

**OUR WORLD. VIEWS FROM THE FIELD.**

# COLOMBIA

OPINION SURVEY AND IN-DEPTH RESEARCH, 2009



**Our world is in a mess.  
It's time to make your move.**

**Ipsos**

REFERENCE



**ICRC**

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# **EXECUTIVE SUMMARY**

## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This research was undertaken in eight countries that were experiencing or had experienced armed conflict or other situations of armed violence. These were: Afghanistan; Colombia; Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC); Georgia; Haiti; Lebanon; Liberia and the Philippines.<sup>1</sup> The aim was to develop a better understanding of people's needs and expectations, to gather views and opinions, and to give a voice to those who had been adversely affected by armed conflict and other situations of armed violence.

This research was commissioned by the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) within the framework of the **Our world. Your move.** campaign. Launched in 2009, the campaign's goal was to draw public attention to the vulnerability and ongoing suffering of people around the world. The intention was to emphasize the importance of humanitarian action and to convince individuals that they had the ability to make a difference and reduce suffering.

2009 was an important year for the International Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement, with three significant anniversaries (the 150th anniversary of the Battle of Solferino, the 90th anniversary of the founding of the International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies, and the 60th anniversary of the Geneva Conventions).

In 1999, the ICRC had undertaken a similar survey entitled *People on War*, which served as a basis for comparison and as a means of highlighting trends in opinions 10 years on.

This report encompasses two types of research: an opinion survey and in-depth research.

### OPINION SURVEY

#### The Impact of Armed Conflict

##### Forms of violence/suffering and their consequences

Around one-third of people surveyed in Colombia have been affected in some way by armed conflict there. Those with direct personal experience make up 10% of the population, and many others also report suffering a range of serious hardships. In total 31% of respondents have been affected in some way – either personally or owing to the wider consequences of armed conflict.

However, among those who have been personally affected, there are widespread problems:

- loss of income (38%);
- an immediate family member being killed (33%);
- being forced to leave home/displacement (32%);
- losing contact with a close relative (23%).

Among those with direct experience of armed conflict, one person in five (21%) says they are currently being affected; among the 'other' consequences mentioned is the falling standard of living (by most of those with direct experience: 57%).

People's fears reflect their experiences. The majority fear losing a loved one (68%). Many also worry about separation from loved ones (30%), displacement (30%), losing their property (27%), and losing their means of income (24%).

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<sup>1</sup> Respondents in seven of the eight countries were asked about 'armed conflict'. Please note that respondents in Haiti were asked about 'armed violence'.

## Needs and assistance

People's needs during armed conflict consist of 'the basics' of security/protection (61%), food (54%) and health care/treatment (36%). However, the respondents also emphasize the need for economic help (35%) and to maintain respect/dignity (29%).

In Colombia, when people need help they usually turn to their families/parents (38%). Others they call upon – considerably less often – include the government (16%) and the Colombian Red Cross (6%).

Most who have received help from their families/parents say the families have a 'complete' understanding of their needs (73%).

## Obstacles to receiving help

Any failure of help or support to reach people is attributed to a range of factors.

Corruption is viewed as the main factor (cited by 82% of respondents), then the fear of being perceived as aligned with the 'wrong side' (46%). Discrimination/social status (43%) is also widely mentioned – along with a lack of awareness that help is available, or a lack of physical access to it.

It seldom happens that help is turned away because it is not needed (4%).

## Reducing suffering

When Colombians are asked which organizations can 'reduce suffering during armed conflict', the Colombian Red Cross (55%) and the ICRC (41%) are mentioned more than any others (82% mention one or the other, including some mentioning both).

Other groups cited include international humanitarian organizations (37%), the United Nations (29%), government authorities (27%) and the military/combatants (25%).

## The international community

International action is viewed as necessary both to reduce suffering on the ground and to address the bigger picture of ending the armed conflict.

The primary need is for emergency aid (43%), organizing peace talks (34%) and enforcing laws to protect victims (32%). Three persons in ten (30%) support military intervention.

## Behaviour during Armed Conflict

### Acceptable behaviour

Nobody in Colombia supports the idea of totally unrestrained behaviour by combatants during armed conflict. All respondents (100%), for example, think it is unacceptable to take civilian hostages or to plant landmines which may harm civilians.

Furthermore, almost all (99%) oppose the destruction of historic/religious monuments, or attacks on combatants in towns/villages where civilians could be killed.

Even when civilians voluntarily help the enemy by transporting ammunition or supplying food, few Colombians feel attacks on them are acceptable (85% and 96% of respondents, respectively, are opposed).

Virtually all of the respondents (99.5%) support the principle that civilians should not be targeted during armed conflict. Almost nine people in 10 (88%) think civilians should not be

attacked in any circumstances, as a matter of principle. The remaining 12% say they should be spared 'as much as possible'.

### **Health workers, ambulances and the right to health care**

A resounding 99% of respondents feel that health workers and ambulances are never acceptable targets. The overwhelming majority (98%) agree that 'everyone wounded or sick during an armed conflict should have the right to health care'.

The vast majority (96%) believe health workers should take care of the sick and wounded from all sides in armed conflicts.

### **The Geneva Conventions**

Just under four people in 10 (38%) have heard of the Geneva Conventions – and more women than men view them as effective.

## **IN-DEPTH RESEARCH**

### **The Impact of Armed Conflict**

Many of the civilians taking part in this research believe the armed conflict in Colombia has deteriorated into a criminal conflict where civilians are harassed, robbed, forced into groups of weapon bearers, kidnapped and held to ransom.

The reported pointlessness of the Colombian armed conflict, with no clear direction or end in sight, exacerbates this lack of hope. For many there is no solace that this conflict is for the greater good in the long run.

Civilians lack confidence that the armed conflict can be resolved.

### **Personal experience of armed conflict**

There are many practical, social and emotional effects of armed conflict on civilians' lives. These include the kidnapping or murder of relatives, forced recruitment, threats and persecution and, in the case of mine victims, loss of limbs. Armed conflict tends to result in the displacement of civilians and the loss of their property and belongings.

The presence of unexploded mines in civilian areas is seen as a particularly cruel ongoing effect of the conflict.

First responders feel the same fear as those they are trying to help, but they are focused on their task of helping victims. They report having to work hard to gain civilians' trust.

### **Civilians' needs**

Civilians talk about their main priorities during armed conflict as: shelter, food/water, access to medicines/hygiene, clothing/bedding and money. Employment is seen as the key to providing for all these things, but armed conflict interrupts and destroys working lives.

Prioritizing the needs of children and the elderly is seen as paramount.

Civilians caught up in the armed conflict also have psychological needs that are neglected in the struggle for basic survival. Mine victims and displaced people often report stigmatization.

## Humanitarian assistance

Civilians value immensely the help they have received from humanitarian organizations such as the ICRC, whether it is assistance when they are displaced from their homes, help during kidnapping cases, help to keep them in touch with family members in detention or health care following injuries sustained from mines.

Even so, some civilians are unaware of the ways in which humanitarian organizations can help them and others claim that they need more help for longer. The needs are huge.

There is some belief that the authorities should be taking more responsibility in helping civilians.

## Humanitarian gestures

Humanitarian gestures are inhibited in Colombia by fear of reprisals from weapon bearers.

However, humanitarian acts do take place, particularly in terms of helping people escape from possible attack and helping displaced people with food and necessities.

## Behaviour during Armed Conflict

### Rules of conflict

There is universal belief that parties to armed conflict should take great care to spare civilians – but that this is often ignored in Colombia.

The continued existence of mines is one of the elements that makes the killing and maiming of civilians likely to continue well into the future, even if the armed conflict were to be resolved.

### Right to health care

All believe that everyone should have a right to health care, whether they are civilians or weapon bearers.

Some first responders report the harassment of health workers and wounded people in hospital by weapon bearers.

All believe that health workers should be spared from attack and left to do their job. They also feel that medical vehicles should be spared, as should the patients inside them.

On the whole, first responders feel the red cross emblem does tend to be respected.

## The Geneva Conventions

Although those affected by armed conflict tend to know little or nothing about the Geneva Conventions themselves, they instinctively support the concept of a system of rules for how weapon bearers are supposed to behave towards civilians in armed conflicts.

However, they feel that weapon bearers in Colombia have little regard for such rules. That said, there is evidence reported by some first responders of improvements in terms of reducing the use of mines and normalizing life for civilians.

### Conclusions: priority actions

Those affected by armed conflict in Colombia would like to see more international condemnation of violations of international humanitarian law.

They would also like to see assistance from the authorities for long-term reconstruction, especially for displaced people.

Lastly, they would like greater protection for civilians who are intimidated by weapon bearers.

# **INTRODUCTION**

## INTRODUCTION

### The Solferinos of today

To raise awareness of the impact of armed conflict or other situations of armed violence on civilians, the ICRC decided to launch a vast research programme. This research focused on some of the most troubled places in the world – the Solferinos of today – which are either experiencing situations of armed conflict or armed violence or suffering their aftermath:

- Afghanistan
- Colombia (covered in this report)
- Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC)
- Georgia
- Haiti
- Lebanon
- Liberia
- The Philippines

### Research

The ICRC commissioned Ipsos, an international research agency, to conduct an opinion survey (statistical, quantitative research) and to design and analyse in-depth (qualitative) research in eight countries.

For the **opinion survey**, a broadly representative sample of the adult general public was interviewed, either in person or by telephone, in each country. Fieldwork was conducted by Ipsos and its international partners. The specific sampling methods and any groups/areas excluded are described in the Appendices. The questionnaire was designed to determine whether the respondents had personal experience of armed conflict/violence and, if so, the specific impact it had on them. Questions also explored respondents' views on what conduct was acceptable for combatants, the effectiveness of various groups and organizations in helping to reduce suffering during armed conflict or armed violence, the actions expected of the international community, awareness of the Geneva Conventions, and the role of health workers during armed conflict or armed violence.

The **in-depth research** was conducted through focus groups and one-to-one in-depth interviews in each country. Ipsos designed, analysed and reported on the findings, with ICRC staff conducting the qualitative fieldwork. The discussion guide was designed to complement the opinion survey and to enable the ICRC to deepen its understanding of the values, motivations, fears and aspirations of those who have been direct victims of armed conflict or armed violence. These included people separated from their families, internally displaced persons, first responders and others directly affected by armed conflict or armed violence.

Further details of the coverage and scope of the research in Colombia are given in the section on 'Research Methodology'. The questionnaire used in the opinion survey (marked-up with overall results) and the discussion guide used in the in-depth research are included in the Appendices.

In 1999, ICRC carried out broadly similar opinion research as part of its *People on War* project. The programme covered some of the countries reported on in 2009 – including Colombia – and

several of the 1999 questions have therefore been revisited in order to provide trendlines. These are highlighted in the report where applicable.

## Background and objectives

The year 2009 had great significance for the ICRC and the entire International Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement ('the Movement'), as two major anniversaries in the history of humanitarian work took place:

- The 150th anniversary of the Battle of Solferino. On 24 June 1859, Henry Dunant, a Swiss businessman, happened to witness the aftermath of one of the most brutal battles of the 19th century – at Solferino, in what is now northern Italy – and the carnage left on the battlefield. The suffering he saw there prompted him to take the first steps towards the creation of the Movement. His book *A Memory of Solferino* led to the founding of the ICRC in 1863. In recognition of his work, Dunant was the joint first recipient of the Nobel Peace Prize, in 1901.
- The 60th anniversary of the Geneva Conventions (12 August 1949). The four Geneva Conventions are the cornerstone of international humanitarian law. They protect, respectively, wounded and sick members of armed forces on the battlefield; wounded, sick and shipwrecked members of armed forces at sea; prisoners of war; and civilians in time of war.

To mark these anniversaries, as well as the 90th anniversary of the founding of the International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies, the Movement launched a campaign – **Our world. Your move.** – to remind everyone of their individual responsibility to relieve human suffering.

The campaign was based on the premise that **Our world** faces unprecedented challenges, from armed conflict and mass displacement to climate change and migration; and it contends that **Your move** reminds us of our collective responsibility to make the world a better place. Like Henry Dunant, we can all make a difference, even through the simplest of gestures.

Throughout 2009, the ICRC undertook various activities to mark these historic milestones by highlighting the ongoing plight of people – particularly the most vulnerable – caught up in armed conflict or armed violence around the world.

## Colombia – research methodology

### OPINION SURVEY

A total of 501 people aged 18 or over were interviewed in person (face-to-face) in the month of February 2009. Random probability sampling was used to ensure that the final sample would be broadly representative of the Colombian population (aged 18 or over) as a whole. In addition, the results have been statistically 'weighted' by age to correct for any discrepancies between the sample profile and that of the equivalent-aged population.

According to 2009 estimates, Colombia's population was around 45,500,000. The median age was between 25 and 26 years.

Those aged 18 or over made up 67% of the population – thus it follows that this survey is representative of approximately 30,500,000 people.

Because a sample was interviewed – not the whole population – the results are subject to 'sampling tolerances'. These show how accurately a result from the sample reflects the result that would have been obtained from the whole population had it been interviewed.

Please see the Appendices for details on sampling tolerances.

On the charts, a '\*' sign refers to a percentage of less than 0.5%, but greater than zero.

## IN-DEPTH RESEARCH

The purpose of the research in each country was to understand the deeper values, motivations, fears and aspirations of those who had been direct victims of armed conflict or armed violence. The research was carried out through focus groups and one-to-one in-depth interviews, carried out by Grupo 13, a research consultancy firm, and by ICRC staff. The combination of these qualitative research methods was used to allow both interactive debate and personal narrative to emerge from the conversations.

The sample was organized according to a number of groups who were particularly affected in times of armed conflict or armed violence, namely:

- **Internally displaced persons.** At the time of writing, it was estimated that more than 26 million people around the globe were displaced within their own countries owing to armed conflict, violence and persecution. The internally displaced make up what has been described as the single largest group of vulnerable people in the world. Internal displacement is one of the most serious consequences of armed conflict; people are forced from their homes and suffer extreme hardship.
- **Members of separated families.** War, disasters and migration lead to many thousands of families being separated. The suffering created by such situations is not always visible to others. This global problem is mostly a silent tragedy. Needing to know what happened to a loved one is as great a humanitarian need as food, water or shelter. Too many victims of armed conflict and armed violence around the world remain without news of missing family members.
- **First responders.** A 'first responder' is most often considered as the first health worker to arrive at the scene of an emergency. However, a first responder is much more – it is anyone who provides a helping hand or a shoulder to cry on.

These groups were used to recruit participants in seven of the eight contexts to be able to draw some comparisons on a global level. In Haiti these groups were first responders and victims of violence, including sexual violence.

In addition, a specific group was selected for each country to cover an issue particular to that country. In Colombia, landmines are a widespread threat, therefore a number of the respondents were **mine victims**.

It should be noted that:

- All respondents were civilians (i.e. not combatants) and were selected based on the ICRC's on-the-ground knowledge of the areas most affected by the conflict in Colombia.
- Respondents' comments, in their own words, have been included throughout the in-depth research chapters of this report, accompanied by a brief indication of their backgrounds. In order to protect identities, the names used in this report have been changed, but other facts about individuals are real. Respondents' ages are sometimes omitted when they could not be verified, but have generally been provided. These respondents' comments were selected by Ipsos and do not reflect the opinions of the ICRC.
- Respondents were often affected in multiple ways by the armed conflict. As such, for example, someone who was invited to share their experiences of being an internally displaced person may also have commented on their experiences of having been a cluster munitions victim.

- Likewise, the division between first responders and other types of civilian is not always easy to define. First responders included: ordinary civilians thrust into giving humanitarian assistance because of the conflict affecting their town, community or family; health workers; and members of humanitarian organizations, including the ICRC. Comments in this report sometimes reflect this range of experiences by individual respondents.
- Interviews were conducted and group discussions moderated by ICRC staff in Colombia. Although the interviewers were trained in qualitative research, the fact that they were from the ICRC introduced the possibility of bias in what respondents were prepared to share and how they expressed it. However, interviewers were working to an interview guide designed by Ipsos and the analysis was also undertaken by Ipsos.

In Colombia, four group discussions were carried out, lasting between 90 and 120 minutes each, one with each of the following groups:

- **Internally displaced persons.** This group consisted of two women and two men, ranging in age from 38 to 64. They had all become displaced because of intimidation or threats of forced recruitment from weapon bearers. They had moved to the city to escape these threats and were now struggling to make ends meet.
- **Members of separated families.** This group was made up of five women and one man. All had experienced family separation through kidnappings or imprisonment. Several of the women had since had their family member killed following a kidnapping.
- **First responders.** This group consisted of two women and five men. They were workers or volunteers for a range of organizations such as Medicos sin Fronteras, Social Pastoral, the Colombian Red Cross and the ICRC.
- **Mine victims.** This group was made up of men ranging in age from 24 to 43. All of these men had lost a foot or a leg in an explosion. All of the men were now unemployed. One was a former weapon bearer.

In addition, 10 in-depth qualitative interviews were carried out, lasting 45 minutes to one hour each:

- 2 with internally displaced persons, one man and one woman. They had both become displaced because of intimidation or threats of forced recruitment from weapon bearers;
- 3 with members of separated families, including a man and a woman whose relatives had been released after being kidnapped and one woman whose husband was still in jail;
- 3 with first responders: one woman and two men, all health-care workers or volunteers;
- 2 with mine victims, both men.

Fieldwork took place in Bogotá, Medellin, Florencia, Villavicencio, Puerto Asís and Mocoa.

## Report structure

An Executive Summary with the key findings is followed by the main body of the report, covering each broad subject area in turn. The results of the opinion survey among the general public are reported on first, followed by the findings of the in-depth research among victims of armed conflict/armed violence.

The Appendices contain the sample profile and full questionnaire used in the opinion survey, marked-up with the overall country results (including the 1999 trend comparisons where applicable) and the discussion guide used in the in-depth research.

Please note that no country comparisons are made in this report. These can be found in the separate Summary Report covering all eight countries.

## Colombia in context

At the time of writing, Colombia's armed conflict, still continuing after more than 47 years, had lasted longer than any other in modern times. The murder in Bogotá in April 1948 of presidential candidate Jorge Eliécer Gaitán is generally viewed as the trigger that set off a huge outbreak of violence between Liberals and Conservatives which quickly spread from the capital to the rest of the country. These events influenced the non-international armed conflict in Colombia for many decades.

Guerrilla groups were formed in the 1950s and a state of virtual civil war broke out. Over 200,000 people lost their lives between 1948 and 1957. These groups constituted the main armed opposition movement of the past 40 years.

The *Fuerzas Armadas Revolucionarias de Colombia* (FARC), in 2009 the largest guerrilla organization in the country, was created in 1964.

Another major guerrilla organization was the *Ejército de Liberación Nacional* (ELN). Other groups of weapon bearers, like the *Ejército Popular de Liberación* (EPL), the *Organización Indígena Quintín Lame* and the *Movimiento 19 de Abril* (M-19) (formed between 1960 and 1970), were demobilized between 1991 and 1994. Paramilitary groups, formed in the 1980s to counter these armed groups, quickly spread over a big part of the country. The paramilitary movements, the main objective of which was to fight the guerrillas, were regrouped after April 1997 under the name of *Autodefensas Unidas de Colombia* (AUC).

On 21 June 1998, Andrés Pastrana of the Conservative party was elected president of Colombia. He based his electoral campaign on a platform of peace and reform. As president, he ceded an area in south-central Colombia to the FARC as a goodwill gesture.

On 20 May 2002, Álvaro Uribe Vélez, a right-wing candidate who promised to crack down on insurgents, won the presidential election. As a former member of the Liberal party who then went on to run as an independent, President Uribe declared a limited state of emergency, thereby broadening the government's authority in its campaign against armed opposition groups. In December 2002, the AUC declared a unilateral ceasefire and initiated talks with the government. Peace talks with the FARC ended in 2002 without success.

In 2004, talks with the AUC continued and a safe zone was established. In 2006, more than 31,000 members of AUC were disarmed, and the Constitutional Court approved a constitutional amendment authorizing a presidential re-election, thereby enabling President Uribe to seek – and win – a second term that year.

In what was seen as a rare show of unity, hundreds of thousands of Colombians staged nationwide protests against kidnapping and the civil conflict in July 2007, demanding the release of some 3,000 people still being held hostage by different armed groups. In 2008, a series of military successes against the FARC took place.

In recent times, many armed groups have turned themselves in. Some armed groups have been dissolved, but others have survived or re-emerged. Millions of Colombians have had to flee their land for fear of being killed or persecuted by one or more of the groups of weapon bearers involved in the armed conflict. In several regions of Colombia, armed hostilities persisted in 2009, and showed little sign of abating, offering little hope to the thousands of civilians caught in the crossfire. Violent acts against the Colombia population were committed against a background of over four decades of violent political armed conflict between armed opposition groups and the State.

The consequences of Colombia's armed conflict have been severe. Thousands of people have disappeared, and at the time of writing Colombia had one of the world's largest internally displaced populations – between three and four million people had been displaced since 1985. In addition to massive displacement, there were summary executions, disappearances, hostage-taking, forced recruitment of children and an increasing number of mine-related injuries or deaths. People fled their homes following threats against or executions of family members, or because they feared their children would be coerced into joining groups of weapon bearers.

## The ICRC in Colombia

In Colombia at the time of writing, the ICRC was at the forefront of efforts to provide emergency assistance, including food and household items, to people affected by the armed conflict. The ICRC had been present in Colombia since 1969, with its main objective being to ensure greater respect for international humanitarian law – particularly for provisions protecting persons not taking part in the armed conflict – by all weapon bearers. It also strove to provide emergency assistance to the displaced and other victims of the armed conflict and implemented public health programmes and small-scale infrastructure renovation projects in conflict-affected areas.

The ICRC provided victims with assistance and protection, and reminded all parties of their obligation to respect and protect the civilian population, medical facilities and personnel and those *hors de combat* because they had laid down their arms or because they were wounded, sick or detained.

The inclusion of international humanitarian law in the training of the Colombian armed forces and of police taking part in military operations was another of the ICRC's priorities, along with efforts to strengthen the Colombian Red Cross' response capacity in conflict-affected areas.

In particular, the ICRC:

- visited places of detention to monitor detainees' treatment and conditions, especially with regard to health. It also sought access to all prisoners held by groups of weapon bearers and had assisted more than 1.1 million displaced people. The ICRC provided assistance during the first three months of displacement and for up to six months for single-parent households. When mass displacements occurred, the ICRC worked hand-in-hand with the Colombian Red Cross to assess needs on the ground prior to organizing transportation and distribution of assistance. In addition, the ICRC sought preventive measures to stem the flow of internal displacement by continuing its dialogue with both state and non-state actors to ensure greater respect for international humanitarian law;
- remained in constant contact with people affected by the armed conflict and collected allegations of possible violations of international humanitarian law. Where possible, the ICRC shared this information on a confidential basis with the alleged perpetrators – whether the armed and security forces or organized groups of weapon bearers – reminding them of the rules of international humanitarian law, urging them to respect these rules and drawing their attention to the humanitarian consequences of the alleged acts;
- gathered reports of people who had disappeared in connection with the armed conflict;
- as a neutral, independent humanitarian actor, voiced its concern for the safety of hostages and detainees held by groups of weapon bearers, and talked to the parties to the armed conflict in order to secure the hostages' release. When hostages were freed, the ICRC provided logistical support to take them home;
- continued to facilitate the exchange of personal news between civilians in order to ease the suffering of those who had lost touch with their relatives;

- implemented agricultural programmes designed to maintain or restore the means of survival of families affected by the armed conflict. In order to cover families' basic needs, the ICRC also distributed food parcels and essential household items such as hygiene articles, cooking utensils, plates, clothes, mattresses and/or hammocks, sheets, blankets and tarpaulins;
- had built, adapted and/or donated basic medical equipment and materials for Colombian health posts. These were now able to offer better medical care to communities in areas severely affected by the armed conflict. The ICRC had also accompanied health workers to different regions of the country, assisted victims of sexual violence and formed mobile health units which had carried out almost 4,000 medical consultations. It had assisted victims of mine injuries and provided limb-fitting centres with training;
- had made it a priority to include international humanitarian law in the training of the Colombian armed forces and of police taking part in military operations.

# **OPINION SURVEY**

## OPINION SURVEY

### The Impact of Armed Conflict

#### Personal experience of armed conflict

Almost one-third (31%) of people in Colombia have been affected in some way by armed conflict there – either through direct personal experience (10%) or owing to the wider consequences which are felt beyond those who were immediately affected.

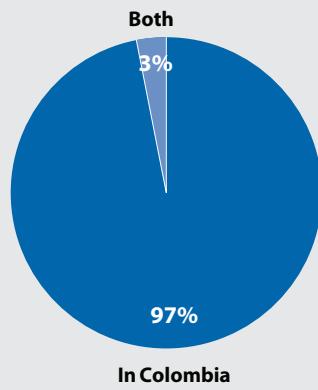
Among those who have personal experience of armed conflict, a third or more have suffered loss of income (38%), had an immediate family member killed (33%) or have been displaced (32%).

#### Personal experience of armed conflict

**Q1.** Have you personally experienced armed conflict, or not?



**Q2.** Was this in Colombia or was it somewhere else?



Base: All respondents (501)

Base: All experiencing armed conflict (73)

Where total does not sum to 100%, this is due to multiple responses, computer rounding or to the exclusion of "don't know" responses

Loss of means of income is the experience most frequently mentioned (by 38% of respondents) by those who have been personally affected by conflict in Colombia.

A third of Colombians (33%) with personal experience of conflict report that a close family member was killed, and almost a third (32%) say they were forced to leave their homes.

About two-fifths of people have experienced other traumas:

- 23% say they lost contact with a close relative (28% of women/19% of men);
- 20% lived in an area that came under enemy control;
- 18% of people were kidnapped or taken hostage;
- 17% had their homes looted.

Among the respondents, 6% were wounded by fighting and 4% were tortured.

When asked a completely open question, where respondents were not prompted and were free to say whatever came to mind, 16% of all respondents – including those with and without personal experience of conflict – spontaneously mention other ways in which the conflict has

had an impact on their lives. The negative impact on the economy/high prices is cited by 39% of those mentioning other effects of conflict, and being forced to leave the country by 24%.

## Personal impact of armed conflict

**Q3.** I'm going to ask you about your actual experiences during the armed conflict in Colombia. Please tell me whether any of the following things happened to you personally or did not happen as a consequence of the armed conflict in Colombia. For each one, please indicate whether it happened or did not happen to you.



*Base: All who have experienced armed conflict (73)*

*Where total does not sum to 100%, this is due to multiple responses, computer rounding or to the exclusion of "don't know" responses*

There is very little difference in the proportions of men and women who have lived through armed conflict in Colombia (11% vs. 9% respectively). Although there is some degree of variation in kinds of experience they have been subjected to, it is not significant enough to be considered representative of Colombia as a whole.

However, we do see some change in the experiences of Colombians since 1999.

Experience of violence tends to be less widespread in Colombia now than a decade ago, but continues to have an impact on a sizeable proportion of the population.

For example:

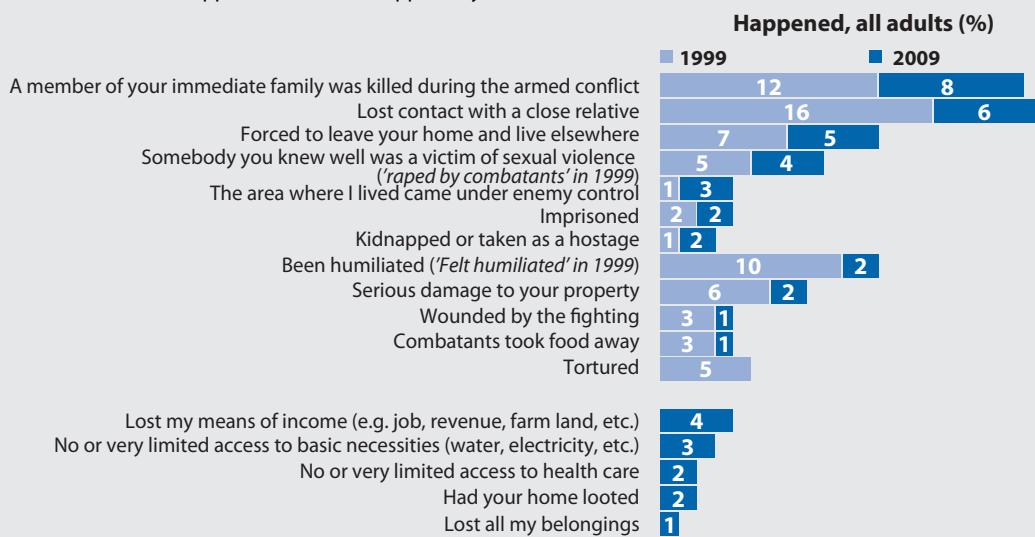
- 6% of respondents report losing contact with a close relative in 2009 (15% in 1999);
- 8% say that a family member was killed (12% in 1999).

There have been smaller declines in other figures, with the exception of the percentage of people living under enemy control, which increased from 1% in 1999 to 3% in 2009.

One person in 12 (8%) has had an immediate family member killed in conflict. Around one in every 20 people has lost contact with a close relative, been displaced and/or known a victim of sexual violence well.

## Personal impact of armed conflict – over a decade

**Q3A/B.** I'm going to ask you about your actual experiences during (how you yourself have been affected by) the armed conflict in Colombia. Please tell me whether any of the following things happened to you personally or did not happen as a consequence of the armed conflict in Colombia. For each one, please indicate whether it happened or did not happen to you.



Base: All (501 in 2009; 857 in 1999)

Where total does not sum to 100%, this is due to multiple responses, computer rounding or to the exclusion of "don't know" responses

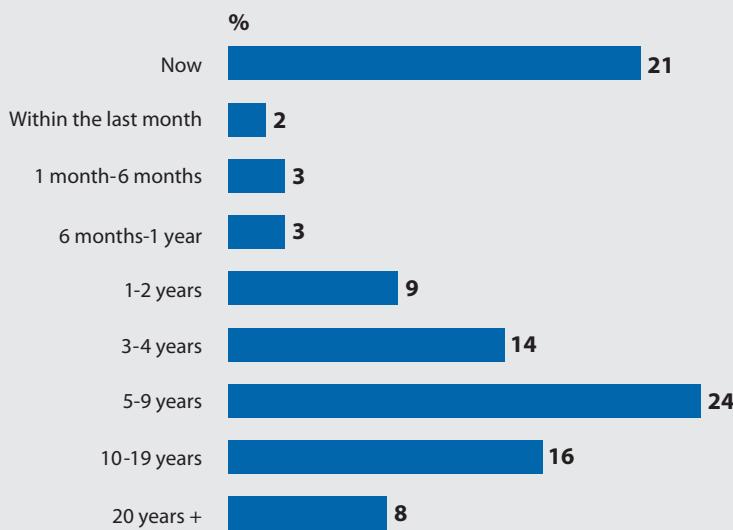
Among those who have personal experience of armed conflict/violence, almost three in 10 (29%) say the experience occurred within the past year – and a fifth (21%) say they are currently experiencing armed conflict in Colombia.

The experience of armed conflict appears to be more widespread now than ever.

One-fifth of those who have experienced armed conflict say they are experiencing it now (21%); three in 10 (29%) have experienced it within the last year.

## Recent experiences

**Q5.** And when were you personally most recently affected by this armed conflict in Colombia?



*Base: All who have experienced/been affected by conflict in any way (154)*

*Where total does not sum to 100%, this is due to multiple responses, computer rounding or to the exclusion of "don't know" responses*

There is no difference in the numbers of men and women experiencing armed conflict going back as far as the 1980s. However, significantly more men (13%) than women (1%) report being subjected to armed conflict 20 or more years ago.

## People's greatest fears

In Colombia, what people fear most is losing a loved one (68%), being separated from a loved one (30%), becoming displaced/a refugee (30%) and losing one's home (27%) or income (24%).

People's greatest fear by far is to lose a loved one (68%). Tragically, this is the second most common experience of this conflict according to respondents' responses.

The next greatest fears are the following:

- being separated from loved ones (30%) or having to leave home/becoming displaced/a refugee (also 30%);
- losing one's home or personal belongings (27%);
- losing the ability to earn a living (24%);
- living with uncertainty (23%).

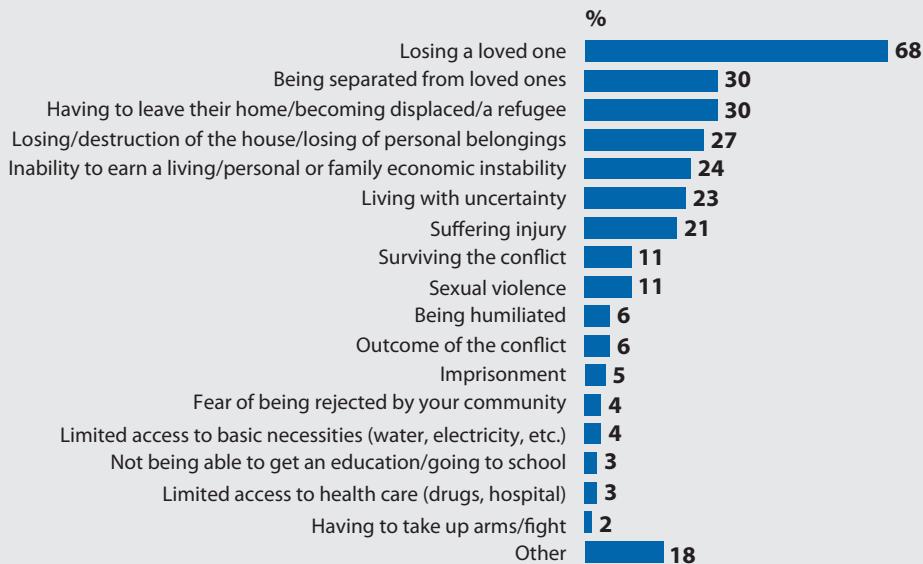
A fifth of the respondents (21%) fear that they may suffer injury, 11% that they may not survive the conflict, and a further 11% that they may fall victim to sexual violence (significantly more women (15%) fear this than men (8%)). Only 5% fear imprisonment and only 2% fear having to fight.

Only small minorities fear the loss of access to basic necessities such as water/utilities (4%), education (3%) and health care (3%).

The outcome of the conflict is also relatively low on their 'list of fears', at 6%.

## People's greatest fears

**Q6.** What do you think are the two or three greatest fears people are facing in a situation of armed conflict in Colombia?



Base: All respondents (501)

Where total does not sum to 100%, this is due to multiple responses, computer rounding or to the exclusion of "don't know" responses

## Feelings as a consequence of armed conflict

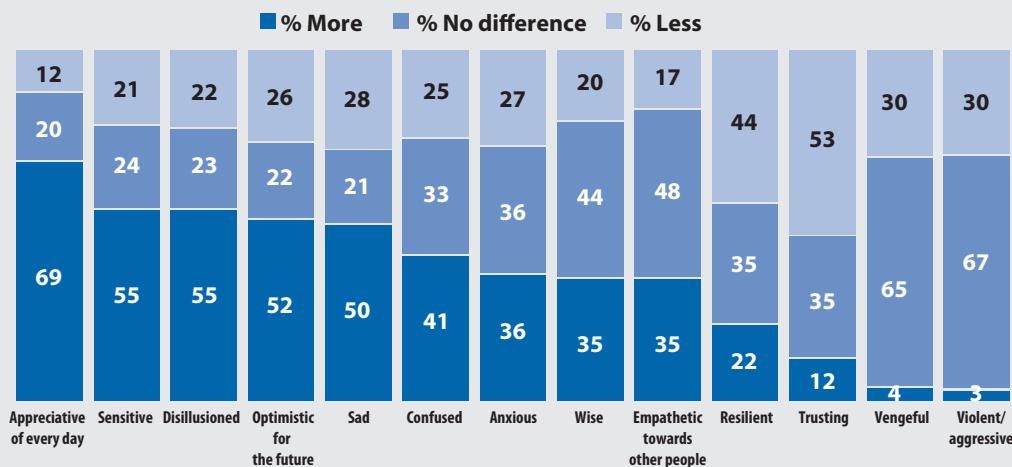
Conflict breeds disillusionment (for 55% of people) and sadness (50%), but also optimism about the future (52%) and appreciation of every day (69%).

This paints a mixed picture of the impact of the conflict on the state of mind of people who have been affected by it:

- two-thirds (69%) say they are more appreciative of every day;
- 55% say they are more disillusioned, and the same number say they are more sensitive;
- 52% are more optimistic about the future;
- half (50%) are more sad.

## Feelings as a consequence of armed conflict

**Q8.** Now I would like to ask you about whether the armed conflict has changed the way you feel. For each description I read out, please say whether the armed conflict has made you feel more this way, less this way, or has it made no real difference. First [....], would you say it has made you more [....], less [....], or has it done neither?



Base: All who have experienced/been affected by conflict in any way (154)

Where total does not sum to 100%, this is due to multiple responses, computer rounding or to the exclusion of "don't know" responses

A large proportion of people (53%) state that their experience of conflict has made them less trusting, and 44% say it has made them less resilient.

About two-thirds say that armed conflict has made 'no real difference' to their feelings of vengefulness and violence/aggression (65% and 67% respectively – higher figures than for any other feeling discussed). Three persons in 10 feel less vengeful and violent/aggressive (30% in each case) – only 4% and 3% respectively say they feel more so.

There are very few differences in the impact of armed conflict on the feelings of men and women.

However, men are more likely to say that conflict has made 'no real difference' to the way they appreciate every day (27% of men vs. 11% of women) and to their feelings of sadness (29% vs. 11%).

Women are more likely to say that their experience has made them less optimistic about the future (37% of women vs. 17% of men) and less disillusioned (33% vs. 13%).

## Civilians' needs in armed conflict

First and foremost, people need 'the basics'. Three people in five refer to security/protection (61%) as a vital need, while almost as many cite food (54%). One-third also sees medical treatment/health care (36%) and economic/financial help (35%) as priority needs.

Those interviewed were asked to name the things they felt civilians need most. Their answers are as follows:

- six in 10 (61%) say security/protection is needed most;
- over half (54%) say food;

- about a third (36%) say medical treatment/health care;
- about a third (35%) say economic/financial help.

Other needs mentioned include the need for respect/dignity (29%) and for psychological support (20%). Women in particular feel that psychological support is important (26% of women compared with 13% of men).

The need for shelter is lower down the priority list at 16%, as is the need to keep families together (11%), and the need for information about separated/missing family members (9%). This is slightly inconsistent with the stated 'biggest fears', which centre on the loss of and separation from loved ones.

## Civilians' needs

**Q7.** What do you think civilians who are living in areas of armed conflict need the most? Please select the three most important to you.



Base: All respondents (501)

Where total does not sum to 100%, this is due to multiple responses, computer rounding or to the exclusion of "don't know" responses

A fifth of respondents (20%) see conflict resolution as a necessity.

## Help and support from entities/institutions

During armed conflict, most people turn to their families (38%) or to government (16%) for help.

People also receive support from other entities, but in much smaller numbers: help from the military/combatants (7%), their community (7%), and the Colombian Red Cross and the ICRC (together adding up to 7%); help received from NGOs or charities and from religious entities amount to 6% of cases. Only 2% see the UN as a source of support.

Men are significantly less likely to have received help from their families (28%) than women (50%).

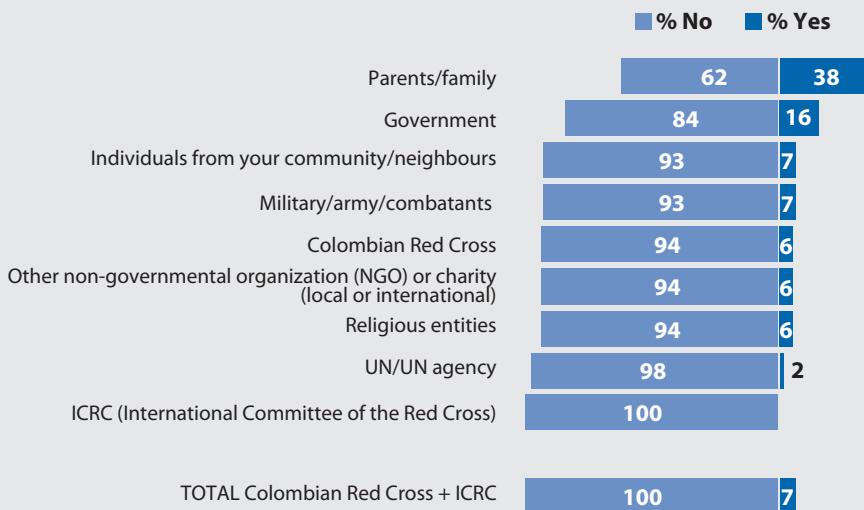
More people view the Colombian Red Cross/ICRC (84%), and even the military/combatants (80%), than their parents (73%) as completely understanding their needs.

Community (58%) and religious entities (39%) are also seen as having a complete understanding of individuals' needs.

Government is considered to have the lowest complete understanding at 11%, but the highest partial understanding (89%) – and no one says government does not understand the needs of individuals during conflict. Almost half of those asked (49%) said NGOs and charities have no understanding of their needs.

## Help and support

**Q9.** During the time you experienced or were being affected by armed conflict, did you receive help or support from any of the following?

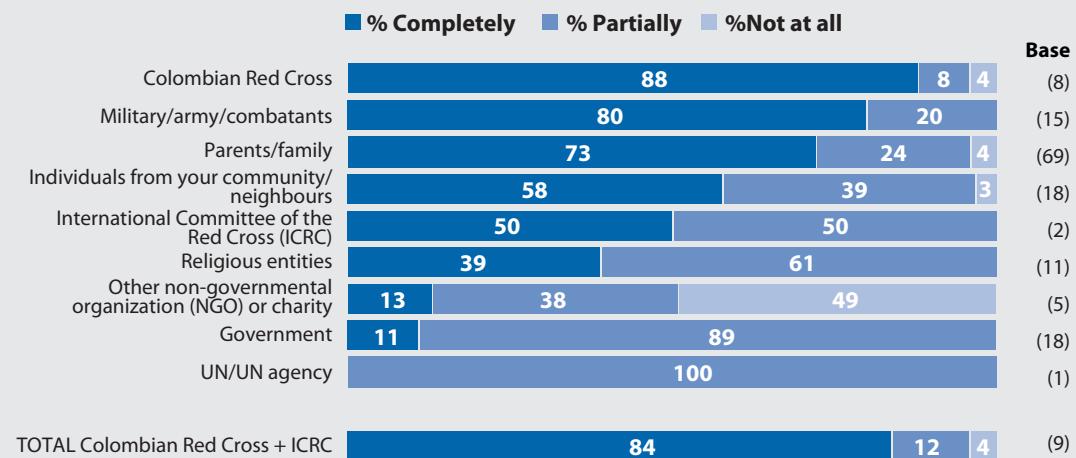


*Base: All who have experienced/been affected by conflict in any way (154)*

*Where total does not sum to 100%, this is due to multiple responses, computer rounding or to the exclusion of "don't know" responses*

## Help and support

**Q10.** For each of the types of organizations or people you mentioned receiving help or support from, I would like you to tell me how well you felt they understood your needs.  
 First, the [type of support at Q9]...do you feel your needs were completely understood, partially understood, or not understood at all?



*Where total does not sum to 100%, this is due to multiple responses, computer rounding or to the exclusion of "don't know" responses*

(N.B.:The results for understanding of needs must be treated with caution as the base sizes are very small.)

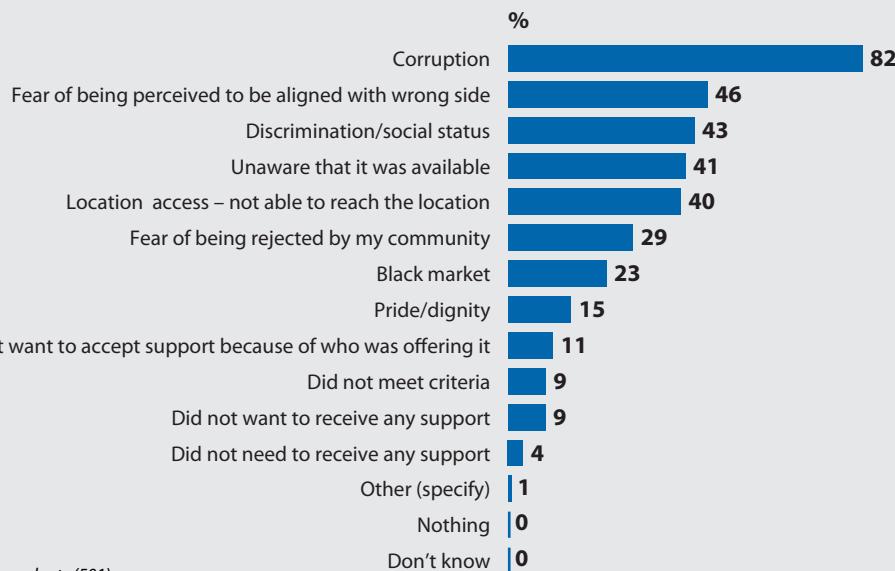
## Barriers to receiving help

Corruption is far and away the single largest factor preventing people from receiving help (82%).

Corruption is seen to be the most important obstacle to people receiving help (82%), followed by fear of being perceived to be aligned with the wrong side (46%) and discrimination/social status (43%). A bit further down the list, 23% cite the black market as a barrier.

## Barriers to receiving help

**Q11.** Which, if any, of the following reasons do you think may have prevented people in Colombia receiving or accepting help or support during armed conflict?



Base: All respondents (501)

Where total does not sum to 100%, this is due to multiple responses, computer rounding or to the exclusion of "don't know" responses

Two people in five (41%) are unaware that help exists, and a similar proportion (40%) are prevented from receiving help due to inaccessible locations.

Just under three persons in 10 (29%) do not request help because they are afraid their community will reject them (this is more the case for women than men (37% vs. 20%)). For 15% of respondents, pride and dignity prevent them from getting help, and 11% do not want help because of who is offering it.

While 9% do not think they meet the criteria – 9% also do not want help, and 4% say they do not need it.

## Reducing suffering

The Colombian Red Cross and the ICRC are most frequently cited (82% taken together) as playing the biggest role to reduce suffering during armed conflict. International humanitarian organizations come next (cited by 37%).

Beyond those organizations, groups and entities already considered as providers of help during armed conflict, some groups are identified as specifically reducing suffering.

Respondents were asked which of a list of groups or organizations specifically reduces suffering. They were then given the same list again (minus the first organization named) and asked to name two further organizations.

The first organizations identified are:

- the Colombian Red Cross and the ICRC (22% each – a combined proportion of 44%);
- the military/combatants (13%);
- international humanitarian organizations (12%).

The Colombian Red Cross (55%) and the ICRC (41%) are most frequently identified among all the organizations mentioned in the first and second instances, with a combined total of 82% (some respondents mentioned both organizations). Women in particular are inclined to mention the Colombian Red Cross (61% compared with 47% of men).

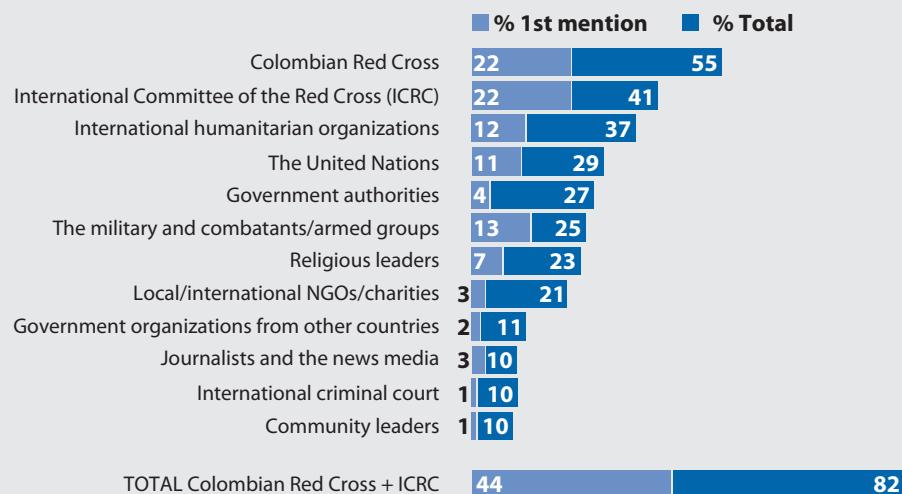
These are followed by international humanitarian organizations (37%), the United Nations (29%), government authorities (27%) and the military/combatants (25%).

The result obtained by the UN in this context contrasts with its relatively low ranking in the Colombia survey as a provider of help and support during conflict.

The International Criminal Court, journalists and the media, and government organizations from other countries are mentioned least often as being able to reduce suffering (10%, 10% and 11% respectively).

## Reducing suffering

**Q20.** I'm now going to describe different kinds of groups and organizations. Please tell me which three of these play the biggest role to help reduce suffering during armed conflict?



Base: All respondents (501)

Where total does not sum to 100%, this is due to multiple responses, computer rounding or to the exclusion of "don't know" responses

## The role of external actors

The role of the international community in Colombia appears to be twofold: to provide direct aid (cited by 43%) and to help stop the conflict such as by organizing peace talks, (cited by 34%).

The international community is seen to need to help civilians by:

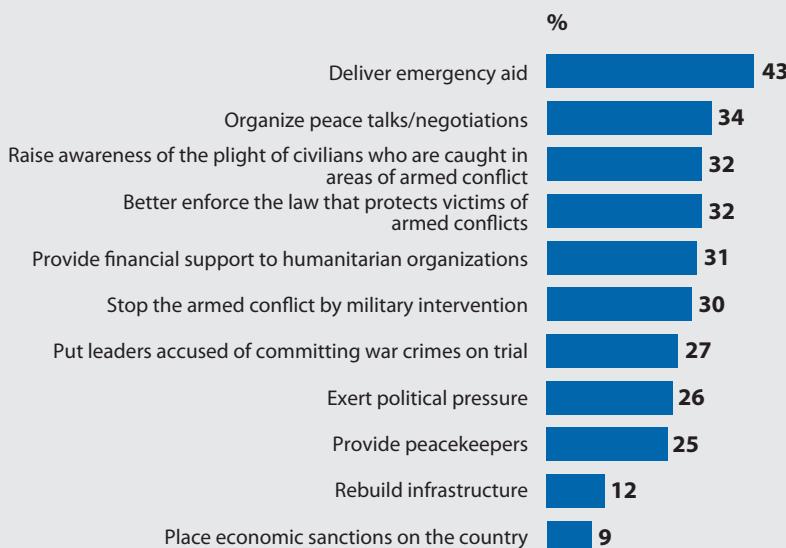
- delivering emergency aid (43%);
- organizing peace talks/negotiations (34%);
- better enforcing the law that protects victims of armed conflicts (32%);
- raising awareness of the plight of civilians (32%);

- providing financial support to humanitarian organizations (31%);
- stopping the armed conflict by military intervention (30%).

These actions provide aid 'on the ground,' but they also fit within the longer-term picture of working towards ending the armed conflict.

## The role of external actors

**Q21.** What do you think the international community should do to help civilians who are living in areas of armed conflict?



*Base: All respondents (501)*

*Where total does not sum to 100%, this is due to multiple responses, computer rounding or to the exclusion of "don't know" responses*

Bringing to trial leaders charged with war crimes (27%), exerting political pressure (26%) and providing peacekeepers (25%) are also frequently mentioned as actions to be taken by the international community. Significantly more men than women feel that bringing leaders accused of crimes to trial is appropriate (32% vs. 22%).

Rebuilding infrastructure and placing economic sanctions on the country receive the least support (12% and 9% respectively).

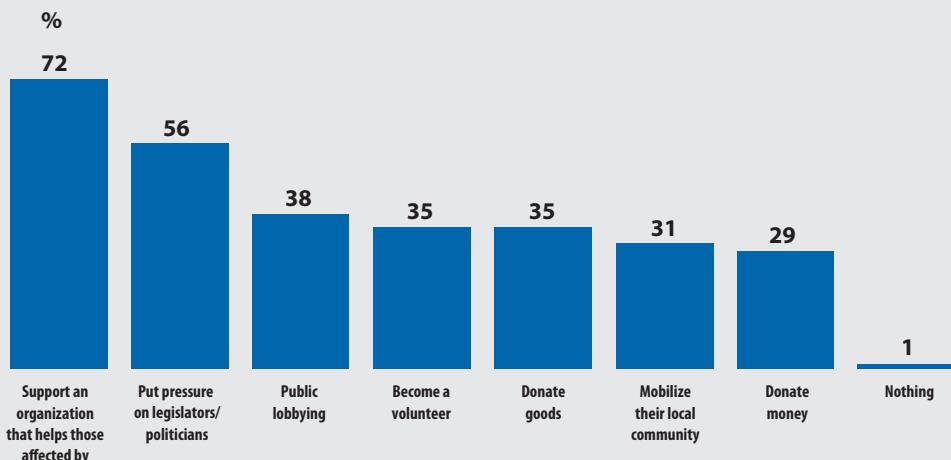
The primary role of people living outside the conflict zone (i.e. citizens living in other countries) in helping victims of armed conflict is political and social engagement:

- almost three-quarters of those asked (72%) say people living outside the conflict zone should support an organization that helps those affected by conflict – suggesting the importance attributed to help from such organizations;
- over half (56%) recommend putting pressure on legislators/politicians.

Another 38% say public lobbying is important (more so for men than women – 45% vs. 33%), 35% would like to see people become volunteers, 35% say goods should be donated, and 29% say money should be donated.

## Support from the wider world

**Q22.** What, if anything, do you think people living outside of conflict zones can do that would most help victims of armed conflict in Colombia? Please select the three you feel are most important.



*Base: All respondents (501)*

*Where total does not sum to 100%, this is due to multiple responses, computer rounding or to the exclusion of "don't know" responses*

## Behaviour during Armed Conflict

### Limits to behaviour

Every respondent in Colombia (100%) believes there should be limits regarding what combatants are allowed to do in armed conflicts.

Through an open question where respondents provided unprompted answers, people recognize there should be limits to conduct in armed conflict:

- four in 10 (44%) felt that violence (including kidnapping, theft, assault and torture) is unacceptable;
- over a third (35%) say that killing civilians is not acceptable, while a fifth (19%) are against the killing of innocent people;
- one-fifth (20%) would like to see increased respect for civil and cultural laws.

Around one person in seven (15%) would avoid the use of certain weapons or types of attack and 13% would forbid the destruction of civilian buildings. One in eight (13%) specifically says that the killing of children should not be acceptable.

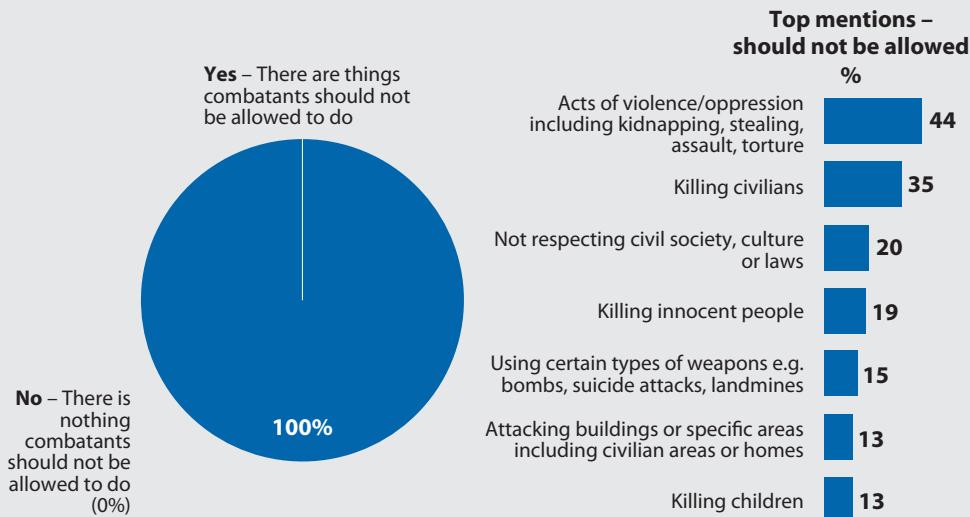
What do respondents mention as the basis for imposing limits?

The overwhelming majority (82%) feel that limits should be applied to combatants in the name of human rights. Nearly half (46%) say that limits should be imposed by law. Personal ethics are mentioned by 27% of respondents (33% of men and 22% of women), religion by 23% and culture by 15%.

Some people feel that certain kinds of behaviour should not be acceptable on the basis of the harm caused. For example, because certain behaviour produces too much destruction (mentioned by 31% of all respondents – 35% of women and 25% of men), or because it produces too much hate and division (21%).

## Limits to behaviour

**Q12.** Is there anything that combatants should not be allowed to do in fighting their enemy?



*Base: All respondents (501)*

*Where total does not sum to 100%, this is due to multiple responses, computer rounding or to the exclusion of "don't know" responses*

## Threats to civilians

Almost everyone (99.5%) supports the principle that civilians should not be targeted during armed conflict – they should either be left alone entirely (88%) or at least avoided as much as possible (12%). Colombians are more emphatic now than they were in 1999 that civilians should be left alone.

Everyone is against hostage-taking (100%) and planting landmines (100%). Virtually everyone is also against attacking religious and historical monuments (99%) and attacking enemy combatants in populated villages and towns (99%).

Respondents were asked if it is acceptable to attack civilians in order to 'weaken the enemy'.

The overwhelming majority of Colombians (88%) say that civilians should be left alone and only enemy combatants attacked. Significantly more women (92%) than men (82%) hold this view.

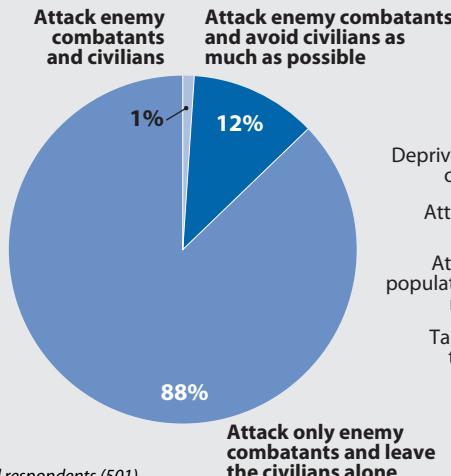
Overall, 12% say that civilians should be avoided 'as much as possible'. More men (17%) than women (7%) agree.

Just under 1% think it is acceptable to attack both enemy combatants and enemy civilians.

This 2009 study suggests more emphatically than the 1999 study that people feel civilians should not be involved in a conflict (88% in 2009, 72% in 1999). In 1999, 20% of respondents felt that civilians should be avoided as much as possible compared to 12% in 2009.

## Threats to civilians

**Q14.** Now I would like to ask you some general questions about how, in your view, combatants should behave in times of armed conflict. When combatants attack to weaken the enemy, should they:



**Q15.** Is there anything that combatants should not be allowed to do in fighting their enemy? For each one, please indicate whether it is OK or not OK to do that in fighting their enemy.

	■ % OK	■ % Not OK
Attacking civilians who voluntarily transported ammunition for the enemy	15	85
Attacking civilians who voluntarily gave food and shelter to enemy	4	96
Depriving civilians of food, medicine or water to weaken the enemy	3	97
Attacking religious and historical monuments	1	99
Attacking enemy combatants in populated villages or towns knowing many civilians would be killed	1	99
Taking civilian hostages in order to get something in exchange	100	
Planting landmines even though civilians may step on them	100	

Base: All respondents (501)

Where total does not sum to 100%, this is due to multiple responses, computer rounding or to the exclusion of "don't know" responses

All of those asked say that it is inappropriate to take civilian hostages in order to get something in exchange or to plant landmines that civilians might step on.

Almost all (99%) say that attacking religious or historical monuments is not acceptable, and just as many are opposed to attacking enemy combatants in populated areas where civilians would be killed.

Ninety-seven per cent think that depriving civilians of food, medicine or water as a tactic to weaken the enemy is unacceptable.

However, 15% say that it is acceptable to attack civilians who voluntarily transport ammunition for the enemy and 4% would allow civilians who voluntarily feed or shelter the enemy to be attacked.

Please note that these results are not strictly comparable to those obtained in 1999. Nevertheless, it is clear that there has been an increase in the number of people saying that certain kinds of behaviour are not acceptable.

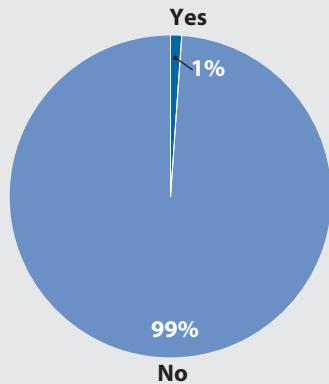
## Health workers and ambulances

There is almost universal support for the notion that neither health workers nor ambulances should be targeted by combatants in any circumstances (support for both runs at 99%).

Please note that as the number of respondents for whom there do exist circumstances in which it is acceptable to target health workers and/or ambulances is very small (1% for both), insufficient data means that conclusions cannot be drawn.

## Targeting health workers

**Q16.** In a situation of armed conflict, are there any circumstances in which you think it is acceptable for combatants to target health workers?



Base: All respondents (501)

Where total does not sum to 100%, this is due to multiple responses, computer rounding or to the exclusion of "don't know" responses

**Q17.** In which, if any, of the following circumstances do you think this is acceptable?

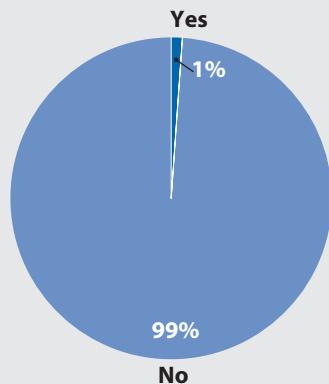
■ % Acceptable ■ % Not acceptable

When health workers are treating the enemy wounded and sick civilians	74	26
When health workers are treating the enemy wounded and sick combatants	74	26
When health workers are not clearly identified as health workers	41	59
When health workers take sides with one party in the conflict	41	59

Base: All who think that some circumstances are acceptable to target health workers (3\*\*) \*\*be cautious: very low base

## Targeting ambulances

**Q18.** In a situation of armed conflict, are there any circumstances in which you think it is acceptable for combatants to target ambulances?



Base: All respondents (501)

**Q19.** In which, if any, of the following circumstances do you think this is acceptable?

■ % Acceptable ■ % Not acceptable

When an ambulance is not clearly identified as an ambulance	24	76
When an ambulance is used by combatants for hostile purposes	17	83
When an ambulance carries wounded or sick enemy combatants	13	87
When an ambulance carries enemy wounded and sick civilians	5	95

Base: All who think that some circumstances are acceptable to target health workers (4\*\*) \*\*be cautious: very low base

Where total does not sum to 100%, this is due to multiple responses, computer rounding or to the exclusion of "don't know" responses

## Health workers and services: the right to health care

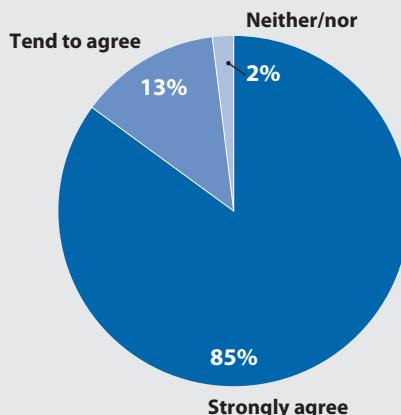
Almost all of the respondents (98%) in Colombia agree to some extent that 'everyone wounded or sick during an armed conflict should have the right to health care'.

The overwhelming majority of people (85%) 'strongly' agree that everyone should have the right to health care, and a further 13% 'tend' to agree.

Almost all (96%) also agree that health workers should treat the sick and wounded from both sides – with 4% of respondents who think they should treat those on their side only.

### The right to health care

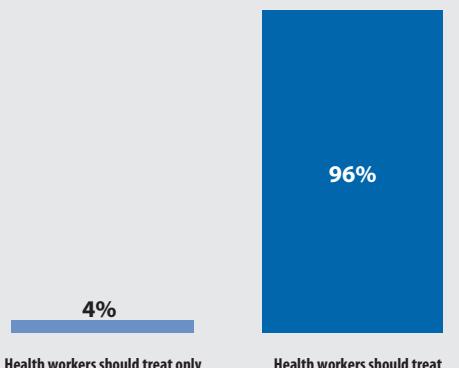
**Q25.** To what extent do you agree or disagree with the following statement: 'Everyone wounded or sick during an armed conflict should have the right to health care'



Base: All respondents (501)

Where total does not sum to 100%, this is due to multiple responses, computer rounding or to the exclusion of "don't know" responses

**Q26.** In the context of an armed conflict, what best describes your personal views:



Base: All respondents (501)

## The Geneva Conventions

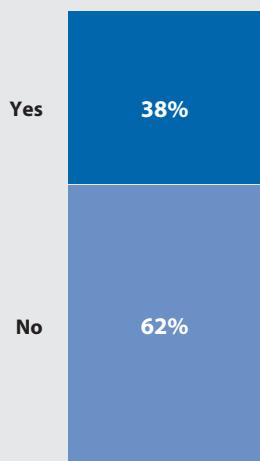
Around two people in five (38%) have heard of the Geneva Conventions. On balance, views are positive on their effectiveness in limiting suffering.

A sizeable minority of people (38%) have heard of the Geneva Conventions.

Among those who are aware of the Geneva Conventions, just over half think they have at least a fair amount of impact in limiting suffering (53%, including 19% who think they have 'a great deal' of impact). Fewer people hold negative views of the ability of the Geneva Conventions to limit suffering (47%, including 19% (28% of men) who think they have no impact at all).

## Awareness of the Geneva Conventions

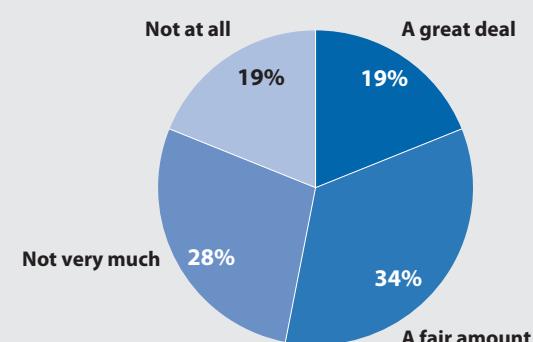
**Q23.** Have you ever heard of the Geneva Conventions?



*Base: All respondents (501)*

*Where total does not sum to 100%, this is due to multiple responses, computer rounding or to the exclusion of "don't know" responses*

**Q24.** To what extent do you think the existence of the Geneva Conventions limits the suffering of civilians in war time?



*Base: All who have heard of the Geneva Conventions (174)*

# **IN-DEPTH RESEARCH**

## IN-DEPTH RESEARCH

### The Impact of Armed Conflict

Respondents believe that the long-standing armed conflict has created a culture where criminal behaviour thrives. Civilians are harassed, robbed, forced into armed groups, kidnapped and held to ransom. This has made life very difficult for civilians, especially for those in rural communities. They lack belief that their authorities can take effective action to resolve the armed conflict.

The people of Colombia have lived through decades of armed conflict. The respondents in this research have experienced it in a variety of ways: becoming displaced because of threats and intimidation; suffering physical injury; having a relative kidnapped or murdered; or acting as first responders. Many people have experienced a combination of these effects.

Many express the view that what might have started many years ago as an ideological conflict has deteriorated into a criminal conflict where civilians are harassed, robbed, forced into groups of weapon bearers, kidnapped and held to ransom. There is also a view that much of the fighting is over the control of drugs and money.

The use of mines is described as inhumane because innocent civilians in poor rural communities tend to be most affected. One young man, Julio, lost his leg after stepping on a mine two years ago. He was so devastated by the accident that he tried to commit suicide twice. After receiving psychological support through a humanitarian organization he is coming to terms with his loss and is learning more about the armed conflict and international humanitarian law through reading. He says:

*For me, the conflict in Colombia is a war without background, none of the combatants know what they are fighting for, they've lost their goal, now they just do it for money and to hurt the unprotected, the poor people who have nothing to do with the conflict. (Julio, mine victim)*

Whatever civilians' views on the nature and causes of the armed conflict in Colombia, they feel its effects in very similar ways, both physically and emotionally. They are united in their feelings of disorientation, sadness, anger and fear.

It is this daily reality in their own lives that dominates their feelings about the armed conflict. It is this, not their politics or their views about the best solution to Colombia's problems, that defines their responses. They are just trying to survive, in a situation where leading a 'normal' life is an achievement.

People are well aware that it is those least able to deal with armed conflict – the very young, the old, the poor and the sick – who end up suffering the most. One young mine victim, Fabian, had refused to collaborate or pay money to a group of weapon bearers because he could not afford it and did not want to take sides. He fled his mother's home after receiving threats only to become injured by a landmine whilst working at a farm. He is now displaced in the city and dependent on his wife and humanitarian aid for support.

*I just think how sad this all is because it is us, the rural people, who are really paying the consequences of the conflict. The poor people. (Fabian, mine victim)*

The sense of relentless suffering is overwhelming and many respondents feel above all helpless to stop it. One woman, Laura, had become displaced three times since 1999 following threats and intimidation. She has seven children and one daughter is detained in jail. Her husband has remained in the countryside.

*Nothing is left where we used to live, only trees. The father of my children is still there ... he has no money, he lives in a house made of branches and leaves, he has no food, no nothing. (Laura, 47, member of separated family)*

The fact that the armed conflict seems to lack a clear rationale for many respondents makes it all the more appalling and more difficult to come to terms with the suffering incurred.

## Personal experience of armed conflict

Being threatened by a weapon bearer is what Colombians fear the most. Kidnapping, extortions, forced recruitment and mines are blighting the lives of civilians. Experience or fear of these events frequently results in the displacement of civilians and the loss of their property, belongings and livelihoods.

### Violence and injury

Violence in the form of torture and physical attacks is commonplace. Weapon bearers often use these tactics as forms of interrogation or punishment for siding with 'the enemy' or when civilians refuse to cooperate with their demands.

Take, for example, Mare's experience. She was displaced and then given a new home. However, she soon found herself once again under threat of displacement – because the land she was now living on was claimed by associates of a drug trafficker who used to live there. She would only be allowed to stay if she helped evict the other families she was working with there, but she refused to do this. She tried to escape but was tracked down, tied up and tortured and her small children were threatened. She has now been displaced again and regrets accepting help.

*I should have remained as a low-profile displaced person, just like other displaced people in this country. (Mare, internally displaced person)*

Another victim, Camilo, was threatened with violence because he had been giving water to weapon bearers when they passed through his village.

*I had to leave because they would come asking for water and we would help. Then the other side heard we were helping them – so they said we were on the wrong side and they told us to leave immediately or we would get killed. (Camilo, internally displaced person)*

Respondents did not tend to have much faith that they could be protected, saying that all parties to the armed conflict could usually find their victims. In addition, reporting aggressors can make civilians and their families a target for reprisals.

*If we say anything then they immediately accuse us of being informers; they take you and torture you. (Camilo, internally displaced person)*

Mine victims have experienced a very specific and indiscriminate form of violence. They point out that the accident itself is only the start of their ordeal. Once they have become disabled their entire lives are affected. They are often unable to work, since their job tends to involve working the land – so financial problems ensue. Poor self-esteem is a common issue: some can start to feel they are unloved by their spouses and family, that their handicap makes them unattractive and a burden. According to first responders and mine victims themselves, suicide is a real risk.

*To lose a part of your body, to know you'll become handicapped, people can't respond to that easily. Some kill themselves. (Mercedes, first responder)*

### Threats and persecution

Threats and persecution are commonplace in conflict-ridden areas of Colombia. Reasons why weapon bearers harass civilians are cited by respondents as including:

- to get money, food or water;
- to force individuals to become weapon bearers;
- to punish individuals for real or perceived help given to enemy forces;
- to punish family members of weapon bearers serving in enemy forces.

Children and young people are often targeted with threats and violence. Lola's family was targeted because a group of weapon bearers suspected her oldest son of being part of an enemy group. To intimidate the family they harassed her three children.

*They took my three little children – 13, 11 and 9 years old – and tied up their hands and started asking them where their brother was. (Lola, 47, internally displaced person)*

Civilians can feel completely trapped by the pressures put on them by competing sides in the armed conflict, with no way to stay out of the conflict and no hope. One mother with three sons was targeted because her eldest son had been recruited into a group of weapon bearers. The family had tried to keep this secret saying he was working in the city, but somehow opposing groups of weapon bearers had found out and began threatening her. At one meeting they demanded that one of her other sons (aged 8 and 17) needed to be recruited to compensate. She escaped to the city with her children but has become impoverished through her displacement and misses her life in the country.

*Sometimes I feel like running away from everything. I just don't see any solutions. I haven't been able to get over it, I can't. Right now I just can't even understand anything. (Catalina, internally displaced person)*

Even mine victims do not escape the threats and intimidation when they try to pick up the pieces of their lives. One mine victim, Luis, found himself the object of threats and extortion from weapon bearers who tried to press-gang him into helping them, despite his disability:

*They insisted I had to [leave the area]. Then when they came back, they charged me \$50,000 pesos [US\$25] just because I hadn't gone ... They took me to the back yard and threw me upside down and aimed at me with a gun ... (Luis, 35, mine victim)*

Some civilians make official complaints to the authorities about their situation – whether they have been displaced, tortured, attacked or threatened – but on the whole do not feel their complaints are dealt with satisfactorily.

*When I looked for legal redress, they started asking for so many things to verify my situation – and they wanted me to turn in so many people – I just wasn't able to; it would have put me at more risk. (Luis, 64, internally displaced person)*

### Kidnapping

Individuals are kidnapped for a variety of reasons. Sometimes it is because they or a family member are with a particular group of weapon bearers or are refusing to join such a group. In some cases they are taken simply so that their family members can be held to ransom.

The emotional effects of kidnapping are clearly hard to bear. Individuals experience much stress, sadness and despair.

As well as experiencing personal anguish, they can find that relationships with other family members, who are also experiencing the same emotions, become strained. Individuals are unable to think clearly and their psychological health is at risk. In one family, for example, where the husband was kidnapped, the relationships between the remaining family members reached breaking point. Claudia's husband was held to ransom and eventually released after nine months. His time in captivity was clearly very difficult for everyone concerned, but she did not want it to entirely dominate her young children's lives, so moved away from her husband's family.

*The situation was already affecting my children's lives, so I left everything and moved out. One day I said, thank you very much, I'm taking my children to another place, I don't want them to continue to be completely sad every single day... (Claudia, 35, member of separated family, now reunited)*

Some people never recover from their ordeal, and the mental effect it has on them eventually results in relationships breaking down. The effect can be especially corrosive where questions of trust are involved – such as in one case where a man who was abducted and later released sank into a bitter mood of recrimination and paranoia in the years after his ordeal, which his family believe contributed to his early death:

*My brother was kidnapped from his house. The feeling of betrayal was huge; for that to happen, people very close to him must have helped. That really affected him a lot, so much so that after his later release he died in the year 2000.  
(Leonardo, member of separated family)*

Some of those interviewed have had family members killed as a result of kidnappings. A couple suspect that their family members have been killed but do not have proof – in particular access to the bodies – and therefore live in a state of uncertainty. There is the additional worry that rescuers or those trying to identify bodies may also put themselves at risk.

*I had to go and identify the bodies of those members of my family who have been killed. The only one I couldn't go for was my oldest brother who was killed in an area where access is very difficult. (Luisa, member of separated family)*

### **Displacement**

Displacement is a widespread problem in Colombia, with rural civilians being forced to flee their homes as a result of persecution, threats, murder of loved ones or because they have been injured by landmines. Often they are displaced two or three times if they are found by weapon bearers; constant upheaval and new beginnings clearly take their toll. To establish themselves in a new town or city means finding homes, work, food and clothing – all of which are challenges in their own right. The emotional strain of having to leave one's home and start from scratch in a new place – usually for an unknown period of time – weighs heavy on both the individual and his or her family.

*... here [in Medellin] I'm not OK, because I can't read or write, I only know farming; we weren't encouraged to study, we were only taught to work the lands ... I had chickens, pigs, all my animals I had to leave everything there, they don't give you time to take anything, we took what we could and took off. ... having a child asking for food drowning in tears and knowing we had it all before is just too hard. (José, internally displaced person)*

Whole families have to flee because reprisals will often be directed against extended family members. For the main breadwinner, finding work and keeping the family financially stable can be almost impossible and extremely demoralizing.

Children's education also suffers, as finding a place in school is difficult in a new area, especially when a displaced person does not have a fixed address first. Obtaining a fixed address is an ordeal in itself.

### **Loss of property and belongings**

Many civilians who have been affected by the Colombian armed conflict go from making a reasonable living to suddenly being plunged into poverty. While family and people come first, belongings are important to people. Belongings define them as individuals, and in many cases the loss of property or land constitutes a loss of their livelihood. Many of the civilian victims always struggled but some others left behind comfortable lifestyles with thriving businesses and farms:

*They make you leave your things – they took over my lands and houses, a bakery, I owned a farm with 7,000 coffee trees. (Luis, 64, internally displaced person)*

When displaced, they have to leave everything but the bare essentials behind – and in some cases even the bare essentials are lost.

As well as the challenge of trying to survive on very little comes the shock of loss of status. Losing all one's belongings and being uprooted from one's home means losing a sense of self-esteem for a lot of individuals.

*It is one thing to suffer conflict, but suffering being displaced can be more difficult. Here we have needs, humiliation, hunger... people look at you as if you are a sick street dog. People think we came here [to Bogotà] to steal. People are afraid of us. (Catalina, internally displaced person)*

### **Civilians' needs in armed conflict**

Respondents cite civilians' main physical needs during armed conflict as being shelter, food/water, access to medicine, clothing/bedding and money.

Employment is the key to providing these but the conflict interrupts and destroys livelihoods.

Armed conflict does more than maim, kill and destroy – though these direct effects are horrifying on their own. When, as in Colombia, it persists over many years, an armed conflict can seep deep into the heart of civilians' lives. This long-term impact on someone's life can come about through an individual event, or a series of events, but most often it is the accumulation of small humiliations, fears and injustices that is the cause.

In Colombia, the armed conflict has created urgent physical needs – for medical care, for shelter, for food – and has left emotional scars through the intimidation of whole communities.

The Colombian conflict is not unique in bringing brutality and senseless loss into the lives of ordinary people. But the willingness of weapon bearers to force ordinary people into the armed conflict makes it one which is difficult for civilians to avoid.

Over 40 years, civilians' resentment of the inequity of the situation has deepened into entrenched bitterness and hopelessness. According to respondents, they feel powerless. All they can do is hope for help from outside, but there is just too little to go around.

Civilians express longing for the peaceful times before their lives were changed by the conflict. They want their old life back, whether this is returning to their home (if they have been displaced), recovering their full health or having back someone they have lost.

Respondents talk consistently about six main areas of physical need, for them and their families:

- **Security.** The armed conflict will not leave them alone. They feel that there is nowhere they can be free from the threat of further victimization:

*When we are displaced, they always pay attention to who leaves and where we go to. If they hear we are saying things we are not supposed to, they punish the family members who were left behind. (Fabian, mine victim)*

- **Shelter.** People leave their homes, only to encounter problems finding anywhere else to live:

*What I really think people need is a safe place. (Pablo, 33, first responder)*

- **Food.** The destruction of farming communities has led to acute food shortages:

*Seeing them cry, seeing malnutrition, children starving ... it's all part of our visits to victims. (Fernando, first responder)*

- **Health care.** For the injured, this is the most important of all. For example, the fitting of an artificial limb for a landmine victim can make a huge impact:

*My life changed with the prosthesis, now I can move, I can go to work, I feel more confident. (John, 26, mine victim)*

- **Money.** Some internally displaced persons receive three months' supply of money upon arrival in a new town, but in the long term it is paid work – which is hard to come by – that is seen as their best chance of addressing at least some of their needs.

*I need a job to pay the rent, to get at least a room to live in with my children. (Lola, internally displaced person)*

The problem is, many workplaces generally require a permanent address, which is not always possible for the internally displaced.

- **Education.** The lack of a permanent address also prevents their children getting places in school:

*We shouldn't have to go through so much to be able to get our children to study. They ask for documents and papers and more papers ... (Luis, 64, internally displaced person)*

The fulfilment of these physical needs can bring emotional reassurance and kick-start positive improvements in the lives of those affected by armed conflict. But in many cases, even meeting physical needs can have little impact. The trauma of mine victims, for example, or those whose family members have been murdered, is often severe and debilitating. This has a double effect: they carry with them the pain of the past; and they are too disoriented to be able to focus on building a better life for themselves in the future. The psychological needs of these people need to be addressed. They can only hope to piece together their lives again over a long period, with counselling and consistent support.

First responders also stress why psychological support is so important for the victims they have worked with, particularly displaced people.

*They are forced to come to the cities where it is more than obvious they won't have what they used to have. Their family breaks, their bonds break, children change suddenly, parents have trouble getting jobs ... (Pablo, 33, first responder)*

Like others, first responders feel that security and protection is something they need and do not always get. In their case, they cannot help others properly if they do not themselves feel safe. One nurse in a hospital, Mercedes, described to us how her work is often hampered by weapon bearers or supporters of specific factions harassing medical staff when they are trying to go about their work.

*We would get people coming to the hospital to try and kill those whom we were assisting – that is very scary. (Mercedes, first responder)*

For first responders, basic security measures and the promotion of humanitarian norms such as the protection of health workers is of vital importance.

### Humanitarian assistance

Civilians value immensely the help they have received from humanitarian organizations such as the ICRC, whether it is assistance when they are displaced from their homes, help during kidnapping cases, help to keep them in touch with family members in detention or health care following injuries sustained from mines.

There is a belief that the authorities should be taking more responsibility in helping civilians.

### The importance of assistance

Assistance from humanitarian organizations is absolutely essential for many Colombians who find themselves affected by the armed conflict. Those affected are grateful for the work of organizations such as the ICRC:

*Thank God we have survived, thanks to the ICRC, who helped us a lot. We received sheets, mattresses and we are trying to move on. I was afraid to leave the shelter I was in and, thank God, the ICRC took me in and helped me. (Luis, 64, internally displaced person)*

As well as helping displaced people, humanitarian organizations such as the ICRC are valued for educating communities about measures they can take to keep themselves away from harm as far as possible and how to start rebuilding their lives through finding the help available: medical assistance, shelter, food and chances to work. One first responder has been involved in a health-care training programme during which he travelled into territory controlled by weapon bearers. He found it a terrifying but rewarding experience.

*[The leader] kept on looking at us with his threatening eyes deep into ours, he would only say, “you are in my territory”, “you are breaking my rules” and “you can stay”. We were able to talk diplomatically with his partner and we were able to show them the importance of the work we were doing there.*

*We were able to be there and give the training. We even had the weapon bearers participate and use them as patients. We were able to gain their trust, we were there for two days, first day everybody had a lot of expectations. For me being there just as a normal Colombian citizen I felt like running away, but as a member of the Red Cross I was doing my duty and I wanted to complete my humanitarian action directly and successfully training those civilians who live in the middle of the conflict; when we were able to gain their complete trust they all started participating and talking a lot. (David, 33, first responder)*

The Red Cross is by far the most mentioned humanitarian organization when civilians talk about the help they have received. The terms ICRC and the Colombian Red Cross tend to be used interchangeably by civilians. The main programmes associated with the ICRC and the Colombian Red Cross are:

- help for displaced people;
- help for separated families and kidnap victims;

- help for mine victims;
- provision of health-care workers and ambulances.

In terms of help for the displaced, lots of respondents mention the aid packages provided by the ICRC and others (usually for the first three months of displacement) as having helped them a lot in the early stages of their displacement. Registering with the ICRC was often one of the first things people did when arriving at a new place and something they have advised other displaced persons to do. However, many are no longer receiving these aid packages and are now struggling to find regular work.

Help with getting in touch with separated family members is also appreciated. One woman, Rosa, has been able to keep in touch with her imprisoned daughter as a result of ICRC support. She also feels that the involvement of the ICRC has helped to improve the conditions of her daughter's imprisonment.

*ICRC has helped us a lot: my daughter has now been treated better than before. She was at least transferred to another cell under better conditions; she has been allowed some phone calls. (Rosa, 47, member of separated family)*

Another person assisted by the ICRC is a boy whose father had been kidnapped whilst travelling in a car several years ago. The ICRC helped with the logistics of the release of his father and provided some psychological support to his mother. Mauricio is now focused on re-establishing a relationship with his father.

*Well we have to start all over again, we lost many years, I barely remember things from before the kidnapping. So far it's been great; I think we'll do just fine. (Mauricio, member of separated family, now reunited)*

Other organizations mentioned in the research include Accion Social, Medicos sin Fronteras, Misio Medica, Social Pastoral, Mencoldes (for business start-ups), Colombian Campaign Against Mines and GUALA (for help for families involved in kidnapping cases).

Although many organizations exist, many of those affected by armed conflict do not know about the help available. These people have often received humanitarian help in other forms – from their community, friends and family, with places to stay and food – but know little or nothing about what humanitarian organizations can do for them. Julio, a mine victim, was a case in point. He spent five years without a prosthetic leg until he found out he could receive aid through the ICRC and others.

*I didn't know many of the things that could have helped a lot, like some of the organizations that help victims. I missed out on a lot of benefits from those international organizations, just because I didn't know. (Julio, mine victim)*

#### **Desired improvements to assistance**

Those affected are very grateful for the assistance they have received from international humanitarian organizations – but they would like their own authorities to be playing a much greater role.

Civilians can feel that they are not their authorities' main priority and there is considerable anger about this. Complaints made to the authorities often come to nothing and civilians conclude that officials are not interested in them.

*Asking the authorities to sit and negotiate, they are responsible for all of us. They need to protect us, and we actually feel left out, abandoned. (Mauricio, member of separated family, now reunited)*

However, most respondents are more concerned about receiving help rather than where it comes from.

In terms of the international humanitarian organizations, there is also room for improvement. Giving help in a warmer and more dignified way could help displaced people who are struggling in a new environment, according to respondents. One woman, Angelica, who lost two brothers in kidnapping cases and is now volunteering to help displaced people in her town, feels that the distribution of aid is conducted in an undignified way.

*I go with people to help them through the process at the Red Cross and I think it is just terrible, standing for so many hours. They are people who lived in the countryside, they had it all, they had dignity, an opportunity to work, now they have nothing. (Angelica, member of separated family)*

Some displaced people feel that they do not receive aid for long enough to establish themselves in a new community – and especially to find a job. First responders agree that self-sufficiency in terms of livelihoods needs to be the goal of aid for displaced people and mine victims.

*As a mine victim I would like the authorities and international organizations to give us more support in finding work ... we don't want to live out of charity. We receive help, food, but I would like to get help to work. (Fabian, mine victim)*

A number of people also feel that false claims need to be more actively prevented by humanitarian organizations. However, it is not clear how people feel this should be done as there is already some criticism of the level of paperwork needed to receive some benefits.

*Maybe they could dig more into each person's story and understand their needs, as well as confirming if the stories are true or not. (Luisa, internally displaced person)*

## Humanitarian gestures

Humanitarian gestures are greatly inhibited in Colombia by the fear of reprisals from weapon bearers. Nonetheless, humanitarian gestures are still made, particularly in terms of helping displaced people.

Fear prevents many people from acting in a humanitarian way towards their fellow Colombians. Stories are told about people being punished by weapon bearers for performing humanitarian acts and this leaves some afraid to offer help. Civilians say they never feel safe because they cannot always tell who is associated with which group of weapon bearers and who might be informing on them.

*We could help, but people are afraid. We don't know who is telling the truth: there are many informers who only pretend that they are displaced to trick you. (Julio, 38, internally displaced person)*

*Generally when facing a victim of the conflict, no one is humanitarian. There is fear to be accused for participating or helping any group, which makes you act indifferent to the situations and circumstances. When someone tries to help, that person will be completely afraid of the consequences of helping someone who is asking for immediate assistance, they look around and confirm no one is looking. Help is reduced to what neighbours can do for each other.*

*(Mercedes, first responder)*

One woman tells how she and her husband had helped a wounded weapon bearer when they found him by a roadside:

*We found and helped a wounded person who was in the road. My husband helped him get to our place and with a blade extracted the bullet from him, then he cured him. My husband burned his clothes, we fed him, we gave him new clothes, and a bed to sleep. The poor kid was probably 20 years old, he never told us what group he belonged to, we never asked questions, the least we knew about who he was, the best for us. We just wanted to save his life. He was at our house for three months. (Mare, internally displaced person)*

However, when a particular group of weapon bearers found out about their actions, they captured her husband and five years later she still has no news of him and she assumes he is dead.

Despite the risks involved, many people have experienced and given acts of kindness. Colombians in affected areas are helping each other where they can with small amounts of money, food, helping each other to find medical help when injured, and providing shelter for neighbours, relatives or even strangers who have lost their homes.

*Some neighbours sold some hens and chickens to give us money for the bus ticket; they got us 90,000 pesos [US\$ 30]. (Eduardo, internally displaced person)*

Another man, José, was receiving help from a neighbour. She was feeding his young daughter regular meals for free because she knew he was struggling to support his whole family.

*My neighbour, she gives my daughter food, and I'm very thankful for that, she would like to give us all food but she just can't, every afternoon she calls her and gives her some food. (José, internally displaced person)*

## Behaviour during Armed Conflict

### Rules of conflict

There is a belief that parties to armed conflict should take great care to spare civilians in their actions – but that this is not the practice in Colombia. One reason is that all parties to the conflict are living alongside civilians and asking them to support and supply them. The use of mines is also hugely resented by civilians.

The principle that civilians should not be drawn into the armed conflict is a strongly held personal belief among those affected by the armed conflict. Some are also aware that there are rules about the protection of civilians, according to international humanitarian law.

However, respondents say these rules are hard to apply in Colombia because parties to the armed conflict often live alongside, or even with, civilians and it can be hard to distinguish between them. Many people described how hard it is to remain outside the armed conflict because weapon bearers force civilians into helping them with basic provisions and shelter.

*They would use us a lot, they would ask us to do things, they would come to our houses asking for food and animals, then another group would come, I once got hit for helping, I just said whoever comes in with a weapon gives the orders. If they come and ask for favours we have to do it. (Edwin, 26, mine victim)*

Respondents feel that although the nature of the armed conflict has blurred distinctions between civilians and weapon bearers, all groups in Colombia have broken the normal moral code of how to behave in armed conflict. Civilians believe that rules of conflict have been flouted in Colombia in a number of ways:

- forced recruitment, including of children;
- use of mines affecting civilians and rural communities;
- hostage-taking and ransom demands;
- reprisals against family members of enemies.

One woman says that it is common practice to force civilians to plant bombs at enemy targets. She says weapon bearers enforce this through threats of reprisals against family members.

*If we don't do what they say they tell us we must give their enemy a 'gift' ... most of the time they activate the bombs before the victim gets to the destination, that has happened before. The point for them is to set the bomb off and kill us too.*  
*(Cristina, internally displaced person)*

International humanitarian law is being broken flagrantly and frequently in the worst possible ways in Colombia, according to respondents. But the very existence of the rules is a beacon of hope to those affected – something to remind them that as civilians, they have a right to expect something better.

## Right to health care and protecting health workers

There is a strong belief from all the groups that everyone should have the right to health care regardless of whether they are civilians or weapon bearers.

### Right to health care

Civilians in Colombia insist that all individuals should be entitled to health care if they need it – and extend this right consistently even to those responsible for the worst violence.

*We are all human beings and we all have the right to humanitarian assistance and health. (Mare, internally displaced person)*

In many cases this stance is reflective of their religious faith, but also a feeling that they would not wish their own loss and hurt upon anyone.

However, first responders have lots of examples of the right to health care not being respected. Mercedes, a nurse in a hospital, told us how wounded people could be targeted when they returned home or even whilst still in hospital.

*We save them, send them home and as soon as they get there, they get killed.  
(Mercedes, first responder)*

### Protecting health workers

It is taken as self-evident by all respondents that health workers and their vehicles should be protected from attack. There is outrage at any attack on medical staff, ambulances or hospitals – it is seen as the worst kind of attack possible:

*They attack people who are working for world humanity. That shouldn't happen.  
It is something that should be respected above all. (Laura, member of separated family)*

Sadly, in practice, the health workers and their facilities are not always respected. Several first responders speak of a recent attack which used an ambulance to dupe enemies.

*This really affected us a lot, and it puts us at risk. (Sebastian, 34, first responder)*

However, first responders say that most of the time the Red Cross emblem plays an important role in protecting them. Their perception is that the emblem is generally respected.

## The Geneva Conventions

Awareness of the Geneva Conventions is quite low. However, civilians would like to see more international pressure to try to halt the worst violations of the rules such as the use of mines, forced recruitment and kidnappings.

Few are specifically aware of the Geneva Conventions, but those who know about them have a reasonable understanding of their content. Many who do not know about specific rules nevertheless have an awareness that international humanitarian laws exist.

Civilians feel passionately that laws – whether in Colombian law or international rules – should be respected, but feel that this is not the case in Colombia.

*We live in a country filled with laws and it hurts me that they are ignored. (Jose Luis, internally displaced person)*

First responders tend to be more aware of the nature and content of the Geneva Conventions themselves. They share some of the feeling that the Geneva Conventions are being roundly ignored in Colombia:

*Having the rules of war doesn't mean much, because people don't know about them and there is no commitment to them by the parties to the conflict. (Fernando, first responder)*

But some first responders also express the view that the situation in Colombia has improved in terms of the impact of the armed conflict on civilians. The positive perceptions come from progress on reducing the use of landmines and protecting civilians.

*The use of landmines, involving civilians in conflicts: the Geneva Conventions are about those things ... organizations like the ICRC and the Colombian Red Cross, Medicos del Mundo, are working to have the Conventions respected and used. Today things have changed and are not like they were 20 years ago. (Maria, 34, first responder)*

### Conclusions: priority actions

Those affected by armed conflict in Colombia would like to see more international condemnation of violations of international humanitarian law.

They would also like to see assistance from the Colombian authorities for long-term reconstruction, especially for displaced people.

Lastly, they would like further protection for civilians being intimidated by armed groups.

Respondents in Colombia have three main messages they would like to communicate to the rest of the world:

- If armed conflict is inevitable, then better implementation of the rules of conflict is needed, to ensure that the impact on civilians is minimal. Respondents want to see more international condemnation and pressure put on the authorities as well as on weapon bearers to help stop violations such as the use of mines and the practice of forced recruitment. First responders feel most strongly about this.

*We need a peace process ... I believe they can put international pressure on all the parties to make them negotiate. (Paula, member of separated family)*

- All groups – and especially internally displaced people and mine victims – want more humanitarian assistance from the authorities for long-term reconstruction and employment. Accommodating displaced persons and developing employment opportunities for them is seen as paramount.
- Respondents would also like better protection from kidnappings and other types of violence and access to legal redress. Whilst eliminating the cycle of violence and intimidation completely will be difficult, people believe more can be done by the authorities to take complaints seriously.

## Specific trends for different groups

<b>Internally displaced persons</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Becoming displaced is a common experience of armed conflict in Colombia and many of those displaced also suffered in other ways (members of separated families, first responders and mine victims).</li> <li>Displacement often follows violence and intimidation from weapon bearers. Civilians are either forcibly evicted or they escape secretly.</li> <li>The displaced tend to go to cities where they believe they will evade capture and where they may have acquaintances. Many find city life hard to cope with and miss the opportunity to gather and grow their own food.</li> <li>For others, the loss of status is hard to bear and they dislike the stigma of being a 'displaced person'.</li> <li>The bureaucracy involved in being a displaced person can be detrimental to re-establishing a normal life. Schools often want proof of address to accept a child and consequently many displaced people are unable to send their children to school.</li> <li>Finding regular work is very challenging and adds to the feeling of failure. Many rely heavily on aid, particularly in the first three months after arrival.</li> <li>Often it is displaced persons who benefit most from humanitarian gestures, when shelter and food are offered to them by others.</li> </ul>
<b>Members of separated families</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Members of separated families have either had a family member kidnapped (and in some cases killed) or a family member in prison. Several have missing relatives whose fate is unknown.</li> <li>Members of separated families are more likely than other groups to have relatives who are weapon bearers.</li> <li>The search for a resolution to kidnappings can dominate lives and have very negative long-term psychological effects. These respondents often feel that they have not been helped enough. When help is received it is often life-changing.</li> <li>Even if people have an idea where their relatives might be, e.g. prisons, contact with those detained may still not happen.</li> <li>This is the group that feels most strongly that they have not received enough humanitarian assistance.</li> <li>The use of radio stations to keep in touch with people who have been kidnapped is very beneficial to relatives but they would still like more to be done to resolve cases.</li> </ul>
<b>First responders</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>First responders see the armed conflict and its effects from both the outside and the inside: from the outside, in their capacity as helpers to those who are being directly affected by the struggle; and, from the inside, in that they are working in territory where the armed conflict is taking place, and therefore feel the same uncertainty and suffer in many of the same ways as those they are helping.</li> <li>First responders are more likely to have a sense of fulfilment from having saved lives rather than experiencing just the hopelessness and humiliation other people often talked about.</li> <li>First responders do not escape the threats and intimidation from armed actors that other civilians talk about. Promotion of the protection to which they are entitled is extremely important.</li> <li>They have strong feelings and opinions about the impact of the wars on everyone.</li> <li>There is a sense that the Geneva Conventions are not being adhered to in Colombia.</li> </ul>

<b>Mine victims</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Victims of mines are likely to be men living and working in rural/farming communities already experiencing multiple effects of war. Most of them also become displaced because they can no longer work the land.</li> <li>They are more likely than other groups to talk about the importance of being able to earn a living and support families. Their perceived failure in terms of supporting themselves and their families is one of the main reasons why mine victims, according to some respondents, are at greater risk of committing suicide.</li> <li>Victims can take encouragement and inspiration from seeing the example of others who have reconstructed their lives after losing a limb. This is the best way to build psychological strength and keep thinking positively.</li> <li>They feel the authorities – and in some cases humanitarian organizations – have not acted soon enough (or at all) in providing them with a prosthesis and rehabilitation care that can enable them to start earning a living once again.</li> <li>Some communities fundraise for individual victims to help them receive medical care and prostheses.</li> <li>Mine victims would like to see mines more rigorously outlawed by the authorities and the international community because they are likely to affect civilians. They also feel action to clear the land of mines has been too slow in coming about.</li> <li>There is a strong sense that children in particular should be spared in armed conflict – and children are often the victims of mines. For this reason there is a particular dread associated with the use of this kind of weapon.</li> <li>The Geneva Conventions are not seen to be implemented. The Geneva Conventions are perceived as academic and unreal in the face of the experiences of many respondents.</li> </ul>
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# **APPENDICES**

## APPENDICES

### OPINION SURVEY

#### Sample profile

<b>Colombia (Weighted profile)</b>			<b>Colombia (Weighted profile)</b>		
	Number	%		Number	%
<b>Total</b>	<b>501</b>	<b>100</b>			
<b>Gender</b>			<b>Cities</b>		
Male	232	46	Bogotá	230	46
Female	269	54	Medellín	38	8
<b>Age</b>			Barranquilla	22	4
18-25	108	21	Cali	36	7
26-35	116	23	Bucaramanga	14	3
36-45	109	22	Pasto	9	2
46-55	78	16	Ibagué	10	2
56 or over	91	18	Popayán	6	1
<b>Religion</b>			Envigado	21	4
Catholic	397	79	Sabaneta	23	5
Evangelical	9	2	Riohacha	10	2
Christian	56	11	Fundación	10	2
Jehovah's Witness	4	1	Desquebradas	6	1
Mormon	1	*	Chinchina	6	1
Other	2	*	Villavicencio	8	2
None	32	7	Pamplona	8	2
<b>Employment</b>			Santander de Quilichao	5	1
Student	39	8	Tulúa	21	4
Employee	231	46	Pradera	18	4
Student and employee	19	4	<b>Education</b>		
Unemployed looking for a job	43	9	Primary school	88	18
Unemployed not looking for a job	10	2	Secondary school	208	41
Disabled/handicapped person	6	1	Technical school	82	16
Retired, pensioner	27	5	University	99	19
Housewife	126	25	Master's degree	22	4
<b>Marital status</b>			Doctorate	3	1
Single	152	30	<b>Income</b>		
Married	205	41	High	15	3
Cohabitation	96	19	Medium – high	31	6
Divorced	28	6	Medium	58	11
Widowed	20	4	Medium – low	172	34
			Low	162	32
			Low – low	64	13

## Sampling details

Sampling tolerances vary with the size of the sample and the percentage figure concerned. For example, for a question where 50% of the people in the full sample of 501 give a particular answer, the chances are 95 in 100 that this result would not vary by more than 4 percentage points plus or minus (i.e. between 46% and 54%) from the result that would have been obtained from a census of the entire population (using the same procedures).

Some examples of the tolerances that may apply in this report are given in the table below.

<b>Approximate sampling tolerances applicable to percentages at or near these levels (at the 95% confidence level)</b>			
	10% or 90% ±	30% or 70% ±	50% ±
<b>Size of sample on which survey result is based (unweighted)</b>			
501 (All respondents)	3	4	4
82 (Men affected by armed conflict)	7	10	11
116 (Catholics affected by armed conflict)	6	8	9

*Source: Ipsos*

Tolerances are also involved in the comparison of results between different elements (sub-groups) of the sample – and between the 1999 and 2009 results. A difference must be of at least a certain size to be statistically significant. The table below shows the sampling tolerances applicable to comparisons of sub-groups and between the 1999 and 2009 research.

<b>Differences required for significance at the 95% confidence level at or near these percentages</b>			
	10% or 90% ±	30% or 70% ±	50% ±
<b>Size of 2009 sub-groups and 1999 vs. 2009 samples involved in this survey (unweighted)</b>			
82 (Men affected by armed conflict) vs. 72 (Women affected by armed conflict)	10	15	16
857 (1999 full sample) vs. 501 (2009 full sample)	3	5	6

*Source: Ipsos*

## Marked-up questionnaire

Questionnaire		
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Interviews with 501 people</li> <li>● Aged 18+</li> <li>● Conducted face-to-face, from 13 February to 21 February 2009</li> <li>● Results are weighted</li> <li>● 'POW' indicates a question also asked in 1999</li> <li>● An asterisk (*) indicates a result of less than 1% (but not zero)</li> <li>● A 'n/a' denotes 'not asked'</li> <li>● Base for each question is all (501), unless shown otherwise</li> </ul>	
INTRODUCTION		
	Good morning/afternoon/evening. I am from Ipsos, an independent social research agency. We are conducting interviews in this area and would like your help with this. The interview will last around 15 minutes and is about your experiences of and opinions on the armed conflict in Colombia.	
AA) ON CONFLICT IN GENERAL		
ASK ALL ↴	Q1. Have you personally experienced armed conflict, or not?	
		%
	Yes	10
	No	90
	Don't know	0
	Refused	0
ASK IF 'YES' AT Q1 ↴	Q2. Was this in Colombia, or was it somewhere else?	
	<i>Base: All experiencing armed conflict at Q1-73</i>	%
	In Colombia	97
	Somewhere else (specify)	0
	Both	3
	Don't know	0

<b>ASK IF 'YES' AT Q1 ↴</b>	Q3A. I'm going to ask you about your actual experiences during the armed conflict in Colombia. Please tell me whether any of the following things happened to you personally or did not happen as a consequence of the armed conflict in Colombia. For each one, please indicate whether it happened or did not happen to you (POW).				
	<i>Base: All experiencing armed conflict at Q1-73</i>	Happened	Did not happen	Don't know	Refused
		%	%	%	%
	<b>Forced to leave your home and live elsewhere</b>	32	68	0	0
	<b>Imprisoned</b>	12	88	0	0
	<b>Kidnapped or taken as a hostage</b>	18	82	0	0
	<b>Tortured</b>	4	96	0	0
	<b>Been humiliated</b>	15	85	0	0
	<b>Lost contact with a close relative</b>	23	77	0	0
	<b>A member of your immediate family was killed during the armed conflict</b>	33	67	0	0
	<b>Serious damage to your property</b>	10	90	0	0
	<b>Wounded by the fighting</b>	6	94	0	0
	<b>Combatants took food away</b>	8	92	0	0
	<b>Had your home looted</b>	17	83	0	0
	<b>Somebody you knew well was a victim of sexual violence</b>	11	89	0	0
ROTATE STATEMENTS BELOW HERE SEPARATELY AFTER OTHERS					
<b>ASK IF NOT 'YES' AT Q1 ↴</b>	<b>No or very limited access to basic necessities (water, electricity, etc.)</b>	13	87	0	0
	<b>No or very limited access to health care</b>	11	89	0	0
	<b>Lost all my belongings</b>	13	87	0	0
	<b>Lost my means of income (e.g. job, revenue, farm land, etc.)</b>	38	62	0	0
	<b>The area where I lived came under enemy control</b>	20	80	0	0
Q3B. I'm going to ask you about how you yourself have been affected by the armed conflict in Colombia. Please tell me whether any of the following things happened to you personally or did not happen as a consequence of the armed conflict in Colombia. For each one, please indicate whether it happened or did not happen to you.					
	<i>Base: All not experiencing armed conflict at Q1-428</i>	Happened	Did not happen	Don't know	Refused
		%	%	%	%
	<b>Forced to leave your home and live elsewhere</b>	2	98	0	0
	<b>Imprisoned</b>	1	99	0	0
	<b>Kidnapped or taken as a hostage</b>	*	100	0	0
	<b>Tortured</b>	0	100	0	0
	<b>Been humiliated</b>	1	99	0	0
	<b>Lost contact with a close relative</b>	4	96	0	0
	<b>A member of your immediate family was killed during the armed conflict</b>	6	94	0	0
	<b>Serious damage to your property</b>	1	99	0	0
	<b>Wounded by the fighting</b>	1	99	0	0
	<b>Combatants took food away</b>	0	100	0	0
	<b>Had your home looted</b>	*	100	0	0
	<b>Somebody you knew well was a victim of sexual violence</b>	3	97	0	0
ROTATE STATEMENTS BELOW HERE SEPARATELY AFTER OTHERS					
	<b>No or very limited access to basic necessities (water, electricity, etc.)</b>	2	98	0	0
	<b>No or very limited access to health care</b>	*	100	0	0
	<b>Lost all my belongings</b>	*	100	0	0
	<b>Lost my means of income (e.g. job, revenue, farm land, etc.)</b>	*	100	0	0
	<b>The area where I lived came under enemy control</b>	1	99	0	0

ALL RESPONDENTS ↴		Q3A/Q3B. I'm going to ask you about your actual experiences during the armed conflict in Colombia. Please tell me whether any of the following things happened to you personally or did not happen as a consequence of the armed conflict in Colombia. For each one, please indicate whether it happened or did not happen to you.				
<i>Base: All respondents</i>		Happened		Did not happen	Don't know	Refused
		1999	2009	2009	2009	2009
		%	%	%	%	%
<b>Forced to leave your home and live elsewhere</b>	7	5	95	0	0	
<b>Imprisoned</b>	2	2	98	0	0	
<b>Kidnapped or taken as a hostage</b>	1	2	98	0	0	
<b>Tortured</b>	5	*	100	0	0	
<b>Been humiliated ('Felt humiliated' in 1999)</b>	10	2	98	0	0	
<b>Lost contact with a close relative</b>	15	6	94	0	0	
<b>A member of your immediate family was killed during the armed conflict</b>	12	8	92	0	0	
<b>Serious damage to your property</b>	6	2	98	0	0	
<b>Wounded by the fighting</b>	3	1	99	0	0	
<b>Combatants took food away</b>	3	1	99	0	0	
<b>Had your home looted</b>	n/a	2	98	0	0	
<b>Somebody you knew well was a victim of sexual violence ('...raped by combatants' in 1999)</b>	5	4	96	0	0	
ROTATE STATEMENTS BELOW HERE SEPARATELY AFTER OTHERS						
<b>No or very limited access to basic necessities (water, electricity, etc.)</b>	n/a	3	97	0	0	
<b>No or very limited access to health care</b>	n/a	2	98	0	0	
<b>Lost all my belongings</b>	n/a	1	99	0	0	
<b>Lost my means of income (e.g. job, revenue, farm land, etc.)</b>	n/a	4	96	0	0	
<b>The area where I lived came under enemy control</b>	1	3	97	0	0	

<b>ASK ALL ↴</b>	Q4. And have you been affected by armed conflict in Colombia in any other ways? What ways were those?	
	SINGLE CODE	
	Yes – specify	%
	No	16
	Don't know	84
	Refused	0
	<b>YES – SPECIFY: TOP MENTIONS (&gt; 5% of respondents)</b>	
	<i>Base: All who have been affected by armed conflict in any other ways at Q4-97</i>	
		%
	TOTAL MENTIONS – DETERIORATION IN THE STANDARD OF LIVING	57
	Poor economy/high prices	39
	Fear	10
	No security	7
	No job/couldn't work	6
	TOTAL MENTIONS – MISCELLANEOUS	34
	Forced to leave the country	24
	Thieves/looting	9
	TOTAL MENTIONS – PEOPLE ARE KILLED/INJURED	11
	Relatives are killed/injured	7
	TOTAL MENTIONS – INTERNAL FIGHTING	9
	Persecution/discrimination	9
	TOTAL MENTIONS – FREEDOM RESTRICTION	8
	TOTAL MENTIONS – TYPES OF VIOLENCE/ATTACKS	6
<b>ASK ALL WHO HAVE EXPERIENCED CONFLICT – 'YES' AT Q1 AND 'YES' AT Q2/ CODE 1 (IN COLOMBIA) OR ANY 'HAPPENED' RESPONSE AT Q3, OR ANY 'YES' RESPONSE AT Q4 ↴</b>	Q5. And when were you personally most recently affected by this armed conflict in Colombia?	
	SINGLE CODE	
	<i>Base: All who have experienced/been affected by conflict in any way, as defined above-154</i>	
	Now/currently experiencing	%
	Within the last month	21
	More than one month ago, but less than six months	2
	Six months ago to within the last year	3
	1-2 years	3
	3-4 years	9
	5-9 years	14
	10-19 years	24
	20 years +	16
	Don't know	8
	Refused	0

<b>ASK ALL ↴</b>	<p>Q6. What do you think are the two or three greatest fears people are facing in a situation of armed conflict in Colombia?</p> <p><b>DO NOT READ OUT. INTERVIEWER TO CODE A MAXIMUM OF THREE RESPONSES</b></p> <table border="1" style="width: 100%; border-collapse: collapse;"> <thead> <tr> <th style="text-align: left;"></th><th style="text-align: right;">%</th></tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr><td>Inability to earn a living/personal or family economic instability</td><td style="text-align: right;">24</td></tr> <tr><td>Losing a loved one</td><td style="text-align: right;">68</td></tr> <tr><td>Being separated from loved ones</td><td style="text-align: right;">30</td></tr> <tr><td>Losing/destruction of the house/losing of personal belongings</td><td style="text-align: right;">27</td></tr> <tr><td>Living with uncertainty</td><td style="text-align: right;">23</td></tr> <tr><td>Having to leave their home/becoming displaced/a refugee</td><td style="text-align: right;">30</td></tr> <tr><td>Imprisonment</td><td style="text-align: right;">5</td></tr> <tr><td>Surviving the conflict</td><td style="text-align: right;">11</td></tr> <tr><td>Suffering injury</td><td style="text-align: right;">21</td></tr> <tr><td>Sexual violence</td><td style="text-align: right;">11</td></tr> <tr><td>Not being able to get an education/going to school</td><td style="text-align: right;">3</td></tr> <tr><td>Fear of being rejected by your community</td><td style="text-align: right;">4</td></tr> <tr><td>Having to take up arms/fight</td><td style="text-align: right;">2</td></tr> <tr><td>Being humiliated</td><td style="text-align: right;">6</td></tr> <tr><td>Limited access to basic necessities (water, electricity, etc.)</td><td style="text-align: right;">4</td></tr> <tr><td>Limited access to health care (drugs, hospital)</td><td style="text-align: right;">3</td></tr> <tr><td>Outcome of the conflict</td><td style="text-align: right;">6</td></tr> <tr><td>Other (specify)</td><td style="text-align: right;">18</td></tr> <tr><td>Nothing</td><td style="text-align: right;">0</td></tr> <tr><td>Don't know</td><td style="text-align: right;">0</td></tr> <tr><td>Refused</td><td style="text-align: right;">0</td></tr> </tbody> </table>		%	Inability to earn a living/personal or family economic instability	24	Losing a loved one	68	Being separated from loved ones	30	Losing/destruction of the house/losing of personal belongings	27	Living with uncertainty	23	Having to leave their home/becoming displaced/a refugee	30	Imprisonment	5	Surviving the conflict	11	Suffering injury	21	Sexual violence	11	Not being able to get an education/going to school	3	Fear of being rejected by your community	4	Having to take up arms/fight	2	Being humiliated	6	Limited access to basic necessities (water, electricity, etc.)	4	Limited access to health care (drugs, hospital)	3	Outcome of the conflict	6	Other (specify)	18	Nothing	0	Don't know	0	Refused	0
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<b>ASK ALL ↴</b>	<p>Q7. What do you think civilians who are living in areas of armed conflict need the most? Please select the three most important to you.</p> <p><b>ROTATE STATEMENTS. READ THE LIST AND ASK RESPONDENTS TO SELECT ONE ANSWER. REPEAT THE LIST IF NECESSARY. THEN READ THE LIST AGAIN WITHOUT MENTIONING THE FIRST ANSWER AND ASK THE RESPONDENT TO SELECT ANOTHER ANSWER. REPEAT AGAIN.</b></p> <table border="1" style="width: 100%; border-collapse: collapse;"> <thead> <tr> <th style="text-align: left;"></th><th style="text-align: right;">%</th></tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr><td><b>Food</b></td><td style="text-align: right;">54</td></tr> <tr><td><b>Shelter</b></td><td style="text-align: right;">16</td></tr> <tr><td><b>Medical treatment/health care</b></td><td style="text-align: right;">36</td></tr> <tr><td><b>Family members to be kept together</b></td><td style="text-align: right;">11</td></tr> <tr><td><b>Information on separated/missing family members</b></td><td style="text-align: right;">9</td></tr> <tr><td><b>Security/protection</b></td><td style="text-align: right;">61</td></tr> <tr><td><b>Respect/dignity</b></td><td style="text-align: right;">29</td></tr> <tr><td><b>Psychological support</b></td><td style="text-align: right;">20</td></tr> <tr><td><b>To influence decisions that affect them</b></td><td style="text-align: right;">6</td></tr> <tr><td><b>Conflict resolution</b></td><td style="text-align: right;">20</td></tr> <tr><td><b>Economic/financial help</b></td><td style="text-align: right;">35</td></tr> <tr><td>Other (specify)</td><td style="text-align: right;">4</td></tr> <tr><td>Don't know</td><td style="text-align: right;">0</td></tr> <tr><td>Refused</td><td style="text-align: right;">0</td></tr> </tbody> </table>		%	<b>Food</b>	54	<b>Shelter</b>	16	<b>Medical treatment/health care</b>	36	<b>Family members to be kept together</b>	11	<b>Information on separated/missing family members</b>	9	<b>Security/protection</b>	61	<b>Respect/dignity</b>	29	<b>Psychological support</b>	20	<b>To influence decisions that affect them</b>	6	<b>Conflict resolution</b>	20	<b>Economic/financial help</b>	35	Other (specify)	4	Don't know	0	Refused	0														
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	<i>Base: All who have experienced/been affected by conflict in any way, as defined above-154</i>					
	More	Less	No real difference	Don't know	Refused	
	%	%	%	%	%	
<b>Vengeful</b>	4	30	65	0	0	
<b>Trusting</b>	12	53	35	0	0	
<b>Resilient</b>	22	44	35	0	0	
<b>Anxious</b>	36	27	36	0	0	
<b>Appreciative of every day</b>	69	12	20	0	0	
<b>Confused</b>	41	25	33	0	0	
<b>Sad</b>	50	28	21	0	0	
<b>Sensitive</b>	55	21	24	0	0	
<b>Disillusioned</b>	55	22	23	0	0	
<b>Optimistic for the future</b>	52	26	22	0	0	
<b>Wise</b>	35	20	44	0	0	
<b>Empathetic towards other people</b>	35	17	48	0	0	
<b>Violent/aggressive</b>	3	30	67	0	0	

**BB) HUMANITARIAN ASSISTANCE/NEEDS**

<b>ASK ALL WHO HAVE EXPERIENCED CONFLICT – 'YES' AT Q1 AND 'YES' AT Q2/ CODE 1 (IN COLOMBIA) OR ANY 'HAPPENED' RESPONSE AT Q3, OR ANY 'YES' RESPONSE AT Q4 ↴</b>	Q9. During the time you experienced or were being affected by armed conflict, did you receive help or support from any of the following?  READ OUT.				
	<i>Base: All who have experienced/been affected by conflict in any way, as defined above-154</i>				
	Yes	No	Don't know	Can't remember	
	%	%	%	%	
<b>UN/UN agency</b>	2	98	0	0	
<b>Colombian Red Cross</b>	6	94	0	0	
<b>ICRC (International Committee of the Red Cross)</b>	*	100	0	0	
<b>Other non-governmental organization (NGO) or charity (local or international)</b>	6	94	0	0	
<b>Government</b>	16	84	0	0	
<b>Individuals from your community/neighbours</b>	7	93	0	0	
<b>Religious entities</b>	6	94	0	0	
<b>Military/army/combatants</b>	7	93	0	0	
<b>Parents/family</b>	38	62	0	0	
<b>Other (specify)</b>	1	99	0	0	
<b>Combination: Colombian Red Cross/ICRC</b>	7	100	0	0	

<b>ASK IF 'YES' AT Q9 ↴</b>	Q10. For each of the types of organizations or people you mentioned receiving help or support from, I would like you to tell me how well you felt they understood your needs. First, the [type of support at Q9]...do you feel your needs were completely understood, partially understood, or not understood at all?					
	SINGLE CODE FOR EACH SOURCE OF SUPPORT MENTIONED AT Q9					
	<i>Base: All who did receive support/help from each organization at Q9</i>	Completely	Partially	Not at all	Don't know	Refused
		%	%	%	%	%
	<b>UN/UN agency (Base = 1**)</b>	0	100	0	0	0
	<b>Colombian Red Cross (8**)</b>	88	8	4	0	0
	<b>ICRC (International Committee of the Red Cross) (2**)</b>	50	50	0	0	0
	<b>Other non-governmental organization (NGO) or charity (local or international) (5**)</b>	13	38	49	0	0
	<b>Government (18**)</b>	11	89	0	0	0
	<b>Individuals from your community/neighbours (18**)</b>	58	39	3	0	0
<b>ASK ALL ↴</b>	<b>Religious entities (11**)</b>	39	61	0	0	0
	<b>Military/army/combatants (15**)</b>	80	20	0	0	0
	<b>Parents/family (69*)</b>	73	24	4	0	0
	<b>Other (5*)</b>	44	56	0	0	0
	<b>Combination: Colombian Red Cross/ICRC (9**)</b>	84	12	4	0	0
	** Very low base/* Low base					
	Q11. Which, if any, of the following reasons do you think may have prevented people in Colombia receiving or accepting help or support during armed conflict?					
	READ OUT LIST. ROTATE ORDER. MULTICODE OK					
						YES
						%
	<b>Corruption</b>					82
	<b>Black market</b>					23
	<b>Discrimination/social status</b>					43
	<b>Location access – not able to reach the location</b>					40
	<b>Unaware that it was available</b>					41
	<b>Fear of being rejected by my community</b>					29
	<b>Fear of being perceived to be aligned with wrong side</b>					46
	<b>Pride/dignity</b>					15
	<b>Did not meet criteria</b>					9
	<b>Did not want to receive any support</b>					9
	<b>Did not need to receive any support</b>					4
	<b>Did not want to accept support because of who was offering it</b>					11
	<b>Other (specify)</b>					1
	<b>Nothing</b>					0
	<b>Don't know</b>					0
	<b>Refused</b>					0

CC) WARFARE/COMBATANTS																																																	
ASK ALL ↴	<p>Q12. Is there anything that combatants should not be allowed to do in fighting their enemy?</p> <p>And what else?</p> <p>OPEN-ENDED QUESTION. DO NOT PROMPT – BUT PROBE FULLY.</p>																																																
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ASK ALL ↴	<p>Q14. Now I would like to ask you some general questions about how, in your view, combatants should behave in times of armed conflict. When combatants attack to weaken the enemy, should they: (POW)</p> <p>READ OUT. SINGLE CODE ONLY.</p> <table border="1"> <thead> <tr> <th></th> <th>1999</th> <th>2009</th> </tr> <tr> <th></th> <th>%</th> <th>%</th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td><b>Attack enemy combatants and civilians</b></td> <td>1</td> <td>1</td></tr> <tr> <td><b>Attack enemy combatants and avoid civilians as much as possible</b></td> <td>20</td> <td>12</td></tr> <tr> <td><b>Attack only enemy combatants and leave the civilians alone</b></td> <td>72</td> <td>88</td></tr> <tr> <td>Don't know</td> <td>6</td> <td>0</td></tr> <tr> <td>Refused</td> <td></td> <td>0</td></tr> </tbody> </table>				1999	2009		%	%	<b>Attack enemy combatants and civilians</b>	1	1	<b>Attack enemy combatants and avoid civilians as much as possible</b>	20	12	<b>Attack only enemy combatants and leave the civilians alone</b>	72	88	Don't know	6	0	Refused		0																									
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<b>ASK ALL ↴</b>	Q15. Is there anything that combatants should not be allowed to do in fighting their enemy? For each one, please indicate whether it is OK or not OK to do that in fighting their enemy (POW).						
	READ OUT. SINGLE CODE EACH STATEMENT						
	OK	Not OK	Don't know	Refused	1999	2009	1999
	%	%	%	%	%	2009	2009
<b>Depriving civilians of food, medicine or water to weaken the enemy</b> ( <i>'Depriving the civilian population of food and water to gain a military advantage' in 1999</i> )	17	3	74	97	0	0	0
<b>Attacking religious and historical monuments</b> ( <i>'Attacking religious monuments, mosques or churches in order to gain a military advantage' in 1999</i> )	15	1	77	99	0	0	0
<b>Attacking civilians who voluntarily transported ammunition for the enemy</b> ( <i>Not asked in 1999</i> )	n/a	15	n/a	85	0	0	0
<b>Attacking enemy combatants in populated villages or towns knowing many civilians would be killed</b> ( <i>Not asked in 1999</i> )	n/a	1	n/a	99	0	0	0
<b>Taking civilian hostages in order to get something in exchange</b> ( <i>Not asked in 1999</i> )	n/a	*	n/a	100	0	0	0
<b>Attacking civilians who voluntarily gave food and shelter to enemy</b> ( <i>Not asked in 1999</i> )	n/a	4	n/a	96	0	0	0
<b>Planting landmines even though civilians may step on them</b> ( <i>Not asked in 1999</i> )	n/a	*	n/a	100	0	0	0
<b>ASK ALL ↴</b>	Q16. In a situation of armed conflict, are there any circumstances in which you think it is acceptable for combatants to target health workers?						
	SINGLE CODE ONLY						
							%
	Yes						1
	No						99
	Don't know						0
	Refused						0
<b>ASK IF 'YES' AT Q16 ↴</b>	Q17. In which, if any, of the following circumstances do you think this is acceptable?						
	READ OUT EACH STATEMENT. ROTATE ORDER. SINGLE CODE EACH STATEMENT						
	<i>Base: All who think it is sometimes acceptable to target health workers-3**</i>						
		Yes, acceptable	No, not acceptable	Don't know	Refused		
		%	%	%	%		
	<b>When health workers are treating the enemy wounded and sick civilians</b>	74	26	0	0		
	<b>When health workers are treating the enemy wounded and sick combatants</b>	74	26	0	0		
	<b>When health workers are not clearly identified as health workers</b>	41	59	0	0		
	<b>When health workers take sides with one party in the conflict</b>	41	59	0	0		
	** Very low base						

<b>ASK ALL ↴</b>	Q18. In a situation of armed conflict, are there any circumstances in which you think it is acceptable for combatants to target ambulances?				
	SINGLE CODE ONLY				
					%
	Yes				1
	No				99
	Don't know				0
<b>ASK IF 'YES' AT Q18 ↴</b>	Refused				
	Q19. In which, if any, of the following circumstances do you think this is acceptable?				
	READ OUT EACH STATEMENT. ROTATE ORDER. SINGLE CODE EACH STATEMENT				
	<i>Base: All who think it is sometimes acceptable to target ambulances-4**</i>	Yes, acceptable	No, not acceptable	Don't know	Refused
		%	%	%	%
	<b>When an ambulance is used by combatants for hostile purposes</b>	24	76	0	0
<b>DD) HUMANITARIAN GESTURES</b>	<b>When an ambulance carries wounded or sick enemy combatants</b>	5	95	0	0
	<b>When an ambulance carries enemy wounded and sick civilians</b>	13	87	0	0
	<b>When an ambulance is not clearly identified as an ambulance</b>	17	83	0	0
	** Very low base				
<b>ASK ALL ↴</b>	Q20. I'm now going to describe different kinds of groups and organizations. Please tell me which three of these play the biggest role to help reduce suffering during armed conflict?				
	READ OUT LIST AND ASK RESPONDENT TO SELECT ONE ANSWER. THEN READ LIST AGAIN AND ASK RESPONDENT FOR TWO MORE ANSWERS. REPEAT IF NECESSARY.				
		First mention	Other mentions	TOTAL	
		%	%	%	
	<b>The military and combatants/armed groups</b>	13	12	25	
	<b>Religious leaders</b>	7	17	23	
	<b>International humanitarian organizations</b>	12	24	37	
	<b>Journalists and the news media</b>	3	7	10	
	<b>The United Nations</b>	11	18	29	
	<b>International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC)</b>	22	19	41	
	<b>Colombian Red Cross</b>	22	33	55	
	<b>Government authorities</b>	4	23	27	
	<b>Government organizations from other countries</b>	2	10	11	
	<b>International criminal court</b>	1	9	10	
	<b>Local/international NGOs/charities</b>	3	18	21	
	<b>Community leaders</b>	1	8	10	
	Other (specify)	*	*	*	
	None of these	0	0	0	
	Don't know	0	*	*	
	Refused	0	0	0	
	Combination: Colombian Red Cross/ICRC	44	51	82	

<a href="#">ASK ALL ↴</a>	<p>Q21. What do you think the international community should do to help civilians who are living in areas of armed conflict?</p> <p>ROTATE STATEMENTS. READ THE LIST AND ASK RESPONDENT TO SELECT ONE ANSWER. THEN READ THE LIST AGAIN WITHOUT MENTIONING THE FIRST ANSWER AND ASK RESPONDENT TO SELECT ANOTHER ANSWER(S).</p> <p>REPEAT IF NECESSARY. MULTICODE THREE.</p> <table border="1" style="width: 100%; border-collapse: collapse;"> <thead> <tr> <th style="text-align: left;"></th><th style="text-align: right;">%</th></tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr><td><b>Stop the armed conflict by military intervention</b></td><td style="text-align: right;">30</td></tr> <tr><td><b>Exert political pressure</b></td><td style="text-align: right;">26</td></tr> <tr><td><b>Deliver emergency aid</b></td><td style="text-align: right;">43</td></tr> <tr><td><b>Provide peacekeepers</b></td><td style="text-align: right;">25</td></tr> <tr><td><b>Provide financial support to humanitarian organizations</b></td><td style="text-align: right;">31</td></tr> <tr><td><b>Put leaders accused of committing war crimes on trial</b></td><td style="text-align: right;">27</td></tr> <tr><td><b>Place economic sanctions on the country</b></td><td style="text-align: right;">9</td></tr> <tr><td><b>Raise awareness of the plight of civilians who are caught in areas of armed conflict</b></td><td style="text-align: right;">32</td></tr> <tr><td><b>Rebuild infrastructure</b></td><td style="text-align: right;">12</td></tr> <tr><td><b>Organize peace talks/negotiations</b></td><td style="text-align: right;">34</td></tr> <tr><td><b>Better enforce the law that protects victims of armed conflicts</b></td><td style="text-align: right;">32</td></tr> <tr><td>Other (specify)</td><td style="text-align: right;">0</td></tr> <tr><td>Nothing</td><td style="text-align: right;">0</td></tr> <tr><td>Don't know</td><td style="text-align: right;">0</td></tr> <tr><td>Refused</td><td style="text-align: right;">0</td></tr> </tbody> </table>		%	<b>Stop the armed conflict by military intervention</b>	30	<b>Exert political pressure</b>	26	<b>Deliver emergency aid</b>	43	<b>Provide peacekeepers</b>	25	<b>Provide financial support to humanitarian organizations</b>	31	<b>Put leaders accused of committing war crimes on trial</b>	27	<b>Place economic sanctions on the country</b>	9	<b>Raise awareness of the plight of civilians who are caught in areas of armed conflict</b>	32	<b>Rebuild infrastructure</b>	12	<b>Organize peace talks/negotiations</b>	34	<b>Better enforce the law that protects victims of armed conflicts</b>	32	Other (specify)	0	Nothing	0	Don't know	0	Refused	0
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<a href="#">ASK ALL ↴</a>	<p>Q22. What, if anything, do you think people living outside of conflict zones can do that would most help victims of armed conflict in Colombia? Please select the three you feel are most important.</p> <p>ROTATE STATEMENTS. READ THE LIST AND ASK RESPONDENT TO SELECT ONE ANSWER. THEN READ THE LIST AGAIN WITHOUT MENTIONING THE FIRST ANSWER AND ASK RESPONDENT TO SELECT ANOTHER ANSWER(S).</p> <p>REPEAT IF NECESSARY. MULTICODE THREE.</p> <table border="1" style="width: 100%; border-collapse: collapse;"> <thead> <tr> <th style="text-align: left;"></th><th style="text-align: right;">%</th></tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr><td><b>Put pressure on legislators/politicians</b></td><td style="text-align: right;">56</td></tr> <tr><td><b>Public lobbying</b></td><td style="text-align: right;">38</td></tr> <tr><td><b>Become a volunteer</b></td><td style="text-align: right;">35</td></tr> <tr><td><b>Donate money</b></td><td style="text-align: right;">29</td></tr> <tr><td><b>Support an organization that helps those affected by the conflict</b></td><td style="text-align: right;">72</td></tr> <tr><td><b>Mobilize their local community</b></td><td style="text-align: right;">31</td></tr> <tr><td><b>Donate goods</b></td><td style="text-align: right;">35</td></tr> <tr><td>Other (specify)</td><td style="text-align: right;">0</td></tr> <tr><td>Nothing</td><td style="text-align: right;">0</td></tr> <tr><td>Don't know</td><td style="text-align: right;">0</td></tr> <tr><td>Refused</td><td style="text-align: right;">0</td></tr> </tbody> </table>		%	<b>Put pressure on legislators/politicians</b>	56	<b>Public lobbying</b>	38	<b>Become a volunteer</b>	35	<b>Donate money</b>	29	<b>Support an organization that helps those affected by the conflict</b>	72	<b>Mobilize their local community</b>	31	<b>Donate goods</b>	35	Other (specify)	0	Nothing	0	Don't know	0	Refused	0								
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<a href="#">ASK ALL ↴</a>	<p>Q23. Have you ever heard of the Geneva Conventions?</p> <p>SINGLE CODE ONLY</p> <table border="1" style="width: 100%; border-collapse: collapse;"> <thead> <tr> <th style="text-align: left;"></th><th style="text-align: right;">%</th></tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr><td>Yes</td><td style="text-align: right;">38</td></tr> <tr><td>No</td><td style="text-align: right;">62</td></tr> <tr><td>Don't know</td><td style="text-align: right;">0</td></tr> <tr><td>Refused</td><td style="text-align: right;">0</td></tr> </tbody> </table>		%	Yes	38	No	62	Don't know	0	Refused	0																						
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<b>ASK IF 'YES' AT Q23 ↴</b>	Q24. To what extent do you think the existence of the Geneva Conventions limits the suffering of civilians in war time?	
	SINGLE CODE ONLY	
	Base: All who have heard of the Geneva Conventions-174	%
	<b>A great deal</b>	19
	<b>A fair amount</b>	34
	<b>Not very much</b>	28
	<b>Not at all</b>	19
	Don't know	0
	Refused	0

**FF) MEDICAL MISSION**

<b>ASK ALL ↴</b>	Q25. To what extent do you agree or disagree with the following statement? READ OUT STATEMENT. SINGLE CODE ONLY	
	<b>Everyone wounded or sick during an armed conflict should have the right to health care</b>	
		%
	<b>Strongly agree</b>	85
	<b>Tend to agree</b>	13
	<b>Neither agree nor disagree</b>	2
	<b>Tend to disagree</b>	*
	<b>Strongly disagree</b>	0
	Don't know	0
	Refused	0
<b>ASK ALL ↴</b>	Q26. In the context of an armed conflict, what best describes your personal views: READ OUT STATEMENTS. ROTATE ORDER. SINGLE CODE ONLY.	
		%
	<b>Health workers should treat only wounded and sick civilians from their side of the conflict</b>	4
	<b>Health workers should treat wounded and sick civilians from all sides of a conflict</b>	96
	Don't know	0
	Refused	0

**Demographics**

<b>ASK ALL ↴</b>	Respondent's gender	
		%
	Male	46
<b>ASK ALL ↴</b>	Female	
	Respondent's age	
		%
	18-25	21
	26-35	23
	36-45	22
	46-55	16
<b>ASK ALL ↴</b>	56 or over	
	Education level	
		%
	Primary school not completed/no education	7
	Primary school	11
	Secondary school not completed	16
	Secondary school completed	25
	Technical education not completed	3
	Technical education completed	13
	University not completed	10
	University completed	9
	Master's degree	4
	Doctorate	1

<b>ASK ALL ↴</b>	Employment	
		%
Student	8	
Employee	46	
Student and employee	4	
Unemployed looking for a job	9	
Unemployed not looking for a job	2	
Disabled person, handicapped person	1	
Retired, pensioner	5	
Housewife	25	
<b>ASK ALL ↴</b>	Cities	
		%
Bogotá	46	
Medellín	8	
Barranquilla	4	
Cali	7	
Bucaramanga	3	
Pasto	2	
Ibagué	2	
Popayán	1	
Envigado	4	
Sabaneta	5	
Riohacha	2	
Fundación	2	
Desquebradas	1	
Chinchina	1	
Villavicencio	2	
Pamplona	2	
Santander de Quilichao	1	
Tulúa	4	
Pradera	4	
<b>ASK ALL ↴</b>	Religion	
		%
Catholic	79	
Evangelical	2	
Christian	11	
Jeovah's Witness	1	
Mormon	*	
Other	*	
None	7	
<b>ASK ALL ↴</b>	Income	
		%
High	3	
Medium – high	6	
Medium	11	
Medium – low	34	
Low	32	
Low – low	13	
<b>ASK ALL ↴</b>	Marital status	
Single	30	
Married	41	
Cohabitation	19	
Divorced	6	
Widowed	4	

## IN-DEPTH RESEARCH

### Discussion guide

This guide was used for the group discussions. A very similar guide was used for in-depth interviews.

<b>Introduction</b>	
<b>1. Your own experience of armed conflict/violence (armed violence, urban violence if necessary)</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• What experiences have you had of armed conflict/violence?             <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– When was it?</li> <li>– Where?</li> <li>– What happened?</li> </ul> </li> <li>• How you were/are – personally – affected? Your family/friends?</li> <li>• What were/are your feelings and thoughts about this armed conflict/violence?             <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– How much did you understand about the armed conflict/violence? Why did it happen the way it did?</li> </ul> </li> <li>• How do you feel (now) about what happened? How are you affected today, if at all?             <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– What, if anything, has changed about you as a result of the armed conflict/violence?</li> </ul> </li> </ul>
<b>2. On armed conflict/violence in general</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• We've talked about armed conflict/violence – can we go further into that. So when we say armed conflict/violence... can you describe to me in detail what you mean by this?</li> <li>• Associations: what words come to your mind when I say 'armed conflict/violence' ... Which words best describe armed conflict/violence for you?</li> <li>• During times of armed conflict/violence what would you say are/were your greatest concerns? (E.g. losing a loved one, your own security, surviving the conflict/violence, etc.)</li> <li>• Do your concerns change over time? (E.g. are some concerns immediate and others only occurring later on? Are some concerns short term, and others longer term for the future?) How would you divide these concerns we talked about up into immediate concerns and longer-term ones? Persistent ones and ones which fade or are resolved?</li> <li>• So when you/others are confronted with these situations what do you feel are the things you/they need the most help for/with. Why do you say that?</li> <li>• If you could, what would you like to communicate to the world?             <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– What would you like to tell people about your needs? What is most important?</li> <li>– And what would you like to tell people about the way you feel?</li> <li>– And to help prioritize these messages in the minds of others, which are the most important issues in terms of your needs? Are there some things you can deal with on your own during these times? And are there some things you just cannot manage on your own without help?</li> </ul> </li> </ul>
<b>3. On international community/humanitarian support</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• During these times – when you have faced these kinds of situations – have you received any support?             <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– Have you ever received any support from any international organizations?</li> </ul> </li> <li>• IF YES – RECEIVED HELP FROM INTERNATIONAL ORGANIZATIONS TO DATE: What kind (s) of help did you receive? How did they help you? Were they able to address any of your key areas of concern in any ways – which ones?</li> <li>• IF NO – NOT RECEIVED SUPPORT FROM INTERNATIONAL ORGANIZATIONS TO DATE: Do you have any views on why you may not have received any support from international organizations to date?</li> <li>• Who played the biggest role (amongst different kinds of people and organizations) to help reduce your suffering (e.g. religious leaders, UN, local NGOs, Red Cross/Red Crescent, ICRC, other international NGOs, neighbours, etc.)?             <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– Why would you say their role (s) were biggest?</li> <li>– Who else played biggest roles?</li> </ul> </li> <li>• What do you think the international community should do to help victims?</li> <li>• If there is something that an international humanitarian organization could do better, what would it be?</li> </ul>

<b>4. On humanitarian actions/gestures</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• And what is a 'humanitarian action' for you? Can you give me some examples?</li> <li>• Thinking of the armed conflict/violence you witnessed, can you recall any gestures or acts of kindness/humanity that made a difference in yours or others lives? <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>— Could you tell me about them?</li> <li>— What difference (s) did this (these) make?</li> <li>— Who was responsible for this (these) act (s)?</li> </ul> </li> <li>• Were you, yourself, able to help someone? If so, how?</li> <li>• If you could have done something to help what would it have been? Why? <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>— Do you think you could have made a difference in someone else's life? If so how?</li> <li>— Thinking back, would you have done anything differently? What could others have done differently?</li> </ul> </li> <li>• More generally, what, if anything, do you think individuals can do to help other people (civilians) who are living in areas of armed conflict/violence?</li> </ul>
<b>5. On warfare/combatants</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• I would like to ask you what you think the rules of conflict should be, ideally, to control what combatants can do in war: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>— Is there anything that combatants should not be allowed to do in fighting their enemy? What and why?</li> <li>— Is it ever OK for combatants to involve civilians in conflicts? In what circumstances?</li> </ul> </li> </ul>
<b>6. On Geneva Conventions</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Before now, had you ever heard of the Geneva Conventions?</li> <li>• Could you tell me what your understanding is of what the Geneva Conventions are about?</li> <li>• Do you believe the Geneva Conventions do adequately protect persons in war time? Why?</li> </ul>
<b>7. On health/medical mission</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Do you think that ambulances operating in situation of armed conflict/violence should always be spared? Why? <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>— How do you identify an ambulance in a situation of armed conflict/violence?</li> <li>— How do you identify a health/medical worker in a situation of armed conflict/violence?</li> </ul> </li> <li>• Do you think everyone wounded or sick during an armed conflict/violence should have the right to health/medical care? Both civilians and combatants? Why? <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>— Do you think there is anyone in particular who should not have access to health/medical care? Why?</li> </ul> </li> <li>• Do you think that in a situation of armed conflict/violence health/medical workers should be protected in all circumstances? In what way... Why? Why not?</li> </ul>
<b>8. Wrapping up</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Is there anything else you would like to share with us about your experiences of living in armed conflict/violence?</li> <li>• What would have been useful for you to know in order to alleviate your suffering/improve your situation during armed conflict? Do you think stronger laws would have helped?</li> <li>• What are the main things which helped/would have helped alleviate suffering/improving your situation?</li> <li>• To sum up: what does your experience tell you about the value of humanitarian work in conflict situations?</li> <li>• What are the main messages you would like us to spread in order to try to make this world a safer place for civilians living in situations of armed conflicts/violence?</li> </ul>

## **MISSION**

The International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) is an impartial, neutral and independent organization whose exclusively humanitarian mission is to protect the lives and dignity of victims of armed conflict and other situations of violence and to provide them with assistance.

The ICRC also endeavours to prevent suffering by promoting and strengthening humanitarian law and universal humanitarian principles.

Established in 1863, the ICRC is at the origin of the Geneva Conventions and the International Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement. It directs and coordinates the international activities conducted by the Movement in armed conflicts and other situations of violence.

## **ABOUT IPSOS**

Ipsos is a leading international research agency, with offices in over 60 countries worldwide and global reach.

Established in 1975, it conducts qualitative and quantitative research with the private, public and voluntary sectors. One of its key areas of specialization is in social and opinion research. This includes extensive work with a wide range of national and international NGOs, charities and aid organizations.

This study was coordinated by Ipsos Switzerland, with fieldwork on the opinion survey in Colombia conducted by Ipsos Napoleón Franco, based in the country.



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