and dialogues for the non-repetition of the armed conflict.

The second redesign of the research (2021) was made in view of the writing of the Final Report. The thematic cores disappeared and, with the first table of contents of the Report, the regional and national teams were again organized into chapters. With the chapters, the complexities of the mandate were woven in writing, as the thirteen topics to be investigated were deeply related to each other.

In 2019, the research route was formally structured in four stages: listening and systematization of the information; analysis, verification and deepening of the information; development and writing of the Final Report; and the editorial process, dissemination, and legacy.

These stages were developed in parallel during the almost four years of the Commission's mandate. Until the last moment (June 2022), the Commission continued receiving testimonies, reports, and cases; systematizing, cross-checking, and analyzing information; and producing knowledge for the Final Report. This meant that parallel to the systematization of the information and its availability for use, the researchers analyzed the information and wrote the initial inputs or texts for the Final Report. Once the first drafts were ready, an editorial team was incorporated to review them in real time while the research was being completed. Charts 2, 3 and 4 show the stages and their activities.

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13. Filter search on Caja de Herramientas Comisión de la Verdad. (Truth Commission Toolbox)

Photography: Truth Commission

After these initial clarifications, this document that the reader has in their hands seeks to explain the route of investigation for the clarification of the truth that the Commission developed and that resulted in the Final Report. It is divided into an introduction and six chapters that represent the aforementioned route. The first chapter describes the historical framework and the readiness stage: a timeline, the first technical and political discussions, the construction of the first state of the art of the conflict, the deployment in the territories, the relationship with ethnic peoples, and the emergence of the Advisory Council.

The second chapter explains how the research approach was determined: from the thematic lines to the decision to use an inductive approach that involved listening and gathering inputs for the creation of analysis teams divided into thematic cores and then into the chapters of the Final Report, as mentioned above. Also, the cross-cutting nature of the differential approaches and the main strategies used by the Commission.

The third chapter focuses on the first stage of the research. It describes the strategies for plural listening, the knowledge management route, the Mission Information System (SIM, from its name in Spanish) and social dialogue. It also addresses the methodologies for differential listening with ethnic peoples, people in exile, women and LGBTIQ+ people, children, adolescents and young people, and a book that will be dedicated to testimonies.

The fourth chapter introduces the conceptual and methodological guidelines of the research: the narrative, the time frame and the cases. It also develops the second stage, which consisted of the verification, cross-checking, and deepening of the findings of the research, together with quantitative methods of analysis and the first findings, patterns, and explanatory contexts of the research.

The fifth chapter addresses the needs that arose, such as reorganizing the territorial approach of the research or creating a methodology for the production of the Final Report. It also discusses in depth how the Report was developed, divided into ten volumes and a call that cover the research carried out over more than three years. This is the third stage of the research.

The sixth chapter focuses on the final stage of the Commission and the last stage of the research: the release and dissemination of the Final Report. This section describes the Commission's strategy for maintaining its legacy after closure and for the Report to be adopted and disseminated by society. One of the key points explained therein is the decision to deliver a living report, which in addition to the printed version has a transmedia version with digital content and artistic, cultural, and pedagogical actions in different territories.

Clarification, recognition, coexistence and no repetition

RESEARCH FLOWCHART

ACTIVITIES

REDESIGN I METHODOLOGICAL

STRUCTURE BY NUCLEI AND TEAMS TERRITORIAL
July 2019 to February 2021

1. Definition of subtopics and questions.
2. Review of the state of the art.
3. Development of methodological datasheets and territorial research routes.
4. Review of data collection instruments and formulation of a series of questions by thematic core.
5. Construction of a tree of codes for inforamtion laneling.
6. Construction of a glossary of concepts.
7. Systematization of the needs of external documentary sources.
8. Definition of information access policy: levels of confidentiality and access.
9. Identification of needs to be covered by external projects.
10. Prioritization of needs and search for financing for external projects.

REDESIGN II METHODOLOGICAL

STRUCTURE BY CHAPTERS
March 2021

Plenary of commissioners:
General guidelines to the research director, discuss and approve the final report.

Director of Research (Appointment March 2021):
Lead the research; guidance on methodology, thematic emphasis and action path, monitor quality and lead the quantitative methodology.

Final Report Group GIF (Appointment April 2020):
Build together with the research director, the methodological guidelines, review the texts in a first stage, and adjust the route and schedule.

Teams by chapter:
• 11 chapters

Directors per chapter:
Lead the research of their chapters according to the schedule.

LISTENING AND SYSTEMATIZATION OF INFORMATION (2019 - 2022)

Own sources
Call or assistance to victims or other actors who want to contribute to the truth. Explanation and signing of consent.

Interviews:
• Individual interview to victims, family members and witnesses.
• Armen actors.
• In-depth interviews and life histories of civilians.
• Collective interviews.
• Community diagnoses.
• Collective subjects.
• Publicly requested.
• Children anD young people.
• Social dialogue scenarios.

Recording into the Mission information System - SIM
• Filling out of long and short data sheets.
• Entry in the information system.

Transcript if interview. Information labeling.

Delivery of coded information for analysis – NVIVO.

Review and study of information coded primary information for thematic or territorial cores.

External sources Delivered to the Commission (Reports and cases of actors external).
• Assistance in their construction, delivery and formal reception.
• Official delivery to the SIM for custody and processing.
• Systematization and analysis. Catalogue complilation and avaliability in the repository.

Managed by the Commission (Files, reports or databases)
• Management before agency or owner of the archive.
• Access and use requirements: agreement and compliance with rules.
• Reference gathering – context of source or organization of archives according to criteria of timelines and relevance
• Consultation of documents in situ, without copying.
• Selection of files to de copy.
  - Copying of electronic or analogous files.
  - Delivery to SIM for custody and processing.

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ANALYSIS CROSS-CHECKING DEEPENING
(2019 - 2022)

Accompaniment from commissioners

• Processing and analysis of primary and secondary information.

• Processing and analysis of structured and cartographic data.

• Profiling of patterns, findings and explanatory contexts.

Analysis of Illustrative cases.

• Validation and feedback of findings with internal and external peers.

• In-depth interviews for cross-checking.

• Cross-checking of information with external sources.

DEVELOPMENT AND WRITING OF FINAL REPORT
(2020 - 2022)

1. Drafting of documents, preliminary texts by chapter.

2. Staggered deliveries to the plenary of commissioners.

3. First review, reading and comments by the plenary of commissioners

4. Incorporation of adjustments to the final report (team by chapter).

5. Second reading, review and comments by the plenary of commissioners.

6. Fact-checking process.

7. Drafting of the final version of the report (teams by chapter).

8. Approval of the final report by the Plenary of commissioners.

9. Drafting of summary and key messages of the report.

10. Delivery of the Final version for the editorial process.

EDITORIAL PROCESS- DISSEMINATION AND LEGACY
(2021 - 2022)

• Proofeeading of the report.

• Checking of maps, charts and photographs of the report.

• Translation.

• Layout of the report in PDF.

• Printing of the report.

• Public presentation.

• Disclosure, distribution and dissemination of the report.

• Process for delivering the legacy

Photography: Truth Commission
METHODOLOGY FOR THE CLARIFICATION OF THE TRUTH

CHAPTER 1.

START
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F ollowing Decree 588 and since December 2017, the Commission began to prepare its operation. In November, the Selection Committee (a body created by the Peace Agreement selected eleven commissioners by public call for proposals[14], who were hired by the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) with resources from the United Nations Multi-Partner Trust Fund (MMPTF) to launch the Commission, set up the objectives and mandate, plan the listening process and start a mapping of external documentary sources[15].

[14.] From Havana, the creation of a selection committee was defined, comprised of a delegate from the Criminal Chamber of the Supreme Court of Justice, one from the Secretary General of the United Nations, one from the Permanent Commission of the State University System, one from the President of the European Court of Human Rights, and one from the International Center for Transitional Justice (ICTJ). Between the committee and contributions from society in general, the methodology was agreed upon, ensuring impartiality, legitimacy, and independence in the selection as well as transparency during the process, encouraging citizen oversight. It was a pluralistic process with the participation of broad sectors of society, especially victims' organizations. It sought gender equality and representation from different regions of the country. In addition to these criteria, it was possible to appoint international commissioners (no more than three). From six public calls for applications, a list of nearly 200 nominations was drawn up, resulting in 34 people being interviewed, from which five women, five men and the president of the Commission were chosen. Finally, ethnic presence was ensured with two seats for representatives of indigenous and black, Afro-Colombian, Raizal and Palenquero peoples.

[15.] _Los y las comisionadas - YouTube_ (The Commissioners) Comisión de la Verdad Colombia #HayFuturoSiHayVerdad (Colombia Truth Commission, there´s future if there´s truth)

During the first months of 2018, the research methodology was built: *Listening, Recognizing and Understanding to Transform*[16], from this mapping exercise. A first research team began in parallel the review of the Report of the Historical Commission on the Conflict and its Victims[17] to understand the origins of the conflict, the issues documented and those necessary to investigate, taking care to ensure that they are related to the points of the mandate.

A small team recruited by UNDP, together with the Secretary General, planned the creation of the agency, ensured the tenure of the commissioners, and organized the budget for the operation of the Commission.

During the subsequent readiness period, which lasted from May to November 2018, teams were put together to meet each mission objective: the clarification of the truth, acknowledgment of what happened and of responsibilities, coexistence in the territories and recommendations for non-repetition.

READINESS PERIOD

While the plenary of commissioners reflected on the nature of the Commission, one of the tasks of the emerging research team was, as mentioned above, to produce a state of the art of the armed conflict at the national and regional levels. This means that during the readiness period (2018) the most relevant sources that in previous years had addressed the causes and explanations of the conflict were studied and analyzed. Thus, the decisions taken for the start of the Commission, its internal organization and its deployment were extensively informed.

A team of seven people dedicated themselves to this task. They mapped sources of information and profiled human rights archives; analyzed databases, reports, and sentences on the armed conflict; made timelines on the milestones of the war; and studied 47 processes of coexistence and resistance. As a result, they were able to deepen their understanding of the national and territorial dynamics of the conflict, identify the main sources for research and determine the public and private institutions wherewith the Commission would sign agreements for access to information.

For the source mapping exercise carried out by the Commission, human rights and historical memory archives produced by individuals, organizations, and national and international public and private agencies were consulted. This mapping allowed the Commission to classify the facts and contexts related to serious human rights violations and breaches of IHL perpetrated in the context of the armed conflict, and to build the conceptual basis for the design of listening methods.

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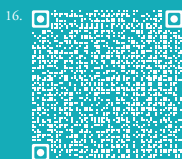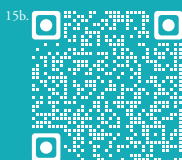
16. *Comisión de la Verdad. Lineamientos Metodológicos: escuchar, reconocer y comprender para transformar. Diciembre 2018.* (Truth Commission. Methodological Guidelines: listening, recognizing, and understanding to transform. December 2018.)

17. *Comisión Histórica del Conflicto Armado. Contribución al entendimiento del conflicto armado en Colombia. Febrero 2015.* (Historical Commission of the Armed Conflict. Contribution to the understanding of the armed conflict in Colombia. February 2015).

The methodology used in these mapping exercises was based on the development of data collection sheets[18]. Then, they interviewed different sources and consulted their archives systematizing the information collected. Finally, in an estimation matrix, they classified the sources according to their content, the status of the archive, the purpose of the source, its relation to the mandate and its contribution to the research.

For the database analysis, 101 sources were reviewed. For some of these it was necessary to carry out interviews since the information required was handled internally by the organizations or agencies. They began the analysis with 42 interviewed sources and 59 non-interviewed sources. All these sources provided key information on facts, victims, perpetrators, and contexts.

In the process of analyzing this large number of sources, there were challenges for the Commission. For example, there were conceptual differences between them, depending on the nature or mandate of the organizations and agencies that created them. In addition, there were no databases on economic, social, and cultural rights, nor specialized databases on gender-based violence against LGBTIQ+ people in the context of the conflict, nor on torture and arbitrary detentions. There were also difficulties in accessing databases of law enforcement, even when the Commission had the approval to do so.

For the first analysis of reports and verdicts, which included those produced in the framework of the Justice and Peace Law and those of the Supreme Court, the Commission had to delve into the gray areas left in the free versions. Not all the content provided by ex-combatants in these versions had been investigated, so there were gaps to be filled with victim testimonies, documentary material, databases and information produced by the ordinary justice system.

Sentences of the Supreme Court of Justice and the Council of State were studied, wherein contextual analysis appeared, and accountable parties were identified. These verdicts were important because they provided detailed information on dates, facts, and actors. From specific cases, inputs emerged to delve deeper into issues such as forced disappearance, torture, massacres, and some practices committed at the regional level by State agents.

Regarding the reports of the National Center of Historical Memory (CNMH, from its name in Spanish), the Commission found important contributions, such as the reconstruction of contexts, the clarification of facts, the incorporation of victims' testimonies and, overall, the preservation of memories.

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18. This collection was developed under the following criteria: 1. The source is key to the constitution, organization, preservation, and custody of archives. 2. Its mission included the registration, collection or preservation of human rights archives or archives that may be of interest. 3. Has carried out or is carrying out a mapping of human rights archives or archives of interest. 4. Has projects to support institutions, organizations, communities or individuals in the classification, preservation, and dissemination of their archives. 5. Has researched or has research projects on the subject of archives. 6. Has experience in Right to Information, Transparency Law and related legislation that may have a connection to access the archives. 7. Has technical and computer capacity for the analysis of large amounts of archives, or archives specialized analysis. 8. Has developed ways of visualizing and communicating archives, including working with media archives (radio, tv, etc.)

These initial findings, together with the recognition of some gaps in them, as well as territorial mappings or assessment datasheets, were the basis for the Commission to begin to deploy itself in the different territories of the country, as will be seen below.

Then, 132 books on the armed conflict were studied, including temporary analyses and invisible issues within each period, as well as information related to the actors accountable and actors involved, cultural, political, economic, and social factors, and dynamics that made it possible for the violence to remain in the territories. Based on the bibliographic review, timelines were developed on the milestones of the conflict, and 1958 was defined as the starting year for the research analysis.

47 coexistence processes were also identified in the territories: grassroots organizations, artistic and cultural practices, citizen participation processes, inter alia. This mapping served to start networking with allies by having a first profile of experiences to approach as a Commission and promote the exchange of methodologies, identify regional problems, and assess the obstacles to coexistence.

Although the impacts of the conflict had been analyzed previously, these state-of-the-art studies did so in depth. Reports and books produced by institutions, social organizations and universities were analyzed, and interviews were carried out with social and victims' organizations in Bogota, Medellin, and Arauca. We also analyzed the damage and psychosocial damage diagnoses of the Victims Unit (UARIV, from its name in Spanish) and psychosocial assessments of cases of human rights violations provided by civil society organizations[19]. Thus, a global understanding of the individual and collective impacts was achieved: emotional, behavioral, thinking, health, cultural, relational, environmental, political, democratic impacts; and of the coping and resistance processes.

The first state-of-the-art studies analyzed during this period included some national experiences, such as the process of the *"Women's Truth" report by the Ruta Pacífica de Mujeres (Peaceful Route of Women)*[20]. The importance for women to be heard and to give their testimony was emphasized. This process provided the Commission with nearly 700 testimonies. Despite the emotional

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[19.] Criteria used included: context analysis and impacts on the population and the territory, as well as on specific issues such as economy, politics, or culture, coping and resistance resources in specific communities and territories, experiences that have contributed to the reconstruction of the social fabric, and transformation facts in organizations and institutions caused by the armed conflict.

[20.] Trenzando la verdad con las mujeres: aportes de la Ruta Pacífica de las Mujeres a la Comisión (Braiding the Truth with Women: Contributions of the Peaceful Route of Women to the Commission).

Photography: Truth Commission
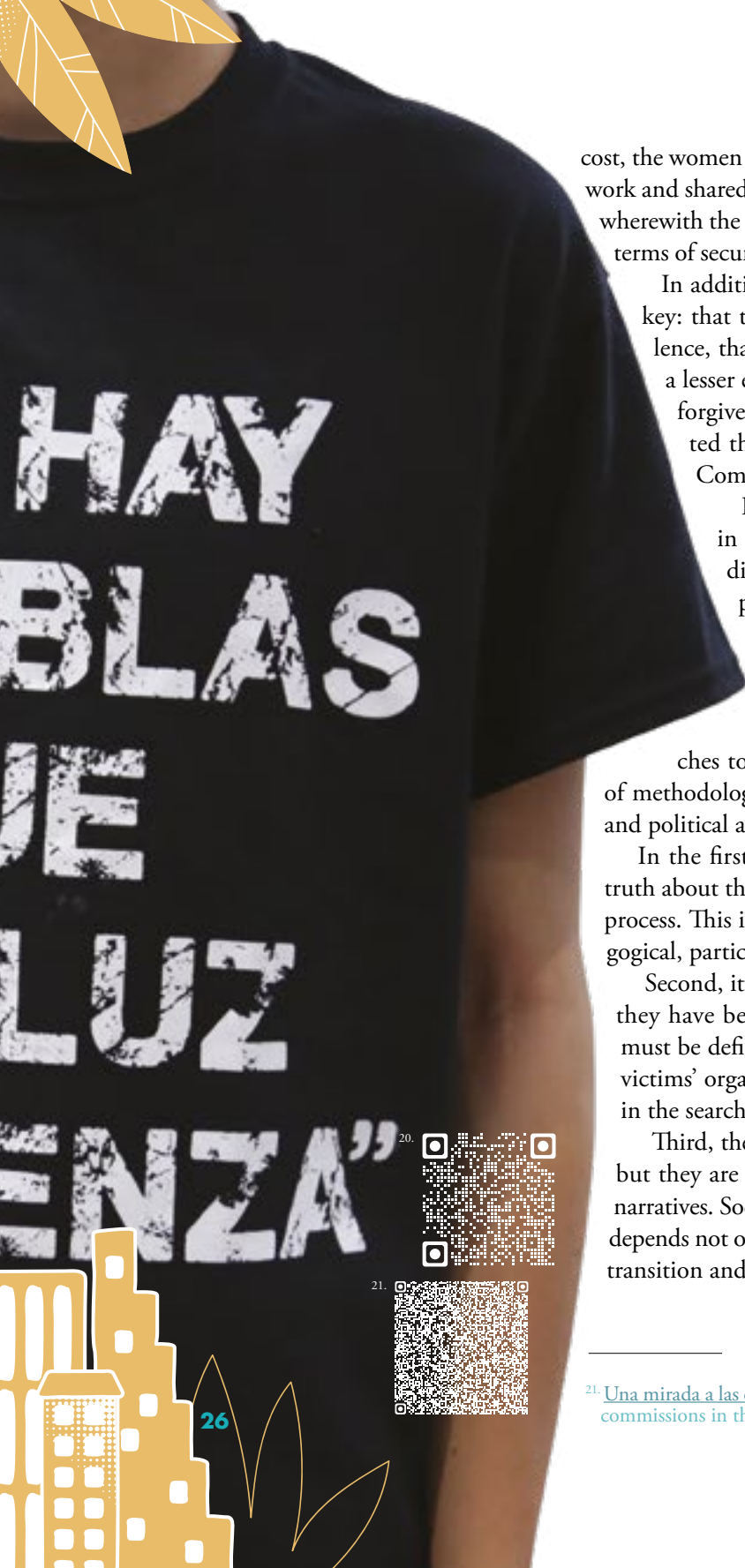
cost, the women appreciated the fact that their experiences were included in this work and shared with them. From the study of this research process, the system wherewith the databases were managed was analyzed, which was a reference in terms of security and information processing for what later became the SIM.

In addition, their reflections on what is needed for reconciliation were key: that there must be structural conditions for the prevention of violence, that there must be a memory of what happened to them and, to a lesser extent, that there must be justice, punishment, or a request for forgiveness from the perpetrators. The methodology that implemented this experience provided key elements for listening within the Commission in Colombia.

Reflection on the work and results of other truth commissions in the world was also important in the early state-of-the-art studies[21]. In recent decades, other countries faced the task of closing periods of violence, from dictatorships to armed conflicts, and seeking the truth about what happened. These international experiences were essential to think about some of the processes that the Commission addressed during its mandate and to increase its impact on society. From issues of differential approaches to archiving and information management, through the design of methodological tools for listening, teaching and dissemination strategies, and political advocacy.

In the first place, it was inferred that it is not enough to establish the truth about the past, but that this is the first step in a medium and long-term process. This implied thinking about the Commission's actions from a pedagogical, participatory, and communicative point of view.

Second, it is necessary for the victims and their organizations to feel that they have been heard, and for this to happen, participation mechanisms must be defined. The cases of Peru, Guatemala and Chile have shown how victims' organizations have been strengthened thanks to their participation in the search for clarification.

Third, the commissions serve to promote public debates about the past, but they are not exempt from the interests of different groups to establish narratives. Society's assimilation of the truths put forward by the commissions depends not only on their reports but also on the characteristics of the political transition and the role of each commission in that transition.

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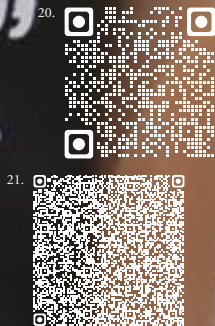
[21] Una mirada a las comisiones de la verdad en el mundo y a la de Colombia. (A look at the truth commissions in the world and in Colombia)

Fourth, that the role of the commissions in holding the perpetrators of violent acts accountable has been limited, especially in the case of those who gave orders or made decisions during the conflict. These recognitions have occurred over time, have depended more on social pressure and judicial factors than on individual initiatives, and have generally been scarce or staged.

Fifth, that the commissions have recommended comprehensive reparations for victims and institutional reforms that provide guarantees for the future, but the follow-up to their implementation depends on subsequent political agendas, the number of people to be repaired and social pressure.

Sixth, the recommendations of some commissions mentioned demilitarization or related reforms, but in reality, the changes were more formal than substantive. In some cases, such as Argentina, more substantial changes were implemented many years later and were followed by symbolic measures, such as requests for forgiveness and actions of historical memory.

Finally, it is decisive who politically leads the transition and the ownership of the report. There were cases, such as Peru and Guatemala, wherein there was a campaign against it, or the government openly refused to accept it. There are struggles over memory and the balance of power oscillates according to several factors. In countries that have taken on recognition and reparation agendas, there is greater openness to the implementation and recognition of the Commission's proposals and recommendations. In this regard, the role of victims' organizations in the political arena and the position of the media have also played a key role.

There were also some lessons learned on specific issues addressed by other commissions. From the Guatemalan experience, for example, lessons were learned regarding the reception, organization and availability of information collected from victims and other sources. This led to reflections that contributed to the creation of SIM, a key system for the Commission, as it was the first of its kind created in the digital era with an advanced technological development for the immediacy of data analysis; this posed the challenge of managing huge amounts of data.

Another lesson learned from what happened in Guatemala was the importance of sharing the documents developed during the research, instead of waiting until the launching of the Final Report. This served two main purposes. The first is that it prepared society for the reception and ownership of the Report. The second is that it allowed external stakeholders to read and discuss the findings and identify issues to be developed or complemented.

In the cases of Peru and Ecuador, the discussion on the judicial or extrajudicial nature of these agencies was analyzed. In both countries it was possible to prosecute individuals for their statements to the Commission. In Guatemala, on the other hand, it was not the commission's task to establish liability. In Colombia, in the framework of the Comprehensive System for Peace, justice operates in a parallel and complementary manner through the JEP, and the information collected by the Commission cannot be used as evidentiary material in trials, but the JEP provided the Commission with the information necessary for clarification. With

the UBPD, the possibility of bilateral collaboration aimed at fulfilling the mission of both agencies was open, as long as it was extrajudicial.

Lessons were learned from the case of Argentina regarding the transfer of archives, especially in terms of how to search for and organize them. This led to reflections on how to take care of the archives, how to maintain the confidentiality of those that were legally classified, or how to guarantee the custody and security of the information during the research process. In Colombia, the Commission had the approval, ratified by the Constitutional Court, to access State archives that were necessary for the clarification. Although many of these are public information, and those that were legally reserved could be accessed due to the powers granted to the Commission, in some cases the Commission ran into obstacles such as the confidentiality of the information of national security, responses indicating the non-existence of the documentation, inter alia.

From the commissions in South Africa, Peru and Paraguay, the mandate was understood as something that transcends the report with public participation strategies aimed at reflecting on the truth and generating practices of recognition, dissemination, and ownership of the central issues.

In addition to these lessons learned from other commissions around the world, there was already a road traveled around questions such as who to listen to, how to organize the stories and what to do to disseminate the reports so that society could take ownership of them, or how to manage the knowledge that emerged from the research. The Commission took lessons learned from these previous processes and integrated them with the new ones that came from outside for the development of its own mandate.

Photography: Truth Commission

TIMELINE OF RESEARCH ROUTE

Legend:
- DISSEMINATION AND LEGACY
- DEVELOMENT OF THE FINAL REPORT
- ANALISYS AND CROSS CHECKING
- LISTENING AND SISTEMATIZATION
- REDESIGN
- GENERAL MILESTONES

CHAPTER 1. START OF THE RESEARCH

2017 BACKGROUND

APR · Decree 588

NOV · Appointment of commissioners Decree Ley 588/17

DEC · Technical- Political Discussions
· Conversations with organizations of the society civil, organizations of victims, among other.

2018 READINESS PERIOD

JAN · Commissioners study sources to build methodology
· Secretary General and UNPD carry out administrative creation

MAR · Beginning of prior consultation with ethnic peoples
· Ethnic methodology and protocols definition

MAY · Legal personality of the Truth Commission
· Positioning of commissioners before the president
· Beginning of the period of readiness

· Beginning of agreements and protocols of understanding with State agencies.
· Recording system for information requests to the commission.

JUN · State-of-the-art of the conflict and truth commissions
· Regionalization of the conflict.

JUL · Gender group.

AUG · Exploratory territorial deployment.
· Construction of listening instruments and methodologies.

NOV · Access to information group and policy.

DEC · Opening of houses of Truth.
· Methodological guidelines.
· Start of territorial deployment.

JAN · Wind maps.

FEB · Consolidation of the Mission information system.

MAR · Proposal of 5 thematic lines for research.

ABR · Beginning of participatory diagnostics.
· Timeline distribution of the conflict document.
· First meeting of researchers.

MAY · Narrative document.
· Document of explanatory contexts.

JUN · 26 territorial routes of research

JUL · Creation of Directorates (Ethnic Peoples, Knowledge, Territory).
· Organization of the research by thematic cores
· Emergence of the knowledge route: four stages of research.

SEP · Document on patterns.

OCT · First label tree.

DEC · Delivery of research reports.

2019 TERRITORIAL DEPLOYMENT - LISTENING AND CROSS-CHECKING

2020 LISTENING, CROSS-CHECKING AND RESEARCH

FEB · Second meeting of researchers.
· Creation of the thesaurus.
· General assessment of the listening process.

MAR · Beginning of transcription and labeling process.
· Covid 19 pandemic.

ABR · Adaptation guides and instruments for virtual spaces (Covid-19 isolation).

MAY · Second delivery of research reports.
· Inception of the Final Report Group GIF.

JUN · Beginning of the JEP – HRGAD Statistical Estimates project.

SEP · Beginning of anonymity rendering process.

NOV · Deepening of listening assessments.

JAN · Beginning of Transmedia production.

FEB · First table of contents of the final report.
· Organization of information by chapters.
· First findings of the research.

MAR · Staggered methodology for the approval of the chapters.

APR · Beginning of diagnosis of cases and reports.

JUN · First presentation of chapters.

JUL · Victims' demand to the Constitutional Court to extend the mandate of the Commission.
· Creation of the editorial team.

OCT · The Constitutional Court issues the sentence C-337 for the extension of the Mandate.

NOV · Beginning of the legacy strategy.

2021 DEVELOPMENT OF THE FINAL REPORT

2022 LEGADY

JAN · Beginning of the readiness of society for the arrival of the final report
· Legacy strategy begins with SIP
· Technical committee of the legacy

MAY · Beginning of Friday discussions with partners.

JUN · Delivery of the statement, findings and recommendations of the final report and the Digital Transmedia.

JUL · Artistic and pedagogical activations begin.
· Start of the dissemination and distribution of the final report.
· Beginning of national and international tours.
· Staggered delivery of chapters of final report.

The research began with this background. The process was not linear and was permanently crossed by transformations derived from the needs that emerged during the years of the mandate. The illustrated timeline below shows these transformations and how the stages of the research constantly overlapped.

It is divided by milestones, years, and periods (chart 5): from the background in 2017 and the 2018 readiness period to the arrival of the legacy in 2022, passing through the year of territorial deployment and the beginning of hearings in 2019, and the deepening of what was emerging from the processes of clarification and social dialogue in 2020, and the development and drafting of the final report in 2021. These processes, as mentioned above, occurred in parallel until the last year of the mandate of the Truth Commission in Colombia.

The timeline is organized by years. It highlights the milestones and events that marked the research route. On the left side are the phases of the route with distinctive colors that are reflected, in turn, in the milestones and events mentioned. The distribution of the colors along the line indicates how the phases were not linear all the time but developed in parallel in the construction of the Final Report.

TIMELINE
OF RESEARCH ROUTE

TERRITORIAL DEPLOYMENT

One of the most important premises of the Agreement is that peace must be territorial. With this in mind, the Commission defined itself as a national agency with a territorial approach. The Commission thus began a quest to understand how the armed conflict affected certain regions due to their geographic, political, economic, or cultural characteristics.

The approach began to take shape thanks to local work teams that understood the territories as places where decisions were made, where knowledge was built and where the processes that would nurture the search for clarification were ingrained.

There were meetings in the territories with people, organizations, and communities, many of them historically marginalized, some eager to tell their truths, others tired of repeatedly giving their testimonies, and many of them worried about a context wherein security guarantees have never been consistent. Also, some who for years had led processes of memory, accusation and demand before different State agencies and international organizations, and others who until now, after the demobilization of the FARC-EP, had not dared to name acts of violence or to interrupt their silence. The Commission also expanded its hearings, for example, with the leaders of the new political movement that emerged from the FARC-EP and with the new victims of emerging groups and of the escalation of violence in recent years, which was one of the main challenges of the Commission's work.

In Colombia, the transition to a stable and lasting peace has been a fragmented process lacking guarantees, largely due to the territorial control still exerted by the ELN, FARC-EP dissidents and other post-demobilization armed groups. The Commission began in 2018 with a scenario where this peace was a near promise. Over time, after the change in the political apparatus, a detracting social climate, in some cases contrary to its mission, and the worsening of violence, the Commission faced perhaps its most permanent challenge: to fulfill its mandate in a scenario that was changing the task inherited from the Peace Agreement and that constantly confronted the Commission with new needs, to rethink its tasks and even to extend the time it was assigned.

This is why, prior to territorial deployment, the Commission carried out an exploratory pilot project[22]. Each member of the Plenary was responsible for coordinating the intervention in a given territory. This deployment focused especially on pedagogy about its mission and mandate, and above all on the search for a social fabric to be strengthened and to where people could be anchored. Also, national allies and allies outside Colombia who wanted to support and build this truth together.

It began with a first geographic distribution, led by Commissioner Alfredo Molano, based on the analysis of data and maps of the conflict obtained from different sources, such as the CNMH, the Peace and Reconciliation Foundation, and the National Planning Department (DNP, from its name in Spanish), as well as the analysis of the factors and dynamics of the conflict in the territories. This map considered ethnic and cultural criteria, but above all focused on the regional

22. Comisión de la Verdad inicia el despliegue exploratorio en macrorregiones (Truth Commission begins exploratory deployment in macro-regions)

dynamics of the conflict. Between August and November 2018, the first exploratory deployment occurred in ten macro-regions: nine within Colombia and one with an exiled population.

The work with the exiled population was especially important[23]. Based on data from the United Nations Refugee Agency (UNHCR), which revealed the places with the largest number of Colombian refugees or asylum seekers, 24 zones were defined for this international deployment: Costa Rica and Panama; Venezuela, Ecuador, Peru, Brazil, Argentina, Uruguay, and Chile; France, Spain, Valencia, Andalusia, Catalonia, the Basque Country, Italy, Belgium, Switzerland, Sweden, and Germany; the United Kingdom and Ireland; the United States and Canada[24].

In these areas, together with the International Center for Transitional Justice (ICTJ), workshops were held to understand the peculiarities of exile, cross-border displacement, and refuge, as well as to learn about the demands of the victims and jointly define work routes.

Photography: Truth Commission

This deployment abroad was based on a partnership model with exiled victims' organizations, international cooperation agencies and the Colombian diaspora. They were organized by nodes[25] that bring together volunteers from around the world. The Commission did not have a core team recruited in these nodes[26], but these volunteers were trained in listening methodologies and tools and, with the support of strategic allies in each country, they encouraged the participation of victims and other stakeholders.

[23.] El exilio en Colombia: lo que el país ha perdido "El exilio es un buen indicador de la situación del país y de las continuidades del conflicto" (Exile in Colombia: what the country has lost "Exile is a good indicator of the situation of the country and the continuity of the conflict"). Los aliados internacionales en el camino de la verdad (International allies on the path to truth).

[24.] Internacional - Comisión de la Verdad Colombia (International - Colombia Truth Commission)

[25.] Encuentro de nodos de apoyo al trabajo de la Comisión de la Verdad de Colombia en Europa (Meeting of support nodes for the work of the Colombian Truth Commission in Europe).

[26.] Comisión de la Verdad de Colombia - Nodos de apoyo en el exterior - Home | Facebook (Colombian Truth Commission - Support nodes abroad - Home | Facebook.
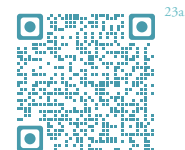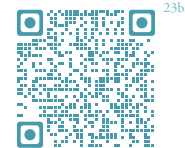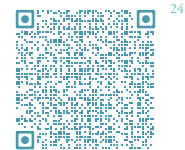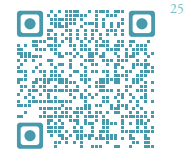
Chart 1. Territorial deployment in exile *

ANDEAN REGION
NORTH AMERICA
CENTRAL AMERICA
SOUTH AMERICA
EUROPE
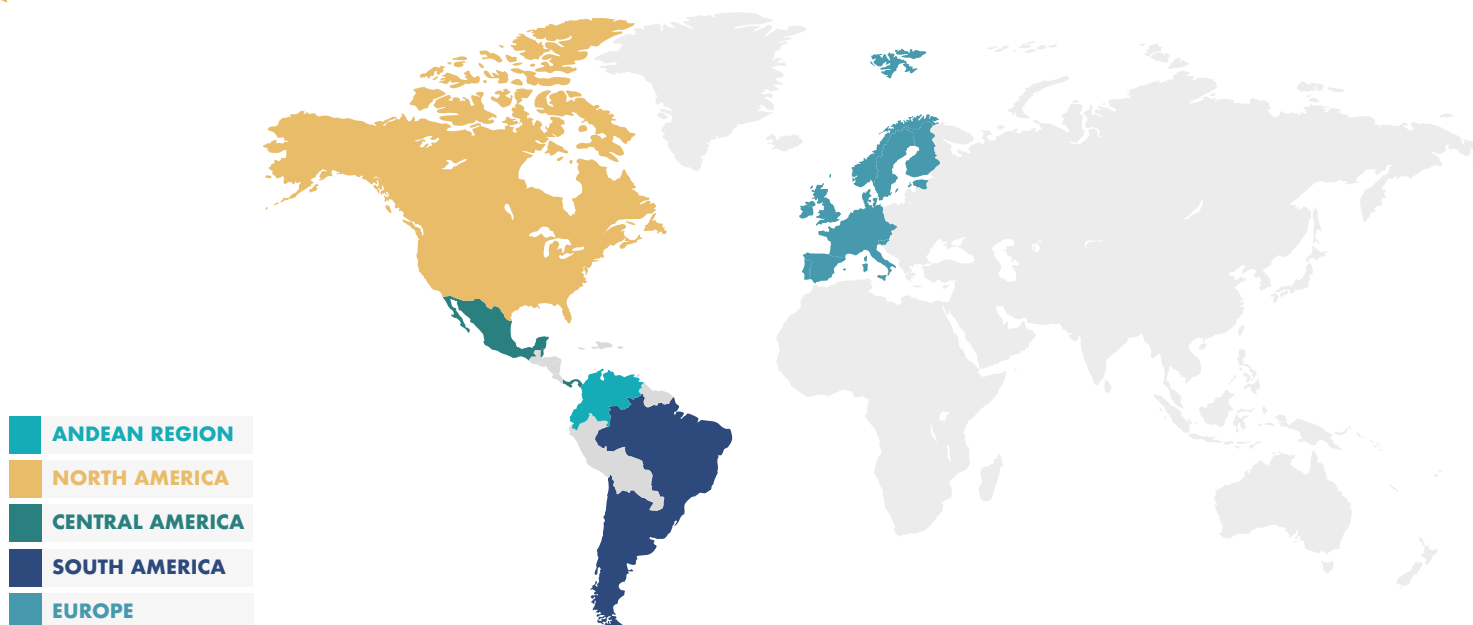
*This map reflects only the continents where the territorial deployment in exile took place, namely, America and Europe.

In the ten macro-regions[27], the Commission approached the communities and identified key actors for the relationship. With their help, it began to understand what the main effects of the armed conflict had been, and how processes of coping, resistance and coexistence had been developed and maintained. On the other hand, it built networks of allies with social organizations, victims and institutions that allowed it to work more security and trust and fluidity in the territories; and its presence in the regions promoted dialogue to contrast existing ideas on the armed conflict.

[27.] 1. Caribbean and islands, covering Atlántico, Bolívar, Cesar, Córdoba, La Guajira, Magdalena, Sucre, and San Andrés. 2. Antioquia and Coffee-growing Axis, which includes Antioquia, Risaralda, Caldas, Quindío, and northern Valle del Cauca. 3. Pacific, for Chocó, Valle, Cauca, and Nariño. 4. South Andean, which includes Valle del Cauca, Cauca, Nariño, Tolima, and Huila. 5. Orinoco region, covering Meta, Guaviare, Vaupes, Vichada, and Guainía. 6. Amazon region, covering Amazonas, Putumayo, and Caquetá. 7. Northeast, which includes Arauca, Casanare, and Norte de Santander. 8. Magdalena Medio, for the department of Santander. 9. Central, which includes Bogotá D.C., Cundinamarca, and Boyacá. 10. International, which covers the population living abroad.

METHODOLOGY FOR THE CLARIFICATION OF THE TRUTH

During this period of preparation, prior consultation with the ethnic peoples was also carried out[28]. This is a fundamental right of these populations to be able to participate in decisions about projects in their territories, and thus protect their social, cultural, economic, and territorial integrity. This right, encouraged by the explicit request of the ethnic peoples that this ought to be done and by the precedent of relations since the signing of the Agreement, led to consultation being the most important agreement process.

This was the great territorial deployment with the ethnic peoples. It involved the three SIP agencies, the Ombudsman's Office, the Attorney General's Office, some international organizations and the three major spaces for consultation established between the State and the ethnic peoples: the Permanent Board of Consultation with Indigenous Peoples (MPC, from its name in Spanish)[29], the National Forum for Prior Consultation of the Black, Raizal, Afro-Colombian and Palenquero Communities (ENCP, from its name in Spanish)[30] and the National Commission for Dialogue with the Roma or Gypsy People (CNDPR, from its name in Spanish).

In order to address prior consultation, the Commission and its already formed ethnic group[31] proposed guidelines that they called *Ethnic Methodology against Racism, Racial Discrimination and Related Acts Bigotry*[32]. Two work routes were recognized therein: an *individual one*[33] and a *collective one*[34], ensuring linguistic diversity with interpreters and translators of the peoples, processes of pedagogy and readiness in the territories; conditions of participation and instruments and methodologies for listening adapted to the collective subjects; a psychosocial approach adapted to the cultures and coordinated with the healing practices

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28. *Comisión de la Verdad adelanta consulta previa y promueve la participación de los pueblos étnicos* (Truth Commission carries out prior consultation and promotes the participation of ethnic peoples).

29. *Histórico acuerdo entre la Comisión de la Verdad y los pueblos indígenas para lograr una verdad plural del conflicto* (Historic agreement between the Truth Commission and indigenous peoples to achieve a plural truth of the conflict)

30. *Acuerdo para que los pueblos afrodescendientes cuenten su verdad del conflicto armado* (Agreement for Afro-descendant peoples to tell the truth about the armed conflict)

31. As a legacy of the peace agreement and the impact of the ethnic peoples, one of the first groups created within the Commission was the ethnic group, as well as the gender group. This group guided the initial deployment, the prior consultation and later became the coordination of the ethnic peoples' directorate.

32. *Comisión de la Verdad. Metodología del enfoque étnico y contra el racismo, la discriminación racial y formas conexas de intolerancia. Octubre 2018.* (Truth Commission. Methodology of the ethnic approach and against racism, racial discrimination, and related acts of bigotry. October 2018)

33. i. Development and coordination of the instruments with the ethnic authorities. ii. Training and readiness. iii. Context and security analysis. iii. Acceptance, informed consent. iv. Interview. v. Systematization and organization of the collective organization. ibíd.

34. i. Training and intercultural dialogue for the identification of patterns and analysis of conflict and identification of collective timelines. ii. strengthening of capacities for the documentation and submission of cases and reports to the Commission. iii. Holding community assemblies. iv. Collective interviews or focus groups. v. Individual interviews. vi. Workshops, interactive techniques, social mapping, and the recreation of community dialogue scenarios. ibíd.

and traditional medicine of the peoples; and security[35] protocols and protection in agreement with the authorities.

These guidelines were discussed during the consultation, which had three stages and was coordinated by the ethnic group within the Commission. The first was the pre-consultation, wherein the SIP agencies and representative ethnic organizations defined a route and criteria for the subsequent deployment of the Commission in their territories: how and where it would be, who would participate and what budget was required. Deployment devoted to clarification, recognition, coexistence, and non-repetition.

The second stage was the consultation, where delegates from the three aforementioned ethnic spaces, occasionally accompanied by representatives of the SIP agencies, and following the criteria of the defined route, began the participation processes in the territories. The fact that it was their own leaders who were at the forefront of the dialogue generated trust, eased the process, and influenced several of them to become part of the Commission's team and to be able to follow up from the inside. However, by this time, the territorial teams already had a significant number of people from the communities involved, who were also promoting the interests agreed upon in the dialogue.

The indigenous peoples' delegates held meetings with different communities in order to achieve the greatest number and diversity of views. In addition, priority was given to the participation of elders, traditional authorities, those exercising the Special Indigenous Jurisdiction in the territories and, generally, those who wished to provide input on the conflict and its impacts.

The Black, Afro-Colombian, Raizal and Palenquero peoples chose to hold autonomous departmental consultation meetings. In the case of the Roma people, there was first a recap of the agreements reached in the pre-consultation, a background on the armed conflict and the Agreement, and the operation of the SIP. On this basis, inputs were gathered to build a work proposal that would consider their peculiarities.

The third stage was the conclusion and formalization of the agreements. After listening and talking in dozens of meetings within the ancestral ethnic territories, the delegate organizations sat down to define the definitive guidelines that would later guide the way in which the Commission interacted with them, based on respect for their rights to self-government, self-determination, autonomy, participation, and agreement on everything that was carried out in their territories.

ARRIVAL IN THE TERRITORIES AND WIND MAPS

After the exploratory territorial deployment and the first indications of the faces of the conflict in each region, the Commission adjusted the division it had initially proposed. The ten macro-regions became eleven. However, during the prior consultation with indigenous

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35. Filter search *Relationship protocol with authorities and victims belonging to Indigenous, Black, Afro-Colombian, Raizal, Palenquero and Roma Peoples and Communities in* <u>Caja de Herramientas Comisión de la Verdad</u> (Truth Commission Toolbox)

peoples, a concern arose: caution had to be exercised in order to avoid fragmenting their organizational processes with the territorial division. For them, the borders of the Amazon with Nariño, Cauca, Huila, Meta, and Vichada should respect the criteria of reservations, territories, and indigenous organizational processes. In addition, Putumayo should be part of the Amazon, but it should be analyzed based on the dynamics of three regions: Andean-Amazonian foothills, Amazonian plain, and transition and plains. Ignoring these criteria could have adverse effects for the Amazonian indigenous peoples. Based on advocacy and joint work with the indigenous peoples, the eleven macro-regions were reorganized, resulting in the organization of the Final Deployment.

To give all of them the necessary relevance and organize the territorial deployment[36], which took place between December 2018 and 2019, the coordination of territorial actions was assigned and led by the territorial teams. The first task they had was to produce a summary of what happened during the armed conflict in each region. This summary was called *Mapa de vientos* (Wind Map)[37].

From these maps, the Commission developed timelines on the milestones of the conflict in the territories, identified allies with whom the Commission could coordinate, drew up analyses of opportunities and threats for its work in the regions, learned about illustrative cases of the armed conflict, and defined specific axes and objectives to be developed in each macro-region.

HOUSES OF TRUTH

It also opened 28 *Casas de la Verdad* (Houses of Truth)[38]: a strategy to build trust with the communities. These became safe spaces for society to contribute to the clarification, find explanations from the perpetrators, weave processes of coexistence and continue on the path towards non-repetition.

These houses were conceived as spaces open to the public where anyone, perpetrators and victims, witnesses, and other actors, could come to learn about the Commission, share their testimony and participate in different processes.

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[36] Así fue el despliegue territorial de la Comisión de la Verdad (This is how the Truth Commission's territorial deployment happened)

[37] Its objective *was to generate an analysis of the regional context that would allow the planning and promotion of effective actions for the fulfillment of the mandate in the territories based on the understanding of the relational, spatial-temporal, socio-cultural and political dynamics. Truth Commission. Guía para el análisis regional (Mapa de Vientos).* 2021. p. 1. (Guide for regional analysis (Wind Map). 2021. p. 1.)

[38] ¿Qué es una Casa de la Verdad?, ¿Quiénes pueden ir a las Casas de la Verdad? Escuche mi verdad - Proyecto Casas de la verdad con sentido (What is a House of Truth, who can go to the Houses of Truth? Listen to my truth - Project of Houses of Truth with Meaning)
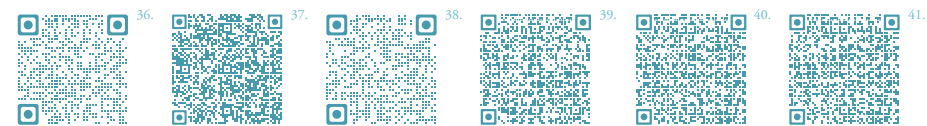
MACRO-REGIONS

1. Caribe E Insular
2. Antioquía y Eje Cafetero
3. Magdalena Medio
4. Nororiente
5. Pacífico
6. Surandina
7. Centroandina
8. Orinoquía
9. Amazonía
10. Bogotá

HOUSES OF TRUTH

1. Villavicencio
2. Cúcuta
3. Popayán
4. Barranquilla
5. Cali
6. Valledupar
7. Ibagué
8. San José del Guaviare
9. Sincelejo
10. Apartadó
11. Medellín
12. Quibdó
13. Florencia
14. Tumaco
15. Arauca
16. Mocoa
17. Puerto Asís
18. Buenaventura
19. Neiva
20. Pereira
21. Bucaramanga
22. Santa Marta
23. La Dorada
24. Pasto
25. Yopal
26. Montería
27. Aguachica

35
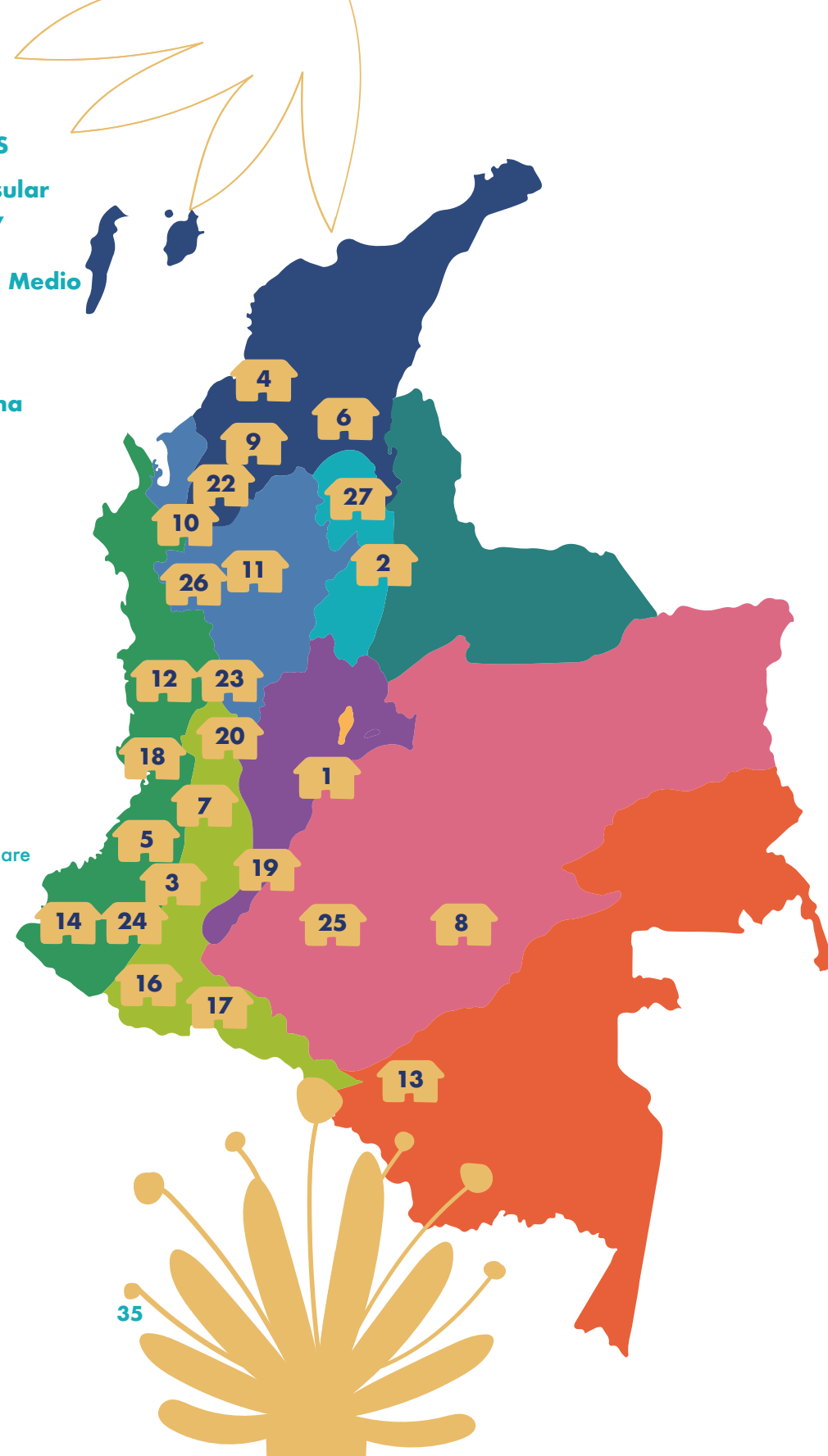
Focus groups, participatory diagnoses, discussion sessions, agreements, learning and coexistence processes, as well as spaces for plural listening, acknowledgement of responsibilities[39], contributions to the truth[40], and dialogues for the non-continuity of the conflict[41], were part of the broad social dialogues promoted by the Commission around the value of truth.

In these places there were always teams trained to listen, attend, guide and facilitate the processes, according to the needs of each attendee. In addition, the Houses also supported the victim assistance route and provided guidance on the powers of the SIP, which, as mentioned above, includes the JEP and the UBPD.

An example of the possibilities of these 28 spaces distributed in the macro-regions were the Casas de la Verdad con Sentido (Houses of Truth with Meaning)[42]. This project convened 36[43] cultural and artistic

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[39.] Encuentros por la Verdad - YouTube (Meetings for Truth)

[40.] Contribuciones a la verdad - YouTube (Contributions to the truth)

[41.] Diálogos para la No Repetición - YouTube (Dialogues for Non-Repetition)

[42.] About the Casas de la Verdad con Sentido (Houses of Truth with Meaning)

[43.] Escuche mi verdad - Proyecto Casas de la verdad con sentido (Listen to my truth - Project of Houses of Truth with Meaning) The following organizations participated in this project. During 2020: *Proactoteatro, Producciones Lalita y Yuppi, Mk Circo, Meridiano 70, Incorporarte, Organización Urasón, Semillero Luisa Perea, Kalú project, Rostros Urbanos,*

42. 43.

PARTICIPATORY DIAGNOSTICS AND TERRITORIAL ROUTES FOR RESEARCH

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organizations from eight territories where the Commission had presence (Apartadó, Arauca, Buenaventura, Cali, Cúcuta, Florencia, Medellín and Quibdó) to build innovative methodologies to promote these social dialogues.

Many organizations with extensive territorial processes became important allies of the Commission, strengthening its deployment. Not only did they support the collection and documentation of regional experiences that served as input for the construction of the Final Report, but they also contributed from their broad experience to the scope of the Commission's mandate and prepared the communities for the dissemination and ownership of the resulting narrative.

Durante este despliegue, la Comisión organizó diagnósticos participativos[44]. These meetings were designed to identify, together with the communities, their main needs for clarification, recognition, coexistence, and non-repetition, and to plan specific and joint actions. These were the first listening exercises carried out by the Commission to understand the conflict at the regional level.

Participation in these diagnoses was broad: among representatives of social and community organizations, non-governmental organizations, academics, and other sectors. The good reception of this initiative generated a social mobilization around the truth, produced exchanges of knowledge and contributed to the definition of the emphasis that the research should have in each territory.

The contributions of these spaces began to fill with stories and inputs the activities built in the Wind Maps. This expanded the perspectives on the territorial dynamics of the conflict, especially the facts and ways in which the perpetrators occupied the territories, interacted with other actors, and intensified the violence in certain periods of the conflict[45]. But the

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Fundación Progreso y Paz, Colectivo Eleggua Comunicación, Transformando Mentes, El Gabinete de Caligari, Arquidiócesis de Cali, Ltincelle, Acumulaciones Taller, Circo Momo, Colectivo de Mujeres Putamente Poderosas, Corporación Renovación, Colectivo Artístico Arte 13. Mi Comuna Collective, Latidos Chocó, Etnia Company, Organización Mujer y Vida, Círculo de Estudios, Museo Casa Natal del General Santander, Fundación Mejor Que Nunca, Biblioteca Pública Julio Pérez, Corporación Juvenil Renovación Cultural, ASOMUCIC, Asociación de Mujeres Artesanas Sueños de Paz, Colectivo Teatral Telón de Sueños, Fundación Casa del Pensamiento, Mumudavi, Fundación Caquetá Diversa. And 2021: Fundación Tejiendo cultura Caribe, Fundación soñadores del mañana - Fundoselma, Fundación núcleos familiares, Fundación Atuca, Corporación juvenil buena vibra, Chedamy es Aluna, Corporación Caribe Afirmativo, Red de líderes unidos por los jóvenes- RED LUJO, Institución Educativa 12 de octubre, Red de mujeres Afrocolombianas kambirí, Cuarto Creciente, Corporación cultural nuevo horizonte, Corporación cultural Pandora, Fundación sentidos de la tierra, Organización Churucos, ACETUR, Plataforma Juvenil, Corpomandela, Fundación Mac Giver, UNIBAC, Institución educativa Jesús Maestro, Institución Educativa John F. Kennedy, Institución Educativa El Salvador, Institución Educativa El Salvador El Salvador, Institución Educativa El Salvador. Kennedy Educational Institution, El Salvador Educational Institution, Colombo Holandés Educational Institution.

[44.] Its objectives were: "to generate a mobilization of society around the Truth, to produce exchanges of knowledge between society and the Commission, and to contribute to the collective definition of the thematic axes and territorial highlights, inputs for the investigation routes". Truth Commission. To know the Guide of Participatory Diagnostics. Visit Caja de Herramientas Comisión de la Verdad (Truth Commission Toolbox).

[45.] La verdad que nos falta (The truth that we are missing)

testimonials and input from society not only led to an understanding of the violence[46], sbut also the way wherein the communities faced it with actions of resistance and coexistence.

These diagnoses were spaces for the exchange of knowledge between society and the Commission that helped to collectively define the thematic axes and territorial highlights in the work routes for clarification. In terms of recognition, it was possible to identify the main facts, forms of victimization and perpetrators. But also, in terms of coexistence and non-repetition, we learned about relevant territorial experiences for the development of these objectives.

Following these diagnoses, the Commission carried out an initial exercise to compare and validate the findings that had been identified in these areas. Reports, cases, and experiences were analyzed, and these were studied together with the regional state-of-the-art studies that had been previously developed.

These activities provided answers, but also raised new questions. Gaps and issues that needed to be explored in greater depth were identified. Significant facts that had not been clarified emerged, victims who had remained silent or had been made invisible, and key individuals, organizations and agencies that could continue to contribute and participate in the process. This is how the 26 territorial research routes were born. These were proposals to answer the question: *What issues must we clarify in order to understand and explain the armed conflict in the regions?*

Each route had to be based on certain criteria. First, define its thematic cores and research questions. Then, to identify the contextual facts and specific cases that would help to understand them. Also, the temporal and spatial dimension of the research. In other words, in which regions, sub-regions and municipalities the events occurred, and in which periods they worsened, in order to understand key patterns that would later provide the causes and clues to build recommendations for the non-continuity of the conflict[47].

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46. An example of this was the Diagnóstico participativo de la Comisión de la Verdad sobre violencia sexual y violencias basadas en genero en el marco del conflicto armado (Participatory diagnosis of the Truth Commission on sexual violence and gender-based violence in the context of the armed conflict)

47. To learn more about the Research Route Guide and the Territorial Research Route Matrix, visit Caja de Herramientas Comisión de la Verdad (Truth Commission Toolbox)

Photography: Truth Commission
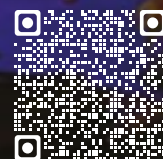
These routes also promoted the delivery of documents, files and databases that served to better understand the issues under investigation, and also to build networks of allies, such as universities, NGOs, or public agencies, who became the support to assist and complement the process of clarification. These files, voluntarily handed over through legal agreements, made up a large package of external sources that were essential for the analysis process, and which complemented the primary sources resulting from the hearing process, as explained in chapter 3.

The organization of the research teams resulted from these first recruitment exercises, made up of researchers with regional knowledge who were available in the territories and researchers with subject-matter experience at the national level.

SCAFFOLDING FOR RESEARCH

While the truth began to be woven in the territories through listening exercises and dialogue with society, and at the national level the state-of-the-art studies were being developed, the internal organization of the Commission was looking for ways to adapt to the needs and how to better interpret the lessons learned from the short road traveled..

By August 2018, the first structure was established. It was headed by the plenary of commissioners, the president and the offices of inter-institutional relations and cooperation and alliances. Then, coordination efforts of each of the objectives, strategies, and approaches. And for research, there was a clarification coordination, an area of Research and Knowledge Management, an area of Territories, and the Working Group for ethnic issues. Finally, to achieve all the goals, the General Secretariat, and its offices: planning and projects, legal and contract management, internal control, disciplinary control, and the Administrative and Financial Directorate, were created.

By 2019, the Commission changed this organization, creating areas that catered to the needs that were found. As a result of the prior consultation process, the Ethnic Peoples Directorate was created. In order to coordinate the investigation, the Directorate of Knowledge and another Directorate of Territories were established; the first one of the SIM, together with a sub-directorate and a coordination, and the second one that coordinated the regions and the work of the Truth Houses. Finally, the Directorate of Social Dialogue was organized, integrating the approaches, strategies and objectives of recognition, coexistence, and non-repetition, and enabling a great national dialogue.

In addition, a participatory, dynamic, and plural knowledge management route was created for the research. It was participatory because it included the prioritized social sectors and the communities of the territories worst affected by the conflict. Dynamic because it was under permanent construction and validation by the actors involved. And plural because it had multiple methods, sources, versions, research techniques and participation processes.

The first step in this process entailed the collection of several sources. One part of these sources were the testimonies delivered to the Commission. The other were academic research, reports from different national and international organizations, sentences and judicial documents, and statistical databases on the armed conflict.

ORGANIZATION CHART
TRUTH COMMISSION

PLENARY OF COMMISSIONERS

Interinstitucional Relationship Office

Legal and Contractual Management Office

Office of Cooperation and Partherships

Planning and Projects Office

PRESIDENCY

Internal control office

Coordination of communication and dissemination strategies

Internal disciplinay control office

SECRETARY GENERAL

Administrative and Financial Management

Social Dialogue Directorate

Knowledge Directorate

Territory Directorate

Ethnic Peoples DIrectorate

Coexistence Objective

Knowledge Depurity-Directorate

SIM Information System Coordination

Macro-territorial Offices

Objective of non-repetition

Territorial Offices

Recognition Objective

Cross-cutting

The strategy: Participation and Sectors

Cultural and artistic strategy and coordination

Strategy Coordination of Pedagogy

Coordination of psychosocial approach

Coordination of genre approach

Life cycle and disability approach coordination

CHAPTER 1. START OF THE RESEARCH

A key issue in understanding these sources was that, for the first time, a State institution had in its mandate the power to access all types of public, classified, and national security files. This opened the door so that, with confidentiality protocols, the Commission could access this information that in previous cases had been classified, such as judicial documents, documents of state security agencies and of the security forces.

The sources were incorporated through a knowledge management route that allowed their appropriate identification, organization, and processing with high security standards to protect the information and guarantee its traceability. The management route included tools to organize and cross-check information, and to build, transfer and use knowledge collectively[48].

The design of the instruments, guides, and methodologies for listening and collecting different sources, such as testimonies and external archives, was developed during the readiness stage (as shown in the timeline) and considered the demands in terms of ethnicity, gender, and other differential approaches, in addition to what was learned from other experiences. The need to develop pedagogical, cultural, artistic, and participatory processes and to involve victims, perpetrators, and other actors in the construction of this truth also became evident[49].

The women's and LGBTIQ+ movements and the deployment abroad also had an impact on the Commission's working methods. This impact was particularly strong due to the spaces for dialogue that these sectors secured during the dialogues in Havana. The former led to the creation of a Gender Group from the beginning (2018)[50], and that, until the end of its mandate, went on providing a mainstreaming view on the gender approach[51], and even encouraged the inclusion of a volume on the subject in the Final Report. This group also incorporated the demands of women, feminist movements and LGBTIQ+ people. This is the first commission in the world that has a special emphasis on the clarification of reproductive violence and specific violence against LGBTIQ+ people.

The second, meanwhile, resulted from the incorporation into the Agreement of proposals from the exiled, where the Unidos por la Paz Foundation, together with the Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights, the Victims Unit, CODHES, the technical committees for Ruling T-025 and the CNMH, made significant progress in the analysis of this population. In a move with few

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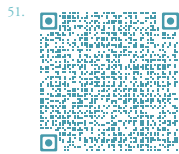
Photography: Truth Commission

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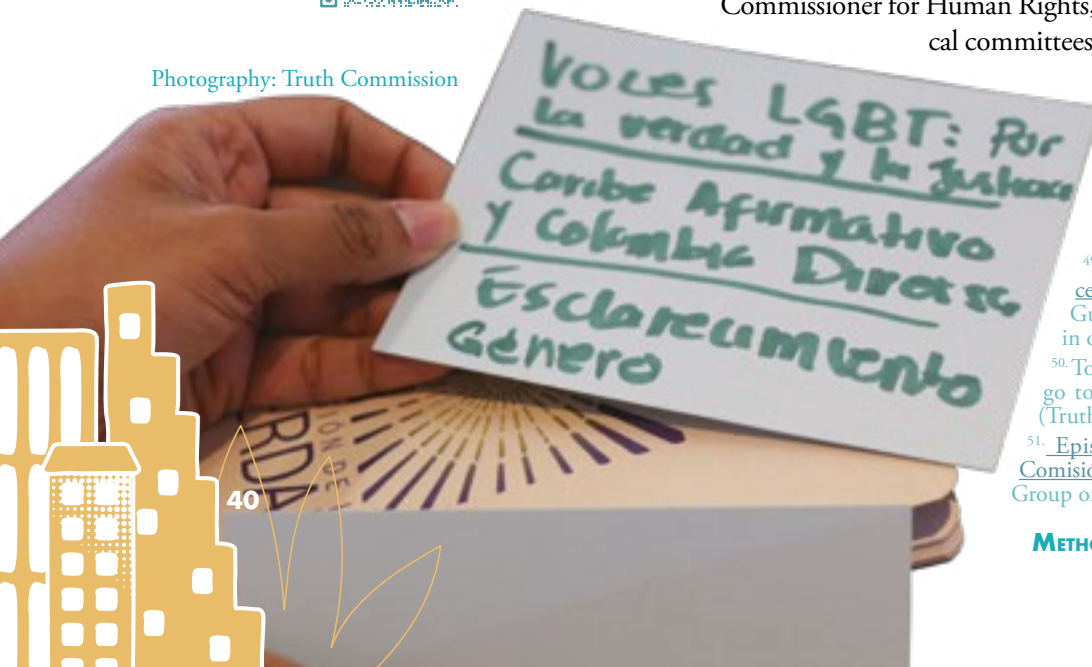
48. Ruta de Gestión de Conocimiento (Knowledge Management Route)

49. Lineamientos Metodológicos: escuchar, reconocer y comprender para transformar (Methodological Guidelines: listening, recognizing and understanding in order to transform the World).

50. To see the *Annual Report of the Gender Working Group* go to Caja de Herramientas Comisión de la Verdad (Truth Commission Toolbox)

51. Episodio 3: El grupo de trabajo de género de la Comisión de la Verdad (Episode 3: The Gender Working Group of the Truth Commission).

METHODOLOGY FOR THE CLARIFICATION OF THE TRUTH

precedents, the Commission decided to give place and recognition to the victims of the armed conflict abroad.

All these actions were aimed at clarifying what happened. Namely, the construction of an explanation of the conflict that satisfies the right of the victims and society to the truth, based on an analysis of the severity of what happened, but also of the resistances and positive transformations related to strategies of organization, resistance, and individual and community peacebuilding.

In December 2018, the Commission's Advisory Council, an external body that operated under the secretariat of the Institute of Intercultural Studies of the Pontificia Universidad Javeriana, was finally created[52]. It was made up of thirteen men and women of different origins and backgrounds, from victims of the armed conflict to academics from other countries, artists, businessmen, former ministers, inter alia, who provided valuable interdisciplinary contributions whenever required by the Commission.

The Commission relied on the Council to complement the research with its views, knowledge, analysis, and reflections. The meetings with this group were not to make decisions or reach agreements, but rather to inform the reflections and discussions of the plenary of commissioners, based on the experience of those who participated in the meetings. The latter supported the Commission in the critical and independent analysis of the development of its mandate.

The setup of the Commission was not a minor task. Imagining and materializing a public institution that was independent of the State and that did not have a legal personality but had a broad territorial presence inside and outside the country, that sought a truth with the participation of all sectors of society, in a country with a broad multi-ethnic diversity, committed to the legacy of different social struggles of different sectors of victims, was from the beginning the horizon that had to be traveled. The next chapter will show how the Commission defined the focus of the investigation without neglecting the central role of the victims, their dignity, and the construction of a truth together with them.

52a.

52b.

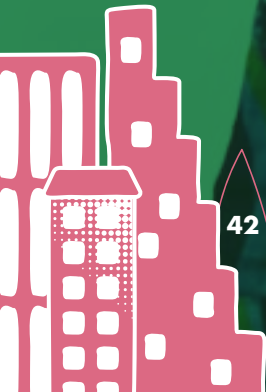[52] Se crea Consejo Asesor de la Comisión de la Verdad (Truth Commission Advisory Council is created) by means of Resolución 146 del 31 de diciembre 2019 (Resolution 146 of December 31/2019).

Photography: Truth Commission

METHODOLOGY FOR THE CLARIFICATION OF THE TRUTH

RESEARCH

AP PRO ACH

In order to investigate an armed conflict that to date has affected the individual and community lives of Colombian men and women, and that has had deep political, economic, social, and cultural consequences, the Commission had to consider a story that would, above all, dignify the lives of the victims.

What issues should be prioritized? From what perspective? How to compare the different voices that emerged from the hearings in the territories? How to address accountability? How to ensure that clarification promotes positive transformations in society, instead of fostering resentment and polarities?

The truth that was under construction had to be as plural and inclusive as possible and had to serve to explain to society how and why the armed conflict has persisted. A truth that would allow a human reading of the concrete facts and that would have an impact on the cultural patterns that have facilitated the persistence of the war and generated social division.

This approach should focus on the stories of those who lived through the conflict, but who have not been the prevailing voices. It had to start from the experiences of the people in the territories and from there generate the necessary explanations. For this reason, it promoted social dialogues, spaces for plural listening and reflections aimed at recognizing, amplifying, and complementing this diversity of voices. This also allowed for the voluntary recognition

of individual and collective responsibilities, coexistence processes in the territories and commitments to stop the persistence of the conflict.

Research of these characteristics, with these aspirations, had to be especially thorough in the treatment and analysis of the information collected. The testimonies of individuals and communities had to be understood according to their contexts, territories, differential approaches, and cultures. They would then have to be cross-checked and investigated to offer assertions and explanations supported by as much evidence as possible. Thus, a polyphonic, but not fragmented or disparate, narrative would be constructed[53].

A truth commission without judicial authority could access, by mandate of the law[54], to the information of public agencies. This information included confidential, classified, intelligence and counterintelligence files on human rights violations and breaches of IHL. The research allowed the possibility to access any type of archives related to the armed conflict in Colombia and a wide range of sources that allowed a closer approach to the facts, the understanding of the causes and the little-known areas of the war. The collection of these sources, and those that he produced during his mandate, were decisive in the search for clarification of the facts.

The management of public information was not easy. Unanswered requests, adjourned visits, incomplete or late documentation, refusals or incomplete files evidenced the precariousness of the management, protection, custody, and accessibility of public archives were some of the difficulties. However, the greatest difficulty faced by the Commission was the legal reserve, state secrecy or confidentiality of the information. By constitutional order, State agencies could not use such refusals for access to this information. They had to provide the information that the Commission found necessary. In addition, when it comes to human rights violations, the Inter-American Court of Human Rights (IACHR) orders the State authorities to provide the information requested by the agencies carrying out the investigation process.

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[53]. For further information, please consult the Lineamientos Metodológicos: escuchar, reconocer y comprender para transformar (Methodological Guidelines: listening, recognizing and understanding in order to transform).

[54]. The Decreto 588 (Decree 588) ratifies that the Commission may access any type of information, including classified public information, confidential public information and intelligence and counterintelligence information. In paragraphs 1, 2, 3 and 4 it ratifies the prohibition of reserve, the power to coordinate with the agencies the delivery of information through agreements or protocols and the requirement to inform the authorities in case of refusal. Also, in Sentencia C-017 (Ruling C-017) of 2018 of the Constitutional Court recognized the obstacles that the commissions have faced regarding access to information and the critical importance of this access for the clarification of what happened during the conflict. Finally, in Article 21 of Ley 1712 de 2014 (Law 1712/2014), it is also established that the exception to information cannot be used as a denial in investigation processes on human rights violations and breaches of International Humanitarian Law.

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Below there is an explanation of how these needs were interpreted and how they changed over time to result in an inductive approach and a thematic structure by volumes on which the Final Report was built [55].

THEMATIC LINES

The strength of an investigation starts with the accurate definition of what is to be investigated and the ways in which it will be done. In this case, the Commission had the challenge of establishing where the key points of its story would be, what questions it would answer, and what its approaches would be.

During 2019, the first coordinating proposal appeared, which outlined the initial axes of the research: the thematic lines[56]. These were defined on the basis of an approach that started from the hypotheses raised from the state-of-the-art studies, carried out during the recruitment period and which were strengthened herein. The input to build these lines were the thirteen points of the mandate, from which additional topics were proposed to be included in the research. The thematic lines were:
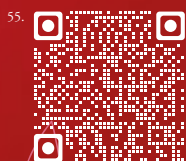
55. *Te contamos cómo se construyó y cómo será el Informe Final de la Comisión de la Verdad* (We tell you how it was built and how the Final Report of the Truth Commission will look like)

56. *Comisión de la Verdad, documento interno de trabajo. Informe de Gestión Dirección de Investigación y Gestión de Conocimiento. Julio 2019. p. 3.* (Truth Commission, internal working document. Management Report of the Directorate of Research and Knowledge Management. July 2019. p. 3)

Photography: Truth Commission

1. **The victimizing facts:** practices and events that violated human rights and IHL, especially those that illustrate patterns or were of a massive or systematic nature. This line also includes the territorial contexts and dynamics wherein these events occurred, and the factors whereby they spread or were replicated[57].
2. **The accountable parties:** Collective responsibilities, both of the armed actors and of those who participated in the conflict politically and economically. The ways in which they originated, were financed, operated in the territories, and collaborated with different actors. This line includes the analysis of the participation of the State, guerrillas, paramilitaries, drug traffickers, businessmen, politicians, inter alia.
3. **The impacts:** The human and social impact of the armed conflict on democracy, civil, political, economic, social, cultural, and environmental rights, and the way in which it affected several people in different manner, communities, and populations, including the actors who participated in it and their families.
4. **Persistence factors:** Those associated with democracy and politics, conflicts over land, justice, economics, culture, patriarchal and colonial violence, illicit crops, and drug trafficking.
5. **Transformations:** The processes of strengthening the social fabric in the communities, the experiences of individual and collective resilience, and the positive transformations of organizations and institutions that sought peace amidst conflict.

With the definition of these lines, a first methodological outline was proposed. This had four moments. The first was that of conceptual and methodological construction. The second consisted of the collection of testimonies and other inputs. The third was the processing of the information. And the fourth was writing.

In addition, it was defined that for each line, a theoretical assessment should be made, wherein the initial proposals were compared with the support of universities, NGOs, think tanks and other organizations and groups. This work with strategic partners was essential not only for the relationship and advocacy, but also for the identification and analysis of sources in the research.

From this initial proposal emerged the discussion about the implications of starting from arguments and hypotheses about the conflict when listening to the victims, that is, from an inductive approach. Although all the information collected and analyzed was very valuable, to put it ahead of the testimonies was again to clarify on the basis of theoretical premises and not to allow other voices to emerge in the historical and human analysis of the conflict. This approach would give the testimonies a place of contrast with the hypotheses and would prevent the latter from being the focus of the hearings. Thus, seeking for the inductive to meet the deductive, starting from the bottom up.

[57.] This line was also based on the effort made in the state-of-the-art studies to unify the types of human rights violations and breaches of IHL contained in different sources, which could also often contradict each other. Eighteen types of human rights violations and 32 breaches of IHL were identified.

In a country that has extensively studied a conflict of such long duration, with multiple academic interpretations, the path had to be different. With the conviction of basing its listening on a strong territorial presence, the Commission decided not only to prioritize the communities' stories, but also to make them its main source of information.

This truth was built with the women and based on their stories. And it was only thanks to the involvement with the social fabric, with their realities, their struggles, resistances, reflections, and dialogues that the Commission was able to build a truth with them, and not over them[58].

For this purpose, the Commission set up local teams in the national territory that approached the communities, often living with them or being part of them. There were also national teams with thematic experience at the national level, as mentioned above. This generated a work on the strengthening of the communities that allowed the construction of a socially shared truth and the possibility of finding joint and contextualized solutions together with the people. For it is right there, in the territories and community links, where the power of transformation of this country is found.

If people feel that their history is reflected, clarified, and explained, it gives them the courage to use it to defend their own rights. The process in Argentina clearly demonstrates this. The mothers and grandmothers of *Plaza de Mayo*[59] were the ones who promoted the transformation of the Law of Life. The resulting mobilization also led to the creation of a museum of memory in the former *Escuela de Mecánica de la Armada* (ESMA, from its name in Spanish, or Navy Mechanics School)[60], where there were tortures, disappearances and from where the death flights departed. The Report of the *Comisión Nacional sobre la Desaparición de Personas* (CONADEP, from its name in Spanish, National Commission on the Disappearance of Persons)[61] promoted, more than thirty years later, the trials against the military regime and against those who participated in and benefited from the dictatorship.

The approach then had to be inductive. That is, it started from listening to the testimonies of the victims and other actors to reach conclusions in the final account. The search for the truth about what happened would not only be about them but essentially with them. The conclusions were compared against extensive studies on the Colombian conflict.

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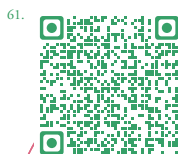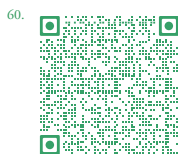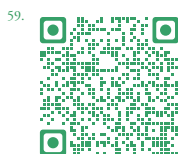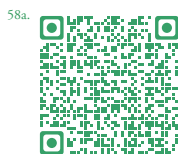
58. Encuentro de la comisionada Ángela Salazar con la comunidad de San Basilio de Palenque «*No queremos que la verdad sea escrita con un enfoque distinto a la realidad que viven las comunidades*», Ángela Salazar. *Encuentro con la comunidad de San Basilio de Palenque, Bolívar.* Octubre 2019 (Meeting of Commissioner Ángela Salazar with the community of San Basilio de Palenque "We do not want the truth to be written with a different approach to the reality of the communities", Ángela Salazar. Meeting with the community of San Basilio de Palenque, Bolivar. October 2019).

59. Madres de Plaza de Mayo. La historia: La batalla por la imagen (1978) - Canal Encuentro (Mothers of Plaza de Mayo. The story: The battle for the image (1978))

60. Museo Sitio de Memoria ESMA | Argentina.gob.ar (Site of Memory Museum)

61. ¿Qué es la CONADEP? | Ministerio de Cultura (What is CONADEP? | Ministry of Culture)
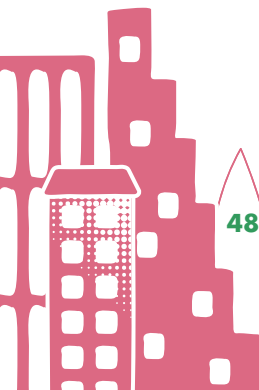
The task of listening to the victims and understanding the regions had already begun with the deployment in the territories, wind maps, participatory diagnoses, social dialogues, territorial investigation routes and networking with allies. However, the upsurge in violence[62] prevented people from sharing their stories. Fear and anxiety marked a different course in the call for plural listening and social dialogue. The Commission had to promote processes of participation, pedagogy, art, and culture to ensure that the voices of the communities were at the center of the story. These processes allowed to explore the contexts together with the communities. But above all, to clarify facts and identify patterns to understand why the events that occurred happened. From these understandings, ten thematic[63], emerged that defined a new direction for the investigation:

1. **Democracy and armed conflict:** This core addressed the impacts suffered by trade unions, political parties (especially opposition parties), social organizations, journalists, social leaders, inter alia, as well as those that resulted in the exile of people who were in danger for political reasons. In addition, questions were asked about the relationship between the armed conflict and ideologies, and the stigmatization of some sectors, especially peasants, indigenous people, and Afro-descendants. Questions were included on corruption and corruption-related patronage as a function of violence. With this, it was proposed to expand the approach and not to take for granted the existence of a consolidated democracy, but to ask about its quality, its transformations, and territorial dynamics in the context of the armed conflict.

2. **The role of the State and its responsibilities:** This core explored the responsibility of political elites in the origin and persistence of the conflict in the country. The concentration of power, centralist dynamics and the territorial configuration of the State in the origin and persistence of the conflict, and the way in which the institutions have influenced its development. Questions related to the national security doctrine, extrajudicial executions, military intelligence, the judicial system and its relationship with impunity, the impacts of the reparation system since the decade of 1990, among other issues, were included.

3. **Armed actors and other participants in the dynamics of warfare:** This core group addressed the origin of the armed actors, their practices, structures and strategies with the civilian population and the territories, and the different responsibilities of the different actors in the conflict, from paramilitaries and guerrillas to the State and civilian third parties involved. Among other questions, those related to the legal and

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[62.] En Colombia no hay una sino varias guerras locales, todas creciendo - La impactante violencia en Colombia contra los defensores de los derechos humanos causa preocupación | Noticias ONU - Retos humanitarios 2022 (In Colombia there is not one but several local wars, all growing - Colombia's shocking violence against human rights defenders causes concern | UN News - Humanitarian Challenges 2022)

[63.] Comisión de la Verdad, documento interno de trabajo. Núcleos Temáticos. Julio 2019 (Truth Commission, internal working document. Thematic Cores. July 2019).
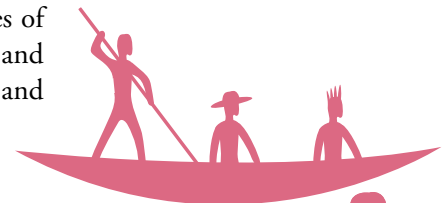
illegal revenues used by the stakeholders, the urban dynamics of the conflict, forced recruitment and extortion of merchants were raised .

4. **Development models:** In this core, the economic dynamics of the war and the relationship between the economy and the conflict were analyzed. Three research subtopics appeared. The first had to do with the relationship between the armed conflict and some development models, such as agro-industry, mining, port expansion, extensive cattle ranching, inter alia. Also, with the struggles for tenure and use of resources such as land and water. The second, with the social and environmental impacts of these models: the expansion of the agricultural boundary, climate change, pollution, land as a victim, inter alia. And the third, with the victimization suffered by businessmen in the context of the war. Questions about the hegemonic economic model, the responsibilities of the business sectors and the difficulty of consolidating alternative models also arose in this core.

5. **Land dispossession and forced displacement:** This core group analyzed the dimensions of displacement and dispossession, the interests, and beneficiaries of these acts against farmers and ethnic communities, and the relationship between these and agrarian legislation at different times. It also included questions aimed at understanding the relationship between displacement and dispossession and the war strategies of armed actors, war economies and the presence of strategic resources for economic exploitation.

6. **Drug trafficking and the armed conflict::** This core group analyzed the relationship between drug trafficking and illegal income, money laundering and criminality. In addition to these topics, the dynamics of rural production, trafficking lines and routes, and consumption practices in urban contexts were also analyzed. Questions were also explored about the relationship between criminal actors and the political and economic actors who acted illegally, and about international contexts such as Plan Colombia, the anti-drug war, and the anti-communist struggle, inter alia.

7. **Resistance, social struggles, and positive transformations:** This core included the main strategies of resistance to violence by different actors. Particularly, rural experiences, youth experiences and artistic and cultural initiatives that opposed violence were analyzed. It also included topics such as the defense of the territorial life projects of some communities, farmers' struggles, memory exercises, the presence and impact of international cooperation, and the positive transformations of the State and its institutions.

8. **Impacts on the cultural and territorial integrity of ethnic communities:** This core group studied the violence experienced by ethnic communities and the impact it had on their cultures and territories. Also, racism and colonialism, as well as an analysis of the way in which discrimination on ethnic grounds overlapped with other forms of discrimination based on gender, socioeconomic status, sexual orientation, age, sex, or disability.

Photography: Truth Commission   METHODOLOGY FOR THE CLARIFICATION OF THE TRUTH

9. **Armed conflict, society, and culture:** This core addressed the influence of sociocultural practices and speeches in the origin and persistence of the conflict and its impacts. This was done along three lines: the analysis of patriarchy and racism as a cultural matrix background and its influence on the dynamics of the conflict. The cultural frameworks embedded in the educational system, the media and the churches from which violence was promoted and reproduced. And the socio-cultural impacts arising from the conflict as a result of the violence on leaders and the restriction of cultural practices.

10. **The international dimensions of the armed conflict and exile:** This core group focused on two major complementary themes. The first, related to the participation of institutions, organizations, agencies, companies, and governments of other countries in the origin, dynamics, persistence, and consequences of the conflict, including their ideological, logistical, and financial role, but also their role in the peace processes at different times. The second, related to the exile of Colombians as a result of the conflict. Questions related to the violations and offenses that forced them to leave, the exit processes, the routes, and conditions under which they left, the adaptation processes, the new violence they had to face, the processes of resistance and organization abroad, and the return (expectations, the responsibility of the State, and the symbolic return) were addressed.

The diversity of peoples, communities, contexts, and types of people in Colombia is wide. This determined, in addition to a territorial presence and an inductive process in the research, the need to incorporate differential approaches for listening and social dialogue, which enhanced the research with concepts, methodologies and insights from their multiple voices.

Also, different strategies that enabled the process of listening, public dialogues, acknowledgements of responsibilities and coexistence processes, as well as dialogues for non-repetition. These strategies were coordinated with each other, were cross-cutting to the Commission's processes, and sought to mobilize society around the truth.

The approaches were key supports for engaging analytical perspectives in the research and developing the human side of the report. They also made significant contributions from their research. For the social dialogue, teams were formed to ensure the incorporation of differential approaches in the Commission's actions (mainstreaming), the transformation of discriminatory cultural practices and the incorporation of skills both in the teams and with the communities.

These approaches intertwine (cross) with each other and, thanks to the strategies, ensured a broad and plural participation that fostered the accomplishment of the mission objectives. These approaches, strategies, and their contributions to the search for clarification are described below.

RESEARCH APPROACHES AND STRATEGIES

Ethnic approach against racism, racial discrimination, and related forms of bigotry

Ethnic peoples have been among the most affected in the context of the armed conflict and also outside of it. Their individual, collective and cultural rights have been violated in multiple ways for centuries. This has affected their community way of life, their identity, their relationship with the territory and their physical and cultural survival. For the Commission, it was essential to provide the conditions for the account of clarification to recognize their voices[64].

Chapter 1 explained how, following the Peace Agreement, the ethnic peoples had an impact on their participation in the Commission's actions, including the Final Report, within the framework of agreements reached through prior consultation. There, it was agreed that *the ethnic approach[65] against racism, discrimination and related forms of bigotry* would be mainstreamed in all the Commission's actions.

This approach was based on a twofold recognition. First, that doctrines, policies, and practices based on the supposed superiority of certain peoples due to racial, religious, ethnic, or cultural differences are racist, scientifically false, morally reprehensible, legally invalid, and socially unjust. Second, that discrimination and the economic, political, and social factors that underlie such discrimination are incorporated into the narratives of violence of the armed conflict, thereby worsening it and violating the rights of ethnic peoples.

This resulted in a perspective that contributed to the transformation of the conditions of discrimination, exclusion, and marginalization of these peoples. It also contributed to the dignification of ethnic victims, to overcoming the gap between the recognition of their rights[66] and their materialization, to the transitional justice process of truth, justice, and reparation, and to the transformation of the relationship between institutions and ethnic peoples. Ultimately, it contributed to the symbolic reparation of historical damages suffered by these peoples.

Within the consultation process, a reflection was also encouraged, which came from the Peace Agreement, on the need for a cross-cutting view between ethnicity and a special focus on gender, women, family, and generation. This was a proposal led mainly by indigenous women, based on the understanding that balance and harmony in indigenous cosmologies is related to the complementary forces of the feminine and the masculine nature. These forces are in all beings, from humans and animals to nature and the stars. On this basis, it is understood that women have a different relationship with spirituality and territory than men..

The indigenous women were influential in ensuring that the actions of the Commission understood that not only women suffer individual impacts during the conflict, but that the

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64. [Minuto de la verdad | La importancia de la participación étnica en el esclarecimiento de la verdad](#) (Minute of Truth | The importance of ethnic participation in the clarification of the truth)

65. [Enfoque Étnico](#) (Ethnic approach).

66. Self-determination; autonomy; self-government; participation; consultation and free, prior, and informed consent; social, economic, and cultural identity and integrity; rights over their territories and resources, recognizing their ancestral practices; and those associated with the special indigenous jurisdiction that recognizes the power of their authorities to resolve conflicts within their communities in accordance with their own procedures, uses and customs.

collective, cultural, and territorial impacts also affect them, their families, communities, all generations, and the spiritual balance. It is not possible to separate the individual from the collective and the territory, and the effects depend on the place that women occupy in their communities and that define them as part of an ethnic collective entity. They also have their own and differentiated contributions and proposals on the road to conflict transformation.

The approach also sought to understand the impacts on families not only as violations against individuals, but also as damage to the family's productive work, by burning their plots of land, preventing family participation in rituals, restricting access to medicines and markets for family and community feeding, or affecting their own schools.

The research resulting from this approach involved the creation of a directorate within the Commission, as we have seen, and the incorporation of people from different ethnic peoples in the territorial and national teams. It had contributions from the aforementioned analytical perspectives, which resulted in a volume on the specific violations of the rights of these peoples and their territories, the modalities of violence, the effects and impacts, and the resistance processes that emerged during the conflict.

Gender approach

During the talks between the Government and the FARC-EP in Havana, feminist and women's organizations at regional and national level mobilized and united not only to press for a negotiated solution to the conflict, but also for the Final Agreement to incorporate their proposals and considerations in terms of gender.

They struggled to overcome obstacles so that initially weak dialogues resulted in an agreement that explicitly included the gender approach[67] in almost all of its points.

This approach, therefore, also became a cross-cutting axis in the agencies arising from the Agreement, including the Commission[68]. It consisted of an analysis tool that recognized the differential impacts of the armed conflict on the lives of women, girls and LGBTIQ+ people as a result of violence perpetrated by armed actors based on their gender, sexual orientation, gender identity and expression, and especially sexual violence[69].

The Commission considered several key aspects in the mainstreaming of the approach[70]. For example, ensuring the clarification of the causes, factors, and patterns of persistent violation of the rights of women and LGBTIQ+ persons during the armed conflict. In contexts of war, extreme positions and social stereotypes are intensified, resulting in violent social behaviors that perpetuate prejudices and forms of sexist and homophobic discrimination.

Thus, mechanisms were established at different levels to ensure the inclusion of methodologies, categories, research questions and hypotheses that allowed us to understand how

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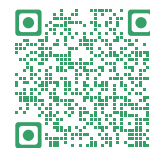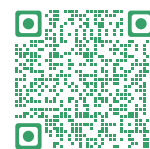
67. Chapter 20. Camino al Informe: Enfoque de género (Chapter 20. Road to the Report: Gender approach).
68. El enfoque de género en el Sistema Integral (The gender approach in the Comprehensive System)
69. Gender Approach
70. To learn more about the Gender Group Policy visit Caja de Herramientas de la Comisión de la Verdad (Truth Commission Toolbox)

and why women, girls and LGBTIQ+ people were particularly victimized. This resulted in a specific research team focused on the analysis of these impacts and violence, from which a chapter of the Final Report focused on the specific impacts on women and LGBTIQ+ people.

Life cycle and disability approach

This approach[71] started from the recognition that, from birth to death, human beings are in a permanent process of biological development and aging in which individual, family, work, and social life journeys are shaped. From this recognition, it is possible to understand in a differential way what happens to boys, girls[72], youngsters[73] and elderly people[74] in the context of the armed conflict.

It also recognized disability as the result of the interaction between people with particular conditions (physical, sensory, cognitive, or psychosocial) that increase their difficulties in adapting in life to environments that impose barriers and prevent them from participating and exercising their rights in the personal and community spheres[75].

The Commission understood, based on these premises, that it was necessary to expand the understanding of the armed conflict and link the construction of the story of clarification with the viewpoints of girls[76], teenagers and youngsters[77], elderly people[78] and people with disabilities[79]. This approach would allow the identification and deepening of patterns of violence, impacts and processes of resistance of these populations. The research of this approach was also key to the volume on boys, girls[80] and teenagers.

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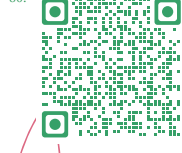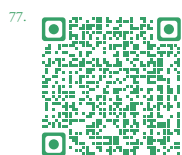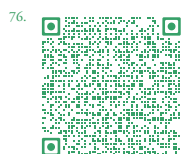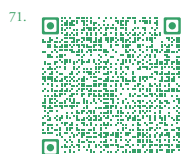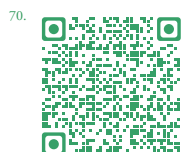
[71] Episodio 4: Enfoque de Curso de Vida y Discapacidad - Comisión de la Verdad Colombia (Episode 4: Life Cycle and Disability Approach - Colombia Truth Commission)

[72] Enfoque Niñas y niños - Comisión de la Verdad Colombia (Approach of Girls and Boys - Colombia Truth Commission)

[73] Enfoque Jóvenes - Comisión de la Verdad Colombia (Youngsters Approach - Colombia Truth Commission)

[74] Enfoque Adulto mayor - Comisión de la Verdad Colombia (Elderly People Approach - Colombia Truth Commission)

[75] Enfoque Discapacidad - Comisión de la Verdad Colombia (Disable People Approach - Colombia Truth Commission)..

[76] Hablamos de verdad con niños, niñas y adolescentes - Comisión de la Verdad Colombia (We talk about truth with children and adolescents - Truth Commission Colombia)

[77] Consulta Nacional de Jóvenes por la Verdad - Comisión de la Verdad - Manifiesto #JóvenesXLaVerdad Generación V+ (National Youth Consultation for the Truth - Truth Commission)

[78] Espacios de diálogo con personas mayores para la no repetición del conflicto armado en Colombia - Envejecimiento, vejez y conflicto armado - Comisión de la Verdad Colombia (Spaces for dialogue with the elderly for the non-repetition of the armed conflict in Colombia - Aging, old age and armed conflict - Truth Commission Colombia)

[79] Discapacidad e inclusión en la superación del conflicto armado - Comisión de la Verdad Colombia (Disability and inclusion in overcoming the armed conflict - Colombia Truth Commission)

[80] ¿Cómo es la relación de los niños y niñas con la verdad? (What is children's relationship with the truth?)

Psychosocial approach

This approach was understood as an interdisciplinary field of knowledge and action, where psychological perspectives on the mind and emotions converge with social, political, and cultural perspectives to understand the individual, family, and collective impacts of violence, to design processes of care and support in the activities of the Commission and to contribute to self-care in the teams[81].

From its inception, the psychosocial approach went beyond the idea of simply assisting at specific moments. Instead, it developed methodologies and manuals to support different stages of the processes[82]. It was involved in the before, during and after activities involving different stakeholders and communities, and designed actions that considered the peculiarities of the victims and the perpetrators. It also addressed the emotional mobilization, the meaning of the events or traumatic impacts experienced, the construction of narratives and testimonies, and the forms of symbolic redefinition, reinforcement of the social fabric and coexistence of the communities and the Commission's teams.

The psychosocial approach was methodologically coordinated with each of the Commission's mission objectives[83]. For the clarification approach, the Commission contributed to the approach of testimony and the analysis of the mechanisms that made violence against the civilian population possible, such as the reinforcement of beliefs, the construction of the enemy, intolerance, justification, inter alia, as well as the analysis of the social and human impacts of the conflict, and the resources for coping and resistance. The findings of this approach resulted in volumes such as "Impacts, Coping and Resistance".

This approach was considered in the methodological design of the instruments to be used by the interviewers and documenters, in order to make them from the point of view of caring for people. During the readiness stage, a training manual on the psychosocial approach was created [84], which was used during the collection of testimonies and included a training stage for the teams. In addition, the manual set out how the work of the approach was to be carried out in the Commission's four objectives.

Participation strategy

This strategy was designed to ensure the participation of diverse people and sectors during the nearly four years of the Commission's mandate[85]. This strategy promoted participation during deployment in the territories, the collection of testimonies, spaces for social dialogue and for the contribution of organizations and agencies. Participation was conceived in a plural, creative, inclusive, safe, and harmless way; opening meetings where the Commission received

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[81]. Enfoque psicosocial - Comisión de la Verdad Colombia (Psychosocial approach - Colombia Truth Commission)

[82]. To learn about psychosocial tools and the psychosocial approach to recognition, see Caja de Herramientas Comisión de la Verdad (Truth Commission Toolbox).

[83]. To learn about psychosocial tools and the psychosocial approach to recognition, see Caja de Herramientas Comisión de la Verdad (Truth Commission Toolbox).

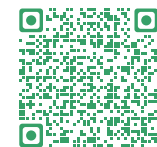[84]. Manual de Formación en Enfoque Psicosocial (Psychosocial Approach Training Manual)

[85]. Estrategia de participación ciudadana - Comisión de la Verdad Colombia (Citizen participation strategy - Colombia Truth Commission)
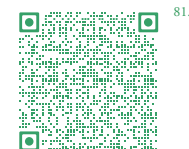
Educational strategy

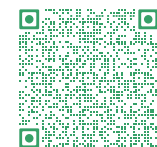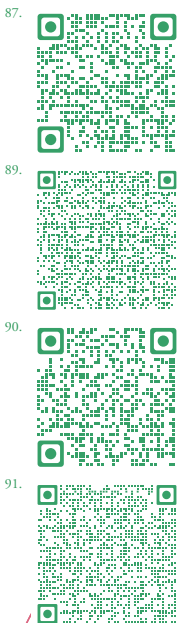reflections from different people, testimonies, and contributions on what happened during the armed conflict, expanding their stories through exercises that allowed a shared understanding of the topics of the mandate[86]. This was done through two lines of work: *incident readiness and restorative participation*. The first focused on recognizing the contributions of the different communities for clarification, considering their capacity for political and social transformation. The second focused on spaces for listening, dialogue and reflection.

This was based on the need to create tools, actions, and partnerships to encourage society to take ownership of the search for the truth[87]. Promoted collective reflection and learning, strengthening skills and capacities of different sectors, finding shared meanings on truth, recognition of what happened, coexistence and non-repetition of the conflict[88]. It also promoted learning communities, pedagogical, emotional, and spiritual processes, and life skills. It changed artistic and cultural languages and promoted expressions of coping and resistance. Contributed to the search for truth through listening settings[89], meetings for public acknowledgments, coexistence processes and dialogues for non-repetition that brought together different sectors and actors in a great national dialogue on truth[90]. And during the legacy strategy, discussed in chapter six, was one of the core strategies driving the arrival of the Final Report.

Cultural and artistic strategy

The armed conflict has impacted culture, and at the same time culture has served to confront or deal with it. For the Commission, art and culture were central elements for the understanding of the conflict, social mobilization, resistance, reconstruction and strengthening of the social fabric[91].

This strategy served to reflect, together with the communities, on the way in which the conflict has ingrained itself in the culture, and the reasons why it has persisted or has been intensified. Also, to identify and recognize cultural expressions that were affected and that need to be recovered or promoted, in terms of symbolic reparation, resistance and historical memory. And to express, transform, and overcome wounds in artistic and collective healing processes. The knowledge derived from these processes expanded the research on the causes, origins and individual and collective affectations, and the impacts and coping that the communities developed during the conflict.

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86. To learn more about the Participation Mechanisms in the Commission for the Clarification of Truth, Coexistence and Non-Repetition go to Caja de Herramientas Comisión de la Verdad. (Truth Commission Toolbox)

87. Estrategia de pedagogía (Pedagogy strategy)

88. To learn more about the Processes for social mobilization for Truth and internal and external pedagogy training, go to Caja de Herramientas Comisión de la Verdad. (Truth Commission Toolbox)

89. Escuchamos para esclarecer y construir un relato compartido de Nación. (We listened in order to clarify and build a shared story of the Nation)

90. Espacio de Escucha con las Mesas de Víctimas (Listening Session with the Victims' Committees)

91. Estrategia Cultural y Artística - arte, paz y verdad (Cultural and Artistic Strategy - art, peace, and truth)

Incident preparation and restorative participation

CHAPTER 2. RESEARCH APPROACH

This process also strengthened existing community networks in the territories by identifying cultural contexts permeated by the armed conflict, revealing the positive and negative transformations that this has caused in the communities, and recognizing and making visible the artistic and cultural expressions that have accompanied the experience of war. This also served to understand, together with the communities, the value of truth, to transform the tragic story into a hopeful one, to understand the cultural and artistic practices that define society, and to recognize the value of the communities in the face of the conflict and its resulting resistance processes. This strategy was also central to the arrival of the Final Report.

Communicating to raise visibility, awareness, and position

The Commission understood communication as a tool to make visible and to disseminate public accounts, stories, and testimonies about what happened in the context of the armed conflict. If the social dialogue was the endeavor to mobilize society at the territorial, national,

Photography: Truth Commission

Methodology for the clarification of the truth

and international levels to clarify the truth, communication was the strategy to place the ownership of this socially woven explanation on the public agenda[92].

Through outreach strategies, the Commission sought to place the recommendations to stop and overcome the conflict and build a future in peace in the public debate; it made visible processes at the local, regional, and national levels, and addressed the experiences of the exiled population. This strategy faced the challenge of speaking to a country that at times has been indifferent to the conflict, which has deep divisions on how to understand and transform it, and wherein diverse narratives meet and intertwine.

Given these conditions, the Commission decided to build a unified narrative around its story and actions and consulted with experts to define innovative actions for different audiences. This contributed to the search for clarification by preparing society for the arrival of the Final Report, positioning a shared narrative, and amplifying the national dialogue in the shared lookout.

With the research guided by an inductive process based mainly on people's stories and accounts, differential approaches and strategies that contributed to social mobilization and the strengthening of community processes, the listening process yielded the following main findings.

With the delivery of the first two outcomes of the research from the listening sessions[93] (December 2019 and May 2020)[94] , The first findings emerged: territorial analyses that addressed the regional and national dynamics of the conflict with interpretations from the thematic cores. With the delivery of these developments, the plenary of commissioners decided to create a team called the Final Report Group - GIF (from its name in Spanish, May 2020), made up of the Director of Knowledge, the Territorial Director, the Director of Ethnic Peoples and two assistant commissioners who coordinated the research: Carlos Beristain and Marta Ruiz, who led and coordinated the research in the stage of analysis, contrast, deepening and writing the Final Report[95].

To this end, the GIF presented to the plenary a document with the route to be followed by the report and the methodological proposal for analysis and writing. It also presented a document that deepened the discussion on the patterns, questions and initial research findings derived from the balance sheets. This document sought to ensure that the definition of the cases was coherent with what the patterns revealed, and that the territorial and national analyses were truly coordinated. This resulted in eleven documents by macro-region and ten thematic documents.

Final Report Volumes

[92.] Strategies such as the Frente al Espejo (Facing the Mirror) program are an example of this: Chapters Frente Al Espejo - YouTube.

[93.] La escucha plural en el 2020 (Plural listening in 2020)

[94.] See timeline. p. 29 of this document.

[95.] Truth Commission. Management Report 2020. p. 24.

The eleven documents from the macro-regions that emerged from the listening sessions presented a narrative on the territorial dynamics of the conflict. These texts answered three questions: What happened in each region with the issues prioritized in the thematic cores, both in terms of violence and resistance? Why did it happen and how can the described patterns be explained? What are the factors that allow us to understand the persistence of the conflict? And the thematic exercises or states-of-the-art studies were divided by the thematic cores[96].

By February 2021, the GIF proposed a preliminary table of contents for the Final Report, which was discussed, analyzed, and adjusted by all commissioners for its final version. This was the result of the study and comparison of these assessments, their preliminary findings, the deepening of the patterns and the identification of gaps and gray areas.

After going through thematic lines and cores, the research approach was structured in these eleven volumes that explain the conflict, show its human side, and gather perspectives for the future.

Those that explain the conflict:
1. Even war has limits.
2. Colombia inside.
3. You shall not kill.

The human side of the conflict:
4. Resistance is not endurance.
5. Not a lesser evil.
6. My body is the truth.
7. Colombia outside Colombia.
8. Suffering the war and rebuilding your life.
9. When the birds did not chirp.

Those that talk about the future:
10. Call for a great peace.
11. Truth Commission Findings and Recommendations.

For the Commission, it was key to translate its mandate into approaches and methodologies on which the Commission focused its efforts to investigate the conflict and seek explanations that dignified the demands of the victims. After thinking about the thematic lines, which became cores and finally resulted in the volumes that make up the Final Report, a framework was established to develop the research in an inductive manner. The following chapter will explain the methodology used to listen to thousands of testimonies from different sectors and in different territories, both inside and outside the country.

[96.] Comisión de la Verdad. Informe de Gestión 2020. p. 36 – 38 (Truth Commission. Management Report 2020, p. 36-38)

Photography: Truth Commission

METHODOLOGY FOR THE CLARIFICATION OF THE TRUTH

CHAPTER 3.

PLURAL LISTENING AND KNOWLEDGE MANAGEMENT

The previous chapter developed some of the key discussions around the core issues to be investigated by the Commission. In addition to the structure by volumes, which attempted to cover the complexity of the armed conflict and emphasize contexts, patterns, populations with special characteristics and strategies for approaching them, an inductive approach was chosen, which placed the testimonies of the victims at the center of the account.

The main strategy for collecting these testimonies were the plural listening spaces: interviews wherein the Commission listened individually and collectively to peasant and ethnic communities, neighborhood and rural organizations, women and LGTBI+ people, children and youth, businessmen, merchants, students and ex-combatants, teachers, religious people, journalists, and members of the security forces, and in general to anyone who voluntarily wanted to share their testimonies.

There were also public and private meeting spaces for deep listening and social dialogue, wherein silence was interrupted, difficult questions were addressed, expressions of resistance were made visible, and individual and collective transformations were unleashed in order to rebuild bonds, to recognize the human nature and the commitment to change by the different actors of society[97]. The

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97. For more information on social dialogue see Diálogo social | IF Transmedia

Commission proposed five strategic lines to address this great national dialogue. First, plural dialogue with victims and other sectors[98]. Second, dialogues with organized and unorganized victims and organizations. Third, contributions to overcoming and non-repetition of what happened[99]. Fourth, the consolidation of working spaces with conflict actors. And fifth, meetings between these actors and different sectors[100]. To develop these five working lines, methodologies were developed to implement the gender, ethnic, psychosocial, life cycle and disability approaches.

A plural listening of these dimensions and characteristics, however, was not an easy task, and there were a few caveats on important aspects to be considered. For example, that people did not feel manipulated or utilized, that they were not re-victimized by repeating painful narratives they had already given to other agencies, that potential emotional outbursts were adequately dealt with, and that the conversations were close to the language of each community, without losing depth and thoroughness in the questions asked.

Listening was based on recognizing and understanding the diverse accounts of victims, perpetrators, and different sectors of society[101]. It was an active listening, wherein understanding not only went through the explicit nature, but also included what could be told by the omissions or avoidance of certain topics. Thus, using psychosocial tools to identify people's needs, we were able to obtain testimonies that were both releasing and of immense contribution to the clarification of the situation.

In addition, the listening spaces helped to go beyond the narrative of the individual story to a collective reflection on what happened during the conflict. And from more than 1,900 public and private events in the country, it was possible to open a dialogue with society to recognize the suffering experienced, to ask for and offer explanations, to understand the reasons why violence occurred and persisted, and to advance in ethical, political, and historical commitments to build peace.

These settings not only contributed to the investigation for the clarification, but also influenced the public scenario and impacted the social and political life of the country[102]. From these, society was moved to recognize what happened, to reject the outrageous, to ask questions about the future, coexistence, non-repetition, the necessary structural transformations, the responsibilities of the armed actors and the State, and to become empowered to seek answers and participate in the transformation.

CEV (Social Dialogue | IF Transmedia CEV)

[98] Espacio de Escucha con la Guardia Indígena (Listening Space with the Indigenous Guards)

[99] Diálogo nacional con líderes de distintas regiones de Colombia (National dialogue with leaders from different regions of Colombia)

[100] Encuentro por la Verdad: reconocimiento a las víctimas de ejecuciones extrajudiciales en Colombia (Meeting for the Truth: recognition given to victims of extrajudicial executions in Colombia)

[101] Reflexiones en torno al valor de la escucha profunda (Reflections on the value of deep listening)

[102] Primer Encuentro por la Verdad: 'Mi Cuerpo dice la Verdad' (First Meeting for the Truth: 'My Body Tells the Truth')

Photography: Truth Commission
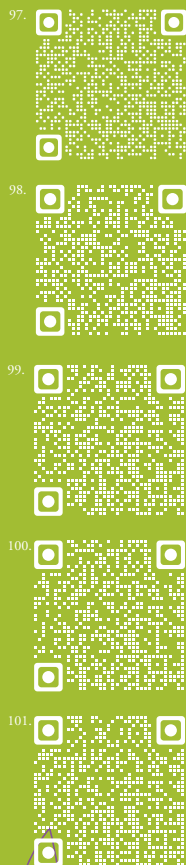
METHODOLOGIES: INSTRUMENTS FOR LISTENING

The collection of testimonies, their analysis and systematization were carried out through interviews to feed the research. The construction of these instruments and their methodological guides, as mentioned in chapter 1, arose from the analysis of community and institutional sources and initiatives, some of which were part of transitional justice processes, and which had developed their own listening strategies..

The Commission carried out interviews with individual and collective victims, and with armed actors and people involved in the armed conflict. The former sought to document facts, contexts, forms of victimization, impacts, coping and resistance, while the latter sought to recreate experiences that made it possible to clarify patterns and responsibilities. The following is a description of the types of instruments used by the Commission to carry out these interviews, according to the needs and contexts:

1. **Individual interviews with victims, family members and witnesses**[103]**:** Basic data was collected, and a complementary mapping was developed on the events and types of violence experienced, the collective responsibilities identified, the alleged perpetrators and the general context wherein the events took place. Also, the individual and collective impacts, coping and resistance processes, and access to justice, reparation, and non-repetition measures. Finally, there were annotations on the narrative and the datasheet by the interviewer.

2. **Interviews with armed actors responsible for human rights violations and breaches of IHL**[104]**:** Also, with basic data and a complementary profiling, this type of interview sought to identify the life of the perpetrators within the armed actors, the dynamics of violence, the specific events, the responsibility for these events, the impacts and coping, demobilization and reintegration, and the contribution to justice, truth, reparation, and non-repetition. At the end of the interview, the interviewer made notes on the story and the datasheet.

3. **Interviews were held with persons appearing before the JEP**[105] resulting from the process of coordination with the SIP, as mentioned in Chapter 1. The appearing persons were Colombians or foreigners who participated in the armed conflict and who were involved in justice processes before this jurisdiction. Those who voluntarily wished

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103. For the Individual Interview Guide for Victims, Family Witnesses go to Caja de Herramientas Comisión de la Verdad. (Truth Commission Toolbox)

104. To learn more about the Guide for Interviewing Armed Actors Responsible for Human Rights Violations and Breaches of International Humanitarian Law. go to Caja de Herramientas Comisión de la Verdad. (Truth Commission Toolbox)

105. These interviews followed the same Armed Actors guide. Nevertheless, as mentioned during the description, it generated a series of certificates 1) Valoración de los aportes de los comparecientes ante la JEP en la ruta de esclarecimiento de la verdad (Assessment of the contributions made by those appearing before the JEP in the truth clarification process). 2) Formato para la elaboración de certificaciones iniciales (Template for the development of initial certifications) 3) Formato para la elaboración de certificaciones finales satisfactorias (Template for the development of satisfactory final certifications) 4) Formato para la elaboración de certificaciones finales negativas (Template for the development of final negative certifications) to see them go to Caja de Herramientas Comisión de la Verdad. (Truth Commission Toolbox)

to receive special treatment, benefits and guarantees before the SJP, contributed to the truth with the Commission. Their account of their participation and responsibility in the conflict, guaranteeing the rights of the victims, allows to know and rebuild that past of the victims and contribute to their processes of memory, truth, justice, and reparation. This process began with an assessment of the need for the contribution to the investigation. The request for its participation was made by the Commission[106], the JEP or upon their request. In addition to the clarification of accountability, there was the clarification of structures, political, military, and social connections; benefits, intentions and plans of those responsible; and contexts, cases, patterns and causes of the conflict. This was followed by a series of conditions related to the commitment or contribution to clarification, reparation and guarantees of non-repetition, which the participants had to comply with to access any special treatment within the JEP *(conditional regime)*. They had two types of certifications, an initial one where the name of the person appearing and the agreed work plan were communicated, and a final one with the conclusions on their contribution derived from the assessment of their contribution. This assessment was made by evaluating their contribution, which had to be transparent and understandable (neither confusing nor contradictory) and specific with respect to the facts, responsible parties, and contexts. This resulted in a Final Report containing the reasons why the contribution was considered to meet the criteria of sufficiency, reliability, and validity. Sufficiency determined the completeness of the information provided. Reliability focused on the willingness of the participant and the conditions that promoted or affected the development of the work plan. Validity, on the other hand, established the coherence of the information, given the research findings compared with other sources. The final certification was positive or negative according to its contribution to the truth. This process was communicated to the JEP, together with the certificates, by the Commission.

4. **Interviews to civilian third parties[107]:** As with the two previous surveys, it gathered basic data and a complementary profile of the civil third party[108], the report also included annotations on the dynamics of participation and benefits, facts, and accountability for the violence, impacts and coping, and contributions to justice, truth, reparation, and non-repetition. It also included annotations on the narrative and the datasheet.

[106.] Decreed by Resolution 075/2019 and under the process of participation of appearing persons before the JEP who make contributions to the truth.

[107.] To learn more about the Individual Interview Guide for Civil Third Parties go to «Caja de Herramientas», Comisión de la Verdad. (Truth Commission Toolbox)

[108.] Person who directly or indirectly participated in the armed conflict.

CHAPTER 3. PLURAL LISTENING AND KNOWLEDGE MANAGEMENT   Photography: Truth Commission

5. **In-depth interviews[109]:** This was a setting for listening and conversation with a person who, because of his or her particular experience, expertise, or specific knowledge, was able to provide concrete information to document relevant issues in the most detailed way possible. These were key witnesses or people who had knowledge of processes, cases or situations over time, social movements, sectors, inter alia. These were carried out in several working sessions and systematized through reports.

6. **Life Stories[110]:** This setting was designed for the interviewee to share his personal story and, with it, his feelings, evaluations, and points of view about his own life and the circumstances of violence he experienced. Listening and delving into what happened through the feelings and language of everyday life was essential for the Commission, to the extent that this approach found richness in the legitimacy given by feelings, in the very experience of the event, in the impact on the development of life itself, in the personal, community, political and social realms, inter alia, allowing for a wide range of nuances for the analysis of the information. These were systematized through reports.

7. **Group interviews[111]:** A setting for dialogue between victims or people who have witnessed violent events and share a common circumstance, whether it be the type of violation, their age, gender or ethnicity, the place where they live, the armed actor of which they were victims, inter alia. The purpose of this dialogue was to collectively recreate the events they experienced, the impacts and the ways of coping they developed, in a context of trust wherein it was possible to compare visions in order to build a common story that acknowledged the differences between them[112]. These were systematized in the form of reports.

8. **Community diagnostics [113]:** Collective reflection exercise of a specific community on dynamics and conditions that promoted or contributed to the persistence of the

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[109.] For the In-Depth Interview Guide go to Caja de Herramientas Comisión de la Verdad. (Truth Commission Toolbox). The team in charge of clarifying the exile expanded this guide and adapted it into this guide with its own narrative.a

[110.] They are a source of information whose content focuses on the vital experience of human beings throughout their lives, in a context that in many cases includes the dynamics of violence. They allowed the Commission to have a vision that transcends the violent event. They also allowed the Commission to reflect on the causes and dynamics of the conflict through people's daily lives, and to identify factors that have allowed the repetition of violence and prevented the consolidation of the elements of coexistence. They followed the Guide for documenting Life Histories, to learn more about it visit Caja de Herramientas Comisión de la Verdad. (Truth Commission Toolbox)

[111.] To see the Guide for Collective Interviews go to Caja de Herramientas Comisión de la Verdad. (Truth Commission Toolbox)

[112.] Due to the fact that in many cases, the damage and events have a collective dimension, it was necessary to have methodologies and forms of collective work that would serve the objectives of clarification, recognition, and coexistence, to support people in the construction of their experiences in spaces of dialogue that were dignifying and meaningful for those who took part in them.

[113.] To see the Community Diagnostic Guide go to Caja de Herramientas Comisión de la Verdad. (Truth Commission Toolbox)

armed conflict, with a participatory methodology, focused especially on members of communities that were affected by the armed conflict for a relevant period of time.

As a result of the health emergency that the country and the world experienced due to the Covid-19 pandemic, and the difficulties that this posed for the work of collecting testimonies, the Commission proposed, as a provisional alternative measure to advance in the fulfillment of the mandate, the use of virtual media to carry out different types of interviews:

9. **Online interviews and written input**[114]**:** Individual or collective listening exercise, through video or telephone calls or, in exceptional cases where there was no connection, other remote means.

In these online interviews, in order to address the warnings mentioned at the beginning of this chapter about the care needed when speaking with the victims, the Commission established some criteria. For example, they could be suspended at the moment the person indicated. The psychosocial team had to be attentive to offer the necessary support, even after the hearing, especially in cases where there were strong emotional reactions. In addition, it should be ensured that they were carried out in setting that provided conditions of safety and privacy.

As an interim measure and exceptionally in the context of the pandemic, some testimonies were collected in written form or by telephone. Although this format reduced the openness of a face-to-face meeting, or even a video call, two alternatives were considered for receiving written contributions: presenting a specific case or answering a previously defined questionnaire

10. **Publicly requested interviews**[115]**:** Another type of interviews was held with stakeholders who played a decisive role in the armed conflict, such as former ministers, former presidents, or former commanders. These spaces, which were offered by public invitation or by voluntary request, were attended by people who have played a relevant role in a dynamic, region or period during the armed conflict; their testimony allowed for an important contribution to the truth. Its purpose was also to generate impact on public opinion. After the interview, through the Commission's media, there was coverage or a public display of the person's commitment to the truth.

The aforementioned instruments had a specific methodology, with definitions of fundamental concepts, theoretical frameworks, and the incorporation of differential criteria of each approach. The people interviewed had to sign (or leave it on audio, for online interviews) informed consents authorizing the Commission to process and use personal data and the audiovisual, photographic, sound and audio recordings. In some cases, an affidavit by the

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114. To see the Guide for holding online interviews and written contributions, go to Caja de Herramientas Comisión de la Verdad. (Truth Commission Toolbox)
115. ABC de los Espacios de Contribución a la Verdad Contribuciones a la verdad - YouTube (ABCs Settings for Contribution to the truth)

Photography: Truth Commission

commissioners, in case there were inconsistencies in the consent, to provide a record of the interview.

For the systematization of the testimonies, each interview had a short datasheet with basic information filled out at the time the testimony was taken. This form was the basis for the production of statistical analyses specific to the Commission, as will be seen below. And a long form filled out after the interview based on the audio recorded for the documentation of the testimony. To this process was added the labeling of the information provided by the testimonies. The complete methodology is described below.

A lesson learned in relation to informed consent emerged towards the closure of the Commission. When the need arose to transfer the accumulated archive and to incorporate the collection produced during the years of its mandate in the Digital Transmedia (described in depth in the last chapter), the Commission found about twenty-two types of templates adapted to the needs of the different processes or to situations such as the pandemic produced by Covid-19. In similar experiences, it is necessary to develop a unified template that meets national legislations and the general processes where they are implemented, foreseeing the use that will be made of the information provided by the individuals.

EL CAMPO CUENTA LA VERDAD

Photography: Truth Commission

Since these are complex issues and involve relations with ex-combatants and former armed actors, the Commission identified the need to create a team dedicated to addressing the requirements and doubts of the territorial teams in charge of taking testimonies from these populations. This was called the Interview Support Group and was created in August 2019. It was initially formed by a group of seven people who shaped the interview instruments. Its task was to serve as a liaison between the different teams of the Commission due to the volume and complexity of the interviews, for example, those of the JEP's appearing persons.

As explained in the previous chapter, the research focused on certain populations with special characteristics, on which violence has had a distinctive impact. These populations have been historically silenced or ignored and have ways of understanding the world that must be recognized on the road to peace. The relationship with them had to follow specific criteria, and for this reason the Commission designed differential methodologies for the listening process. These were drawn from the following differential approaches.

In order to advance in the investigation of the ethnic volume of the Final Report according to the criteria defined with these peoples in the prior consultation, it was necessary to start from the ethnic methodology, as well as to adapt instruments for listening and its safeguard in the SIM. To develop the route of clarification in an ethnic key, the Commission designed a series of instruments in agreement with indigenous, black, raizal, Palenquero and roma organizations:

1. **Collective interview datasheet for ethnic collective subject[116]:** Its objective was to gather information on the facts and collective effects on Afro-descendant, indigenous and Roma communities in the context of the conflict, in order to understand patterns and dynamics regarding the traditional use of the territory, the spiritual relationship with it, cultural identity, formalization and legal security, autonomy and self-government, and free, prior, and informed consultation. The methodologies used were timelines, talking maps, trees of life[117], past-present and category matrix.
2. **Community diagnosis or collective interview for Roma peoples[118]:** Its objective was to document, through collective reflection, the dynamics and conditions that enabled or contributed to the persistence of the armed conflict in the kumpañy (kumpania) communities and organizations of the Romany or Gypsy people in Colombia, based

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116. To learn more about the interview guide for collective subjects and the interview datasheet for collective subjects, go to Caja de Herramientas Comisión de la Verdad. (Truth Commission Toolbox)
117. As will be seen in the listening sessions with children, it is the methodology used to tell their life stories through an artistic and playful rePhotography: the construction of a tree wherein each part is the opportunity to tell the story.
118. To see the Guide for community diagnosis or collective interview for Roma people and the Guide for the preparation of testimony gathering with the Roma people, please go to Caja de Herramientas Comisión de la Verdad. (Truth Commission Toolbox)

DIFFERENTIAL METHODOLOGIES FOR LISTENING

Methodology against racism, racial discrimination, and related forms of bigotry

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119.
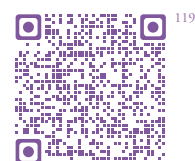
on historical elements. This was done in four sessions: one to build the history of the kumpania/organization, another to understand the territory and daily life, the next to understand the context of the armed conflict and, finally, an evaluation and farewell session.

3. **Survey of Romany or Gypsy women[119]:** Its objective was to identify institutional and conflict-related discrimination behaviors against Romany women, through a dialogue that allowed several Romany women to share in individual interviews the events that had affected them. It began with an awareness-raising activity and the identification of a leader rapporteur, and then a collective dialogue was developed through guiding questions. The session was closed with the possibility of a private dialogue with whoever wished to participate.

4. **Workshop with young Roma or Gypsies[120]:** Its purpose was to identify young people's practices of resistance, protection of their lives and kumpania in the face of the conflict, as well as to recognize their knowledge, coping capacities and life projects. The methodology was a dialogue circle divided into a participatory diagnosis, the identification of capacities and a final evaluation.

In the files, the dimensions, and potential effects of the conflict on the territorial, cultural, spiritual, political, social, economic, and natural fields were analyzed. It was also essential to have a consent form signed by the ethnic authority of the community being attended. In addition, there were guides with guidelines, recommendations, culturally relevant methodologies (talking maps, maps of the past, maps of present transformations, timelines, life trees, inter alia) and proposed questions for individual and collective interviews.

Given the magnitude and specificity of the task and the need to build trust, the support of ethnic organizations was sought through agreements. These teams were trained to use the instruments defined by the Commission. The first step was to coordinate the entry into the territories. Then, the agendas and methodologies to be used were shared and adjusted in order to access the development of the collective space[121].

Having had a listening process that respected the consultation processes with ethnic peoples, their authorities, worldviews, customs, and epistemologies, allowed the Commission,

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[119.] To see the Guide to Surveying Roma Women go to Caja de Herramientas Comisión de la Verdad. (Truth Commission Toolbox)

[120.] To see the Guide for a workshop with young Roma or Gypsies, go to Caja de Herramientas Comisión de la Verdad. (Truth Commission Toolbox)

[121.] The collective spaces were developed in: a presentation of the ethnic authority and the participants; the Harmonization, spiritual preparation of the space with different rituals in each community, led by the spiritual authority or welcome and confidence-building activity; a background introduction on the armed conflict, the effects it produced and the peace agreements; a presentation of the structure, instruments and institutions of the SIP with emphasis on the Commission and the Ethnic Directorate; a presentation of activities to be developed, methodologies and objectives. In this case, the collection of testimony from the ethnic collective subject, instructions, and guiding questions; and finally, the completion of the free, prior, and informed consent form for the ethnic collective subject.

Photography: Truth Commission

METHODOLOGY FOR THE CLARIFICATION OF THE TRUTH

together with the ethnic peoples of Colombia, to find explanations about what happened, which for years had been invisible, distorted or limited.

In similar experiences, prior consultation with the ethnic authorities is essential so that the process meets and respects their realities, honoring the consultation agreements. It is also necessary to make institutional adjustments to guarantee the effective participation of the peoples, to incorporate, within the research teams and those who ensure participation, members of the ethnic peoples that allow a better approach to their realities, as well as a process of permanent dialogue, this ensures their participation and is an opportunity for permanent access and community strengthening. Security strategies must also be incorporated for those who participate, therefore it is necessary to develop permanent risk assessment processes, and when required, the activation of care and protection routes, such as the use of anonymous data, the protection of information and the efforts that preserve and ensure the life of those who take part in similar processes.

Listening in exile

There is a great debt of clarification in Colombia regarding the causes and events that preceded the exile, and the impact on the lives of the victims, their families, organizations, political parties, and communities. For this reason, it was important for the Commission to listen outside Colombia as well[122].

The listening process was carried out thanks to the 23 nodes that encouraged the participation of the victims through trust networks, educational, cultural, artistic and communication actions, whereby they collected testimonies and documentary information[123]. These teams participated in meetings to exchange experiences of exile and in the development of timelines, recognition of cases and prioritized sources. To adapt to the characteristics of this population, the Commission designed other instruments in addition to those described in this chapter:

1. **Semi-structured interview guide on exile[124]:** Listening sessions to clarify the context of the events, the reasons for leaving the country, the situation in the place of arrival or reception and the impacts generated afterwards.
2. **Interview with lawyers who assist victims abroad[125]:** It was used to document personal and professional histories of assistance, types of cases handled abroad and suggested to the Commission, impacts and expectations of return identified, policies of reception and stay in the countries, analysis of national and international legal frameworks,

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[122.] Verdad sin fronteras - YouTube (Truth without borders)

[123.] During the listening sessions, the Commission was able to understand the processes of exile in stages: i. The violent events that caused it. ii. The conditions and routes of departure. iii. Arrival, the search for protection and the emergence of new violence. iv. Remaining abroad, resistance and individual and collective impacts. v. Return and its conditions.

[124.] To see the Semi-Structured Interview Guide on Exile go to Caja de Herramientas Comisión de la Verdad. (Truth Commission Toolbox)

[125.] To see the Guide for interviewing lawyers who assist victims abroad, please go to Caja de Herramientas Comisión de la Verdad. (Truth Commission Toolbox)
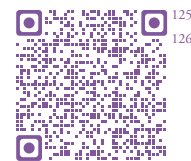
processes of coexistence, memory and reconciliation, asylum requests, institutional reforms, and processes of dignity-building of exiled persons.

3. **Interview with psychologists who assist victims abroad[126]:** It helped to document personal and professional histories of assistance; types of cases handled abroad and their characteristics; psychological, health, family, socioeconomic and loss impacts, both individual and collective; situations of stress, uncertainty and vulnerability; cases of human rights violations; impacts broken down by age, gender, generation or ethnicity; recurring effects and forms of resilience; policies of refuge or care in the different countries; return, psychosocial and legal care; assessment of exile, the Peace Process and the Commission; processes of coexistence, memory and reconciliation; asylum demands, institutional reforms and processes of dignity building of the exiled people.

In Colombia, focus groups and individual and in-depth interviews were held with people returning from exile. A central component of the work in the country was the focus on cross-border forced displacement with Panama, Venezuela, and Ecuador. This work was carried out by researchers specialized in these areas who coordinated with the international macro team in Bogota and the territorial offices of the Commission.

The listening process in exile revealed an invisible Colombia. In the Truth Commission this happened in the investigation, but also at the institutional level. The Commission was able to recognize initiatives outside Colombia promoted by networks, collectives, victims' associations, and platforms for voluntary participation in peacebuilding and the visibility of the experience of exile, which also generated international pressure for Colombia to be featured on the international agenda.

Listening with a gender perspective

The clarification of the truth from a gender perspective focused on the causes, behaviors and impacts of the armed conflict on women, girls and LGBTIQ+ persons, as well as their coping mechanisms. It also involved the review of cultural patterns that were intensified during the armed conflict, such as patriarchal violence and discrimination.

The Commission considered that the taking of testimonies from victims of gender-based violence (GBV) and sexual violence should be done by people who know the territory, who know how to identify and support victims of these forms of violence and recognize manifestations in cases where there was prevention or no recognition of what happened. To this end, it was sought to have these testimonies taken by women and LGBTIQ+ people. In this regard, the following were created:

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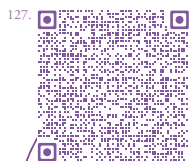
126. To read the interview guide for psychologists who assist victims abroad, please go to Caja de Herramientas Comisión de la Verdad. (Truth Commission Toolbox)

1. **Guide for the approach to sexual violence[127]:** This guide, unlike the previous ones, was designed as a manual for use by the Commission's internal teams. It identified recommendations for a first contact with victims who are survivors of sexual violence in the context of the armed conflict. It addressed what should be avoided in the handling of cases of sexual violence. The objectives and strategies of the Commission for addressing sexual violence were introduced; and tools were provided on how to guide victims in cases of sexual violence. Finally, guidelines were provided for the analysis of patterns of sexual violence.

2. **Gender policy[128]:** This policy, also for internal use, addressed the meaning of gender approach mainstreaming. It provided guiding categories for mainstreaming, guiding analytical concepts and types of sexual violence. It also provided spaces for dialogue, coordination, and a guide to inclusive language.

One guideline for taking testimonies was to respect the decision of each person to publicly assume or not their gender identity or sexual preference. For this reason, it was preferred to seek out these people through organizations and social movements belonging to or close to these sectors. Another guideline was to ensure the confidentiality of their testimony, something that was especially important with victims of sexual violence, because of the stigma surrounding this topic. In addition, it was essential to work with territorial organizations that in recent years have been dedicated to making violence against LGBTIQ+ sectors visible. These organizations submitted reports and illustrative cases that allowed for a better understanding of the impacts, contexts, and responsibilities. Working with the leaders of these organizations, and learning about their life stories, helped to deepen the processes of coping and resistance of LGBTIQ+ people[129].

This process was based on the incorporation of the feminist approach and the gender perspective as an ethical commitment to listen to the victims and to recognize, believe and trust their testimonies. Thanks to this belief, the Commission is the first state agency to make an effort to collect, analyze and integrate disaggregated data on the impacts on LGBTIQ+ people in the war. In similar experiences, it is fundamental to incorporate the feminist approach and the gender perspective, ensuring that women and people with different gender preferences

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127. Guía para el abordaje de las violencias sexuales en la Comisión de la Verdad (Guide for the approach to sexual violence in the Truth Commission)

128. To learn more about the Internal *Policy of the Gender Working Group for the mainstreaming and implementation of the gender approach in the Commission*, go to Caja de Herramientas Comisión de la Verdad. (Truth Commission Toolbox)

129. Other key sources for clarification with a gender approach were the decisions of Justice and Peace, the Special Jurisdiction for Land Restitution, the Council of State, the Constitutional Court, the Prosecutor's Office, and the Supreme Court. Also, reports submitted by social organizations and the State before the International Criminal Court (ICC), reports from organizations that provide psychosocial support to victims with a gender perspective, risk reports and follow-up notes from the Ombudsman's Office and reports from the Attorney General's Office, specifically from the monitoring boards on the situation of women and LGBTI+ victims of the armed conflict.

are heard and participate from this perspective. At the same time, this approach should cut across the actions derived from similar processes both within the organizations and agencies, as well as in the work with the victims.

Listening to children and teenagers

The Commission identified the need to understand the impacts of the conflict on children[130], teenagers and young people. And not only in the moment when the violence occurred, but also in the consequences it had on their life experiences. The differential Life cycle approach was responsible for this understanding.

In order to hear and document their stories, the Commission worked with UNICEF, ICBF (Colombian Institute of Family Welfare) and the High Counselor's Office for Human Rights, and also worked with civil organizations responsible for the protection of these sectors. Based on this, specific methodological guidelines were developed for collecting testimonies, and collective individual interviews and life stories were collected, always considering the principles of protection and action without harm. This was included in the:

1. **Methodological tools for the development and approach to the process of clarification with children and adolescents[131]:** These were information-gathering mechanisms for working with children and adolescents, such as: Our Visions interview guide, *My territory and I* focus group guide, and the guide for documenting stories *The tree of my life.* Also, the protocol for the use of annexed formats in clarification processes, guidelines for vulnerability assessment, informed consent for the participation of children and adolescents. And the security checklist and the checklist for the person in charge of the interview, instruments for the collection of data and information from the testimonies.

Testimonies were collected from different generations of children, teenagers, and young victims, as well as from people who witnessed these acts of violence. Adults who lived through these events in their childhood or adolescence also participated. They told not only how they were impacted by the conflict, but also how they dealt with it and tried to overcome it.

Testimonial Volume

The plenary of commissioners proposed the need to include in the Final Report a volume built around the testimonies heard. A book that reflects the act of testifying, the legacy of a critical stance of listening. Although the basis of the volumes of the report are the testimonies

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130. Enfoque Niñas y niños - Comisión de la Verdad Colombia (Children Approach - Colombia Truth Commission)
131. To learn about the methodological tools for the development and approach of the clarification process with Children and Teenagers, go to Caja de Herramientas Comisión de la Verdad. (Truth Commission Toolbox)

of the people, this chapter focused on the daily stories of the people[132] What happens in their lives or in the *layers of destruction*[133], when the armed conflict pierces through them.

This exercise had six stages. First, an administrative stage to form the work team. Second, internal training within the agency with the seminar: *The act of witnessing*[134]. Third, the development of the traveling methodology of *Territorios de la Escucha* (Territories of Listening)[135], The project was deployed in the Caribbean, wherein the territorial contexts were experienced, the territories were explored by walking through the word, and the soundscapes were recorded[136], the experience of destruction was felt and evidenced what does not fit in a structured interview. This process was returned to the communities in ritual readings aloud[137], from which the testimonies that are part of the volume were collectively built.

Fourth, an indirect approach to SIM testimonies, based on the conversation with interviewers, note-takers, or taggers: *the listening agents*[138]. Fifth, an approach, now direct, to the testimonies of the SIM. This began with a mapping and identification of life stories and individual or collective interviews, both with victims and with family members, witnesses, and armed actors. The sixth stage, finally, had to do with the editorial process called *reciprocity of the word, editorial gestures*[139], in which an attempt was made to keep alive the spirit of the testimony and of the meeting that led to it[140].

This listening exercise recognizes violence beyond the violent act, as a long-lasting process that leaves after-effects and repercussions. Thus, the category: layers of destruction, underlying the violent events, appears. Researching from this logic implied complementing the search for the clarification of human rights violations and breaches of IHL with a perspective that

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[132.] Everyday life understood as the place where people meet, in specific contexts and at specific times; and what happens there in people's lives.

[133.] According to Alejandro Castillejo, commissioner, these layers «are not organized like the geological layers of the earth but are overlapping in each individual and group that experiences those layers in a given place». Thus, according to his proposal, «these layers can be analytical, of each person's experience, they can even be understood as layers of pain. » National University. Conversatorio «La guerra como capas situadas de devastación» (Conversation "War as localized layers of destruction"). May 2020.

[134.] Seminario «El Acto de Testimoniar: Conversaciones Interdisciplinarias» (Seminar «The Act of Witnessing: Interdisciplinary Discussions»)

[135.] Territorios de la escucha (Territories of listening)

[136.] Diálogos con la naturaleza (Dialogues with nature)

[137.] 'Lecturas Rituales', una nueva forma de narrar el conflicto (Ritual Readings', a new way of storytelling about conflict)

[138.] Anyone was involved in the testimony cycle.

[139.] It is «the relationship that sets up the listening process to the filigree and carpentry with the texts, resigns the pretension of explaining the word of the other and ethically, politically, aesthetically and technically takes on the responsibility of building a bridge between what is told by a person and the need to underline the intention of communicating while delivering an account of oneself. The editorial gestures are a weaving of relationships between the person who tells the story before the commissioning device, the different listening agents (including us, the researchers of the Testimonial Volume), and the readers». Alejandro Gabriel Pérez Rubiano. Editorial Phase Process Guide. October 27th, 2021. p. 2.

[140.] Divided into: i. registration, verification, and archiving; ii. preparation for editing, the eight processes; iii. first edition, selection of story type; iv. story structure and first version; and v. final edition and caveats.
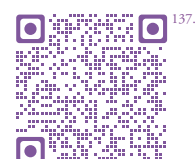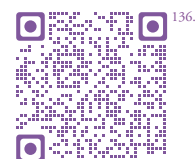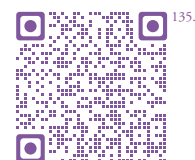
extended the concept of the experience of life in the face of war to what happens in people's daily lives. In similar experiences, it is important to expand research perspectives by understanding the experience of war, its impacts and processes of resistance arising comprehensively, and thus find explanations and transforming narratives that are installed in society in such a way as to allow the conflicts to cease. And, as pointed out by ethnic peoples, women and the LGBTIQ+ community, it is important to incorporate the analysis of the continuum of violence, structural violence, and intersectionality in the analyses for clarification

MISSION INFORMATION SYSTEM (SIM)

At the beginning of 2019, the Mission Information System (SIM) was consolidated, its main objective was to manage the Commission's information from its reception, through digitization, catalogue classification, labeling and transcription of sources, and requests for public archives and databases. The SIM allowed recording, preserving, processing, and protecting the results of the listening process, together with the contributions made by organizations and institutions that contributed to the clarification of the truth.

This knowledge was subjected, together with technological tools, to automatic and manual processes to organize, systematize, process, and make available for analysis the information produced and received by the Commission. The SIM was the system that looked after, protected, and made this knowledge available. It was also the technological base that allowed the analysis of structured and semi-structured data with specialized catalogs, documentary collections and tools for consultation and visualization. It also allowed the exploration and downloading of databases and information sources, and access to own and external sources.

DATA COLLECTION AND PROCESSING

The processes of collecting and processing own and external sources, receiving cases and reports, and processing testimonies will be discussed below.

Data collection was the process of receiving and gathering information to be catalogued, organized, described, and made available in the SIM through metadata[141] also to retrieve a record or bibliographic record. This metadata allowed its organization and search within the system. This information was processed through transcription and labeling, cleaning, conversion, integration, and organization or indexing.
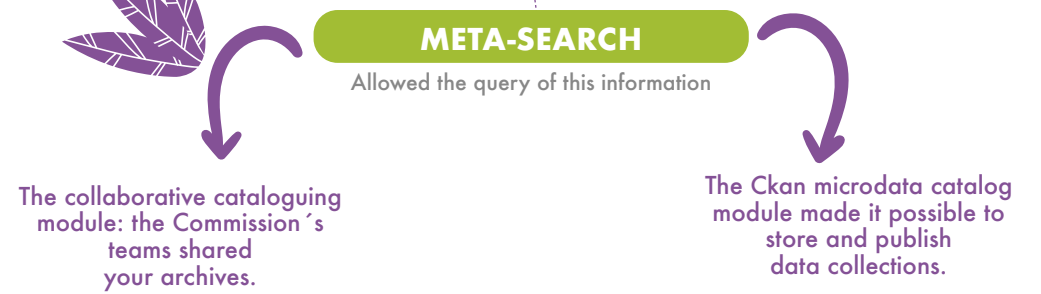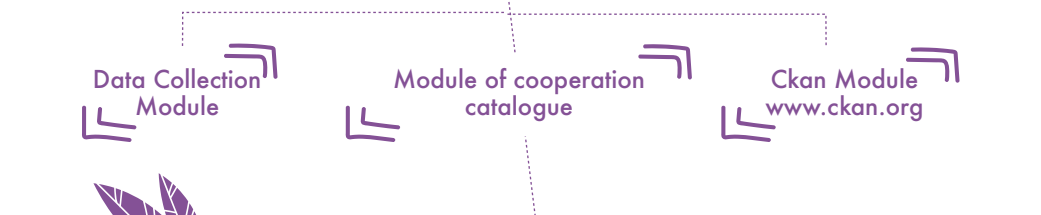
This information was recorded in the following modules, according to their classification[142], and was integrated into the meta-search engine, which was the tool that allowed searching for the information:

The data collection module was the web application developed by SIM for the registration of the testimonies made by the Commission.

The collaboration catalogue creation module allowed the Commission's teams to share their files. SIM then validated and monitored this information along with its description and integrated it into the meta-search engine.

[141.] The metadata standard from which the system operates is Dublin Core.

[142.] External sources (cases, reports), structured databases, bibliographic documents, etc.

DATA PROCESSING

COLLECTION

The process of receiving and collecting data

TRANSCRIPT AND LABELING

Organize it, describe it in a record

CATALOGUE CLASSIFICATION

UPLOAD TO SIM

LOADING...

Data Collection Module

Module of cooperation catalogue

Ckan Module www.ckan.org

META-SEARCH

Allowed the query of this information

The collaborative cataloguing module: the Commission´s teams shared your archives.

The Ckan microdata catalog module made it possible to store and publish data collections.

THE COMMISSION

LISTENED TO MORE THAN

28,000 PEOPLE

ACHIEVING

14,000 TESTIMONIALS

CROSS-CHECKED MORE THAN

600 CASES AND

1,800 REPORTS

CHAPTER 3. PLURAL LISTENING AND KNOWLEDGE MANAGEMENT

The Inhouse microdata catalog module[143] enabled the storage and publication of data collections.

Sources external to the Commission were contributed, as mentioned above, by victims' and civil society organizations, agencies, NGOs, universities, researchers, and international cooperation, through databases, documents, reports, specific cases, and archives. The contribution was made on a voluntary basis through legal agreements, wherein the conditions and commitments of exchange and confidentiality were specified. Their collection, systematization and custody were fundamental for the validation, validation and deepening of the knowledge produced during the research. They were deposited, classified, labeled, and included in the SIM for consultation and analysis.

These sources were managed by the territorial teams, national teams, commissioners, and teams outside Colombia, thanks to the Commission's academic and inter-institutional networking efforts.

The original documents were received in digital copies and, in exceptional cases, under agreed conditions of conservation, preservation, access and use, for their digitalization and subsequent return. This was in response to the regulations issued by the General Archive of the Nation[144]. The information received was downloaded to the Commission's devices, following the security measures established by the Information and Communication Technologies Area. Only in some cases data was consulted at the headquarters of the institutions or organizations.

This was consolidated in a documentary inventory with minutes of receipt of reports, cases, and external sources, describing the institution, organization or person giving the contribution. The information was supported by informed consents, when necessary, fact sheets, and met the following transparency criteria:

- Relates to the Commission's mandate.
- Relates to the objectives of the Commission.
- Relates to gender, ethnic, life cycle, disability, and psychosocial approaches.
- Meets one or more of the prioritization criteria: explanatory, serious or relevant documents, unknown or silenced facts, facts with a higher risk of repetition, contributions to peacebuilding.
- Includes voices and visions of the victims (individual or collective) of the conflict or people involved.
- Includes voices and perspectives of decision makers and other relevant stakeholders.
- Allows to know and understand practices and facts that constitute serious violations of human rights and breaches of IHL perpetrated in the framework of the armed conflict,

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[143.] *Free microdata software.*

[144.] Acuerdo No. 006 de 15 OCT 2014 (Agreement No. 006 of 15 OCT/2014), whereby Articles 46, 47 and 48 of Title XI are developed: "Conservation of Documents" of Law 594/2000.

or to identify individual and collective responsibilities, the impacts suffered by people and coping and resistance strategies.

The procedure was carried out through the signing of the reception act and the delivery of the documentation inside the SIM[145]. They were received at events, at the Casas de la Verdad (Houses of Truth) or by e-mail. This documentation was then processed and made available in the aforementioned tools: collection module, catalog and Ckan.

During its mandate, the Commission received around 1,500 reports and cases, which the Commission systematized, analyzed, and catalogued. Some were developed by the organizations within the framework of the Commission's mandate, others were contributed to the SIP, especially to the JEP, and shared for the clarification process. There were also reports, briefings or summaries submitted to Congress, or written by human rights organizations and platforms submitted to intergovernmental human rights bodies.

The reports and cases provided are divided into three main groups. First, those produced before the signing of the peace agreement, with emphasis on academic publications, social organizations, and human rights platforms. Second, those that provide methodological recommendations to the Commission. And third, those that contribute to the clarification of the truth and highlight impacts, damages and violations of human rights and breaches of international humanitarian law.

INTERVIEW PROCESSING

The SIM designed an interview processing strategy to facilitate the analysis. The processing of the information began with the transcription and labeling of the testimonies[146]. Listening to the interviews provided information to the teams for filling out the fact sheets, impacts and stories told by the victims and perpetrators, as well as the identification of important aspects for the investigation, which were recorded in logbooks and analytical reports.

As explained at the beginning of this chapter, the Commission created long and short datasheets to collect qualitative and quantitative information from the testimonies. For the collective interviews, short files and reports of the meetings were used. The individual interviews had four thematic axes: facts and perpetrators, context and dynamics of the conflict, impact and coping, and access to justice, reparation, and non-repetition. The collective interviews focused on identifying information that would allow the analysis of patterns, accountability, historical milestones, causes, origins and persistence factors.

As part of the processing, the documents in the file of each interview were analyzed (long, short and report datasheets, informed consents, and annexes), as well as the technical conditions of the audio and the correlation between the content of the audio and the information

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[145]. To learn more about the Procedure for receiving Reports, Cases, External Documentary Sources, go to Caja de Herramientas Comisión de la Verdad. (Truth Commission Toolbox)

[146]. For more information, see the Systematization of Methodologies of Transcription and Labeling Equipment, Supervised Language and Help Desk of the Missional Information System (SIM) at Caja de Herramientas Comisión de la Verdad. (Truth Commission Toolbox).
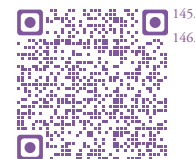
in the interview. The transcription process was carried out using the OTranscribe[147] tool, and a transcription guide was defined to unify criteria in the processing of interviews.

In order to retrieve some contributions to the research from the testimonies, one hundred and twenty transcribers distributed among the eleven macro-regions according to their origin (which allowed for a better understanding of the jargon and culture of the interviewees) recorded in logs the relevant elements for the construction of patterns and contexts. The criteria for these inputs were modified as the structure of the Final Report changed. Then, the contributions from the logs were discussed in collective spaces, resulting in 27 analytical reports. These reports were used to produce a report of contributions to the research.

The labeling was done with the Dataturks tool[148]. It was guided by a tree of labels organized by specific research topics. The construction of this label tree, which also allowed classifying and connecting the transmedia contents of the Final Report and the external sources, started from a first tree with labels derived from the thematic cores of the research[149], and which were subsequently refined with the investigative teams from analysis of the supervised language wherewith the Commission requested, and established the terms related to its investigative activities through a common language. For this purpose, it constructed the Thesaurus[150], with the terminology validated and made available to the agency's investigators within SIM.

The Thesaurus[151] allowed the recording and standardization in a tidy manner of the technical and jargon terms[152] tor more frequently used, in order to have a common language on the armed conflict. It was the reference framework for the documentation, cataloguing and curation of both testimonies and external sources. Its vocabulary, designed with the purpose of organizing the concepts and terminology used by the Commission based on semantic

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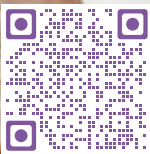147. https://transcripcion.comisiondelaverdad.co/transcripcion/

148. https://docs.dataturks.com/

149. This tree comprised thematic directories (for instance, armed group structures) and a dictionary of labels per thematic core.

150. System that allows to organize the knowledge of databases, reports, cases, or documentation produced by the Commission and bibliographic consultations, under a vocabulary or a systematic order of concepts. Visit https://archivo.comisiondelaverdad.co/
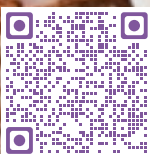
151. It was organized through thematic cores, domains, and directories. The ten cores describe the actors or participants, causes, processes and dynamics of the conflict. The eleven domains cover cross-cutting themes: types of violence, consequences, impacts, coping and resistance. And the seventeen directories complemented information on the armed conflict (types of weapons, types of armed structures) and data (types of populations, organizations, milestones in national history, inter alia). The directories were distributed as follows: cartography, gender, native languages, mandates, approaches and objectives of the Commission, citizen participation mechanisms, educational levels, social programs and initiatives, organizations, armed structures, professions and trades, populations, weapons, milestones, media and political parties, aliases of the armed actors and addresses of the Commission.
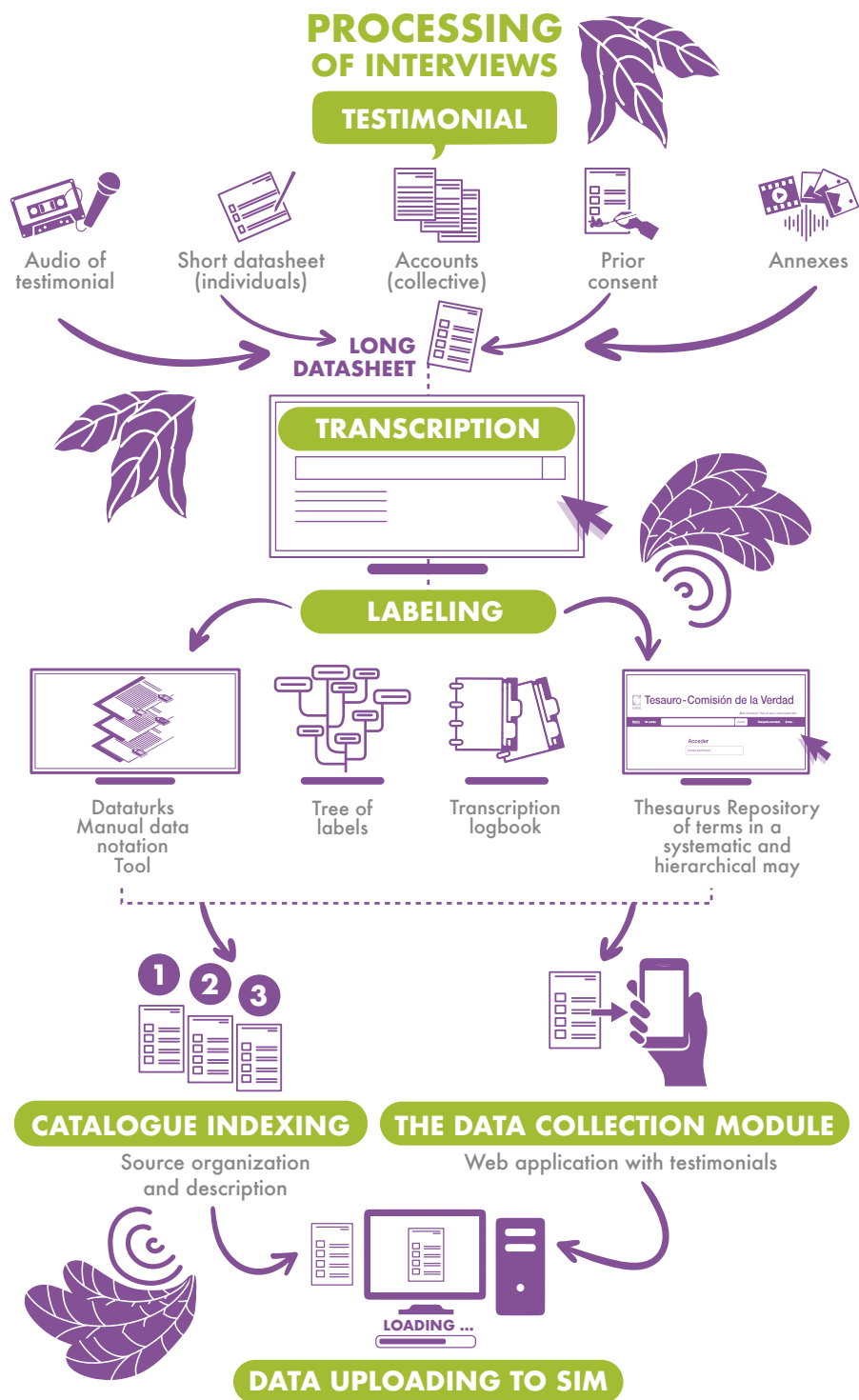
152. The Thesaurus had two types of simple and compound terms. The former terms are self-explanatory (exile), the latter broaden the meaning Exile as a consequence of the armed conflict. Distributed in this way, they allowed (semantic) relationships for the analysis of the information. One of these was hierarchy, where it was possible to analyze the information based on thematic structures. Another was equivalence, allowing the analysis of different terms that have the same meanings in different contexts. Also, the association between terms related in meaning but not hierarchically. Each one had its acronym in the System and allowed an important method for the search and analysis of the information.

PROCESSING OF INTERVIEWS

TESTIMONIAL

Audio of testimonial

Short datasheet (individuals)

Accounts (collective)

Prior consent

Annexes

LONG DATASHEET

TRANSCRIPTION

LABELING

Dataturks Manual data notation Tool

Tree of labels

Transcription logbook

Thesaurus Repository of terms in a systematic and hierarchical may

Tesauro - Comisión de la Verdad

Acceder

CATALOGUE INDEXING

Source organization and description

THE DATA COLLECTION MODULE

Web application with testimonials

LOADING ...

DATA UPLOADING TO SIM

CHAPTER 3. PLURAL LISTENING AND KNOWLEDGE MANAGEMENT

relationships, allowed access to and visibility of the data, and contributed to the accuracy of the search for information in documents and digital tools.

It was built in numerous working sessions with the researchers at workshops. A first tree was built with 538 labels for own and external sources. After feedback exercises and a pilot test, the tree was refined and confirmed by 392 definitive labels.

In similar experiences, it is necessary to have this type of tool from the beginning of the process, otherwise, agreements on statements and conclusions are delayed and made more difficult. It is also important that the concepts do not exceed a significant number, since having more than 300 labels or base concepts for the statements also makes their use and search more complex. It is also essential to understand the labels from their semantic relationships, because if they are understood as separate terms, without conceptual relationships, they can limit the analysis tools and make the search for information more complex[153].

INFORMATION ACCESS POLICY

Given the powers that the Commission had for access to external information from State agencies and with the aim of generating trust in the interested sectors and society in general on the custody and reserve of this, the Group of Access to Information was created in August 2018. This group had the purpose of managing access to information from other agencies and/or national or international organizations for the development of the duties and objectives of the Commission. On the one hand, it organized the process of gathering external information required by the investigation for the analysis and cross-checking of the findings. On the other hand, it established a procedure and culture of care within the Commission to safeguard the confidentiality and use of these sources.

Since the end of 2018, this group sought and developed agreements and protocols with State agencies and created a registry of information requests that later became a unified access, management, and monitoring alert system for obtaining external information. It also issued the Internal Policy on Access to Mission Information[154], which sought to regulate access to documents by researchers. Initially, a four-level qualification was carried out:

1. **Access level 1 (N1):** State intelligence and counterintelligence information. This information was accessed by individuals with exclusive authorization, commissioners and professionals or advisors with an investigative role. Such authorization was in charge of the Commissioner in charge of the Group of Access to Information.

2. **Access level 2 (N2):** Confidential judicial and public information. Only people designated by their direct boss or supervisor of the contract and authorized by the Commissioner in charge of the Group of Access to Information had access to this information.
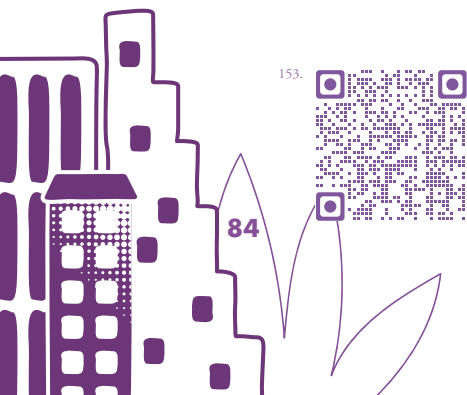
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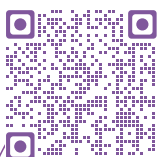
153. To learn about a sample of what the Commission has identified from the language visit A viva voz | Informe Final Comisión de la Verdad (To the top of the Lungs | Final Report of the Truth Commission)

154. Truth Commission. *Política de Acceso a la Información*. V2. 2022 (Information Access Policy)

3. **Access level 3 (N3):** Information provided by perpetrators in the context of participation in the armed conflict. Authorized persons had access to the information for the investigation and clarification.
4. **Access level 4 (N4):** Mission information. The persons involved in the Commission with missionary functions had access to this information.

Although the implementation of these four levels of access allowed for timely institutional organization along with follow-up and access strategies, these did not comply with the three levels provided for in the Transparency Law. For the closing of the mandate and the creation of the Archive of Clarification[155], which gathers the accumulated information from external and in-house sources produced during almost four years, the Commission reclassified the information for its transfer and legacy. In similar experiences that seek to develop information gathering processes, it is essential to establish criteria for the use, access, and organization of this information in correlation with the transparency and archiving laws in force in each country. This is the only way to avoid duplicating internal processes and, on the other hand, to promote the creation of robust human rights archives according to the organization of the countries.[156].

This chapter describes the criteria used by the Commission for the listening process. From the building of trust and the implementation of methodologies adapted to contexts, people and needs, to the transcription, labeling and organization of this information in a system that enabled the purposes of the research. Therefore, the next step was to convert these inputs into findings, which had to be thoroughly verified, delved into, and validated, as will be explained below.

[155.] Chapter 4 will provide more information on the Clarification Archive.
[156.] For further reflections, see the annex to the Final Report: *Balance sobre Acceso a la Información* (Report on Access to Information).

Photography: Truth Commission

METHODOLOGY FOR THE CLARIFICATION OF THE TRUTH

CHAPTER 4.

ANALYSIS, VALIDATION AND VERIFICATION OF THE

RESEARCH

By the end of 2019, the first year of the Commission's operation, around 12,000 testimonies had been collected throughout the country with the purpose of clarifying what happened during the armed conflict from the voices of the victims, perpetrators, and other actors. At that time, it was decided to make a first major assessment of what had been heard.

The teams in charge of the research produced 23 documents aimed at deepening the contexts and patterns. These were divided into one document for each of the ten thematic cores and eleven more for each macro-territory.

This assessment, which was later deepened during the first half of 2020 after a review by the plenary of the commissioners, revealed some needs to continue with the research. The first was that the analyses being carried out by the national teams,

by definition more focused on developing the complexity of each thematic core, should be better coordinated with the territorial research. The second was that the territorial teams should not expand the core, but rather explore the local dynamics of each region in greater depth.

The third that, having taken almost a third of the testimonies that had been scheduled[157], it was necessary to make quick progress in their processing so that the findings could be based on what was said by the victims and perpetrators. The fourth was to relate these findings to the current situation in the territories, in terms of the persistence of the armed conflict. And the fifth was to define a common timeline of the conflict among the teams, to avoid the emergence of a different timeline from each thematic core.

Thus, the methodological route was adjusted, and the technical-political guidelines of the research were defined, in order to move forward in the identification of patterns, explanatory contexts and factors of persistence of the conflict based on the testimonies and cases found. Once this information had been compiled, the process of analysis, cross-check and deepening was developed, as well as validation and feedback. With the arrival of a new coordinator to the Knowledge Management Directorate (July 2019), the Knowledge Management Route was created[158], which contained the research methodology in a flow chart with four stages. This allowed the regional and national teams to have a flexible and common methodological perspective, which was adjusted to the contexts and needs that arose. The possibility of having a sufficiently adaptable methodological base, together with the integration of the technical-political guidelines of the research (patterns, contexts, and persistence factors), allowed the research to have a shared direction.

In similar processes, it is necessary to have simple and flexible methodological clarifications that seek to coordinate the different experiences within the same research. Graphic resources such as a flow chart, together with the creation and automation of procedures, methodologies and instruments that go hand in hand with the stages, allow for shared clarity, depth of experience and coordination between the parties. If this is connected to an information system based on technological tools, knowledge management (its production, use and transfer) can be guaranteed.

The following are the methodological and technical/policy agreements and guidelines that the Commission developed. Stage three of the research is described also: the verification, cross-checking and validation of the findings during the research.

[157.] At this time, the goal was 16,000 testimonials. This goal was surpassed, and more than 27,000 testimonials were gathered during the almost four years of the mandate.

[158.] To learn more about the Knowledge Management Route go to Caja de Herramientas Comisión de la Verdad. (Truth Commission Toolbox)

CHAPTER 4. ANALYSIS, VALIDATION, AND VERIFICATION OF THE RESEARCH

NARRATIVE

The first listening assessments (2019 and 2020) showed the need to build a shared narrative across the Final Report. This narrative should serve as a bridge for both the victims and the rest of society, which to a large extent has naturalized the war and has become indifferent, to move between the understanding of a past and a present wherein violence persists, and a future where new horizons are possible.

The narrative is an attempt to question society in ethical and political terms based on a story that coordinates the factors, contexts, patterns, and cases arising from the process of listening and comparing. Victims should see themselves reflected in what is told therein and those who are not victims must be able to connect emotionally[159]. As explained in Chapter 1, the victims and their testimonies are the heart of the story. This is built on the basis of what the witnesses say about what happened, and thus contributes to their dignity, as it has a restorative intention.

An account with such aspirations could not be limited to the scope of a narrow range specialized in the armed conflict. If the objective was to reach the different sectors of society and foster dialogues and an emotional experience, its narrative construction had to be based on a clear, straightforward, and accurate language, close to the people, wherein the explanation of the findings did not overshadow the voices of those who gave their testimonies, but rather amplified and dignified them. Simply put, descriptive language to narrate the facts and analytical language to explain the contexts, factors, and patterns.

In order to connect with the interests and ways of communicating and learning of different sectors, including the differential approaches wherewith the Commission worked, it was decided that it should transcend the written narrative. This was done on the basis of a transmedia narrative that integrates various formats, digital content, analog actions in the territories and different languages. The last chapter of this document will explain in detail the meaning of making a living report and the different ways designed for its adoption.
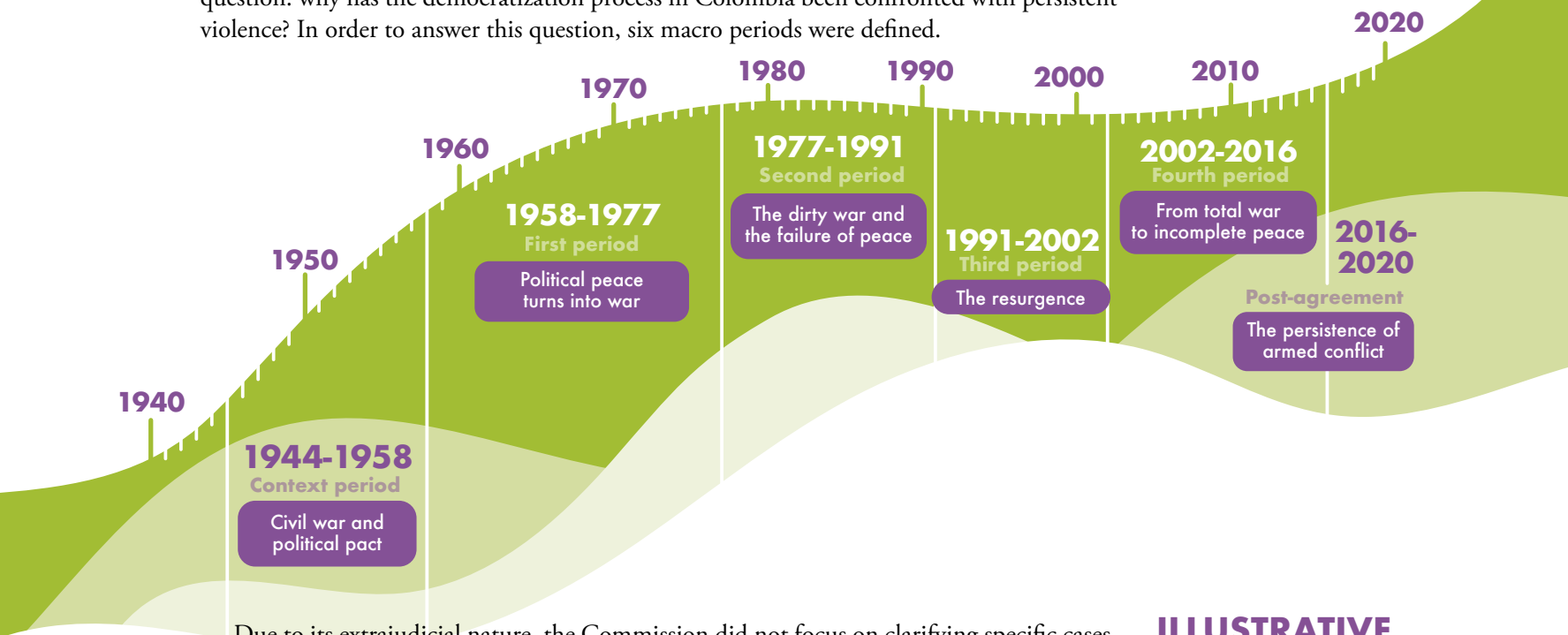
This was an attempt to answer a big question: how did the lives of the people, the conflict, its dynamics, and the contexts that explain it all come together? To answer it, as has been outlined so far and will be developed in the remainder of this chapter, it was necessary to analyze the information gathered from the thousands of testimonies, compare it, and validate it with other sources in order to produce findings.

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159. The first guidelines of the narrative are collected in a document written by Commissioner Marta Ruíz *About the Narrative*. With the arrival of the legacy, as we will see in Chapter 6, two documents are created: *Legacy Narrative and working paper on The Narrative in the Context of Legacy*.

Given the need to frame the investigation in a period that would serve to explain the facts of the armed conflict, the contexts and the factors of persistence, the Commission defined that the analysis would begin with the end of the bipartisan violence in 1958 and would extend until the post-agreement process in 2020[160]. To complement this, other periods were established to identify the roots of political violence during the last century: the social unrest in the 1920s, the beginnings of violence in the 1930s and 1940s, the assassination of Jorge Eliécer Gaitán in 1948, and the subsequent stage, known as *La Violencia* (The Violence).

These periods were understood as junctures wherein political, military, economic, social, and cultural factors interacted and were decisive in clarifying the armed conflict, and from them the narrative of the story was built. The timeline distribution mainly answered one question: why has the democratization process in Colombia been confronted with persistent violence? In order to answer this question, six macro periods were defined.

2020

1980
1990
2000
2010

1970

1977-1991
Second period

2002-2016
Fourth period

1960

1958-1977
First period

The dirty war and the failure of peace

1991-2002
Third period

From total war to incomplete peace

2016-2020

1950

Political peace turns into war

The resurgence

Post-agreement

The persistence of armed conflict

1940

1944-1958
Context period

Civil war and political pact

Due to its extrajudicial nature, the Commission did not focus on clarifying specific cases, since the Special Jurisdiction for Peace (JEP) is in charge of investigating, judging, and establishing individual responsibilities. However, as there are events that share important characteristics and elements that illustrate facts or patterns, the Commission chose some to study in detail and, through them, to deepen the findings of the research.

ILLUSTRATIVE CASES

[160] Both the Methodological Guidelines and the document Timeline distribution (for internal use) reflect this conceptualization and technical and political agreement. For an illustrative example, please refer to the especial Caquetá: *Periodización: Un esfuerzo por ordenar el tiempo de estudio* – (Caquetá Documentary: Timeline distribution: An effort to order the time of study) - 1958 until today - based on the logics of the conflict, in the economic and socio-political context of the country in each of the four defined sub-periods.

160.

91

The cases are events that have in common situations of mode, time, and place, which generate human rights violations or breaches of IHL, and wherein it is possible to precisely identify dates, places, forms, and modalities of violence and impacts on the victims in relation to the mandate of the Commission[161]. In addition to the cases known to the country and which have already been extensively documented, the Commission decided to study others that have been silenced or were little known, especially in the 1960s, 1970s and 1980s[162].

Some, as explained in the previous chapter, were contributed by organizations or institutions. Others were identified by the Commission during the listening process in the territories or in the analysis of secondary sources. Each selected case was built from the testimonies of the victims and complemented with research documents. The exercise allowed understanding the dynamics of the conflict and comparing patterns, contexts, and persistence factors.

During the research, the regional and national teams collected cases to explain and illustrate the findings. However, given the breadth of the conflict in Colombia, prioritization was necessary. This was initially developed by the GIF and then completed by a curatorial team of cases. Their relevance within the Report, their explanatory, descriptive and analytical contribution in relation to the mandate, their representation regarding the findings, their illustrative nature on concrete and relevant experiences, were some of the criteria for their prioritization. This team also selected the most complete cases, which became annexes. These are an important basis for the explanation and illustration of conflict patterns and trends and will be a historical contribution due to the information they will provide.

VERIFICATION, CROSS-CHECKING, AND DEEPENING OF INFORMATION

Based on the methodological guidelines described above, which allowed for the organization of the information collected to better understand the what, how, why, and what for - of the armed conflict - the Commission then moved on to the process of verifying, cross-checking, and deepening the information obtained from different sources. For this purpose, criteria were defined, which will be explained as follows[163].

[161.] The criteria used for their identification were: relationship with the mandate, representation of findings, patterns, or trends of the conflict. Also, they had to account for the experience of the victims or affected populations (impacts, coping or resistance) or answer questions asked by the victims and society. They should explain or show the complexity of the conflict, for example, those of greater severity or relevance or those that are little known or ignored. On the other hand, those that are related to the objectives of the Commission or that are at risk of being repeated (persistence factor) and those that shed light on the changes that must be made to build peace. In terms of substantive and formal aspects, the following criteria were considered: coherence, structure, and argumentation. They should not generalize, nor have inaccuracies or contradictions with other texts, nor unsubstantiated assertions. The cases had to be supported by reliable sources and undergo an exercise of verification, contrast, and deepening: interviews, reports, quantitative data, judicial sources, and acknowledgements of responsibility. They also had to present a narrative writing accessible to the public, include testimonies taken by the Commission and comply with quotation guidelines and spelling and writing standards.

[162.] Internal seminars on cases and patterns held by Commissioners Alejandro Valencia and Carlos Beristain during March 2020.

[163.] This process was carried out by means of the Methodological Guide for the verification, cross-checking and deepening of the information. To know more visit Caja de Herramientas Comisión de la Verdad. (Truth Commission Toolbox)

Verification consisted of checking the validity of the information. Cross-checking was used to compare the arguments, voices and views provided by different sources. And deepening allowed to delve deeper into the sources to obtain more precise and detailed information. These three methods were coordinated in a triangular fashion, since it was understood that by verifying, we cross-check, and by cross-checking we verify and go deeper.

The methodology to advance in this process was divided into three stages: the selection and weighting of sources, the triangulation of these sources and the evaluation of findings, statements, and final results. Each stage was related to the research question or hypothesis. As the analysis moved forward, it was possible to revisit these questions, to assess the correlation between the new data and the initial data, or to go deeper with other sources to fill in gaps in the data.

As seen so far, the number of sources used by the Commission for this investigation was huge: 28,596 voices heard, 14,948 testimonies collected, 1217 reports and 732 cases received. For this reason, it was necessary to define a procedure to select those that contributed the most to each topic. This was done in two steps. The first was the analysis of the types of sources wherein their relevance and thematic contribution was assessed. The second was the analysis of qualities, which was used to determine the relevance of the sources[164], reliability[165], coherence[166], clarity[167], sufficiency[168] and depth[169] of the information provided by the source.

1. Selection and assessment of sources

In order to strengthen the arguments found, achieve a broader understanding, and validate the research findings, three types of triangulation techniques were used to relate and complement the sources with each other.

1. **Triangulation of methods:** Quantitative methods were combined with qualitative methods. In some cases, speech and historical analyses, and others, were included, combined with quantitative analyses that determined the who, what, how many, when and where. Some of the quantitative information collected by the Commission through different sources was structured, but there were also important gaps in other records, especially related to forms of violence that have been made invisible, with specific data from some territories and with differential approaches. For this reason, several teams

2. Data triangulation

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164. Is timely and consistent with the research and mandate and addresses the issues of the research hypotheses.

165. It offers certainty or a high probability of being truthful and consistent with the information. It was essential to evidence within the sources the steps that support their conclusions or assertions, and to evaluate potential biases.

166. Source information is consistent, coherent, and logical. The details of time, manner and place match, and there is consistency with other sources.

167. It is readable and easy to understand.

168. It can make an important contribution to clarification where there are large gaps, or issues that are less visible or poorly documented.

169. It develops the topics in a complete manner and offers detailed information based on facts, details of manner, time and place, and explanatory contexts.

163.

CHAPTER 4. ANALYSIS, VALIDATION, AND VERIFICATION OF THE RESEARCH
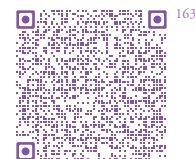
had the task of cross-checking extensive databases according to the research topic. As for qualitative analyses, these served to complement explanations of how and why.

2. **Triangulation of sources:** Different sources were included to verify, confirm, refute, or reinforce the statements. This triangulation was done with different perspectives of analysis that used multiple actors as sources, to achieve a higher cross-checking level, breadth, and depth of information.

3. **Triangulation of researchers:** In order to have greater monitoring, review and feedback from different perspectives, interdisciplinary teams participated in the research, made up of people with diverse experiences and perspectives. Synergies were achieved from perspectives ranging from ethnographic and anthropological studies to sociological, economic, political, historical, and legal studies.

3. Validation of findings

After the selection and triangulation processes, from which the teams derived their findings, a validation process followed, which was divided into two parts. The first involved a screening of the sources that support the findings and their contribution to the research. The second was a review of the process followed to reach each finding.

1. **From the weighting process of the sources:** At this point, the criteria of relevance, reliability, coherence, clarity, depth, and sufficiency of the sources were again revisited, and based on this analysis, the levels of truth of the findings were classified, thereby producing:

2. **From the validation of the consistency and traceability of the process:** The Commission's clarification process was not only about reaching truths, but also about supporting in a transparent way the means to build them through the inductive method, as explained so far in this document. The results delivered by the research teams are accompanied by explanations of the routes they took, the methodologies they used, the criteria wherewith they selected the sources, the way in which they collected and systematized the information, including other things.

Solid truths:
The sources are relevant, consistent, reliable, sufficient, and deep, so that the findings can be considered rock-solid truths.

Convincing truths:
Sources are relevant, reliable, and consistent, but not sufficient to prove absolute validity.
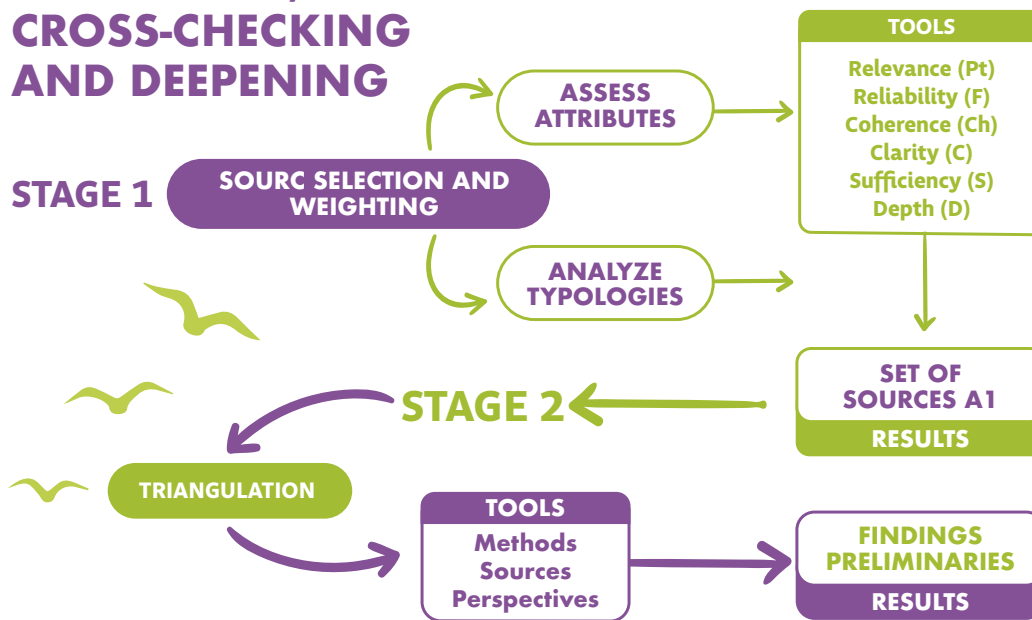
Verifiable truths:
The sources are relevant and reliable, but they are not sufficient and are not always consistent and clear. They are truths under construction. It is not possible to deny them, but there is no high level of verification either.
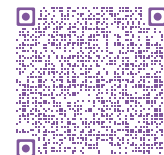
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At this point, then, it was appropriate to verify these processes in keeping with the guidelines defined by the Commission. Some of the points considered for this validation were as follows[170]:

- Ensure that beliefs and opinions do not affect the interpretation of data.
- Avoid conclusions before analyzing all possible information.
- Consider the importance of different data, especially those that run contrary to one's own opinions.
- Privilege all voices and sources with equality.
- Be aware of how sources, especially primary sources, have been influenced and also how they have influenced and impacted the views of researchers.
- Seek evidence for and against the hypotheses and their emerging findings, without preferring one of the two points.

VALIDATION, CROSS-CHECKING AND DEEPENING

STAGE 1 — SOURC SELECTION AND WEIGHTING

ASSESS ATTRIBUTES

ANALYZE TYPOLOGIES

TOOLS
Relevance (Pt)
Reliability (F)
Coherence (Ch)
Clarity (C)
Sufficiency (S)
Depth (D)

SET OF SOURCES A1
RESULTS

STAGE 2

TRIANGULATION

TOOLS
Methods
Sources
Perspectives

FINDINGS PRELIMINARIES
RESULTS

170. Truth Commission. *Guía metodológica para la verificación, contrastación y profundización de la información.* V. 2021. p. 10. (Methodological guide for verifying, cross-checking, and deepening of information) To learn more visit Caja de Herramientas Comisión de la Verdad.(Truth Commission Toolbox)

VALIDATION, CROSS-CHECKING AND DEEPENING

STAGE 3

VALIDATION OF FINDINGS

PROCESS TRACEABILITY VALIDATION

VALIDATION OF ATTRIBUTES OF SOURCES SUPPORTING FINDINGS

YES

YES

YES

TOOLS

Clear explanations on the step by step

RELEVANT AND RELIABLE

CRITERIA

RELEVANT COHERENT AND RELIABLE

CRITERIA

Relevant Reliable Consistent Clear Enough Deep

CRITERIA

then

then

then

Verificable truth

CONCLUSIONES

Convincing truth

CONCLUSIONES

Solid truth

CONCLUSIONES

ISSUANCE OF RESULTS

RESULTS

Creation Investigation process folder

CONCLUSIONS

Without results complex

No complex results

REVIES THE PROCESS

DEEPENING

96

The Commission worked with large volumes of information. To get the best out of them, according to the methodological guidelines defined to understand dynamics, contexts and persistence factors, a process of quantitative data analysis was carried out to strengthen the findings from the perspective of the questions that emerged from the primary sources.

The research was fueled by more than 500 databases related to multiple phenomena that help explain the armed conflict. Some databases are directly related to the conflict, on issues such as violence, security, defense, coexistence or justice, and others address economic, social, cultural, environmental, and other contexts. The Analytical team was in charge of processing and analyzing the information from primary and external sources, in some cases with external consultants, supporting the researchers with convincing elements for the analysis, contrast and verification of the qualitative findings.

This process was developed together with the analytical research teams. During the research, the following were developed: the Multiple Systems Estimation project (consultancy led by Patrick Ball in partnership with the JEP), in-house statistics from the short interview datasheets of victims, family members and witnesses, cross-checking of external databases and research projects for the writing of the report and databases.

Based on these processes, it was possible to work with structured and unstructured data[171] to reveal patterns with temporary, territorial, or descriptive variables in an agile, incremental, reliable, replicable, and user-friendly way. The analytical research also incorporated differential approaches as an analysis criterion. This allowed us to delve deeper into the impacts according to different types of people.

During 2020, due to the pandemic produced by Covid-19 and the resulting confinement, the Commission developed a strategy for the collection of external information in a more agile manner, as efforts were mostly devoted to the stage of *verification, cross-checking and validation* of the information. This led to an increase in the number of cases, reports and databases received from organizations, NGOs, and State agencies.

Nevertheless, the listening process continued, as discussed in chapter 3, online, in writing and by telephone.

It was in this context that the external consultancy Multiple Systems Estimation Project was launched[172], in Partnership with JEP and the Human Rights Data Analysts Group (HRGAD), which was led by Patrick Ball[173], , U.S. researcher with a long experience in statistical estimates on armed conflict in other truth commissions around the world. This consultancy was in charge of analyzing data, making estimates on the underreporting of the conflict in Colombia and identifying patterns of homicide, kidnapping, recruitment, forced disappearance and

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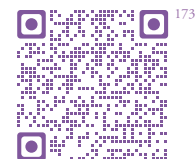
171. Structured: databases. Unstructured: large volumes of data that are not in databases.
172. Truth Commission. Informe de gestión 2020. p 10. (Management Report 2020. P. 20)
173. HRDAG – Human Rights Data Analysis Group | Patrick Ball, PhD

forced displacement[174]. The research had two by-products: an integrated database on the aforementioned patterns and statistical estimates that sought to analyze the invisible magnitude of the conflict.

This allowed the research to have reliable and robust information for the cross-checking and validation process. The resulting database is the largest and most complete on human rights violations in Colombia. It gathers information from 89 data sets submitted by 29 organizations, institutions, and NGOs. It also has 22.7 million records. However, only 13 million have complete information.

The main difficulty faced by the Commission in determining the magnitude and patterns of the conflict in Colombia was underreporting. This means that there is partial data, disparity between sources and a high number of unidentified victims (John Doe) and unregistered missing persons. The Consultancy, together with the Analytics teams, sought to maximize the accuracy of these estimates to reach statistics based on the largest number of databases on the conflict.

It also compiled, consolidated, and cleaned more than 400 databases from other agencies and organizations and consolidated eight databases created by the research project. In addition, it produced databases on the short datasheets of the individual interviews with victims, family members or witnesses. For this purpose, each interview was transcribed and coded into three files: two of them collected sociodemographic information (characteristics of the individuals), human rights violations, accountability, contexts, impacts, coping, access to justice, reparation and guarantees of non-repetition; the third on victims in exile. This data was analyzed and allowed us to understand the experience of the people interviewed, including frequencies, percentages, correlations of variables, correspondence analysis, and cluster analysis. With this information, linguistic, network and label analyses were carried out, such as: patterns of violence, mourning, extrajudicial executions, stigmatization, cultural impacts, massacres, violence, and entity analysis[175].

[174.] Chapter 8. Camino Al Informe. La trascendencia de los datos del conflicto. (Chapter 8. Road to the Report. The relevance of conflict data)

[175.] This was done by the Natural Language team, which was in charge of analyzing the language that people use when expressing themselves: idioms, dialects, colloquialisms, or expressions typical of the different regions of the country that, in a non-literal way, have meanings that express violations, cases, contexts and the characteristics already described. This was done by analyzing the interviews and searching in the text for information that would support what was said with the external sources.
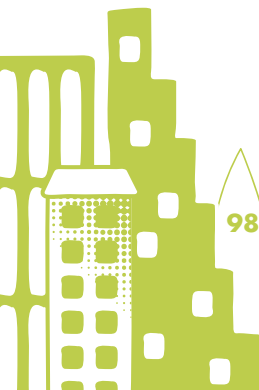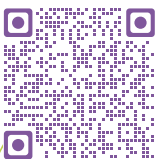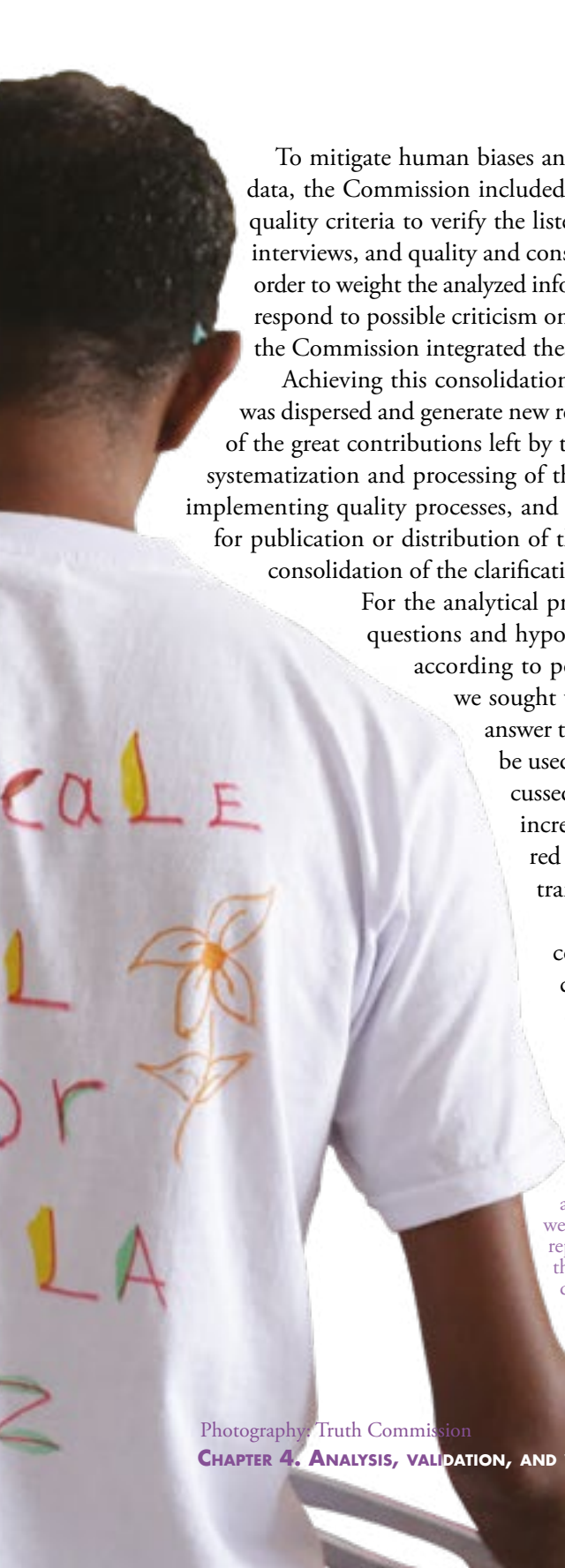
To mitigate human biases and give credibility, validity and representativeness to the data, the Commission included statistical methods such as weighting calculations and quality criteria to verify the listening data in the databases (duplication of victims and interviews, and quality and consistency controls in the transcript, file, and database). In order to weight the analyzed information, solve these risks, have technical arguments, and respond to possible criticism on the results submitted with the structured information, the Commission integrated these methods.

Achieving this consolidation in order to centralize the information that until now was dispersed and generate new reliable sources of information for future research are two of the great contributions left by the Commission. In similar experiences, combining the systematization and processing of the testimonies collected, refining the existing data sets, implementing quality processes, and generating new data sets and implementing protocols for publication or distribution of the information obtained, is essential to advance in the consolidation of the clarification of acts of violence.

For the analytical projects, a methodology was used based on the research questions and hypotheses by chapters. First, the questions were delimited according to population, period, place, and object of study. Second, we sought what structured data the Commission had available to answer that question. Third, the quantitative methods that could be used were defined. Finally, projects were developed and discussed collectively with internal peers in the Commission to increase thoroughness and impartiality, and which were stored in the GitLab[176], web platform to meet the purposes of transparency, replicability and auditability[177].

The information retrieved from this process, which combined quantitative tools with extensive technological support, provided the investigation teams in charge of clarification with a more solid basis for the analysis, testing and verification of their hypotheses. To ensure

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[176.] https://gitlab.com/gitlab-org/gitlab.

[177.] During the process, progress reports on the statistical and analytical exercises and data visualizations, such as charts or maps, were reviewed and discussed. Once the process was completed, results reports were produced and shared in seminars with internal peers, so that the researchers received feedback on the application of the methodology and interpretation of the results. To present the results of the projects in an illustrative manner, the SIM geoportal and visualization dashboards were used. The geoportal is a website that allowed users to find geographic information from multiple sources for queries, analysis, and data storage. The visualization dashboards, on the other hand, allowed users to view statistical analysis and timelines.

CHAPTER 4. ANALYSIS, VALIDATION, AND VERIFICATION OF THE RESEARCH

176.

DATA ANALITICS

Process, analyze and standard-ize structured and unstructured information.

STATISTICAL TECHNIQUES

MATHEMATICAL TECHNIQUES

$$z = \frac{x}{+ y\%}$$

TECNOLOGICAL TECHNIQUES

Structured data was analyzed with temporary, territorial and descriptive variables

HRGAD - JEP STATISTICAL ESTIMATES

DATABASE DEBUGGING

DATABASES CONTAINING DATASHEETS

DATA ANALYTICS PROJECTS

Discussed with internal peers (Teams)

RESULT REPORTS: STRENGTHENED THE RESEARCH

METHODOLOGY FOR THE CLARIFICATION OF THE TRUTH

replicability, auditability, and transparency, three open-source tools were used, which means that the source code is freely available, allowing its use or adaptation to different contexts.

The first of these tools is Ckan[178]: a data management system (DMS) which eases the publication, sharing and use of data. The second is Gitlab[179]: a platform for software development and built-in version control, issue tracking, code review, and more. Finally, R/Rstudio is a free software environment for statistical computing and graphics; it compiles and runs on a wide variety of platforms such as UNIX, Windows and macOS. y gráficos; compila y se ejecuta en una amplia variedad de plataformas UNIX, Windows y macOS.

The diversity in the use of the aforementioned techniques and methodologies, together with an interdisciplinary group, enabled the adoption and use of different tools. These techniques combined statistical, econometric, and spatial techniques[180], which resulted in innovative methods of conflict analysis, for example by incorporating new ways of delimiting and analyzing the territory based on quantitative analysis.

In similar investigations, formulating and adopting new methodologies, incorporating constant dialogues between qualitative and quantitative research, and using a significant number of databases and data sets, as was done in the analytical process at the Commission, not only strengthens the clarification of facts, but also leads to progress in an interdisciplinary analysis. This process produces a legacy of inputs for future investigations, including databases, cartographies, analysis documents and data visualization tools. Thanks to the aforementioned methodologies and their open codes, similar experiences will be able to compare what has been found and replicate the process.

PATTERNS

The analysis of more than six decades of armed conflict has shown that there are cycles, forms, and dynamics, as well as recidivism and similarities between violence that resemble each other in terms of the types of victims, the violations and infractions committed, and the territories where they occur, including other criteria. These are the patterns[181] The analysis of more than six decades of armed conflict has shown that there are cycles, forms, and dynamics, as well as recidivism and similarities between violence that resemble each other in terms of the types of victims, the violations and infractions committed, and the territories where they occur, including other criteria. These are the patterns[182].

[178.] CKAN is an open source DMS (data management system) for powering data centers and data gateways. CKAN facilitates the publishing, sharing and use of data. It drives hundreds of data portals around the world. In: CKAN.

[179.] Millions of developers and companies build, ship, and maintain their software on GitHub, the world's largest and most advanced development platform. In: GitHub.

[180.] Branch of economics that integrates mathematical and statistical techniques for research.

[181.] ¿Qué son los patrones del conflicto armado? (What are the patterns of armed conflict?)

[182.] «The pattern is a set of cases with the intention of reaching an understanding of the armed conflict, (which) we understand in a similar way. The pattern enhances the understanding of each and every one of the cases, reveals the reasons for the repetition of these cases and the way they are coordinated in the territory and in time, and the probability or trend of their repetition in certain circumstances. The pattern gathers the minimum elements of the cases, their similarities, and their repetitive frequencies. Truth Commission». Cases and Patterns. March 2020.
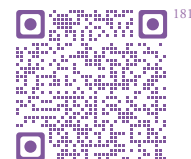
Some patterns are related to dynamics that were more noticeable in certain periods or are closely linked to violence against certain sectors and territories. Others show the ways in which different actors and civilian third parties have violated human rights and breached IHL, and the relationships that developed between them. Still others illustrate how the armed conflict affected democracy or allow us to understand the coping and resistance processes of the victims and communities.

Each pattern is composed of a context, wherein the causes, background and persistence factors are identified; some facts or modus operandi; some perpetrators, from which it is investigated why and what they did it for; some impacts, which delve into what generated the violence, and some positive transformation factors.

There were several criteria for prioritizing and selecting the patterns that were finally used in the research: those that answered the questions of the victims and society, those that best explained the complexity of the conflict, the most severe, the most unknown or silenced, those that allowed to explain the persistence and shed light on the ways to seek peace, and those that provided a better understanding of the conflict.

Based on the above, 15 patterns were defined (September 2020) that were key to the analysis, contrasting and deepening of the information derived from the listening and the study of other secondary sources[183].

EXPLANATORY CONTEXTS

Human rights violations and breaches of IHL have not been isolated events or events that can be understood individually. On the contrary, to explain how the country came to have millions of victims as a result of the armed conflict, it is necessary to delve into the historical, political, economic, cultural, and environmental conditions wherein certain violent dynamics originated, transformed, and persisted.

In addition to the analysis of patterns, explanatory contexts appeared[184] (May 2020). The analysis of these contexts allowed to delve deeper into the roots of the cases and to complement what was drawn from the patterns[185]. For example, with the search for the conditions for an event to occur, which are usually correlated and have to do with tensions and power struggles over political, economic, cultural, or territorial issues. Also, with the understanding of the reasons of the perpetrators, their intentions, decisions, and strategies; the coping and resistance processes of the victims, witnesses, and society; and the measures undertaken by the State.

The explanatory context also allowed for understanding how, at the territorial level, the armed conflict has different forms, intensities, motivations, and purposes. But also, that,

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183. These were collected in a draft document for internal discussion: Deepening of Patterns.

184. «In this case, explanatory context is understood as the set of conditions - historical, political, economic, cultural and environmental - wherein the internal armed conflict has been made socially possible and rationally understandable. Explanatory contexts transcend the descriptions of the facts and delve into the exploration of their whys and wherefores. Truth Commission». Methodological Guidelines. October 2018. p. 24-25.

185. The guidelines for these contexts are included in the document for internal use: *Contextos Explicativos del Conflicto Armado Colombiano* (Explanatory Contexts of the Colombian Armed Conflict).

despite the fact that the events and their effects concern one territory, there is a web of relationships that can connect them with others due to historical, political, economic, military, and other issues. And that, in turn, the territory is contained by even larger and more complex national explanatory contexts.

In order to develop the explanatory contexts, it was necessary to analyze and cross-check testimonies, data, and information from primary and secondary sources. Thus, the Commission came closer to understanding why and for what purpose the events occurred, from a temporal perspective that encompasses the clarification of the past, its persistence or not in the present and the ways it could be extended into the future.

FINDINGS

In addition to collecting and analyzing information from primary and secondary sources, verifying, cross-checking, and deepening the information, applying data analytics, and implementing the methodological tools described above, the Commission found a series of findings with hypotheses that explain the origin, development, and persistence of the armed conflict.

Most of the findings emerged from the analysis of patterns of violence, cases, testimonies, and reports, and from the deepening of the first listening assessment during 2020. These findings (February 2021)[186] were the route to reach the conclusions on which the Final Report was written. They were finally refined and collected in the volume Findings and Recommendations of the Truth Commission in the Final Report.

Up to this point, the way in which the research was carried out has been addressed with the emergence of different needs. These led to agreements between the research teams that enabled the search for truth, mainly in patterns and contexts, to explain the origin, causes and persistence factors of the conflict. Stringent processes of analysis and contrast, both qualitative and quantitative, strengthened and deepened the findings that emerged from the listening processes. The following chapters will explain how the Final Report was drafted and what strategies the Commission used to produce it. It is also important to keep in mind that this truth goes beyond the written report: it will be a legacy that will last beyond its mission and mandate.

[186.] These initial findings are reported in the internal document Preliminary Findings.

Photography: Truth Commission
METHODOLOGY FOR THE CLARIFICATION OF THE TRUTH
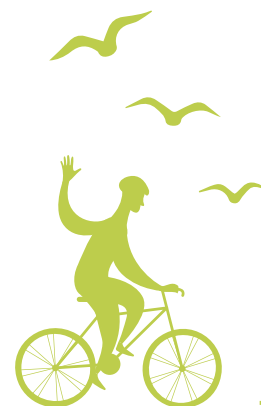
CHAPTER 5.

DEVELOPMENT AND WRITING OF THE

FINAL REPORT

By 2021, the year wherein the initial term of its mandate ended, the Commission had listened to thousands of people in the territories, analyzed their testimonies according to specific guidelines, compared them with qualitative and quantitative methods, and produced assessment documents with explanations of the armed conflict. With this experience, the task of drafting the Final Report began.

In the second half of 2020, the research deepened the information found during the first listening assessment, as we saw in the previous chapter, which led to other research needs. A first decision was to expand the regional analysis. Initially, the teams had focused on understanding the conflict in 28 micro-territories, but it was later determined that the analysis would be based on the patterns that encompassed the eleven macro-regions. This revealed new patterns and contexts that needed to be explored in greater depth. This process was called regionalization.

The regionalization process led to a new delimitation of the borders that had been initially defined. In order to analyze some milestones, patterns, and contexts, it was necessary to further develop the map of the armed conflict itself, which had already been drawn up during the deployment. During the process, additional

tools appeared that added new levels of interpretation to what happened in those regions, the heat maps. These maps allowed measuring the magnitudes and densities of different facts and patterns of the conflict in the macro-regions. The analysis of this information gave rise to the territorial volume of the Final Report.

This reiterated the need to coordinate the work of the national teams with territorial research. The coordination included building bridges between the thematic analyses on the patterns made at the national level and the specific features of each territory, and also between these and the macro-regions. An additional need of this assessment was to speed up the transcription and labeling process within the SIM in order to have as much information as possible for the analysis.

National meetings, in-depth seminars, shared readings among the teams and multiple coordination efforts were implemented during the years of the Commission's mandate. However, in spite of these actions, the national thematic and territorial research, with emphasis on the regional dynamics of the conflict were parallel. This resulted in a Final Report that includes analyses on the main issues, differential approaches arising from the armed conflict and regional analyses that account for the dynamics of the territories.

With the needs resulting from this assessment, which strengthened the task of clarification, the Commission reached the final stretch for the development of the Report. The Final Report Group (GIF) had been created to coordinate the investigation and led the final stage, which also included the editorial team. As a result, progress was made in the last stage of analysis, cross-checking and in-depth analysis, and, of course, in the writing and editing of the Report.

With the indications of the GIF, and thanks to in-depth research seminars, in April 2021 the writing of the definitive texts corresponding to the volumes of the Final Report began. These texts were based on the inputs produced by thematic lines and cores; the exchanges between national and territorial researchers; the assessment of the listening processes and their subsequent analysis, verification, and cross-checking; and the work of the other areas of the Commission in charge of social dialogue, differential approaches, and strategies. In addition, at this point, the teams that had carried out the research were rearranged to meet the demands of volume writing.

Since 2021, the GIF built the methodological guidelines for the Report, reviewed the final texts in a first level of analysis, led the exercises to deepen the findings, patterns and explanatory contexts, followed up on the route and schedule of the research, defined the new organization of volumes and put together a group called the expanded GIF, with internal peers from the Commission who read the documents and joined in the analysis and validation of the progress.

The volumes, under the responsibility of commissioners and directors, also had a coordinator who provided thematic guidelines for the drafting of the documents. The directors, together with the coordinators and their teams, presented the proposed content and developed the volumes. In February 2021, Commissioner Carlos Beristain was appointed as director of the research and was in charge of guiding the methodological route.

DEVELOPMENT OF *THE FINAL REPORT*

Photography: Truth Commission

CHAPTER 5. DEVELOPMENT AND WRITING OF THE FINAL REPORT

For approval of the volumes, the directors reviewed the preliminary documents for each volume. Then, they presented them to the GIF, which analyzed them and requested a first round of adjustments. Finally, they were reviewed by the Plenary to start the approval process again, which was carried out in stages:

DATA AUDITING OR *FACT-CHECKING*

During the last round of approval, the data audit or fact-checking process was included. It consisted of reviewing, standardizing, and ensuring the replicability of the quantitative information that led to the statements made in each volume, based on the internal and external sources used.

To further streamline the review, each chapter of the Report included a quantitative statistical annex describing the data analysis processes, the standardization of sources, the calculation of the figures presented, and their interpretation, visualization, and consistency. The data audit was divided into three stages.

1. Figures check

In this stage, the databases used were checked to ensure that they were standardized with regard to variables and cut-off dates, that the calculations were made with the same database versions, and that the necessary updates were made in case of inconsistencies. The Analytics team, together with researchers from each chapter, was also responsible for verifying sources and reviewing the percentages, numbers, ranges, structures, denominators, types of charts and baselines of calculation for the indicators.

This was done through a process called cross-checking, where the chapters were analyzed and reviewed in pairs, together with the editing teams. This was done on the Word document in an online version and with change control: first the editor sent the documents by reviewed chapters to the quantitative analyst, who reviewed the data, commented, and added to the GitLab replicability system.

He then returned them to the editor and the editor returned them to the researchers, who answered the comments about where the figures came from, clarified sources, and provided other information requested by the quantitative team analysts.

2. Interpretation of data

In this stage, a review was made of the coherence of the figures with regard to the context of the arguments in each chapter. The analysts checked that the interpretations of the figures, indicators, estimates, and statistical tests were correct, and in case of doubts, the authors and editors of the chapters were asked to analyze them again.

3. Audit

Precedents and dependencies were tracked, errors were checked, and formulas were evaluated. In precedent tracing, auditors ensured that each figure, range, table, or chart was calculated in a manner consistent with other similar ranges, tables, and charts. In dependency tracing, all calculations between the original data and the final charts, ranges or tables were verified.

Finally, those responsible for data analysis in each chapter calculated the statistics over again or adjusted the sources according to the comments and alerts made by the audit team.

DATA AUDITING OR *FACT CHEKING*

Review, standardize and ensure the replicability of the quantitative information in the chapters of the Final Report

By means of:
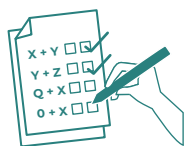
Numbers check

Checked that all databases used and standardized.

Interpretation of the data

Review of the consistency of the figures.

Audit

Precedents and dependents have been tracked, errors have been checked, formulas have been evaluated, or sources have been adjusted.

Affirmations in the chapters of the Final report verified, contrasted and substantiated with data.

This is how the process to strengthen the quantitative robustness of the research was completed

During the second half of 2021, an editorial team was put together, with a coordinator, to consolidate the criteria for writing each chapter of the Reporte[187]. Its first task was to create a style manual, which took as input some documents and guidelines that had been produced in earlier stages of the process.

This was followed by a stage of diagnosis of the status of each chapter, wherein diverse editorial processes were defined in response to the particular needs. The editors, together with each research team, built collaborative work plans that allowed smooth progress in the writing.

In addition to the specific work of each team, there was also a general strategy with three moments in the editorial process. The first was a macro edition to check that the main elements of the structure of each chapter worked, the handling of testimonies, the depth of the

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[187.] These criteria had already been created previously by several commissioners, mainly headed by Carlos Beristain, director of the research. These were: i. Suggestions for the testimony analysis process (July 2020) ii. Categories to keep in mind when reviewing the cases (March 2021) iii. Some basic rules for writing the final report (May 2021) iv. Characteristics of the texts of the truth commission (May 2021). v. Key concepts, definitions, or criteria to be considered for drafting the final report (May 2021) vi. Alert on guidelines for reporting accountability (June 2021). And a series of eight videos created by the research director divided into: 1. Models of Research, 2. Revision of Sources, 3. Mandate and Levels of Analysis, 4. Report drafting process, 5. Video with examples of impacts on democracy, 6. Use of Testimonials 1, 7. Use of Testimonials 2 and Use of Reports.

EDITORIAL PROCESS

information, the narrative line of the text, inter alia. The second was a micro-editing, which focused on a line-by-line analysis of the story: here they made sure that each sentence contributed to the structure, that they made the right sense and that there were no redundancies or gaps. The third stage was the correction of spelling and style.

The incorporation of data analysts and editors in each of the chapters of the Final Report allowed for progress, on the one hand, in the construction of an analysis that strengthened the research and, on the other hand, in a process of permanent writing and editing. In similar research experiences, in order to avoid reprocessing and meet the objectives set, it is necessary to consider from the beginning the incorporation of research and data analysis teams, as well as social researchers, editors and writers. For example, having style manuals before the start of writing can guarantee the standardization of spelling in the documents produced, standardization in quoting and expeditious proofreading.

External readers

In addition to internal peers in different areas of the Commission, the research also had external readers from diverse fields of knowledge, with extensive experience related to the armed conflict, who read, reviewed, and commented on the chapters of the Report.

The anonymity processes

A parallel process to the writing of the Final Report was anonymity of the testimonies. It consisted of rendering anonymous the data of the testimonies quoted, those that appear in the Digital Transmedia and those used publicly. Anonymity rendering is a tool to minimize the massive use of personal data and the risk that this may entail. The testimonies provided to the Commission were classified as public information, since the end of the mandate.

The anonymity rendering process consisted of transforming the personal data so that the individuals and organizations named could not be identified after the disclosure of the legacy. In order to make public versions available for consultation and to guarantee active transparency[188], the SIM Development team worked on a software that allowed the automatic anonymity of the data of the short and long datasheets, and of those identified in the transcription and labeling process. In them, the information related to names, surnames, exact dates, villages, ethnic names, reservations, armed groups, organizations, perpetrators, and any term that would allow the identification of the person who gave testimony was rendered anonymous.

However, due to the natural language of the people (colloquialisms, dialects, idioms, or expressions of the different regions) this process had to be verified manually, comparing the original versions of the testimonies with the anonymous ones, in order to guarantee the protection of the rights and data of the people, so that they can be read in a coherent manner when consulted.

For this purpose, the context of the interview, the duration of the violent events, the region where they occurred, and the information that allows us to understand the patterns of violence were kept in the information. Also, the profiles of the individuals without identifying them,

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188. Publication and disclosure of public information without prior request or restriction.

age at the time of the events, department of birth, sex, sexual orientation, gender identity, ethnicity. And to specify timelines, type of violence and perpetrators, location, facts, date, and age at the time of the events.

Finally, this comparison was made using the Word tools Compare and Review, which, together with a Follow-up Matrix and the original and anonymized files, allowed the information to be reviewed semi-automatically.

When working with information on human rights violations and breaches of IHL provided by organizations and victims, the identity of those who make these contributions must be protected, especially in countries with ongoing conflicts and where security risks involve the lives of individuals and those who cooperate in these processes. In similar experiences where this information must be classified as public, it is essential to incorporate data anonymity exercises from the outset to avoid the identification of individuals, organizations, and civilian processes.

determinante incorporar desde el inicio ejercicios de anonimización de datos, para evitar la identificación de personas, organizaciones y procesos civiles.

The Report is divided into ten volumes and a call for applications, which address the points in the mandate[189]. The inputs on which its writing was based were collectively built, discussed, revised, transformed, deepened, and validated over a period of more than three years. From then on, different national and territorial teams, with the support of multiple actors, worked to clarify the armed conflict, fulfill the rights of the victims and challenge society with a narrative that would contribute to the construction of a different future.

The proposal of the account is designed to live, transcend the text, and expand through different formats and to different populations, as will be explained in the following chapter. The following is a synthesis of the themes explored in each volume:

FINAL REPORT:
THERE IS A FUTURE IF THERE IS TRUTH

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[189] To consult the chapters of the report visit Hay futuro si hay verdad | Informe Final Comisión de la Verdad (There is a future if there is truth | Truth Commission Final Report)
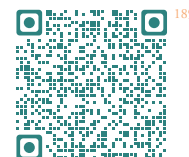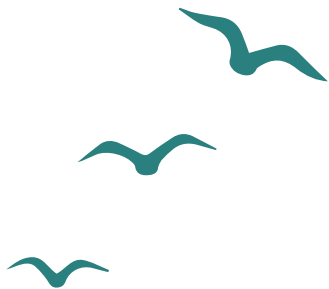
1. Call for a great peace[190]**.** The Commission's statement was written by its president, Francisco de Roux, with input from the plenary of commissioners. It is divided into three parts: an introduction, a section named "Clarifying the truth", and some elements of the explanatory context. The first part reflects the voice of the Commission. The second part is divided into two steps for clarification: accepting the reality of the victims and the explanation in order to be able to sign. The third part provides analytical and conceptual elements to understand the Final Report: the complex framework, responsibilities, history, weapons in politics, the internal enemy, dying for the homeland or for the people, the hard time of the war and the great victimization, the risk of imperfect peace, the findings and messages, and the challenge of reconciliation.

2. Findings and recommendations[191]**.** This volume is comprised of two parts. The one on findings is based on the discussions of the plenary of commissioners with respect to the truth claims or findings that emerged throughout the research process. These findings were studied, analyzed, and completed by a group of researchers whose objective was to make a second-level analysis, that is, one that could go beyond much of the descriptive material in the other volumes and provide explanations of the complexity and interweaving of different variables within the conflict. To write this text, the researchers interacted periodically in extended GIF sessions to receive feedback on their proposals and progress in writing. Once the findings were defined, they began to be coordinated with the recommendations that had been identified by a team within the Commission.

The recommendations were based on the question «What measures should be implemented to guarantee the non-repetition of the armed conflict? ». The team worked on the systematization, balance, and analysis of sources, as well as on the identification of themes and lines of recommendation. The sources used in this process were developments in the other chapters of the Final Report, 1,870 proposals collected by the Territories, Ethnic Peoples and Social Dialogue directorates in different spaces, 397 reports submitted to the Commission containing recommendations, problems and proposals sent by the teams of the Findings chapter, the Social Dialogue team and other research teams.

3. When the birds didn't chirp**[192]**. Stories of the armed conflict in Colombia. This volume is testimonial and pedagogical. It was built from the voices of the people, their experiences

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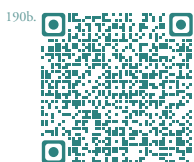
[190.] For the complete text visit Convocatoria a la PAZ GRANDE (Call for GREAT PEACE) and Convocatoria a la paz grande | Informe Final Comisión de la Verdad (Call for a Great Peace | Final Report of the Truth Commission)

[191.] For the complete text visit Hallazgos y recomendaciones (Findings and Recommendations) and to expand Hallazgos y recomendaciones | Informe Final Comisión de la Verdad (Findings and Recommendations | Truth Commission Final Report)

[192.] To Learn more on the volume Cuando los pájaros no cantaban (When the birds didn´t chirp) together with this wide range of sound content Sonido y memoria | Informe Final Comisión de la Verdad (Sound and memory | Final Report of the Truth Commission)
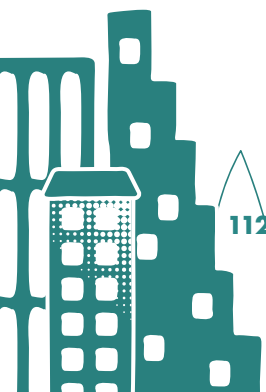
in the conflict and what happened before, during and after the violence. The methodology to do so, as described in chapter 3, was based on several processes that started from a listening process with a future perspective: a. The identification of testimonials housed in the SIM and identified together with the people who listened within the Commission (interviewers, labelers, and documenters), b. The methodology Territories of Listening, where the experiences of the war were listened to from the people's own account, c. The writing process, based on the editorial gesture, and d. The Ritual Readings, a new way of telling the conflict from an educational exercise to share the result of this chapter and the listening process that the Commission achieved in their testimonials.

More than 2,000 people were heard in more than 1,100 interviews. This process led to finding and extracting testimonies that emerged from the polyphony of voices. From this emerged an understanding of the conflict in relation to bodies, spaces, time and language, intersections, and the daily experiences of war. This led to the writing of a narrative divided into three books: *Anticipaciones* (Anticipations), *Devastaciones y la Vida* (Destruction and Life), *and Porvenir* (Future).

4. Not a lesser evil[193]**. *Children and teenagers in the armed conflict.*** This chapter develops five major topics: orphanhoods, absences, displacement, schools, bonding and coping. For its development, the research team analyzed 1,150 testimonies and 132 reports. To these were added 174 testimonies and 47 reports. When choosing the voices, it was borne in mind that peasant, Afro-descendant and indigenous children, and adolescents should be made visible. However, a large number of these accounts consisted of the memories of people who are now adults, who told the Commission about the events and victimization acts that occurred during their childhood. The voices of the armed actors were also very important in this volume, as they helped to understand the logic of recruitment. Interviews with experts were also considered, which allowed us to understand the findings and dynamics. The testimonies were complemented with the use of figures, so that the stories gained a broader dimension, because with the numerical data the magnitude of the violence was evident[194].

5. Colombia outside Colombia[195]**. *The truths of exile.*** Its narrative is directly related to the complete route taken by refugee claimants, exiles, or cross-border displaced persons, and expands in cases of return[196]. For this purpose, more than two thousand interviews were held by the international macro, including exiles, returnees, and experts on different

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[193.] To Learn more on the volume No es un mal menor (Not a lesser evil) and to Learn more about Niños, niñas y adolescentes | Informe Final Comisión de la Verdad (Children and Teenagers | Truth Commission Final Report)

[194.] "Colombia es un país que no ha querido a los niños, niñas y adolescentes": Diana Britto (Colombia is a country that has not loved children and teenagers)

[195.] For the complete volume go to La Colombia fuera de Colombia (Colombia outside Colombia)

[196.] To Learn more go to Exilio | Informe Final Comisión de la Verdad (Exile | Truth Commission Final Report)
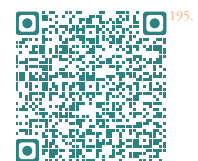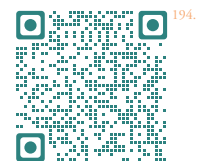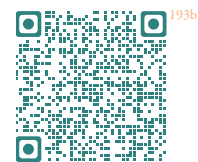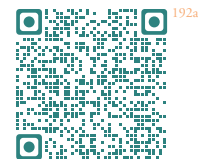
topics. More than 30 reports received that tell the story of exile and academic, systematization and analysis documents were analyzed. In terms of social dialogue, discussions, thematic workshops and acts of recognition were also used as inputs. After collecting testimonies, the team compared them with secondary sources, databases and archival sources[197].

6. **You shall not kill**[198]. *Historical account of the armed conflict.* This chapter attempts to answer the question: why does the conflict repeat itself despite multiple peace processes? To address this question, the findings, and inputs from the former research cores, such as the one on drug trafficking, as well as the territorial reports, were used as a basis. With this information, added to the testimonies and reports and cases, matrixes were created to classify the findings by time periods, following the timeline distribution proposed by the plenary of commissioners. In addition, contrasting interviews were carried out, mainly with political actors, such as congressmen, ministers, ex-combatants, inter alia. In addition, information was taken from the contributions to the truth of five former presidents, and some inputs from the social dialogue. They worked with the SIM interviews, from the logs provided by the transcribers, the listening assessments carried out by the commissioners and those produced by the directorates of knowledge and territories.

7. **Suffering the war and rebuilding your life**[199]. *Impacts, coping and resistance.* This chapter explores both the suffering and the serious effects of the armed conflict, as well as the manifestations of dignity wherewith individuals and collective groups have confronted it and have committed themselves to peacebuilding. Its construction was achieved through the review of primary sources, such as testimonies and reports submitted to the Commission, as well as dialogues and meetings with different sectors, and finally secondary sources, such as information provided by institutions, NGOs, academia, inter alia. Work was also carried out with the SIM databases, and all quantitative information went through a contrasting process.

8. **My body is the truth.** *Experiences of women and LGBTIQ+ people in the armed conflict.* This chapter exposes how women and LGBTIQ+ people have been victims of a continuum of violence with differential impacts, but also their capacity to defend their lives[200]. To build this narrative, the research team took a sample of 1,865 interviews. These were defined based on territorial, ethnic and age diversity and the type of victimization.
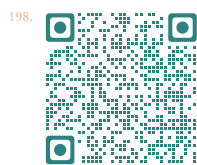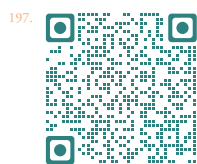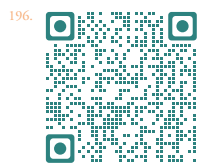
[197.] Relatos en el exilio: lanzamiento de piezas audiovisuales (Stories in exile: release of audiovisual pieces)
[198.] For the complete volume visit No matarás (You Shall not Kill)
[199.] For the complete volume go to Sufrir la guerra y rehacer la vida (Suffering the war and rebuilding your life)
[200.] For the complete volume go to Mi cuerpo es la verdad (My body is the truth) and learn about 25 stories from this chapter Vidas en re-existencia | Informe Final Comisión de la Verdad (Lives in re-existence | Truth Commission Final Report)

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There are in-depth interviews, group interviews, interviews with perpetrators and life histories.

39 related reports were reviewed, among the more than 1,000 received by the Commission, in addition to 54 others that were submitted directly to the team by women's and LGBTIQ+ organizations. They also took as input 52 listening sessions at the territorial level that were exclusively with women. With all this information, together with the reading of external experts and the analysis of secondary sources, the chapter was cross-checked and the statements that support it were produced.

9. Resistance is not endurance. *Dynamics, violence, and damage caused by the armed conflict to ethnic peoples in Colombia*[201]**.** As explained earlier in this document, the impact of the ethnic peoples from the dialogues in Havana until the creation of the Commission ensured that the agency had a specific directorate for these issues and that the Final Report also had a chapter dedicated to them. This process of ongoing dialogue with the peoples also led to the agreement of methodologies for the construction of the chapter[202]. The theses of the chapter were built from the collection of information from the SIM, reports, individual and collective testimonies of ethnic peoples, responsible parties, and institutions. It is important to point out that the Commission held 2,104 interviews with the Afro population (Afro-Colombians, Blacks, Raizales and Palenques), 1,691 with the indigenous population, 60 interviews with the Roma population and 304 with collective subjects. In terms of persons participating in the listening scenarios, 3,734 persons belonging to or identifying themselves as Afro, 7,091 persons belonging to or identifying themselves as indigenous peoples, and 239 persons identifying themselves as Roma were recorded.

Initially, these theses were prepared by the ethnic commissioners and the director of ethnic peoples. They were then analyzed at a workshop with ethnic organizations and experts and were read and fed back by leaders of the peoples, as well as academics and others who contributed to the project.

10. Even war has limits[203]**.** *Human rights violations, breaches of international humanitarian law and collective accountability.* This chapter focuses on the main violations of human rights and IHL that emerged in the lifetime of the investigation. It develops the whys and wherefores of these violations, in order to understand the patterns and determine who benefited from them and how they benefited from them. The first part of the chapter describes and explains, from different analytical elements, the

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[201.] For the complete volume go to Resistir no es aguantar (Resistance is not endurance)

[202.] To learn more about the process go to Pueblos étnicos | Informe Final Comisión de la Verdad (Ethnic Peoples | Truth Commission Final Report)

[203.] For the complete volume go to Hasta la guerra tiene límites (Even war has limits)
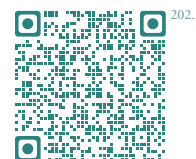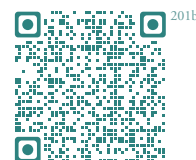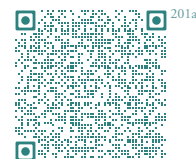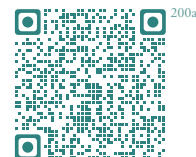
main violations, and offenses: homicides, indiscriminate attacks, threats against the right to life, enforced disappearance, torture, inhuman, cruel, and degrading treatment, sexual violence, kidnapping, recruitment of children and adolescents, forced labor, arbitrary detentions, forced displacement, dispossession, confinement, attacks on protected property, extortion, and looting. Some have extensive and previous publications, research, databases, reports, and cases, such as massacres or forced disappearance, while others are dealt with in a very general manner in publications and research publications and for which there are no databases, as in the case of extortion or looting.

The second addresses the aforementioned questions: why, for what purpose and who benefits? These questions are answered based on the analysis of the set of violations and offenses, and of the intersections and differences in relation to their ends. The relationships and oppositions yielded dynamics, criminal logics, and motivations, and this allowed dimensioning the military objective pursued, the interests and beneficiaries of each one of them.

11. **Colombia Inside**[204]. *Collection of Territorial Accounts of the Armed Conflict.* This volume was led by the Territories Directorate. It comprises a general presentation, a chapter for each of the eleven macro-regions defined by the Commission and two additional chapters: peasantry and urban dynamics[205]. More than 10,000 interviews were taken in these regions, which were used for the construction of the patterns. From this universe, the 30 most important interviews in each region were chosen, read and systematized, and were used to deepen the dynamics of each territory.

A total of 150 reports submitted to the Commission that relate to the facts described in the regional accounts were reviewed, and 30 cases were documented in depth. Based on the assertions that emerged from this process, in order to ensure that the information was appropriately cross-checked, sources contrary to those consulted so far were reviewed. This exercise was complemented with a verification of databases to cross-check information that was supported only by qualitative sources. All sources were studied for consistency and reliability.

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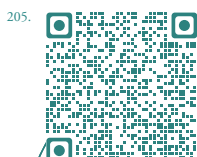
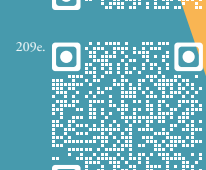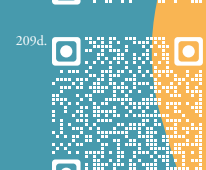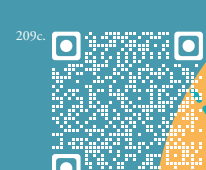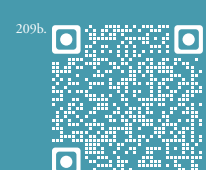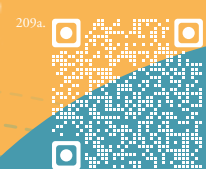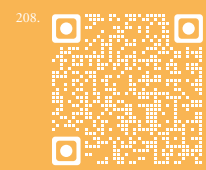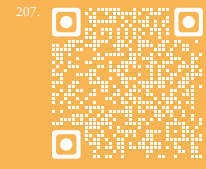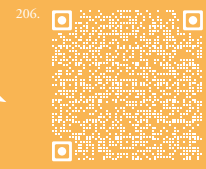[204] For the complete volume go to Colombia adentro (Colombia Inside)

[205] To learn more about regionalization go to Colombia adentro | Informe Final Comisión de la Verdad (Colombia Inside | Truth Commission Final Report
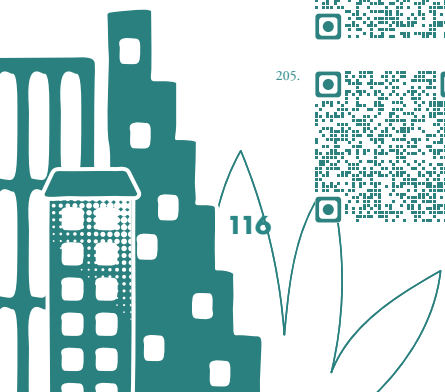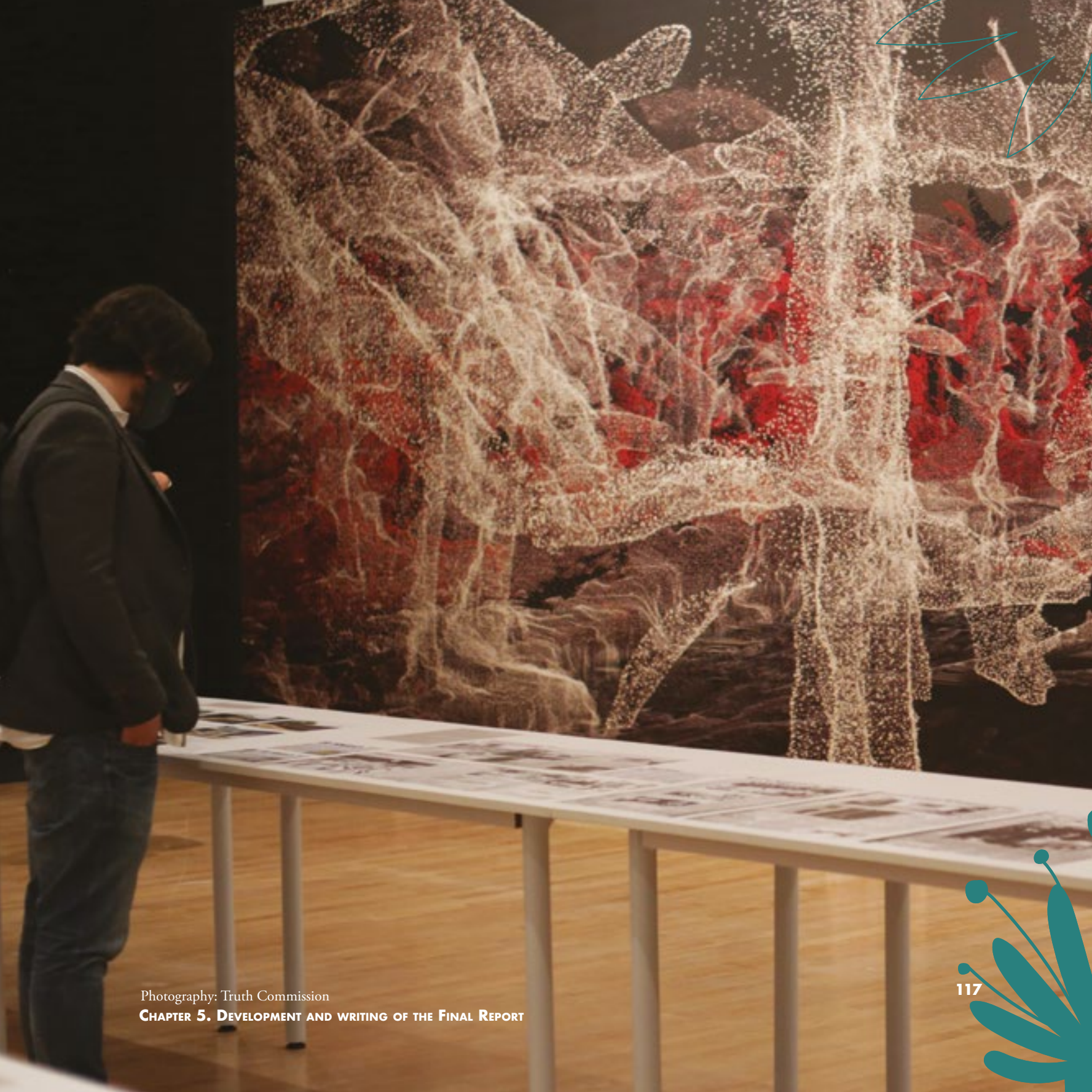
Photography: Truth Commission
CHAPTER 5. DEVELOPMENT AND WRITING OF THE FINAL REPORT

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Photography Comisión de la Verdad

METHODOLOGY FOR THE CLARIFICATION OF THE TRUTH

CHAPTER 6.

REPORT AND LEGACY

The previous chapters showed the route followed by the Commission to clarify what happened during the armed conflict. The next step, after building this narrative, would be to disseminate it and promote its ownership by society. Several truth commissions around the world had defined strategies to achieve this[206]. These had ranged from incorporating peace education models to translating the report into indigenous languages, including communication campaigns, work with networks of allies, or artistic and cultural memory actions. Based on these references, and on discussions that took place since the readiness period, the Commission began to think about how to mobilize society around the truth that had been constructed[207].

The great event of the Commission, at the end of its mandate, would be the delivery of the Report. But it was clear that the Report should not be limited to a textbook to be read by a public expert on the subject, but that it would have to move and challenge broader sectors through innovative and complementary strategies. Its dissemination should place it at the center of the national dialogue and of the cultural imaginary[208], and even in the international realm[209].

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206. Comisiones de la verdad: paso clave hacia la reconciliación (Truth commissions: key step toward reconciliation)

207. 'Llamamiento a la verdad' - pieza musical ('Call for truth' - musical piece)

208. El acontecimiento de la verdad (The happening of the truth)

209. Embajador de Bélgica en Colombia habla sobre el Informe Final de la Comisión de la Verdad Embajador de España en Colombia habla sobre el Informe Final de la Comisión de la

These discussions were also framed in two articles of Decree 588/2017, which defined the mandate and objectives of the Commission. Article 13 speaks of the need to implement a dissemination, pedagogy, and relationship strategy, to develop cultural and educational initiatives to disseminate the Final Report, and of the existence of an exhibition about the Commission at the National Museum of Memory[210]. In addition, Article 32 mentions the creation of a committee to monitor and follow up the implementation of the recommendations made by the agency.

This strategy was called *legacy*[211]. The Commission's legacy to the country is the legacy of its lessons learned, the tools to reflect on the patterns, contexts, cases, and factors of persistence, which provided the basis for the recommendations to turn the truth into a collective knowledge that opens the way to do away with the conditions under which violence has persisted.

This work was led by the Legacy Coordination Board. The four directorates, the communications team, the pedagogy team, the president's office of the Commission and the artistic and cultural activations team participated. It was organized into four components within the Commission: The Legacy Narrative, the Transmedia (which includes a web platform[212] and a set of artistic and cultural actions), networking with partners and internal coordination. And it was divided into three major strategies with society: preparing society for the arrival of the Report, adoption of its contents and recommendations, and actions to sustain the legacy. The Legacy strategy will be presented below based on the strategies known by society.

Verdad Embajador de Noruega en Colombia habla sobre el Informe Final de la Comisión de la Verdad Embajador de Polonia en Colombia habla sobre el Informe Final de la Comisión de la Verdad Embajador de la UE en Colombia habla sobre el Informe Final de la Comisión de la Verdad (Belgium, Spain, Norway, Poland, EU Ambassadors to Colombia speak about the Truth Commission's Final Report)

210. Exposición en Museo Nacional de la Memoria de Colombia (Exhibition at The National Museum Of Memory In Colombia)

211. La Comisión de la Verdad presenta su Legado a las víctimas (The Truth Commission presents its Legacy to victims)

212. ¿Qué es la transmedia de la Comisión de la Verdad? - Creative Commons (What is the Truth Commission´s Transmedia). Conoce y navega la plataforma digital del Informe Final de Comisión de la Verdad (Discover and browse the digital platform of the Truth Commission Final Report)

READINESS OF SOCIETY FOR THE ARRIVAL OF *THE FINAL REPORT*

The Narrative

Before delivering the Final Report, the Commission implemented communicative, pedagogical, ownership and mobilization actions to prepare society to receive it. These actions were aimed at promoting active listening, understanding the scope that the clarification would have and committing different actors to coexistence and non-repetition[213].

As explained in Chapter 4, the Commission's narrative was a political, social, and cultural approach that proposed a shared understanding of what happened in the armed conflict and what needs to be done to build a different future wherein the factors that have led to the persistence of violence are eradicated.

Although it is not a script, an effort was made within the Commission to ensure that the communication of messages and ideas was coordinated and based on the same arguments. This narrative had to be clear, direct, and concise in order to reach broad and diverse audiences. For this reason, it was also decided that the Report, beyond the text, would be a transmedia project with multiple languages, platforms and with digital and analog formats.

Networking with partners

A key strategy for strengthening and multiplying the reach and ownership of the Commission's work throughout the country was by means of partnerships[214]. During the almost four years of its mandate, some 3,300 partners from different sectors were identifie[215]. This relationship was a priority for the Commission, as it understood that they would be a fundamental piece to prepare society for the arrival of the Report, to disseminate and adopt it when it was made public, and to keep alive the legacy built by the Report.

In March 2021, the Office of the President of the Commission started a process of profiling and relationship building with these partners, in order to expand the network and promote coordination scenarios for the Report. In order to mobilize them around this initiative, information was disseminated to promote the understanding of the contents, methodologies, and tools in the specific audiences of the partners.

The dissemination of this information was done through spaces and strategies to activate the democratic debate around the Report, to keep alive the processes of coexistence and recognition that began in the territories and to influence the implementation of the recommendations for non-repetition, as will be explained in the next section.
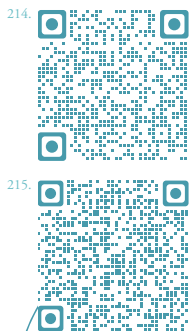
213. From the psychosocial approach, Orientaciones para la preparación de la llegada del Informe Final (Guidelines for the readiness of the arrival of the Final Report) were also created

214. Trabajo en red con los aliados de la Comisión de la Verdad. Frente al Espejo - Cap 33 (Networking with partners of the Truth Commission. Facing the Mirror - Ch 33) and Trabajo en Red Con Aliados (Networking with Partners)

215. To learn more visit ¿Con quién lo hicimos? | IF Transmedia CEV (Who did we do it with? | IF Transmedia CEV)

In addition to networking with allies, the Commission included a process of advocacy with national political actors to clarify expectations, reduce resistance and inform about the arrival of the Final Report. To this end, we defined a coordinated effort with several sectors.

National and territorial victims' organizations, human rights platforms, the social movement, public agencies, trade and business associations, alternative caucuses in Congress, the media, and opinion leaders. With these actors, specific routes were designed to implement the Commission's recommendations.

The advocacy work included the development of territorial strategies and the clarification of expectations about what the Report and the legacy would entail. Besides, the positioning of narratives around the truth, the inclusion of the recommendations in the Development Plan, especially with congressmen, and, with victims' organizations, the public policy that will be included in the Conpes (National Planning Authority Roadmap) 2022 on victims.

The Commission developed an internal educational strategy to standardize the process for the Final Report. This strategy provided pedagogical support based on tools to promote networking with partners. To this end, the pedagogical materials produced by the different teams were mapped. These were organized in a matrix with 584 inputs and shared with the partners.

Outwards, it was supported by two processes: Generation V+[216] and the community of practice *Que la Verdad sea Dicha* (Let the Truth Be Told). The former is a citizen support network to create and disseminate meaning about the value of truth[217] and public communication actions to mobilize society around their search for[218] truth. The second is a community of practice stemming from the laboratories for the co-creation of pedagogical tools for the social ownership of truth[219], together with several education communities in the country[220].

There were also sensitive, experimental, listening and dialogue actions and learning scenarios that encouraged questioning, critical thinking, and otherness.

Based on questions and dialogue, which are its two cross-cutting axes, the strategy supported the Commission's actions through three lines of action:

1. **Bringing people together to learn:** It invited to share and learn with others from their realities and contexts. It created a close and daily dialogue based on their own knowledge and experiences that allowed active listening and potential agreement for

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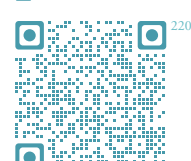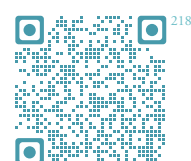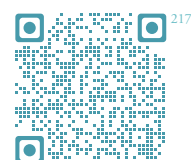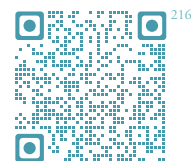
216. Chapter 22. Camino al Informe: Generación V+ (Chapter 22. Road to the Report: Generation V+)

217. Lanzamiento de Generación V+ 'Declarando la verdad a la guerra y el olvido' (Release of Generation V+ 'Telling the truth to war and oblivion').

218. Encuentro Nacional Generación V+ | Día 1Encuentro Nacional Generación V+ | Día 2 (National Convention Generation V+ | Day 1 and 2)

219. Comunidades educativas que contribuyen a fortalecer el legado de la Comisión de la Verdad (Education communities contributing to strengthening the legacy of the Truth Commission)

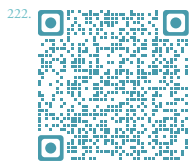220. Pedagogía | Informe Final Comisión de la Verdad (Pedagogy | Truth Commission Final Report)
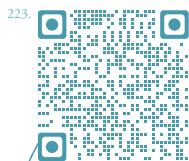
learning, the demand for truth as a public asset and the empowerment of capacities for peacebuilding.

2. **Coordinate and mobilize to support:** Proposed to work jointly and in coordination from a horizontal logic to build actions for the ownership of the legacy and the Final Report, aimed at its mobilization and sustainability over time.

3. **Create to transform:** Acknowledged that the creative capacity and culture as the production of meaning from and about life are essential to think about the transformation of the conflicts that the country has experienced as a result of the armed conflict.

From these three lines, pedagogical materials and training scenarios were designed, and learning and practice communities were coordinated for the ownership of the legacy and the Report, on the basis of dialogue and social mobilization. These were also systematized as replicable methodologies.

Artistic and cultural activations

The Commission's cultural and artistic strategy was coordinated with communities to reflect on the impact of the conflict on culture and the ways in which expressions and initiatives have served to confront violence, provide symbolic reparations, and achieve positive transformations[221].

The legacy was coordinated with these expressions to prepare society for the arrival and ownership of the Report, and to mobilize around the story with actions that create empathy and emotion. Its purpose was to place the value of truth as a fundamental public asset, to move from the tragic story to the hopeful story, to understand the social and cultural practices that define society and use them on behalf of transformation, to promote public dialogue through creative languages, to promote the development of the public dialogue through the use of creative languages, to contribute to the recognition of the value of communities and the arts[222] to report, resist and heal, and to stimulate social ownership of the Final Report and its recommendations.

HAPPENING: THERE IS A FUTURE IF THERE IS TRUTH

The delivery of the Final Report was conceived as an event that would mark a turning point in the transition towards a different country, and that would summon broad and diverse sectors of society to be part of this path[223]. This event was composed of several elements that have been part of the Commission's work for nearly four years: the recognition of the victims, citizen contributions to the clarification, the contributions to the truth by former presidents, the responsibilities and commitments undertaken by different actors, inter alia.

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221. To learn more go to Activaciones artísticas y culturales | Informe Final Comisión de la Verdad (Artistic and cultural activations | Truth Commission Final Report)

222. Cultura y conflicto (Culture and conflict)

223. Acto público de presentación del Informe Final de la Comisión de la Verdad (Public ceremony for the presentation of the Truth Commission's Final Report)
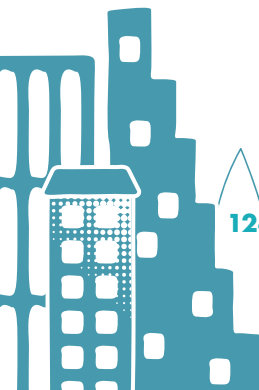
A series of narratives, actions, products and pedagogical processes in different languages and formats, as well as book presentations, television and radio programs, audiovisual pieces, talks, concerts, theater and dance performances, film cycles, exhibitions, audiovisual pieces, tours, digital broadcasts of works, exhibitions, photographs, and celebrations, were also part of the event, as has been explained so far[224]. Although it was coordinated around the Report with a network of actions and relationships for its arrival, the happening was also conceived in terms of recognition, coexistence, and non-repetition.

The Commission was created with the purpose of helping to understand the reasons why the armed conflict has existed and persisted. And, based on that understanding and the social dialogues around it, to be able to deal with the suffering and move towards coexistence and non-repetition. As we have seen in this chapter, a major quest in this sense is that the legacy is maintained after the end of the mandate[225]. To move society along this path[226], the Commission considered the following elements or strategies:

After four years of collecting thousands of inputs, the Commission had to define what to do with the sources and archives collected and produced, and how to make them available to the victims, the State, other related agencies, partners, the international community, and the rest of society, so that from this legacy the truth of the armed conflict can continue to be built.

This heritage, comprising the documentary fund, the Mission Information System, the Report's digital platform and research tools, is a key contribution for different sectors of society to carry out research, learn about the processes and methodologies used by the Commission, design pedagogical strategies for the ownership of memory, among other transformation initiatives.

The Commission's documentary fund is a human rights archive that gathers the information collected and produced during its mandate. It contains the voices of victims, witnesses, perpetrators, communities, organizations, public and private agencies, as well as the documents and databases provided, and also those that record the development of the Commission's management.

3. OWNING AND SUSTAINING THE LEGACY

The human rights archive [227]

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227b.

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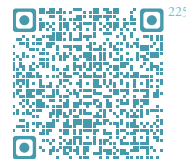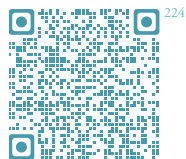
224. Cubrimiento digital previo a la presentación del Informe Final (Digital coverage prior to the presentation of the Final Report)
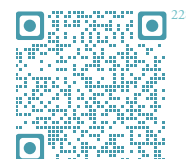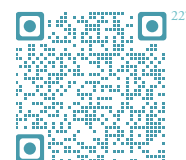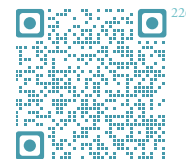
225. Lo que sigue es la sostenibilidad del legado de la comisión como legado del sistema integral para la paz. (What follows is the sustainability of the commission's legacy as a legacy of the comprehensive peace system)

226. The Commission also created didactic resources, pedagogical and artistic devices that seek to promote The Commission through pedagogical actions. To learn more visit Pedagogía | Informe Final Comisión de la Verdad (Pedagogy | Truth Commission Final Report)

227. To consult the Archivo del Esclarecimiento de la Verdad (Truth Clarification Archive) and entidades depositarias - archivo físico (depository agencies - physical archives)

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In order to regulate this archive, five document policies were produced: document management[228], digital preservation, treatment of personal data, security and privacy of information, and access to mission information. Furthermore, a number of protocols and guidelines for the transport, access, consultation, custody, and preservation of archives.

The definition of the agencies that would receive the archive followed several criteria: their legal nature, compliance with the applicable laws, experience in human rights archives and dissemination of documentary heritage, location, sustainability and availability of resources, security conditions, staffing, its physical and technological infrastructure, its ability to promote strategies with victims to build and exchange knowledge, and its interaction with international cooperation agencies.

The Mission Information System

In addition to the fund, the Commission also delivered the Mission Information System and its technological tools. The SIM, as explained in chapter 3, allows the consultation of the results of the listening process, reports and cases delivered as a contribution to clarification, and collections to explore and download structured public information on the conflict.

The SIM has a meta-search engine with more than one million resources from its own and external sources, and a bibliographic systematization of research that enables easy consultation and links to external repositories. These components operate on the basis of technological tools for accessing, consulting, and analyzing information.

The agency that receives this legacy will receive all the data and tools. In order to make an appropriate transfer of this material and the knowledge to manage it, the Commission also foresees to deliver technical documentation of the software and to provide training to the technical team of the recipient agency.

Digital Transmedia
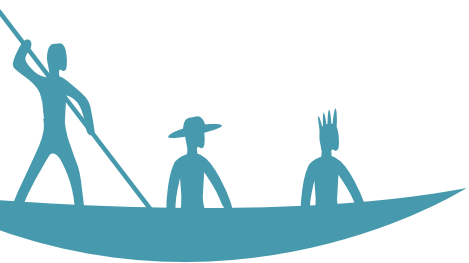
In order to overcome the obstacle of the Final Report being consulted only by a limited audience, the Commission decided that, in addition to the textbook with the development of the chapters, it would also produce a digital transmedia[229] with multimedia and multimodal contents to promote their dissemination and ownership.

This digital complement to the Final Report opens the horizon so that, through other languages, more people can learn about and interact with the story of clarification. There is content designed for children and young people, for ethnic peoples, for the exiled population, among other specific sectors, but also for a broad and diverse public that, without the need to be an expert in the memory of the conflict, can learn about and emotionally connect with the events of the conflict.

The digital transmedia has fourteen sections. Nine sections show the findings of the Final Report. There are both texts and other multimedia content that complement the narrative.

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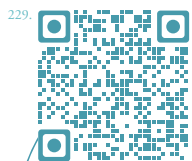
228. Cómo es el proceso de gestión documental en la Comisión de la Verdad (What is the document management process like at the Truth Commission?)

229. To consult the transmedia visit Comisión de la Verdad (Truth Commission)
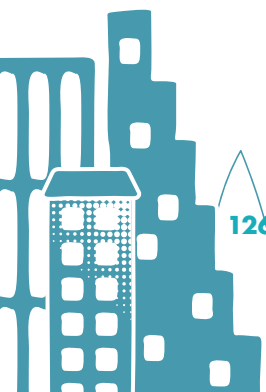
Three show the social dialogue processes, the pedagogical actions and the artistic and cultural activations developed in different territories during the mandate. One with the archive of truth clarification. And the last one shows the systematization of the work done by the Commission and answers to " Who did we do it with? and " How did we do it?

Faced with the challenge posed by the lack of connectivity in many parts of Colombia, 60% of the content can be downloaded for consultation without Internet access. Besides, 35% of the contents were translated into ethnic and indigenous languages, and another 35% were accessible to people with visual or hearing disabilities.

This is the first truth commission report in the world that was conceived from the beginning as a platform for mass participation and dissemination. Transmedia is a key input to expand, contextualize and promote ownership of the Final Report.

Territorial actions

After the delivery of the Final Report, the Commission developed a series of actions and events in different territories to promote the ownership of the findings of the clarification. These included academic lectures, processes with ethnic peoples, pedagogical strategies, tours, disruptive actions in public spaces, national and international tours of the commissioners, meetings with international organizations, exhibits, dissemination of multimedia content, thematic dialogues, artistic and cultural activations, inter alia.

The Follow-up and Monitoring Committee

Article 32 of Decree 588 provides the need to set up a committee to follow up on[230] the implementation of the recommendations of the Final Report, which shall become operational after its delivery and shall have a duration of seven years. It is to be financed by the national government. and of which the Plenary of Commissioners, through Resolution No. 019 of April 26/2022, defined its regulations[231].

The Committee will be made up of seven representatives from different sectors of society, including victims' and human rights organizations, and will submit periodic follow-up reports that include assessments of progress and difficulties in the process and the steps that have been taken. In addition, it shall implement a territorial, national and exile approach, as well as differential approaches. The Committee will also implement the necessary measures to disseminate its reports and strategies for engagement, dialogue, and advocacy.

No truth commission in the world has ever had a monitoring committee after its closure. This is a novelty and an important difference of this Commission, since this body will be in charge of producing reports that will be published every 6 months based on the monitoring

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230. Comité de seguimiento | Informe Final Comisión de la Verdad (Monitoring Committee | Truth Commission Final Report)

231. Un ABC sobre el Comité de Monitoreo y Seguimiento. (An ABC on the Monitoring and Follow-up Committee) La Comisión de la Verdad deja instalado el Comité de Seguimiento y Monitoreo de sus recomendaciones (Truth Commission inaugurates the Committee for Follow-up and Monitoring of its recommendations) Estas son las personas que continuarán con el legado de la Comisión de la Verdad | EL ESPECTADOR (These are the people who will carry on the legacy of the Truth Commission | EL ESPECTADOR)

and follow-up it will do in order to influence what happened during the almost four years around the search for the truth to achieve the structural changes that Colombian society needs.

However, the implementation of these recommendations will only be possible if there is real political willingness, an active position of victims' and human rights organizations inside and outside the country, and solid territorial processes. The path that remains must be based on the memory of what happened, on not allowing oblivion again, on the ownership of this truth built collectively, which is above all a public asset belonging to the whole society.

This history belongs to all of us. It was built in a territory basis. It reflects the pain of what happened from the voices of those who suffered the devastation of war. But also, from the stories of confrontations, resistance efforts and struggles. It was born from a path traced by the Truth Commission, which sought above all to meet the demands of the victims, but also to incorporate the contributions of those accountable, and to join efforts to dignify the stories, motivate society and strengthen a historically fragmented social fabric.

The Final Report is only the beginning of a path for transformation and the search for a stable and lasting peace. During the coming years and in the face of such a complex landscape as the Colombian one, it is only possible to sustain this truth if it is deeply anchored in the different social processes, the economy, politics, the country's territories and the wide range of cultures and peoples.

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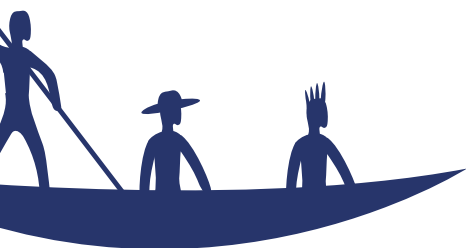
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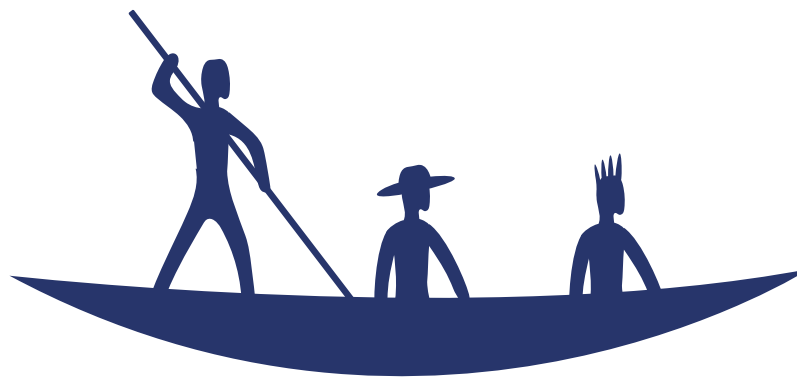
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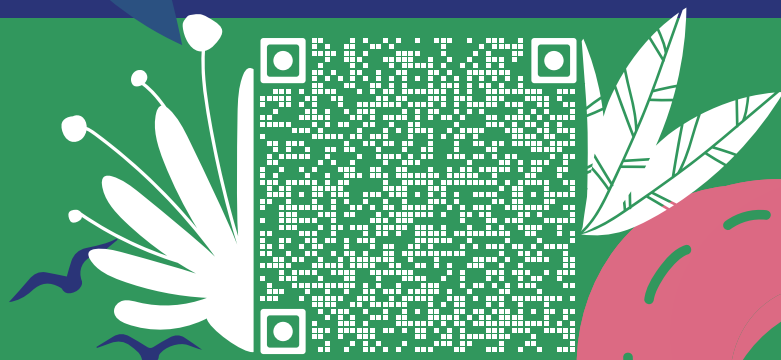
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