



Cartography of Forced Disappearance in Colombia

An (always) incomplete
account of what has been
made invisible.

A collective work coordinated by
Fidel Mingorance and Erik Arellana Bautista

DESA PARICIONFORZADA.CO

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HUMAN RIGHTS EVERYWHERE

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Prologue by Juan Manuel Roca

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Cartography of Forced Disappearance in Colombia

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ABOUT THE COVER

The cover of the *Cartography of Forced Disappearance in Colombia* is based on an image by the artist Fernando Arias. It is one of the boards – most of which are butcher's boards – used in the *0566* exhibition by this artist from Armenia (Quindío), in which he denounced the murder of social leaders in Colombia. This touched a raw nerve in the indelible scars left by the conflict and violence in the country.

'That's what happens with cutting boards: they're pretty [like Colombia], but no one knows that violent cutting occurred on them, and that they were soaked with blood and so much history. I went through the process of washing them and I linked this to how we erase our history, erase the stains and pretend that nothing had ever happened', Fernando Arias explained in an interview.

The board we've used is the only wooden one in the exhibition and was saved by the artist from one of the gravestone-making premises next to Bogota's Central Cemetery. On it, sharp cuts that slice the cold marble of death.

For the forced disappearance mapping team in Colombia, this process – the memory-washing to clean reality off it – is related to the crime of forced disappearance: the blood, the tortured body and the life taken are all removed, but the impressions remain there, in the families, on sidewalks, in neighbourhoods, in the rivers of the country.

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HEARTFELT CARTOGRAPHY

For those of us who have accompanied the resistances in Colombia for decades, the amount of terror is immeasurable. Once thousands of testimonies have been heard, when people have walked the paths of pain, when the stories have already been written, the emotions depicted and the silence portrayed ... there seems to be no good way to explain what, despite having an explanation, does not want to be understood.

The complex conflicts that penetrate the Colombian reality have historical roots and colonial and postcolonial explanations that no expert would find strange. 'War' can be a scant concept to describe the reality of the country. Other words or terms, such as violence, territorial control, oligarchy, illicit markets, mafia, revenge or organised crime, are nothing more than vectors of an extremely degenerate reality in which the ways of producing pain, fear and control continue mutating without ever disappearing.

That is why attempting to continue drawing maps that place in its real dimension the mechanisms of terror and death cannot be deemed sterile. These mechanisms have turned the country into a necropolitical laboratory that seems perpetual.

Mapping is not just a trend, but a tool very scarcely used in the past, that now helps to democratise information and localise it in space. This helps to draft working hypotheses to stop these dynamics or, at the very least, resist them with more and better data.

This *Cartography of Forced Disappearance in Colombia* can be considered as the first issue from a body of work extracted from an immense flow of information available from contradictory sources. It is a first step that will allow, in subsequent work, to pursue specific lines of inquiry. This first exercise which you hold in your hands, already allows you to foresee many of those lines of research. That is why we did not want to close it without showing some of the paths that we intend to pursue.

Since forced disappearance has evolved in forms, reasons and drifts, this work is not a static picture, but a tool that allows us to make some significant hypotheses. The most obvious, and most denied by

some of the official sources, is the direct link between forced disappearance and armed conflict. The areas most affected overlap with those areas of greatest intensity of armed conflict, and therefore it seems clear that forced disappearance has been a weapon of war. The second hypothesis that takes shape is that wherever communities or collectives have opposed legal or illegal economic megaprojects, cases of forced disappearance have multiplied.

This cartography is not intended to be conclusive, but is just one more tool on the difficult path to finding truth, justice, and reparation for victims and, above all, generate guarantees of non-repetition. Therefore, other possibilities for analysis will be mentioned as well.

This mapping is a reflection of intense work of almost three years that can be found in the virtual repository <*Desaparicionforzada.co*>. There are hundreds of maps that tell of one of the hardest sides of the conflict, and in so doing, try to avoid its depersonalisation. There are no numbers or coordinates in the cartography of forced disappearance, but rather individual lives that were stolen and replaced with pain, persecution and stigma. For this reason, this work is a tribute to those victims and their families, who are victims not just of this crime, but also and above all, of the official and social indolence that has prevailed in Colombia with regard to forced disappearance.

The desire of the group behind this cartography is for it to be consulted, used, improved and expanded upon by all those who research and work for rights and justice. The intent is to counterbalance the misinformation, manipulation and anecdotalisation of violence that is used as a weapon of war in the trench of public opinion.

May the lives of so many who have been forcibly disappeared and the resistance of the few who have not ceased in their search and denunciation, make the silence of the many explode. ♦

OBLIVION CARTOGRAPHY

By *Juan Manuel Roca*

I must begin by saying that mapping an inapprehensible and smoke-drawn phenomenon such as forced disappearance requires an argument that in many respects has to rely on statistics, despite not being irrefutable. But also, and perhaps even more so, on the magnitude of the intangible void left in society, on the uncertainty that has no numbers and cannot be measured in any other unit than atmospheres of a collective nightmare, on the traces left by the steps untaken by those who departed and will not return. The ones they took away.

The coldness of the statistics, in all probability unintentional, leave out the individual drama to make it quantitative. ‘Under the multiplications there is a drop of duck blood, / under the divisions there is a drop of sailor’s blood,’ said a poet from Granada to the misery in its fancy dress, to the delusion and the deceptive asepsis of Wall Street. How can we not remember also Belby Portens, a disobedient thinker who coined this quote that has sheltered all the world autocracies: ‘Kill a man and you will be a murderer; kill a thousand men and you will be a hero.’

In the same way, one could parody Portens in a map of fear like the one in which we live: make a man disappear and you could be a magician. Make thousands disappear, you’ll be a justice-seeking patriot.

That same map and that same cartography are good to draw a clinical picture of fear. Once fear settles in, uncertainty is born and this leads to inaction and deaf and muzzled obedience. It is not uncommon for the media to play an important role in this collective daze, though not always knowingly. It is known that public opinion is almost always the posture of those who have no opinion of their own but rather base their view on consensus – a misleading acceptance forged by the media and their false transmission of news and interpretations.

In Colombia the truth has an expiration date, which depends on the power of denial of those who are always ready to deny crimes and disappearances.

A blurry map. A story – excuse me for reiterating it – written meticulously and officially, with a rubber rather than a pencil. Before this landscape, how can we not remember the assertion made by the formidable poet of the French resistance René Char in *Companions in the Garden*, ‘History is just the lining of the masters’ attire’. This *Cartography of Forced Disappearance in Colombia* welcomes it courageously and generously. It is the story that hides in the attire of the people of power.

One cannot stop thinking that there must be persons missing due to other reasons as well. It is verifiable how others who have been made invisible have been added to the surveys, intellectually rather than physically, as we were never interviewed in order to forge the aforementioned consensuses. Others, who dared to speak an uncomfortable truth to the establishment, were issued a stateless passport to the map of limbo.

Walter Benjamin points out that ‘there is such a non-violent aspect to human understanding that is completely inaccessible to violence – the true and very nature of mutual understanding: language’. However, we know that this premise is rather impractical because, beyond those who directly execute forced disappearance, the greatest generators of inequality are camouflaged, looking away, hiding their heads or, as Simone Weil would say in the context of another story that keeps repeating itself, ‘they surround with encouraging smiles those whom they will kill’.

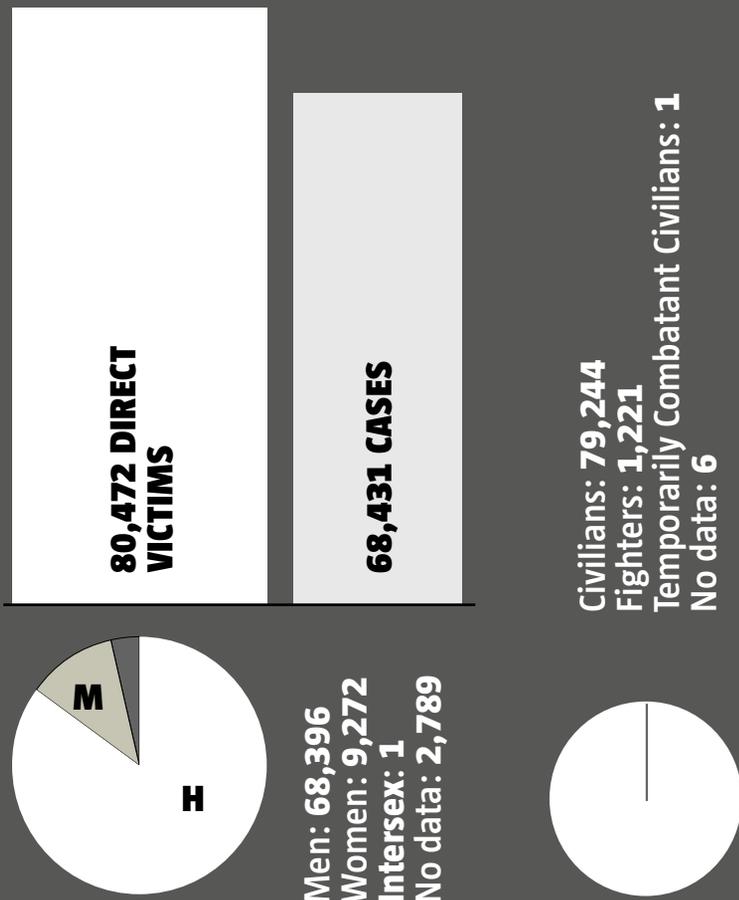
I repeat: unfulfilled promises are nothing new in our history. The fleeting understandings and unfulfilled agreements in our political life are a constant form of violence; they draw a map of exile and reiterate that war here always comes after post-war.

Even though this documentary mapping attests to it, it must be emphasised that the country that resists does not tire of asking the state – as its open or masked victimiser – about the missing men and women. ♦

THE ~~UNSEEN~~ CRIME MADE INVISIBLE

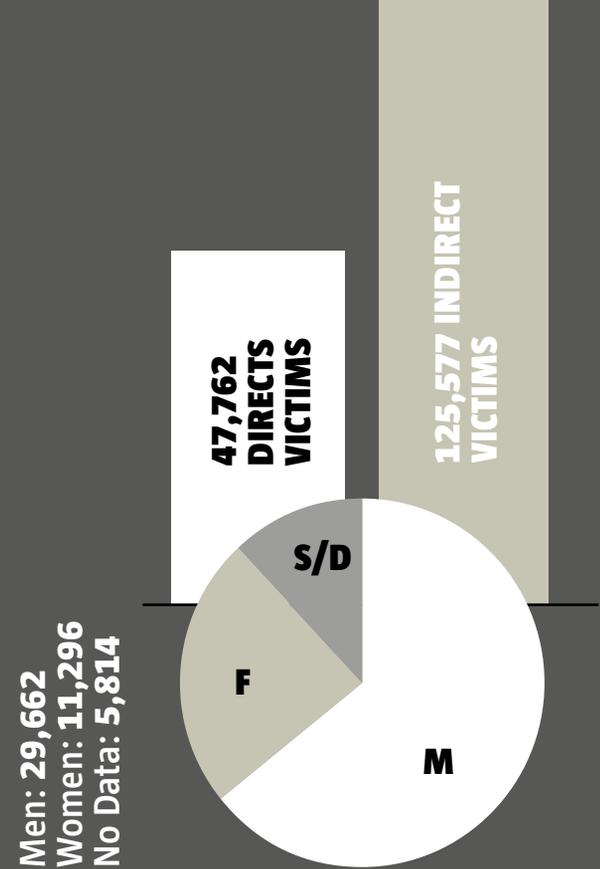
The dance of numbers around forced disappearance unfairly makes the real dimensions of this deep scar invisible, but this is not coincidental. The state has failed to systematise information, unify criteria and databases and put in place effective search mechanisms. This is what is supposed to be known.

OMC (CNMH)



Source: Victims of Forced Disappearance documented by the CNMH and registered by the OMC for the period 1958-2018. Cut-off date: 15 September 2018

RUV (UARIV)



Source: Single direct victims of Forced Disappearance identified by the UARIV and registered in the RUV. Cut-off date: April 1, 2019

* 114,318 people were reported as unclassified disappearances (79.33%); 28,755 disappeared due to presumed forced disappearance (19.95%); 515 disappeared due to presumed illegal recruitment (0.36%); 286 disappeared due to natural disaster (0.20%); 152 disappeared due to presumed kidnapping (0.11%) and 81 disappeared due to presumed human trafficking (0.06%).



Source: Victims of presumed Forced Disappearance reported in the SIRDEC, registered in the RND. Cut-off date: 20 March 2019

RND

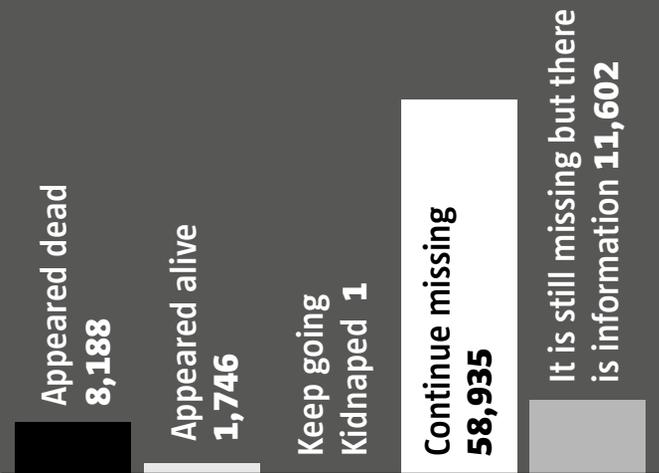


Source: Victims associated to crime reports of Forced Disappearance registered in the SPOA of the FGN. Cut-off date: January 10, 2019

SPOA (FGN)



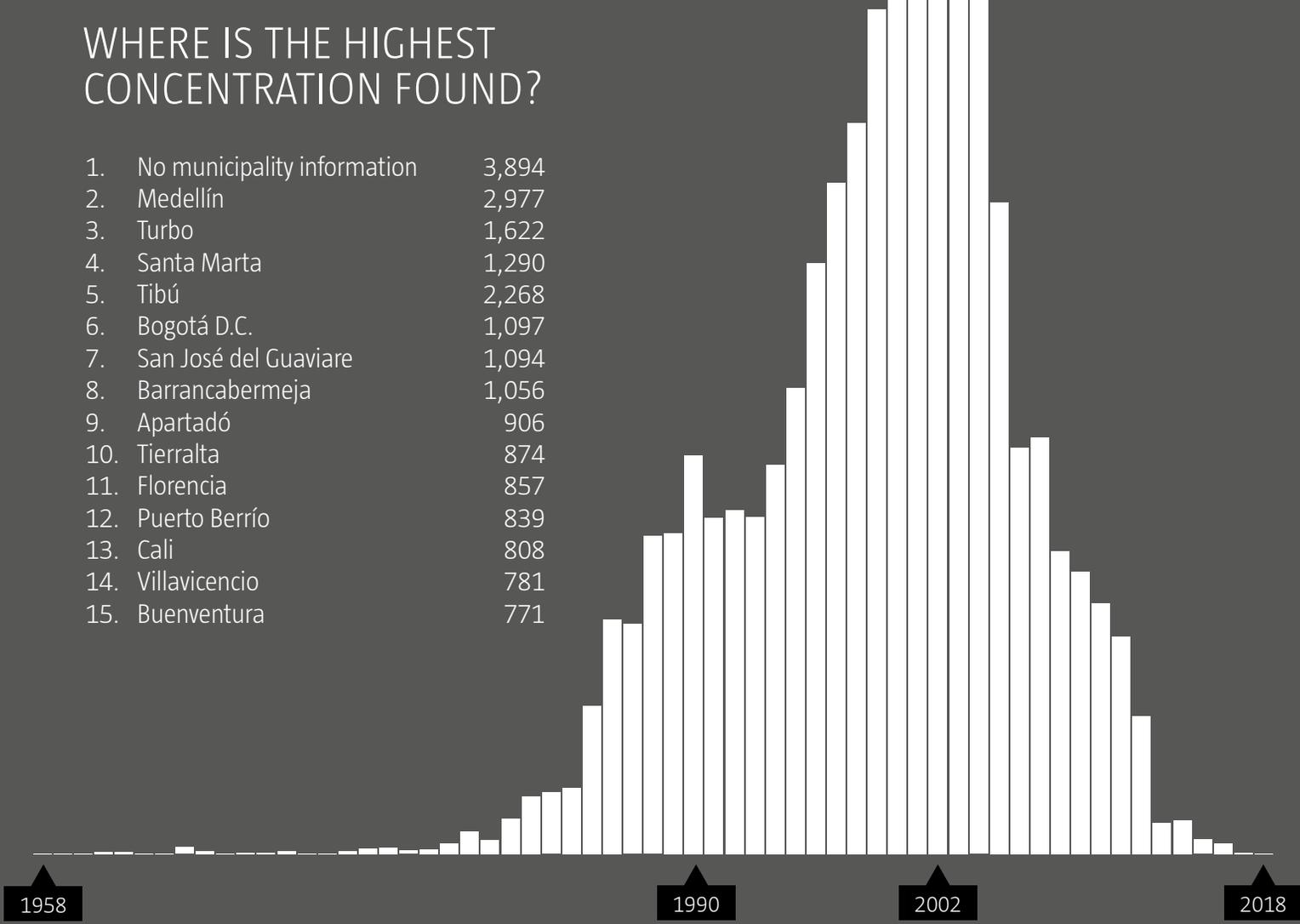
WHERE ARE THEY?



Source: Victims of Forced Disappearance documented by the CNMH and registered by the OMC for the period 1958-2018
Cut-off date: 15 September 2018

WHERE IS THE HIGHEST CONCENTRATION FOUND?

- | | | |
|-----|-----------------------------|-------|
| 1. | No municipality information | 3,894 |
| 2. | Medellín | 2,977 |
| 3. | Turbo | 1,622 |
| 4. | Santa Marta | 1,290 |
| 5. | Tibú | 2,268 |
| 6. | Bogotá D.C. | 1,097 |
| 7. | San José del Guaviare | 1,094 |
| 8. | Barrancabermeja | 1,056 |
| 9. | Apartadó | 906 |
| 10. | Tierralta | 874 |
| 11. | Florencia | 857 |
| 12. | Puerto Berrío | 839 |
| 13. | Cali | 808 |
| 14. | Villavicencio | 781 |
| 15. | Buenaventura | 771 |



1958

1990

2002

2018

SIGLAS Y ACRONYMS

- ASFADDES:** Asociación de Familiares de Detenidos Desaparecidos (Association of Relatives of Disappeared Detainees)
- ATPA:** Ley de Preferencias Arancelaria Andina (Andean Trade Preference Act)
- ATPDEA:** Ley de Preferencias Arancelarias Andinas y Erradicación de la Droga (Andean Trade Promotion and Drug Eradication Act)
- AUC:** Autodefensas Unidas de Colombia (United Self-Defence Forces of Colombia)
- CBPD:** Comisión de Búsqueda de Personas Desaparecidas (Commission for the Search of Disappeared Persons)
- CCEEU:** Coordinación Colombia–Europa–Estados Unidos (Colombia–Europe–United States Coordination)
- CEVCNR:** Comisión para el Esclarecimiento de la Verdad, la Convivencia y la No Repetición (Commission for the Clarification of Truth, Coexistence and Non-Repetition)
- CIA:** Central Intelligence Agency
- CIDH:** Corte Interamericana de Derechos Humanos (Inter-American Court of Human Rights)
- CINEP:** Centro de Investigación y Educación Popular (Centre for Research and Popular Education)
- CINUC:** Coalition of International NGOs UPR Colombia
- CIVP:** Comisión Interétnica de la Verdad de la región del Pacífico (Pacific Inter-Ethnic Truth Commission)
- CJL:** Corporación Jurídica Libertad (Corporation for Judicial Freedom)
- CNB:** Comisión Nacional de Búsqueda (National Search Commission in Mexico)
- CNMH:** Centro Nacional de Memoria Histórica (National Centre of Historical Memory)
- DAS:** Departamento Administrativo de Seguridad (Administrative Department of Security: intelligence body abolished in October 2011)
- DINA:** Dirección Nacional de Inteligencia de Chile (National Intelligence Directorate of Chile: operative from June 1974 to August 1977)
- DNP:** Departamento Nacional de Planificación (National Planning Department)
- EPU:** Examen Periódico Universal (Universal Periodic Review of Human Rights carried out by the UN on the states. Known as UPR.)
- FARC-EP:** Fuerzas Armadas Revolucionarias de Colombia–Ejército del Pueblo (Revolutionary Armed Forces of Colombia – People’s Army)
- FARC:** Fuerza Alternativa Revolucionaria del Común (Common Alternative Revolutionary Force: political party since August 2017)
- FEDEFAM:** Federación Latinoamericana de Asociaciones de Familiares de Detenidos-Desaparecidos (Latin American Federation of Associations of Relatives of the Detained-Disappeared)
- FGN:** Fiscalía General de la Nación (Office of the Attorney General)
- FUTCO:** Fuerza de Tarea Conjunta Omega (Omega Joint Task Force)
- Gaoml:** Grupos Armados Organizados al Margen de la Ley (Illegal Organised Armed Groups)
- HREV:** Human Rights Everywhere
- IACHR:** Inter-American Court of Human Rights
- INMLCF:** Instituto Nacional de Medicina Legal y Ciencias Forenses (National Institute of Legal Medicine and Forensic Sciences)
- JEP:** Jurisdicción Especial para la Paz (Special Jurisdiction for Peace)
- LGBTIQ:** Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, Intersex and Queer
- LIFE:** Localización de Información Estadística Forense (Localisation of Forensic Statistical Information)
- M-19:** 19th of April Movement
- MOVICE:** Movimiento Nacional de Víctimas de Crímenes de Estado (National Movement of Victims of State Crimes)
- MTDF de CCEEU:** Mesa de Trabajo sobre Desapariciones Forzadas de la Coordinación Colombia–Europa–Estados Unidos (Colombia–Europe–United States Coordination Working Group on Forced Disappearances)
- OIDHACO:** Oficina Internacional de los Derechos Humanos – Acción Colombia (International Office for Human Rights Action on Colombia)
- OMC:** Observatorio Memoria y Conflicto del CNMH (CNMH Memory and Conflict Observatory)
- PC:** Plan Colombia
- RCLM:** Red Colombiana de Lugares de la Memoria (Colombian Network of Places of Memorial)
- RND:** Registro Nacional de Desaparecidos (National Missing Persons Register)
- RUV:** Registro Único de Víctimas (Single Registry of Victims)
- SIVJRNR:** Sistema Integral de Verdad, Justicia, Reparación y Garantías de No Repetición (Integral System of Truth, Justice, Reparation and Guarantees of Non-Repetition)
- SIRDEC:** Sistema de Información Red de Desaparecidos y Cadáveres del INMLCF (INMLCF Network Information System on Disappeared Persons and Cadavers)
- SPOA:** Sistema Penal Oral Acusatorio de la FGN (FGN Oral Accusatory Criminal System)
- TDF:** Tasa de Desaparición Forzada (Forced Disappearance Rate)
- UARIV:** Unidad para la Atención y Reparación Integral a las Víctimas (Unit for Comprehensive Care and **Reparation for Victims**)
- UBPD:** Unidad de Búsqueda de Personas Dadas por Desaparecidas (Search Unit for Presumed Disappeared Persons)
- UNODC:** United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime
- UP:** Unión Patriótica (Patriotic Union)

HOW TO READ THE MAPS?

The title is important. Some maps may look similar, but the title clearly explains what each one refers

DEPARTMENTAL FORCED DISAPPEARANCE RATE (SPOA)



This table includes national information, Colombia's total data (data source, data period or date and

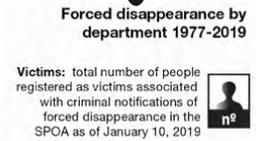
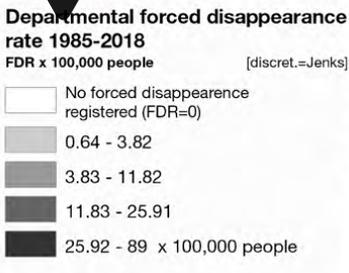


National forced disappearance rate 1985 - 2018

4.06
x 100,000 people

Relative data (Relative measurements such as proportions of total victims or rates per 100,000

Absolute data (Number of victims of forced disappearance or indirect victims of forced



No one is left out, and that is why an icon is included for quantifying those persons for whom we do not know the location of disappearance. Also forced disappearances of Colombian nationals abroad (usually in border areas).

The sources used include the origin of the mapped data, images, iconographies and geographic

Sources | Data: SAASI group of the Attorney General (FGN) - Oral Accusatory Criminal System (SPOA), 10/01/2019 · DANE, population projections, 2010 revision · Icons: Creando, 2017 · Base layers: FANE, IDEAM, ESRI, USGS, NOAA



MAKE VISIBLE [WHAT THEY WANT TO BE] THE INVISIBLE

By Fidel Mingorance¹

(...) geographies or spatialities can be both just and unjust, and are produced through processes that are at the same time social and spatial, objective and subjective, concretely real and creatively imagined. Geographies, in other words, are results, not simply the background on which our social life is projected or reflected. For Lefebvre and Foucault, space not only mattered, but was also a powerful formative force in society and politics on any scale and in any context, from the intimacies of the body and the small tactics of habitat to the realisation of global geopolitics and the repetitive crises of capitalism’ (Edward Soja, 2014:150).

Those of us who position ourselves in the territory of critical geographies or counter-cartographies and share proposals such as those of E. Soja or those of J.B. Harley, that great deconstructor of maps and their close connections with power, cannot help but scrutinise and analyse any map we encounter. Harley, in his last article published during his lifetime, alluded to the need to construct a cartographic ethics (J.B. Harley, 1991). A question of coherence: if you criticise the subordination to power that hides, more or less obscurely, behind the cartographic language and the content of the map, how can you not analyse or even strip the maps that you produce yourself?

The ethical commitment of those of us who have been part of *desaparicionforzada.co* since 2017, has motivated us to produce this text. We want to share what is below and above, in front of and behind the maps that make up this Cartography of Forced Disappearances in Colombia. We want those who read, interpret or use these maps to know the what, why and how of our

counter-cartographic practice.

From words to map

‘Disappeared’, ‘false positives’, ‘unidentified bodies’, ‘graves’ or ‘delivery of bodies to family members’ are words and concepts that are already part of the changing terminology that violence is gradually introducing in conversations, interactions in social networks or mass media content (in either information or disinformation) in Colombia... or in Mexico, or in the northern triangle of Central America, or in many places of variable scales and geometries scattered throughout the planet.

From the Argentine ‘*chupaderos*’ (‘suckers’) to the ‘*levantados*’ (‘rebels’) in Mexico, the distance is only a few decades and a few thousand kilometres because the horror to which they refer is the same. Undoubtedly, we are in need of words to make more intelligible this apparent violent nonsense that, as a matter of fact, is only apparent. Behind all this there are schemes, with clear objectives, that violently impose this fragmented vision and their own language. We need to draw that framework and change its language if we aspire to uncover barbarism and the cartographic language offers us some interesting possibilities.

It should be stressed that any attempt to approach the crime of ‘forced disappearance of persons’ is always complex. Fundamentally, because the nature of the crime and the context in which it is committed fiercely seek to hide any trace of the victim, the crime committed and the criminals who perpetrate it. Hence, mapping the forced disappearance becomes both indispensable

¹ Member of HREV, he is responsible for the mapping task in this association of activists. He launched the critical cartography and human rights spaces *Geoactivismo.org* and *Geographiando*. He has collaborated in various territorial processes in Colombia since he first arrived with Peace Brigades International-PBI (1999–2002)

and tremendously complicated.

It is essential, as a particularly useful tool for lifting, even if it is just slightly, a small part of the thick veil of ‘night and fog’² that criminals build around them, turning the crime into something invisible, something you can’t see, something you don’t talk about, something you don’t ask about. Making visible what they want to be invisible thus becomes the first objective of this mapping.

This has been complicated by all the obstacles, risks and threats encountered by those who seek to know the truth, because impunity enjoys ‘good health’ in Colombia and its mechanisms remain well-oiled. Access to information on forced disappearance is always difficult. State registries suffer from a significant degree of under-registration, offering fragmented information and data, uncoordinated among the different institutions in charge of compiling them and full of gaps and inconsistencies. And, if we don’t know how many people disappeared nor where most of the victims of that crime are.... Can we even put them on a map?

What we can map

Can we place on a map something we don’t know the location of? In theory, no. Everything whose whereabouts is unknown cannot be placed on a map. The untraceable cannot be placed on the map until it becomes located, until it becomes geo-referenced in one of the coordinate systems we use to locate ourselves on the planet and become part of the world.

Thus, according to data from the National

Centre of Historical Memory (CNMH) – the source with the highest record of forced disappearances – only 12.34% of known cases of forced disappearance could currently be put on a map. This percentage would be composed of 2.17% of crime victims who appeared alive and 10.17% of victims whose bodies were found. These 9,934 people, who continue to be victims of the crime of forced disappearance, ceased to be disappeared; they appeared or were found.

The mapping of all those victims who appeared or were found could well be elaborated perfectly from a web mapping, using an online map in one of the platforms or applications currently available on the Internet.

The use of this electronic means allows the addition of a wide set of qualitative information in each location marked on the map, through the different file formats that can be incorporated (image, audio, video, text...). This allows us to use language most approximate or specific to families, victims’ movements and other support and advocacy networks. Thus, the symbology, memory and narrative that are constructed are not mediated by the languages of power. More so, it is not even limited by constraints that may be imposed by mapping semiotics itself. This is possibly the most respectful way to represent the victims on a map. Technically, this online map is a perfectly feasible exercise, although it becomes a tremendously complex process as soon as the indispensable opinions and feelings of the relatives of the victims, who are themselves also victims of this atrocious crime, come into play.

2 The decree ‘Directives for the persecution of infractions committed against the Reich or the Occupation Forces in the Occupied Territories’ dates from 7 December 1941 and is known as the Night and Fog Decree or the NN Decree. Those detained under this decree were secretly sent to concentration camps and marked with the badge ‘NN’.

In Colombia there are 125,577 relatives registered as indirect victims of forced disappearance in the Single Registry of Victims (RUV data as of 1 April 2019). Not taking them into account would make this web mapping totally meaningless. Taking into account their rights, respecting their feelings or requesting the corresponding authorisations, as we think is essential, would transform the mapping into an arduous exercise of microcartography, which would require a case-by-case, person-by-person elaboration.

A useful and necessary microcartography should imperatively be done, but at present would take us far away from achieving a global mapping of the victims. It is frightening to think that, according to CNMH data, 80,472 people have been victims of forced disappearance in Colombia, but it is even more frightening to know that nine out of ten of these individuals are still missing today. 70,538 people are still off the map at the very least, since at this moment we cannot define the real magnitude of this crime against humanity in Colombia. We cannot map data that we do not know.

But it is possible to map all those for which there are records and some kind of geographical information. In the case of the majority of victims who are still missing and cannot be geolocated on a map, a map of the crime can be made instead. For 95.17% of all registered victims (CNMH data), the municipality where the crime was committed is known. Knowing the municipality in which the crime occurred already allows us to elaborate a complete cartography of persons (victims), events (cases or crimes) and derived indicators at the municipal level or in regional, departmental or national aggregates.

Unfortunately, we still cannot draw the



Victim of the Trujillo Massacre demands solution to the forced disappearance of his relatives by the Cauca River. 📷 *Rodrigo Grajales.*

maps that locate all the people who have been forcibly disappeared in Colombia, but we can take a first step by mapping where those crimes were committed. We must put all the victims on the map. Now, how to do so?

Because they are more than dots on a map...

The most adequate cartographic method to represent a number of people (victims) or events (crimes) that happen in a given place (municipalities) is the dot. Cartographic semiotics recommends that if the mapped data are quantitative (quantities), proportional dots should be used.

The map of dots of victims of forced disappearance by municipality almost inevitably becomes our first map.

Such a map already tells us a few things about forced disappearance in Colombia. However, this is not the type of map that we were planning to produce when we started the *desaparicionforzada.co* process. Having accompanied victims for many years or, without going any further, being victims of this crime (relatives or indirect victims), has influenced us enormously when choosing a language to produce our cartographic story. We have heard too many times, from the mouths of their relatives, that the victims are neither numbers nor statistics. They have a name and they are

♦ □ 21

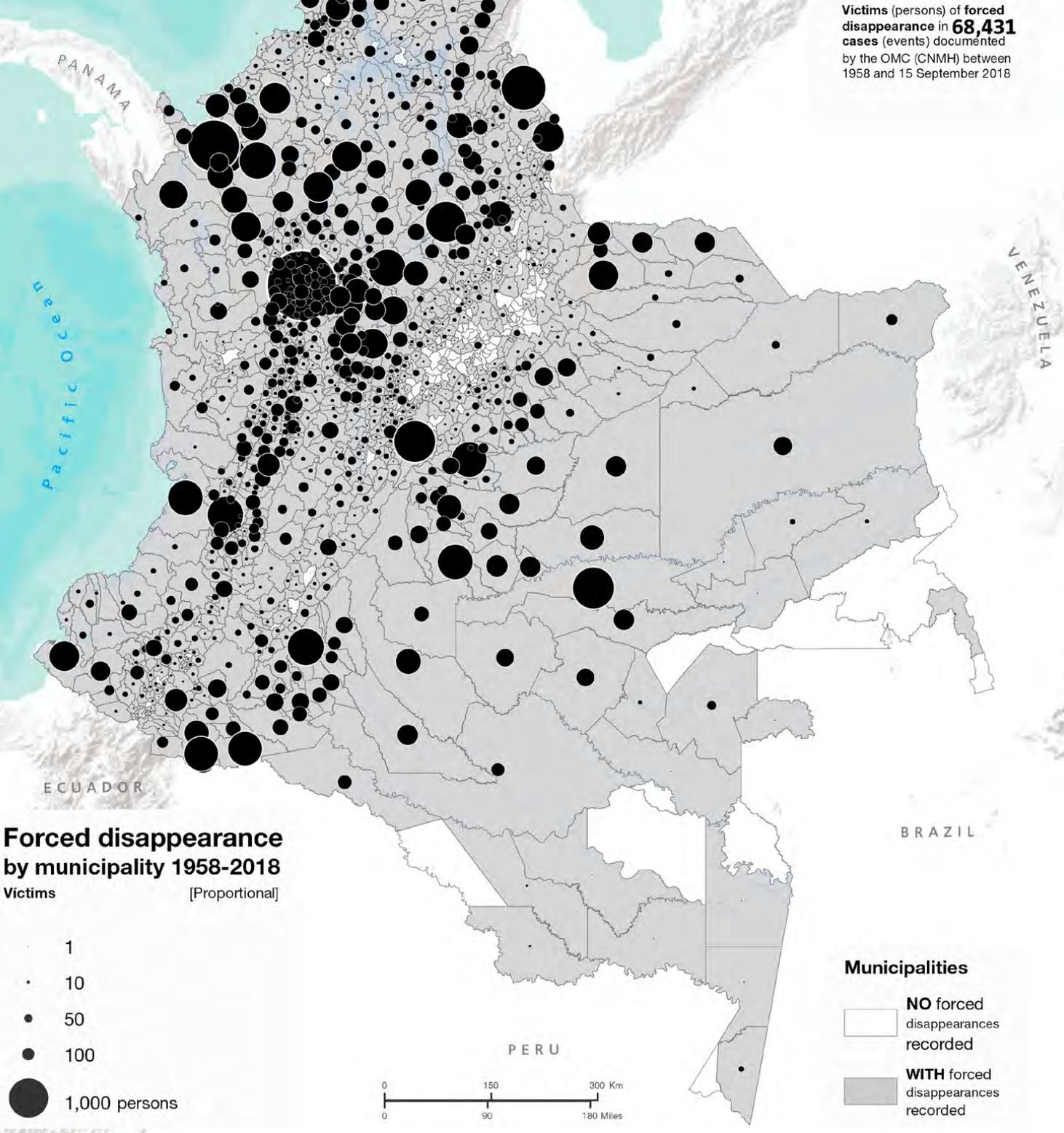
VICTIMS OF FORCED DISAPPEARANCE BY MUNICIPALITY (OMC)



OMC (CNMH)

80,472

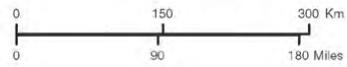
Victims (persons) of forced disappearance in **68,431** cases (events) documented by the OMC (CNMH) between 1958 and 15 September 2018



Forced disappearance by municipality 1958-2018

- Victims [Proportional]
- 1
 - 10
 - 50
 - 100
 - 1,000 persons

- Municipalities**
- NO forced disappearances recorded
 - WITH forced disappearances recorded



Sources | Data: Memory and Conflict Observatory (OMC) of the National Center for Historical Memory (CNMH), September 2018 · Base layers: DANE, IDEAM, ESRI, USGS, NOAA

a brother, a father, a wife or partner. They are someone with experiences, dreams and life goals – they are more than just dots on a map.

Faced with this, we wanted to provide our maps with a textual and iconographic language that is as respectful as possible towards the dignity of the victims. On the one hand, using terminology that persistently reaffirms that these are people who have been forcibly disappeared. They are not numbers or ‘disappeared’ that occur spontaneously in the Colombian landscape; they are people who are victims of a crime against humanity. On the other hand, we use our own iconography, designed by the studio Creando, which, for example, replaces the specific cartographic implementations (the dots on the map) with an anthropomorphic figure that can generically represent both the forced disappearance of persons and the victims of this barbaric criminal practice. In the icon designed, this human figure is framed, like any of the altarpieces of victims of forced disappearance that populate the Memorial Galleries created by their families and support networks.

The iconography aims to symbolise a human figure without attributes of sex, gender, skin colour or any socioeconomic condition; it is inclusive and suitable to symbolise any person. The shades of grey from lower to higher intensity, is both a symbol of ethnic diversity and is also a disturbing call for warning about this diffuse grey zone where they want to house at least 80,472 people in Colombia (CNMH data) and at least 245,889 people in the American hemisphere (data from the Latin American Federation of Associations of Relatives of the Detained-Disappeared, FEDEFAM).

3 Jesús María Peña Marín, Chucho Peña, was a poet, playwright and cultural leader of Bucaramanga who was tortured and disappeared on 30 April 1986 in his city. His body was found lifeless in the village of La Vega, Cáchira (North Santander).

Forced Disappearance of persons by Department in 2002



Victims: Total number of persons registered as victims of forced disappearances in 2002 by the OMC (CNMH) as of 15 September 2018.



Family
Single indirect registered victims of forced disappearance of persons in Colombia between 1994 and 01 April 2019 (UARIV)



Women registered as victims of alleged forced disappearance of persons in Colombia on 20 March 2019 (RND)

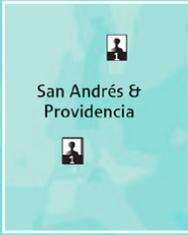
If we re-create the previous map, changing the proportional points for icons (the altarpieces) and their municipal location for random ones, for each of the 80,472 victims registered by the aforementioned data source, we obtain quite a different map of victims.

For the creator of these maps, this is THE map of forced disappearance in Colombia. Each and every known victim has been placed on the map, represented by an altarpiece (icon). At the same time, it is also a small tribute to the families of the victims, their associations and to that tool that represents the search for their loved ones so clearly: the Memorial Galleries.

The resulting map is symbolically very powerful, but only one thing counts: the stark number of people who have disappeared in Colombia, to the point where, as the poet Chucho Peña³ says, ‘there are so many of them that one day they will flood the whole country!’

Putting all known (documented) victims on the map by flooding them with altarpieces may be an act of poetic justice, but it does ▶ □ 23

VICTIMS OF FORCED DISAPPEARANCE IN COLOMBIA (OMC)



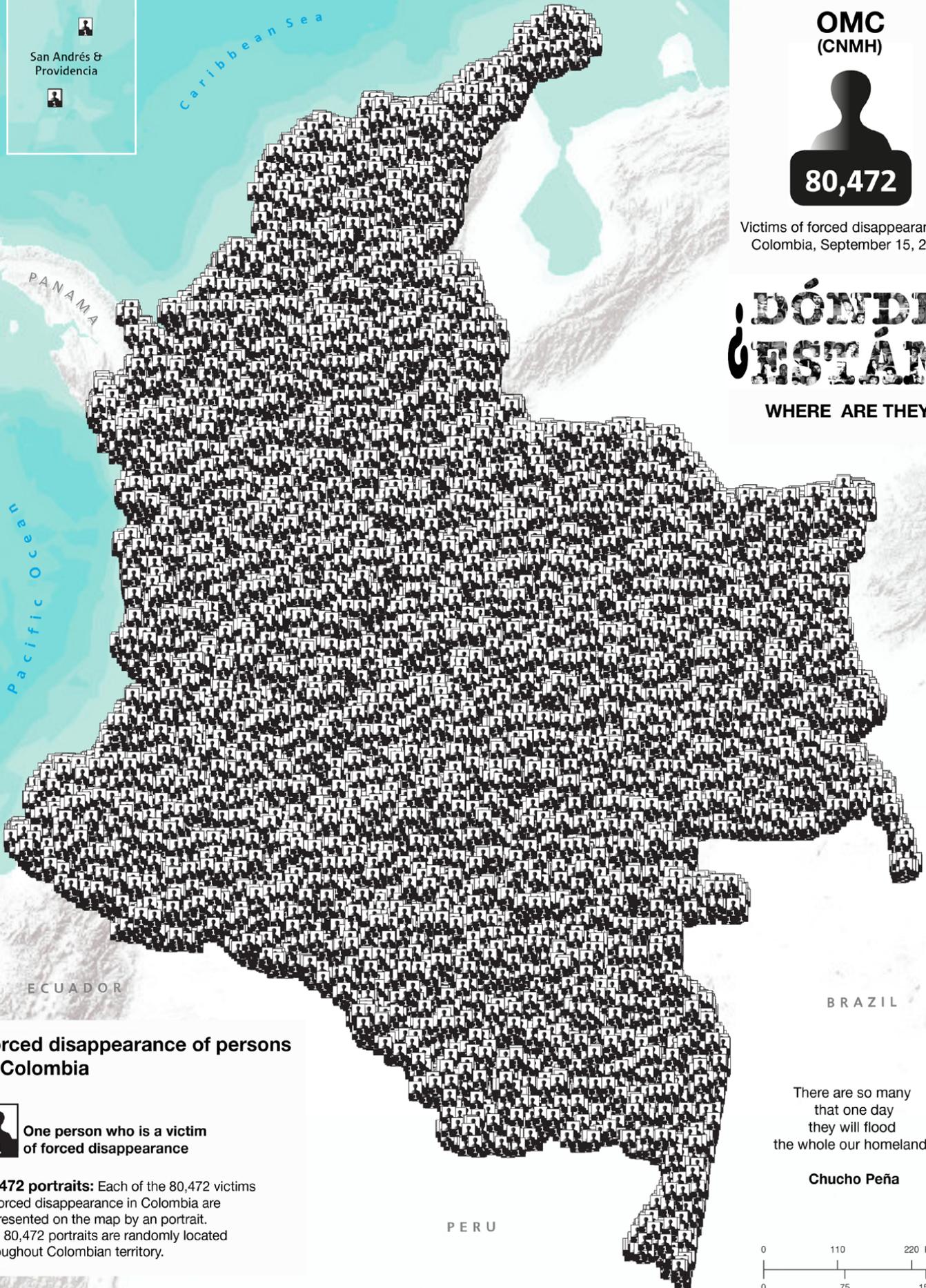
OMC
(CNMH)



Victims of forced disappearance in Colombia, September 15, 2018

¿DÓNDE ESTÁN?

WHERE ARE THEY?



Forced disappearance of persons in Colombia



One person who is a victim of forced disappearance

80,472 portraits: Each of the 80,472 victims of forced disappearance in Colombia are represented on the map by an portrait. The 80,472 portraits are randomly located throughout Colombian territory.

There are so many that one day they will flood the whole our homeland!

Chucho Peña



not provide any help for the development of any kind of analysis of, for example, the specific territoriality of the crime or the patterns followed by the criminals. The need to generate materials that provide inputs for this type of analysis led us, in the second quarter of 2019, to introduce the use of algorithms, some geostatistical tools and adopt the use of more orthodox cartographic semiotics.



Demonstration of the National Movement of Victims of State Crimes in Bogotá, on the occasion of the International Day of Victims of Forced Disappearance 30 August 2018. © Erik Arellana Bautista.

Making visible the invisible

‘Magnitude is a mathematical and merely quantitative fact, but it is not devoid of emotional and political toll when it exceeds certain limits.’

El siluetazo. Proposal presented to the Mothers of Plaza de Mayo in September 1983

Once we know what we can or cannot map and we know how we want to represent it, it is time to begin to sketch the dimension of this serious violation of human rights in Colombia. That is basically what the maps that make up this volume illustrate, being the first and necessary step in our attempt to make visible what they want to remain invisible.

We start from the principle that it is the Colombian state that must reveal how many people were forcibly disappeared and where they are, how many were murdered and where their bodies are. It is also up to the state to account for how many people have been forcibly disappeared during the course of the internal armed conflict, where these individuals are and who disappeared them.

This double obligation has generated two types of official data sources. On the one hand, those deriving from the constitutional

obligations of the state: National Missing Persons Register (RND) and criminal statistics from the Office of the Attorney General (FGN). And on the other hand, those that emerge from the Law of Victims and Restitution of Lands: Single Registry of Victims (RUV) and National Centre of Historical Memory (CNMH).

The National Missing Persons Register ‘is the only national registry of disappeared persons in the Colombian state’, created by the law typifying forced disappearance (Law 589 of 2000), regulated by Decree 4218 of 2005, coordinated and operated by the National Institute of Legal Medicine and Forensic Sciences (INMLCF).

After a thorough analysis of the form and content of the data published by the Institute of Legal Medicine and Forensic Sciences (LIFE, Forensis/Masatugó, Observatory of Violence)⁴, it can be concluded that what the INMLCF has achieved is that no one can have clear, easy, complete and informed access to the RND’s forced disappearance data.

The ‘sole national registry’ is curiously the one with the fewest victims of forced disappearance from the four sources mentioned. The RND registered 28,755 victims of alleged forced disappearance as

► □ 25

⁴ See a complete analysis of INMLCF data at <<https://colombia.desaparicionforzada.com/los-datos-de-la-desaparicion-forzada-de-personas-del-Instituto-de-medicina-legal-INMLCF/>>

DEPARTMENTAL FORCED DISAPPEARANCE RATE (RND)



RND
(INMLCF)



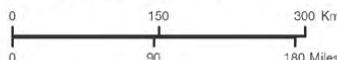
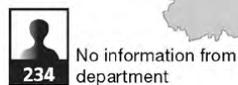
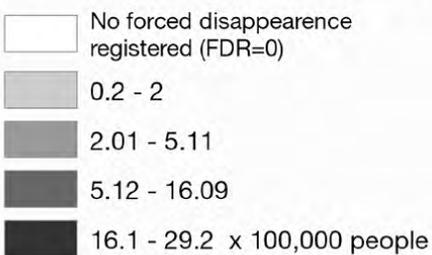
Registered victims (persons) of alleged forced disappearance in Colombia between 1938 and 20 March 2019 (INMLCF)

National forced disappearance rate 1985 - 2018

2.16
x 100,000 people

Departmental forced disappearance rate 1985-2018

FDR x 100,000 people [discret.=Jenks]



Forced disappearance by department 1938-2019

Victims: Total number of people registered as victims of alleged forced disappearance in the RND until 20 March 2019



Unknown Gap between the national total of victims and the sum of data per department on LIFE platform (INMLCF)



of 20 March 2019 (period 1938–2019). The department of Antioquia has the highest absolute value, with 6,580 victims, and the department of Guaviare has the highest relative value, with an allegedly forced disappearance rate of 29 victims per 100,000 inhabitants per year (1985–2018 period).

To obtain the mapped data, we use LIFE, one of the public consultation applications⁵ of the National Missing Persons Register. According to INMLCF, LIFE is a georeferencing application that provides up-to-date statistics on missing persons, unidentified corpses, deaths and injuries at the national, departmental and municipal levels.

After querying ‘disappeared’ in the 1,122 municipalities, the 33 departments of Colombia and abroad (Colombian nationals disappeared outside the national territory), we learned that as of 20 March 2019, there were 144,107 disappeared persons registered. Of these, 114,318 were reported as disappeared without classification (79.33%), 28,755 by alleged forced disappearance (19.95%), 515 by alleged unlawful recruitment (0.36%), 286 due to natural disasters (0.20%), 152 by alleged kidnappings (0.11%) and 81 due to alleged trafficking of persons (0.06%).

The only certainty that can be extracted from the published data is that in the ‘sole national registry’ of the Colombian state, as of 20 March 2019, only 286 persons are known to have disappeared due to a natural disaster. For almost 80%

of the missing persons, nothing is known about their disappearance (‘unclassified’) and that the disappearance of the rest is ‘presumably’ criminal. That is to say, there are 143,821 registered victims due to human disaster (social and political) and 286 due to natural disaster.

Figures of this magnitude clearly exceed our capacity for representation, understanding or empathy (Anders, 2003). Perhaps we can get an idea of the scale of the disaster if we ‘compare’ it with what happened in a brutal tragedy such as the Spanish Civil War and the subsequent Franco dictatorship. The 143,821 victims in Colombia exceed the known minimum of 114,266 victims of forced disappearance as a result of war and repression in Spain (Audiencia Nacional (Spanish National Court), 2008).

However, no victim of forced disappearance is listed in the National Missing Persons Register. In Colombia, according to the official register, there are only a few tens of thousands of victims of *alleged* forced disappearance and more than one hundred thousand ‘unclassified’. There is clearly a problem with this register.

The problem is just what is concealed, what is counted and how it is counted. The Colombian state’s account distorts the data to falsify reality or, better still, to impose ‘its reality’. Some analyses point out that there are so many ‘unclassified’ cases due to how the register is made and who and how it decides what type of disappearance is at hand⁶. The parameters

5 LIFE is an application hosted on the INMLCF website <<http://sirdec.medicinalegal.gov.co:58080/mapaDesaparecidos/>>

6 To find out how and why disappearances are characterised in this way, see the FORENSIS of 2009 (in ‘Complementary articles’ pp. 328–333) and 2014 (in ‘Behaviour of the phenomenon of disappearance.’ Colombia, 2014, pp. 468–472). A good interpretation of the problem can be found in *Rompiendo el silencio en la búsqueda de los desaparecidos en Colombia* (Breaking the silence in the search for the disappeared in Colombia), Haugaard & Nichols, 2010, pp.16–17 or in *Normas y dimensiones de la desaparición forzada en Colombia* (Norms and dimensions of forced disappearance in Colombia). Volume I, CNMH, 2014, pp. 266–267.

of the register are legally determined by the *Comisión de Búsqueda de Personas Desaparecidas* (Commission for the Search of Disappeared Persons, CBPD), an institution that – according to victims and human rights organisations – must ‘be legally reformed and restructured, since it does not reflect the political will of the institutions that it represents and fails to carry out the mission entrusted to it’ (MTDF & CCEEU, 2016).

It is not a simple technical malfunction or a problem with the language used. It is important to note that 70% of the ‘presumably’ forced disappeared have been admitted to the RND by the Office of the Attorney General, an institution that lists 337 cases of forced disappearance for which the perpetrators are serving sentences (they have been investigated, tried and convicted for the crimes). Moreover, in the two reports submitted to the Special Jurisdiction for Peace (JEP), the FGN specifies that 22 were convictions of members of the FARC-EP (Revolutionary Armed Forces of Colombia – People’s Army), 159 of members of the National Army, nine of members of the National Police, one of an official of the extinct DAS (Administrative Department of Security), 77 of members of Illegal Organised Armed Groups (Gaoml) and seven of individuals⁷.

It is bad enough that in Colombia there are only 337 crimes of forced disappearance investigated, tried and convicted. To make matters worse, they are concealed or hidden under this vague label of ‘alleged forced disappearances’. At the very least, there is no doubt in these 337 cases of forced disappearance (SPOA-FGN data as

of 10 October 2018).

Meanwhile, the FGN is aware of 54,046 victims associated with 46,375 criminal reports of forced disappearance (SPOA data as of 10 January 2019). Since the Prosecutor’s Office is part of the CBPD, it is obliged to register all these victims in the RND (Decree 4218 of 2005). But although it is the main contributor to the national register (59% of the disappeared persons – in all categories – and 70% of the presumed forced disappearances)⁸, it is not very clear what the criteria for including the victims in the RND should be, because the discrepancy between the two figures is more than 25,000 people.

It is difficult to understand how many of these victims associated with crime reports (the alleged crimes that have come to the attention of the Prosecutor’s Office which must be investigated by constitutional mandate) can be dismissed as such in the subsequent judicial stages of investigation or trial, because 92.3% of them remain frozen in the inquiry stage, stalled in this limbo in which nothing and nobody moves (SPOA data as of 10 October 2018)⁹.

The mapping of FGN data also shows that Antioquia is the department with the highest absolute number of victims of this crime, with 12,632, and Guaviare is the one with the highest relative number, with a rate of forced disappearance of 88.5 victims per 100,000 inhabitants per year (period of 1985–2018).

The national rate of forced disappearance (TDF x 100,000 inhabitants) from the data of the Prosecutor’s Office doubles the

⁷ See complete analysis of the data of the FGN at <<https://colombia.desaparicionforzada.com/los-datos-de-la-desaparicion-forzada-de-personas-de-la-fiscalia-general-de-la-nacion/>>

⁸ Ibid

⁹ Ibid

TDF from the National Missing Persons Register, which is extremely strange if we consider that the data of the FGN should be compulsorily registered in the RND.

Lack of coordination, dysfunction and institutional paralysis¹⁰ seem to dictate the state's obligations in relation to the crime of forced disappearance. Under pressure to tackle this abnormal state of affairs, the state entities 'responsible for the administration of the records on disappearances in the country, promoted a series of meetings for the cross-analysis and reorganisation of the National Missing Persons Register. The committee for this process proposed that a report on the results be submitted by February of this year [2016]. However, as of the closing date of this report [September 2016], the results are still not known. That is, the consolidated figures, which are the product of the process of cross-analysis and reorganisation, are not known' (Coordinación Colombia Europa Estados Unidos, 2016, pp. 7–8). The UPR-2018 report of the Coalition of International NGOs UPR Colombia (CINUC) confirms that at the end of 2017 these consolidated figures were still unavailable (OIDHACO, 2017 p.10). In June 2019 we still have not encountered reference to any progress in the goals projected by the working group.

The data sources emanating from the Victims and Land Restitution Act should bring some clarity to a picture that shows too many uncertainties and questions, too much confusion and too much 'fog'. The Single Registry of Victims (RUV) of the Unit for Comprehensive Care and Reparation for Victims (UARIV) is the

first of these sources. Both the institution and the registry were created in 'January 2012, from Law 1448 on Victims and Land Restitution, by which measures of attention, assistance and comprehensive reparation for victims of the internal armed conflict are dictated' (UARIV).

The RUV records 13 offences to which the population has been subjected in the context of the armed conflict. One of them is forced disappearance, of which direct victims – victims of forced disappearance – and indirect victims – 'persons to whom a first-degree relative by blood or marriage, or a permanent partner or companion, has been the direct victim of homicide or forced disappearance' (RUV) – are registered. It is the only Colombian registry that covers the relatives of persons who have been forcibly disappeared, by also including them as victims.

In Colombia, information on relatives of victims of forced disappearance is hardly ever published. The INMLCF's Masatugó 2008–2014 report offers a brief (though interesting) characterisation of women reporters in the RND, according to their relationship to the disappeared person. Thus, for the period 1938–2014 and for the cases of presumed forced disappearance 'it is observed that the relative with the greatest number of reported cases correspond to the mother, with 6,416 records, followed by partner and wife, who make up 4,062 records, sister, with 3,544 recorded cases, and daughter, with 1,118 records. For this classification, it is shown that 90.77% of the records are concentrated in the five categories of relationship described' (INMLCF, 2014). The lack of information on relatives is severe and what is published

♦ □29

¹⁰ The Colombia-Europe-United States Coordination Working Group on Forced Disappearances, in its alternate report on the situation of forced disappearances in Colombia presented to the United Nations Committee on Forced Disappearances (2016), offers an analysis that sheds much light on the (dis) functionality of the FGN in this matter (pp. 21–24).

DEPARTMENTAL FORCED DISAPPEARANCE RATE (SPOA)



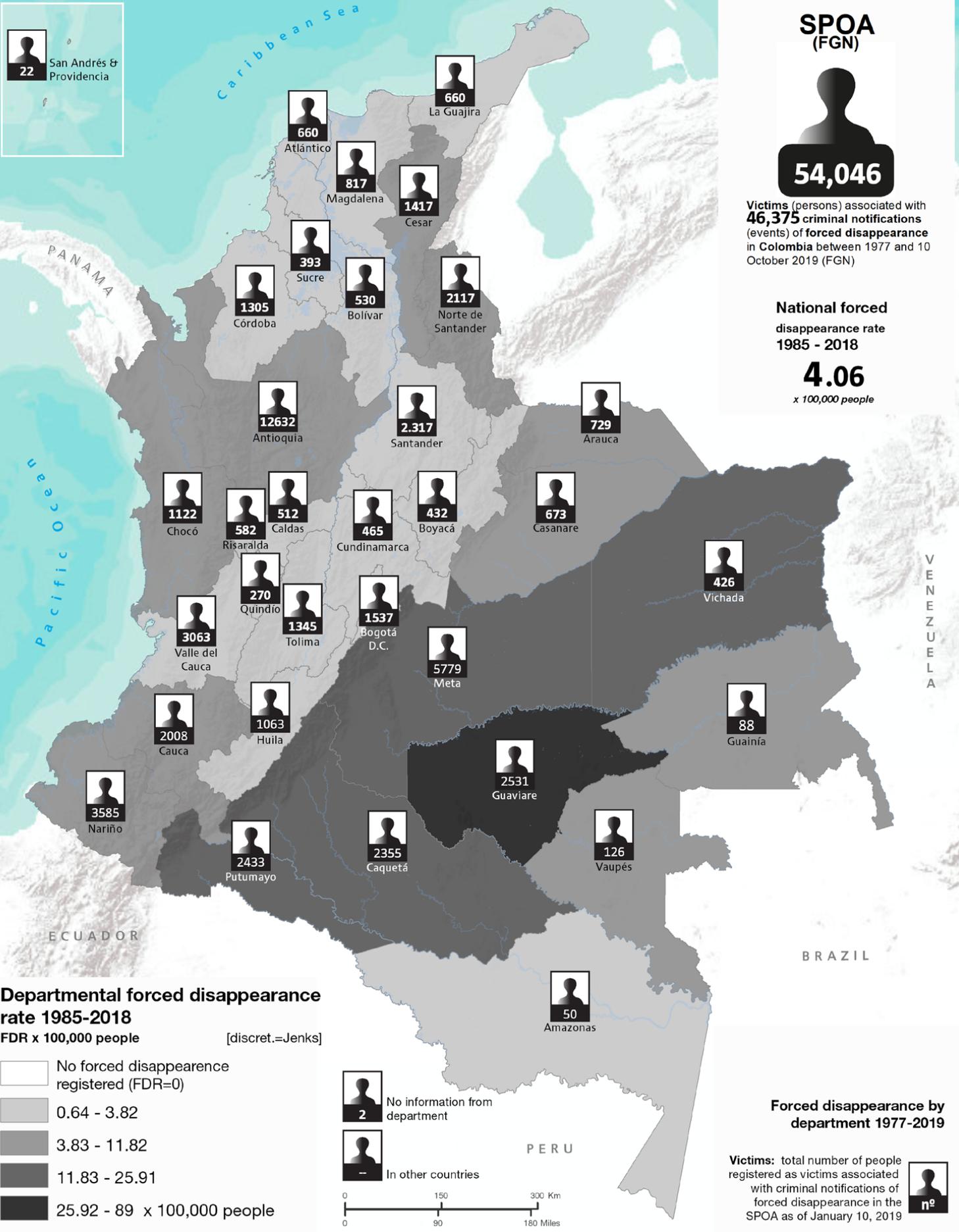
**SPOA
(FGN)**



Victims (persons) associated with **46,375** criminal notifications (events) of forced disappearance in Colombia between 1977 and 10 October 2019 (FGN)

National forced disappearance rate 1985 - 2018

4.06
x 100,000 people



Departmental forced disappearance rate 1985-2018

FDR x 100,000 people [discret.=Jenks]

- No forced disappearance registered (FDR=0)
- 0.64 - 3.82
- 3.83 - 11.82
- 11.83 - 25.91
- 25.92 - 89 x 100,000 people

- No information from department
- In other countries



Forced disappearance by department 1977-2019

Victims: total number of people registered as victims associated with criminal notifications of forced disappearance in the SPOA as of January 10, 2019



by the RUV is clearly insufficient. In addition to Colombia, only Peru has a Single Registry of Victims in which direct victims and family members are also included [See Map 5].

In the mapping of the RUV data we can again observe that Antioquia is the department that presents the highest absolute value, with 11,519 direct victims of this crime, and Guaviare again has the highest relative value, with a rate of forced disappearance of 42.4 victims per 100,000 inhabitants per year (period 1985–2018).

Data from the Single Registry of Victims published monthly by UARIV¹¹ were used to prepare the map. The data used has a cut-off date of 1 April 2019 and includes all the registered victims of forced disappearance, both victims of the armed conflict and victims recognised by the C280 Judgement and the 119 Order of 2013. It must be noted that the national number of victims on the map corresponds to the number of uniquely identified victims and registered in the RUV on the indicated cut-off date. However, the departmental and municipal figures used are those appearing in the aggregate data files¹². Only by using these data can we draw up the map of direct victims and the map of family members [See Map 6].

Using any of the available data aggregates introduces a distortion in the departmental and municipal data, the sum of which turns out to be higher than the national figure for single victims (the data are somewhat ‘inflated’). In this regard, the RUV is

satisfied with warning that ‘the sum of the Total column of the downloaded data does not reflect the total of individual victims because a person may have been victimised in one or several municipalities’. For the April data we get a disproportionately high number of 1,318 direct victims and 5,470 indirect victims¹³.

The UARIV, as any proper state entity, has not been able to refrain from making things as confusing as possible. Furthermore, this source is blamed for a great deal of underregistration, either because the victims have only been registered since 1985, which is too short a period of time, or because many relatives are not aware of the existence of the RUV or are afraid to register (it should not be forgotten that the state itself is one of the perpetrators of this crime).

The most serious thing of all is knowing that the Colombian state has recognised, through the Single Registry of Victims, the existence of 173,339 victims of forced disappearance, of which 47,762 are people who have been forcibly disappeared and 125,577 are their direct relatives. Each of these 47,762 persons is a ‘victim uniquely identified either by his/her identification number, by his/her full name or by a combination of these things’ (RUV). How is it possible that, if the same state has recognised 47,762 persons as victims of this crime, only 28,755 victims of ‘presumed’ forced disappearance have been registered in the National Missing Persons Register (RND)? It is incomprehensible that they have not been able to crosscheck the data in both registers, and more so

11 The data can be consulted and downloaded as data aggregates from the RUV reports page <<https://www.unidadvictimas.gov.co/es/registro-unico-de-victimas-ruv/37394>>.

12 In this case, they are those included in the file ‘Number of Persons by Municipality of Occurrence and Victimization (Direct and Indirect Victims)’. Unlike the RND, in the RUV you can download data on almost 8.5 million victims of the armed conflict (there are 25 downloadable files!).

13 For a complete analysis of the RUV data, see <<https://colombia.desaparicionforzada.com/los-datos-de-la-desaparicion-forzada-de-personas-del-Registro-Unico-de-Victimas/>>.

that another state institution has done this but the results have had no impact on the National Missing Persons Register. We refer to the fourth and last source of data mentioned: the Memory and Conflict Observatory (OMC) of the National Centre of Historical Memory (CNMH), which, as of 15 September 2018, had 80,474 documented cases of forced disappearance of persons.

The information and data compiled by the OMC constitute the lowest under-recording to date in Colombia. This register includes '592 sources and 10,236 databases and documents. The Observatory's sources are catalogued in institutional and social sources' (OMC). To this fact, we can add that it is the source that has most and best documented the data in its registry and the methodologies used¹⁴. This is, without a doubt, the largest exercise carried out so far in integrating and clarifying data from different sources relating to forced disappearance in Colombia. Also, since the Observatory's website went online, it is the register that most effectively provides the data for public downloading.

For all these reasons, it is the OMC data that we use first and foremost in the preparation of the maps that make up this volume. This does not mean that we endorse their data nor that we do not map using other sources¹⁵. We simply accept that this is the data that currently best allows us to measure forced disappearance in Colombia.

The resulting map [See Map 7] has an eminent informative function, showing two variables of forced disappearance: on the one hand, the absolute numbers of victims in each of the departments and, on

the other, the annual crime rate per one hundred thousand inhabitants. The latter, the Forced Disappearance Rate (TDF), is a relative measure and ratio that makes the figures comparable between geographical entities of different populations and, to a certain extent, allows us to get a glimpse of the intensity of this terrible event.

In this map we can identify the same general trend as in the previous ones, which should not be so surprising since the register of this Observatory integrates the data of RND, FGN and RUV.

Antioquia is the department that registers the highest absolute value, with 19,794 victims, and Guaviare the one with the highest relative value, with a rate of forced disappearance of 62.8 victims per 100,000 inhabitants per year (period 1985–2018).

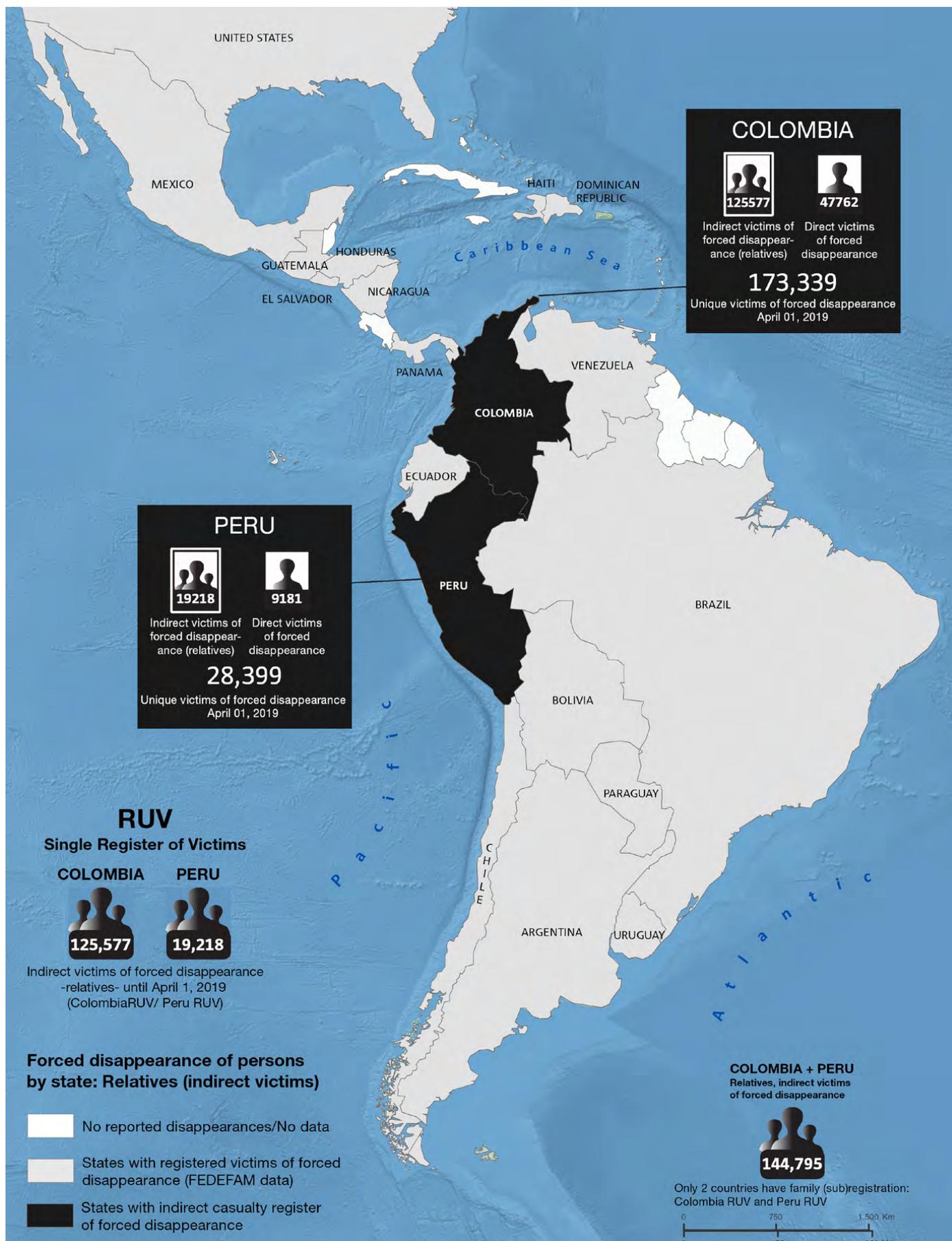
To show another of the many possible ways to represent the data, we have produced the same map using the percentage of victims in each department with respect to the national total [See Map 8]. This map seems more intuitive because the greater the number of victims, the more intense the color of the depicted department. Here it is clear that Antioquia has the highest absolute number of people who have suffered this crime. However, the use of rates brings greater benefit to the analysis. This relative variable takes on its true importance in the municipal maps (as will be seen later).

While the informative function we require is perfectly fulfilled by the maps at the departmental level [See Annex Departmental Maps], it is important to take into account that the smallest geographical unit for

14 Both the OMC website and the website of the CNMH contain up to 11 publications concerning forced disappearances: from a data dictionary or a methodological compendium to various reports with geographical, historical or even forensic focus.

15 As can be seen by accessing the map section of our website <<https://colombia.desaparicionforzada.com/mapas/>>, there are already about 200 maps on this subject.

RELATIVES OF FORCED MISSING PERSONS IN COLOMBIA AND PERU. INDIRECT VICTIMS (RUV)



Sources | Data: Single Register of Victims (RUV) - Unit for Comprehensive Care and Reparation for Victims (UARIV), 2019. Single Register of Victims (RUV) - Reparations Council (CR), 2019 · Icons: Creando, 2017 · Cartographic projection: Fuller "Dymaxion map" · Base layers: Natural Earth

DEPARTMENTAL FORCED DISAPPEARANCE RATE DIRECT VICTIMS (RUV)



RUV
(UARIV)

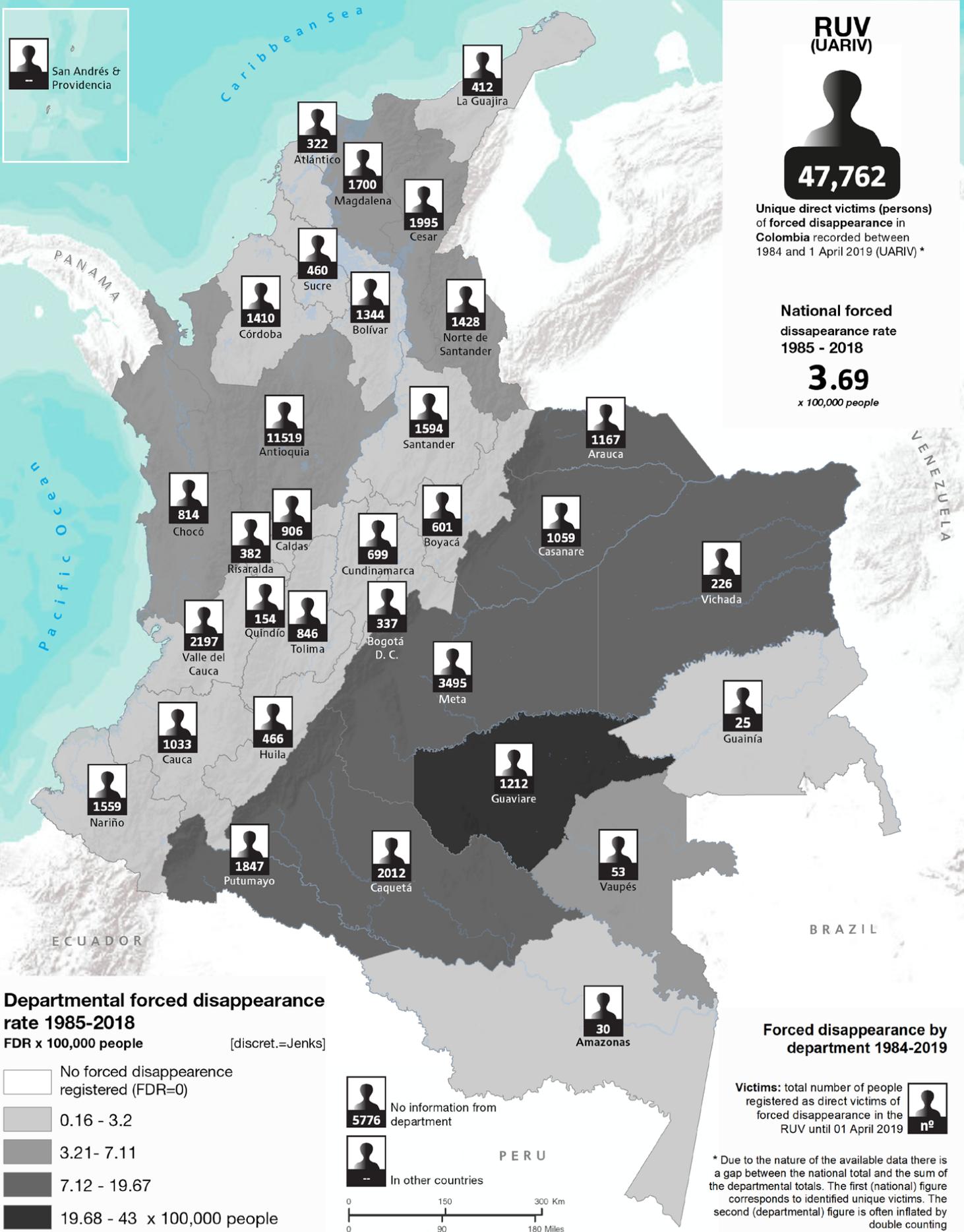
47,762

Unique direct victims (persons) of forced disappearance in Colombia recorded between 1984 and 1 April 2019 (UARIV) *

National forced disappearance rate 1985 - 2018

3.69

x 100,000 people



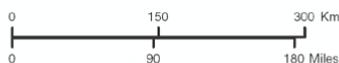
Departmental forced disappearance rate 1985-2018

FDR x 100,000 people [discret.=Jenks]

- No forced disappearance registered (FDR=0)
- 0.16 - 3.2
- 3.21- 7.11
- 7.12 - 19.67
- 19.68 - 43 x 100,000 people

No information from department

In other countries



Forced disappearance by department 1984-2019

Victims: total number of people registered as direct victims of forced disappearance in the RUV until 01 April 2019

* Due to the nature of the available data there is a gap between the national total and the sum of the departmental totals. The first (national) figure corresponds to identified unique victims. The second (departmental) figure is often inflated by double counting

DEPARTMENTAL FORCED DISAPPEARANCE RATE (OMC)



OMC
(CNMH)



Victims (persons) of forced disappearance in **68,431** cases (events) documented by the OMC (CNMH) between 1958 and 15 September 2018

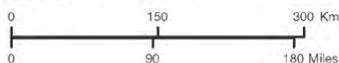
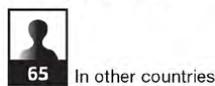
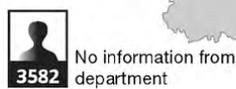
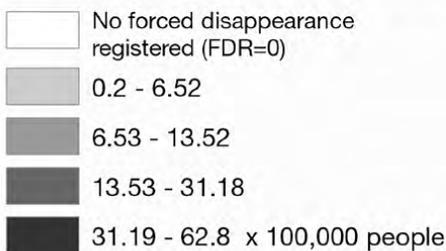
National forced disappearance rate 1985 - 2018

6.05

x 100,000 people

Departmental forced disappearance rate 1985-2018

FDR x 100,000 people [discret.=Jenks]



Forced disappearance by department 1984-2019

Victims: total number of people registered as victims of forced disappearance in the OMC until 15 September 2018



FORCED DISAPPEARANCE BY DEPARTMENT (OMC)



OMC
(CNMH)

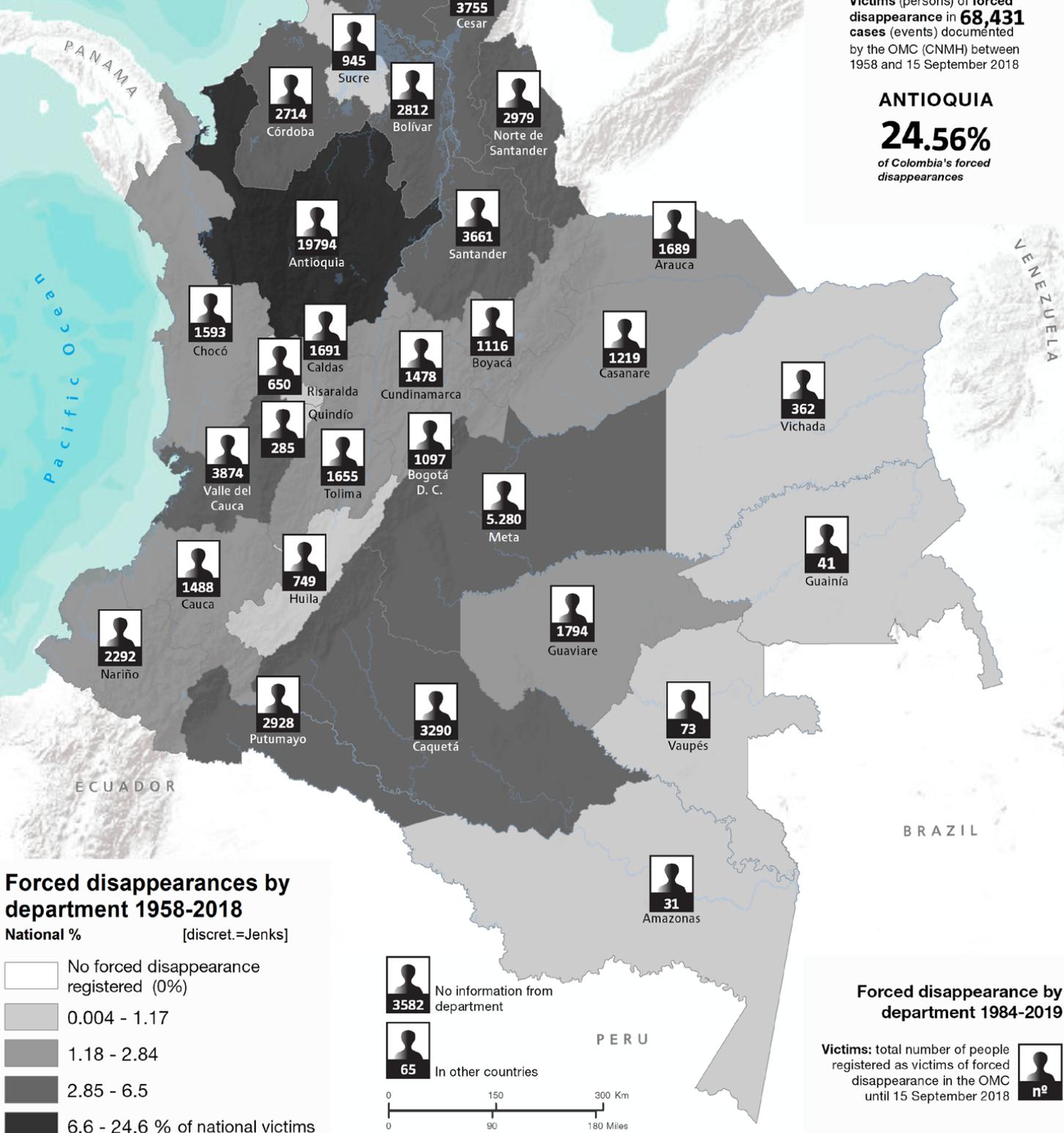


Victims (persons) of forced disappearance in **68,431** cases (events) documented by the OMC (CNMH) between 1958 and 15 September 2018

ANTIOQUIA

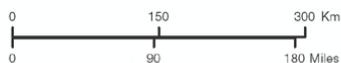
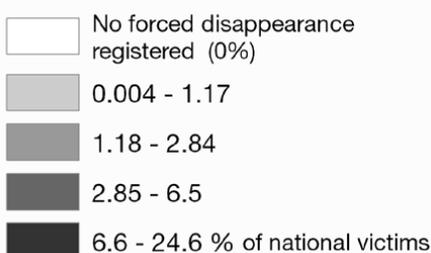
24.56%

of Colombia's forced disappearances



Forced disappearances by department 1958-2018

National % [discret.=Jenks]



Forced disappearance by department 1984-2019

Victims: total number of people registered as victims of forced disappearance in the OMC until 15 September 2018



collecting data on forced disappearances is the municipality. Any aggregation of data that we use, in this case at the departmental level, will always generate a certain degree of geospatial distortion.

The best way to work cartographically on such an eminently spatial crime as forced disappearance is to adjust the scale of the map as much as possible to the scale of the event. Although for a number of cases the exact place where the disappearance was committed, the last place where the person was seen or where the body is buried is known, for most victims only the municipality of occurrence has been identified. In fact, in view of the problems already encountered in acquiring data, it is important to appreciate that we can at least map the phenomenon at the municipal level.

A good example of the usefulness of this scale is the map of forced disappearance in the municipalities of Colombia, according to the data from the four sources analysed [See Map 9].

Cross-referencing the data (spatial analysis) from these four sources gives a terrifying geographical reading. There are only 66 municipalities in Colombia (5.8%) that have no record of any forced disappearance from any of the four sources. We do not know if this serious human rights violation was committed in these municipalities, but we do know that there are no victims registered in any of the various state records.

On the contrary, in 791 of the municipalities (70.5%) the four sources register victims of forced disappearance. In the remaining 265 there are some of

the sources (one, two or three, but not all four) that report forced disappearances of Colombians.

Faced with such a barbarous scenario, we have found it useful and essential for anyone to be able to consult the absolute and relative figures for forced disappearance of any of the country's 1,122 municipalities¹⁶.

In the maps, in addition to the absolute and relative variables, we have also incorporated temporal information that highlights the annual historical maximum of forced disappearances. In addition, the data on the impunity of the crime in the department has been incorporated¹⁷. For the reasons already explained, in these municipal maps by department, the OMC data of the CNMH have been favoured. Lastly, it is important to point out that we have self-imposed the 'obligation' to put both the place names of each of the municipalities and the absolute number of victims. The objective is clear: we want the people who read the maps to be able to know the magnitude of the crime in each and every municipality in Colombia. This prioritisation has led to the fact that, in the departments with the greatest number of municipalities, such as Antioquia, general readability has had to be sacrificed in order to maintain the aforementioned informative objective. On the other hand, the unexpected effect achieved by the map of Antioquia is staggering.

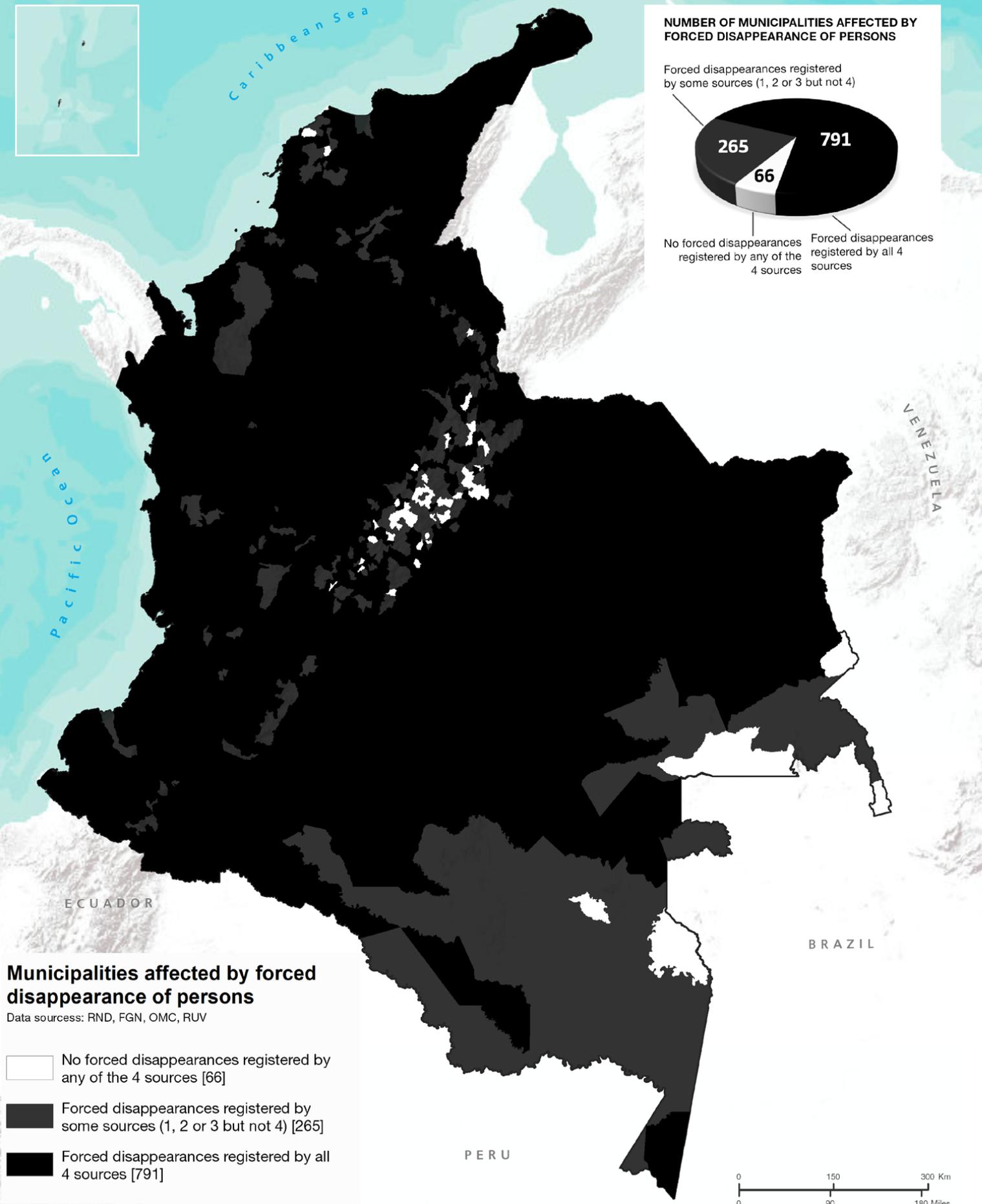
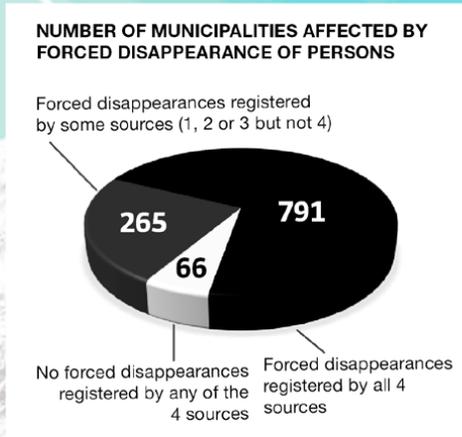
Let no one be fooled; the effect is not caused by the map but rather by the magnitude that this crime has had in the department and in the country.

♦ □37

16 This includes the figure of districts and departmental townships. The source used is the DANE national geostatistical framework of 2017.

17 A complete account of how we have calculated impunity is available at <<https://colombia.desaparicionforzada.com/calculo-de-impunidad-de-desaparicion-forzada-en-colombia/>>.

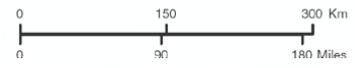
MUNICIPALITIES AFFECTED BY FORCED DISAPPEARANCE (4 SOURCES: OMC,RND,RUV,SPOA)



Municipalities affected by forced disappearance of persons

Data sources: RND, FGN, OMC, RUV

- No forced disappearances registered by any of the 4 sources [66]
- Forced disappearances registered by some sources (1, 2 or 3 but not 4) [265]
- Forced disappearances registered by all 4 sources [791]



Sources | Data: Memory and Conflict Observatory (OMC), 09/15/2018. Single Register of Victims (RUV), 04/01/2019. National Register of Missing Persons (RND), 03/20/2019. Oral Accusatory Criminal System (SPOA), 05/29/2019 · Base layers: DANE, IDEAM, ESRI, USGS, NOAA

Pulling the thread...

The previously displayed maps pursue the objective of geographically defining a crime against humanity, giving priority to the dissemination of information. That first step of making visible what they want to remain invisible is not intended to be more than just a first step.

In order to make it visible and clear a little bit of the fog with which the perpetrators want to cover themselves, it is necessary to establish the frameworks, pull on the threads, and analyse all the possible dimensions. Without going into detail, we can point out some of the elements we are working on¹⁸.

The relationship with armed conflict

We have already explained that the minimum geographical unit of information available is the municipality. We also pointed out that the nature of the crime is tremendously spatial and local, thus practically affecting the first scale of geographical analysis: the body.

The national maps by department are very suitable for dissemination, but allow very little analysis to be made. Forced disappearance does not attend to departmental dynamics. Therefore, for example, the data and the map of forced disappearance in Antioquia explain very little of the territorial dynamics of crime in the area affected by the Hidroituango energy project, which is more influenced by the presence of armed men and their transit corridors that connect this area with the coast (Urabá Cordobés and Antioqueño), with the lower Cauca and with the metropolitan area of Medellín. But what happens if we rework Map 7 with municipal TDFs instead of departmental

ones? [See Map 10]

As one might have guessed, the map of municipal rates outlines the Colombian armed conflict. On the map it is easy to identify two large territorial arches. One that is drawn from the Urabá chocoano, Antioqueño and Cordobés towards the Bajo Cauca Antioqueño to reach the Magdalena Medio, where it converges with the line coming from the Oriente Antioqueño to head towards the Catatumbo; and from there continue north towards the Serranía del Perijá, the Sierra Nevada de Santa Marta and end up in the Montes de María. The other arch is drawn, almost in a straight line following the entire foothills of the plains, from Lower Putumayo to Arauca, extending to the eastern plains [See Map 11].

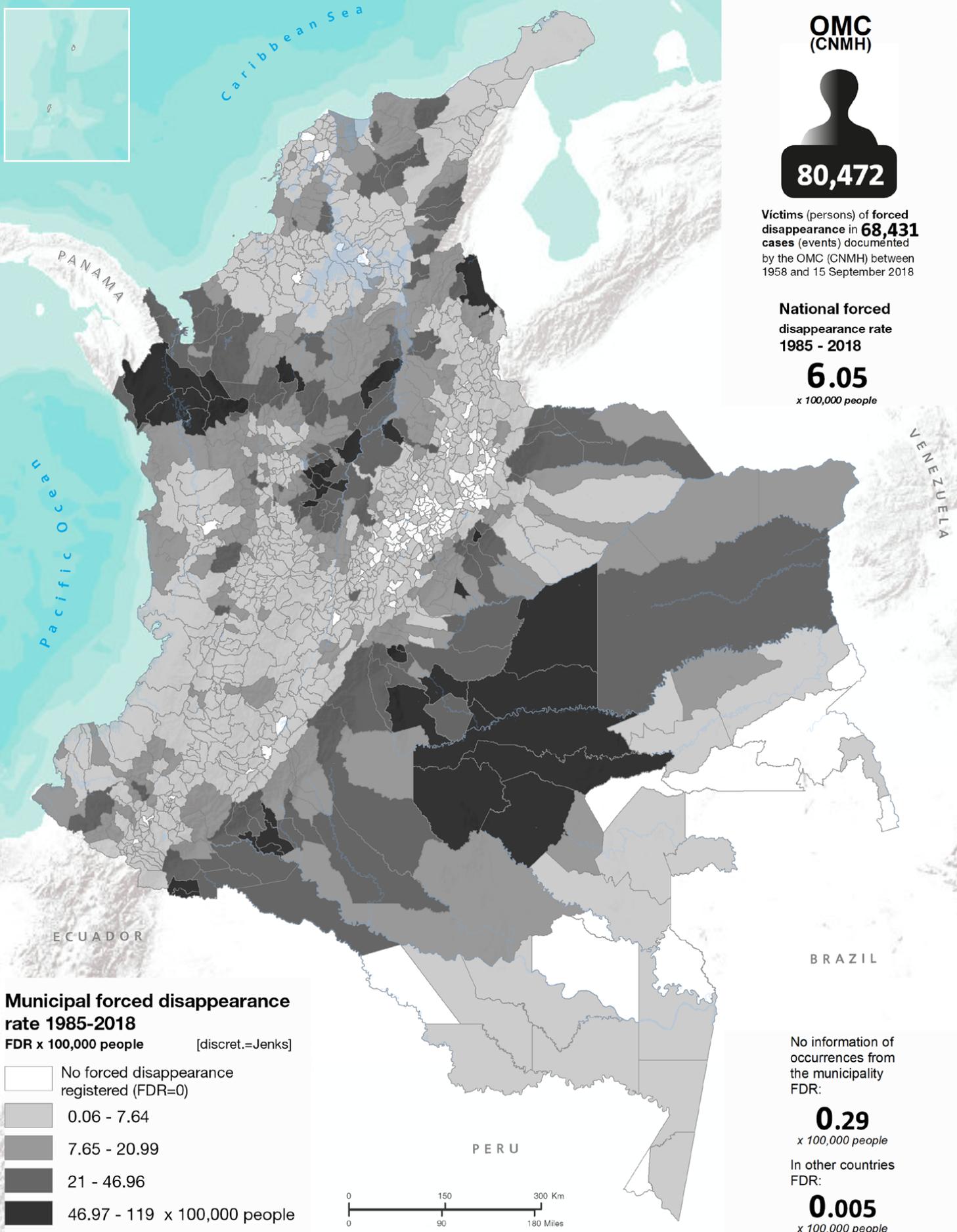
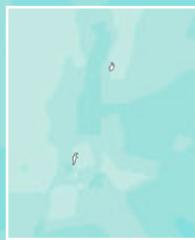
To organise the class intervals specified in the legend, the Jenks (natural breaks) algorithm has been used, which analyses the entire data set (from all municipalities) to generate the most homogeneous groups possible from the natural breaks. It is the statistical operation that determines how the different groups are organised (four of them only, since we have imposed the group 'With No Forced Disappearances' – extracting it from the classification – to highlight the municipalities where there is no crime recorded: there are so few that it is important to draw attention to them!)

The outline of the conflict can be even more pronounced if we create a map of the municipalities that have a TDF above the national average (6.05 x 100,000 inhabitants for the OMC data) and the municipalities that have a TDF below it. This is the typical type of analysis that can begin to develop around the mapping of

► □ 39

18 Work in progress that you can follow on our website <<https://colombia.desaparicionforzada.com/>> and of course, in future cartographic volumes.

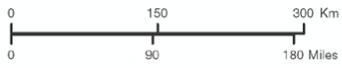
MUNICIPAL FORCED DISAPPEARANCE RATE (OMC)



Municipal forced disappearance rate 1985-2018

FDR x 100,000 people [discret.=Jenks]

- No forced disappearance registered (FDR=0)
- 0.06 - 7.64
- 7.65 - 20.99
- 21 - 46.96
- 46.97 - 119 x 100,000 people



OMC
(CNMH)



Victims (persons) of forced disappearance in **68,431** cases (events) documented by the OMC (CNMH) between 1958 and 15 September 2018

National forced disappearance rate 1985 - 2018

6.05
x 100,000 people

No information of occurrences from the municipality FDR:

0.29
x 100,000 people

In other countries FDR:

0.005
x 100,000 people

municipal rates of forced disappearance. As an example, to show where the analyses are going, a composition has been made with four maps [See Map 12]: one of the municipal TDF [See Map 10], one of the national rate (the national average), one of the dots of victims [See Map 1] and one of the geographical areas historically affected by violence made by Salas Salazar (2016)¹⁹. Salazar's kernel map shows that our interpretation of the municipal TDFs coincides with other external analyses.

Geographies of Dispossession. Maps of mega projects.

Indeed, kernel maps (now well-known as heat maps), densities, indices, spatial correlations or statistics can be produced. Without going any further, a simple overlaying of the municipal TDF map and the image of the chronicity of coca cultivation (United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC) data) already invites us to look for correlations. In this case, the aim is to find out if there is a correlation between the municipalities with the highest TDF and those that have suffered from the government's control and eradication policies (clear vectors of violence) [See Map 13].

Coca, mining, oil, agro-industrial plantations, hydroelectric plants... everything can be linked to forced disappearance.

Men with weapons

The geographies of armed conflict

are intertwined and mixed with the geographies of dispossession, as will be discussed in the text *Lo que desaparece con cada desaparecido* (What Disappears with Every Missing Person). If the map of the municipal TDF depicts the armed conflict, the map of the armed men will show us something about the perpetrators.

Men with guns have a certain territoriality²⁰ that should give us clues about the terror unleashed, both by the forced disappearances committed and by other related crimes such as extrajudicial executions (the so-called 'false positives') or massacres (in whose macabre ritual some disappearances used to be included) [See Map 26].

So far we have not produced any map of perpetrators. Information is too scarce to be mapped. Now in view of the maps we have presented so far, how can we not ask ourselves about this TDF in the department of Guaviare, which is also widely visible in municipal maps. What has happened in Guaviare?

It is one of those threads that must be unravelled. For the moment, no hypothesis has been put forward, but it seems interesting to explore this great knot of the armed conflict located there²¹ [See Map 14].

From gender maps to gendered maps

As a counterpoint to the armed men we want to finish by talking about the women and with the women. With a special

► □ 45

¹⁹ This map has been used under its Creative Commons licence. The original map has remained unchanged except for modification in the colours used, here assimilated to those of our entire cartographic series.

²⁰ It is already a theme dealt with on our websites <<https://geoactivismo.org/>> and <<http://geographiando.net/>>

²¹ After listening to the Colombian military's criticism of the CNMH's memory exercise (especially the *Nunca Más* report) we find the account of the war these armed men are waging: from a Bogotá surrounded and besieged by the FARC to how the FUTCO was created and how they began 'the road to victory' (Omega Joint Task Force, 2016). The FUTCO seemed to be the Gordian knot of the war.

FORCED DISAPPEARANCE IS ALSO A SCAR OF WAR



Caribbean Sea



80,472
Scars from war and political and social violence

PANAMA

Pacific Ocean

VENEZUELA

ECUADOR

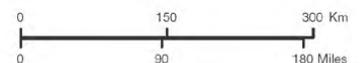
BRAZIL

Chorem of the municipal rate of forced disappearance 1985-2018
Geographical chorem

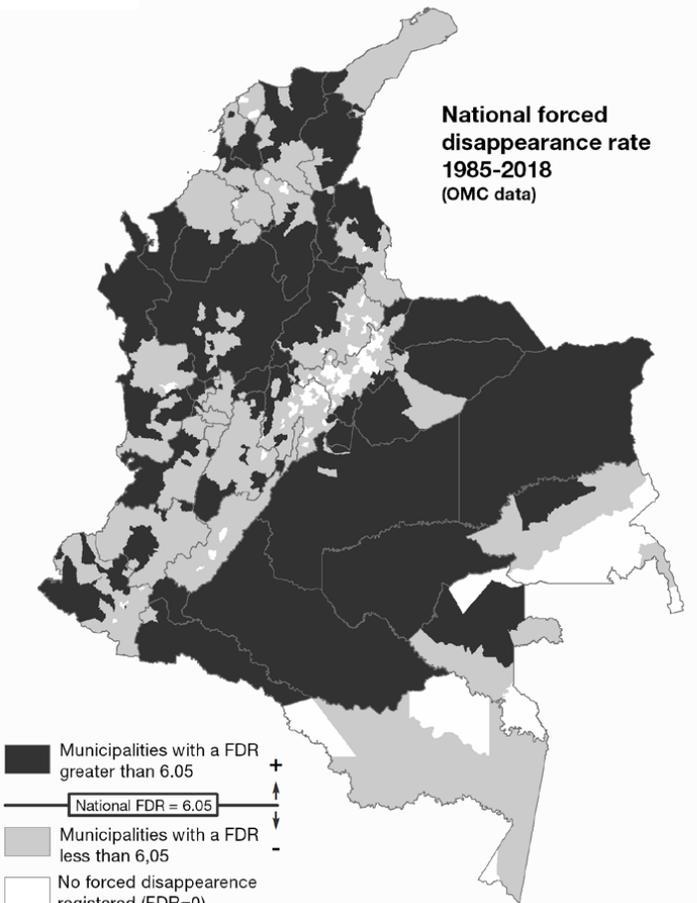
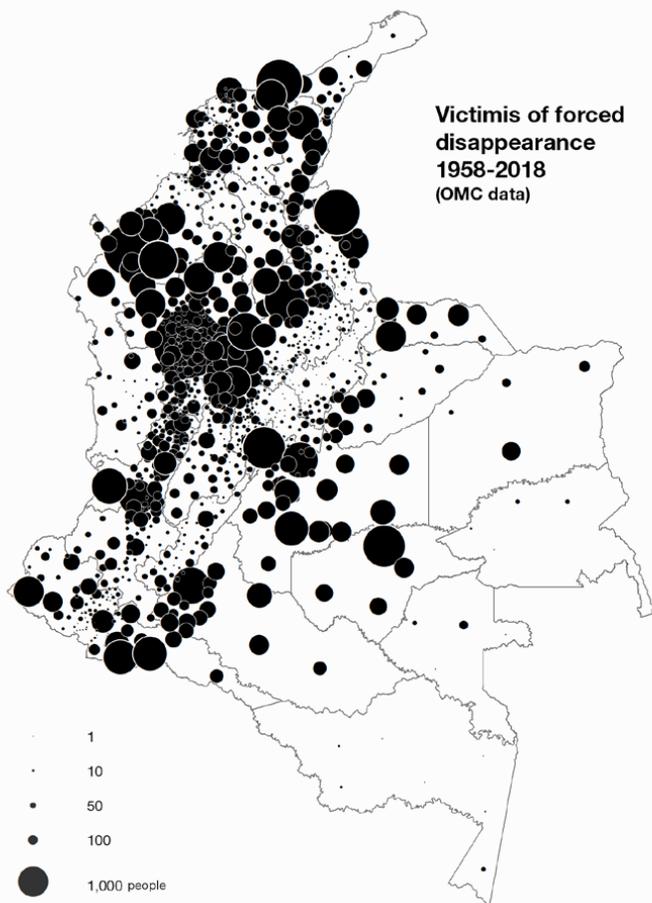
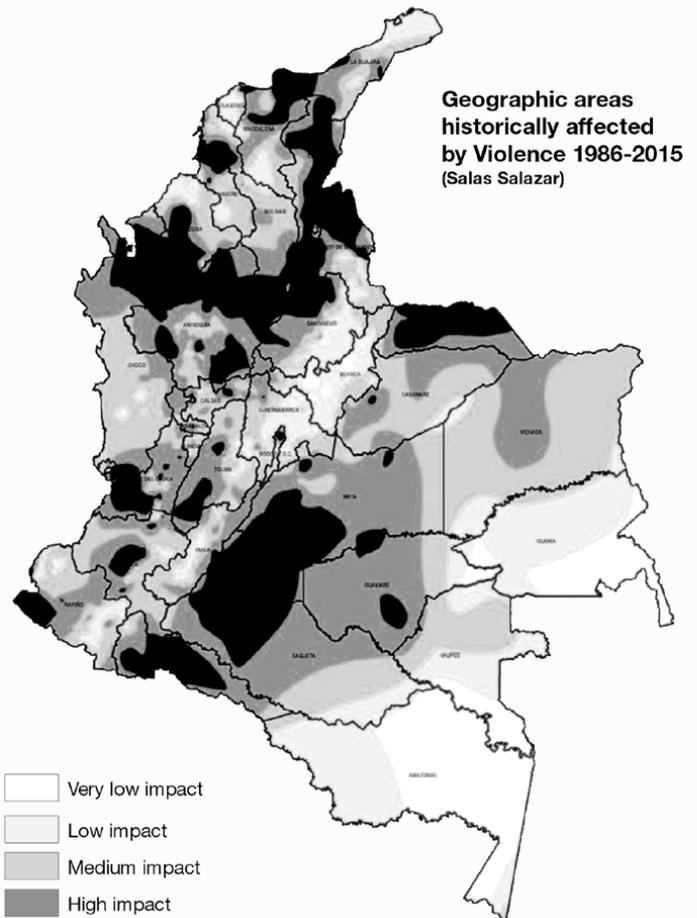
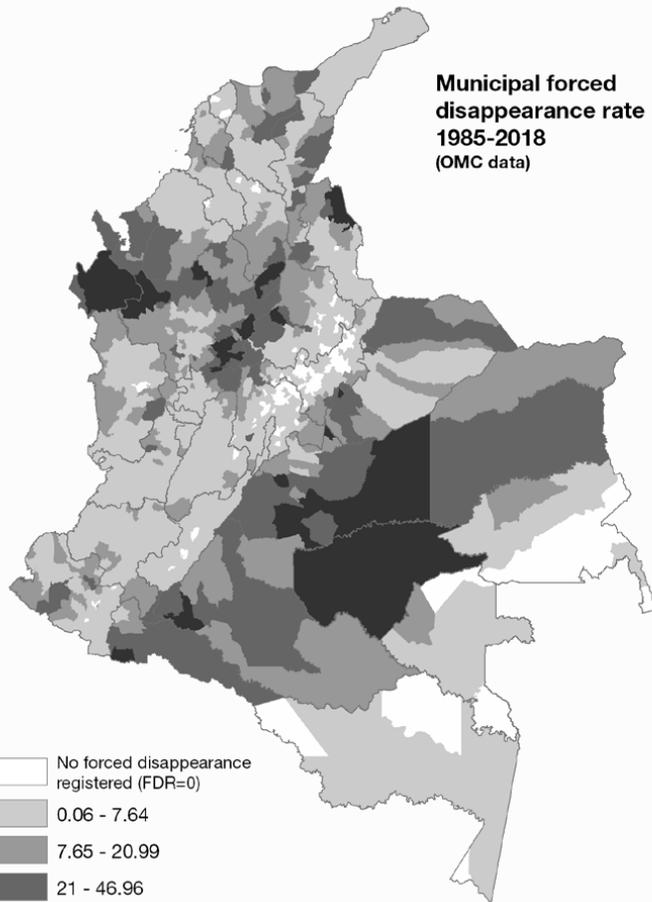


North Great Arch and Orinoco
-Amazonian Plains

PERU



FORCED DISAPPEARANCE AND IMPACT FROM ARMED CONFLICT



Sources | Data: Memory and Conflict Observatory (OMC), 09/15/2018. DANE, population projections, 2010 revision · J. Gabriel Salas Salazar map with modified colors, 2016 · Base layers: DANE

MUNICIPAL FORCED DISAPPEARANCE RATE AND CHRONICITY OF COCA CROPS (OMC/UNODC)



Caribbean Sea

Chronicity of coca crops 2005-2014

Chronicity index [Index]

Chronicity index



Dynamics of coca crops under state control and eradication policies

VENEZUELA

Pacific Ocean

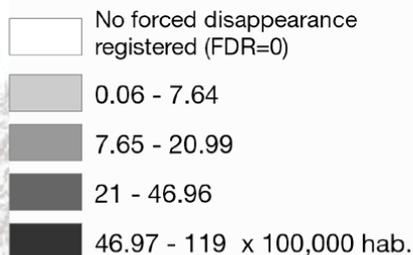
PANAMA

ECUADOR

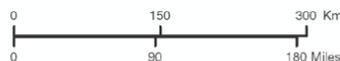
BRAZIL

Municipal forced disappearance rate 1985-2018

FDR x 100,000 people [discret.=Jenks]



PERU

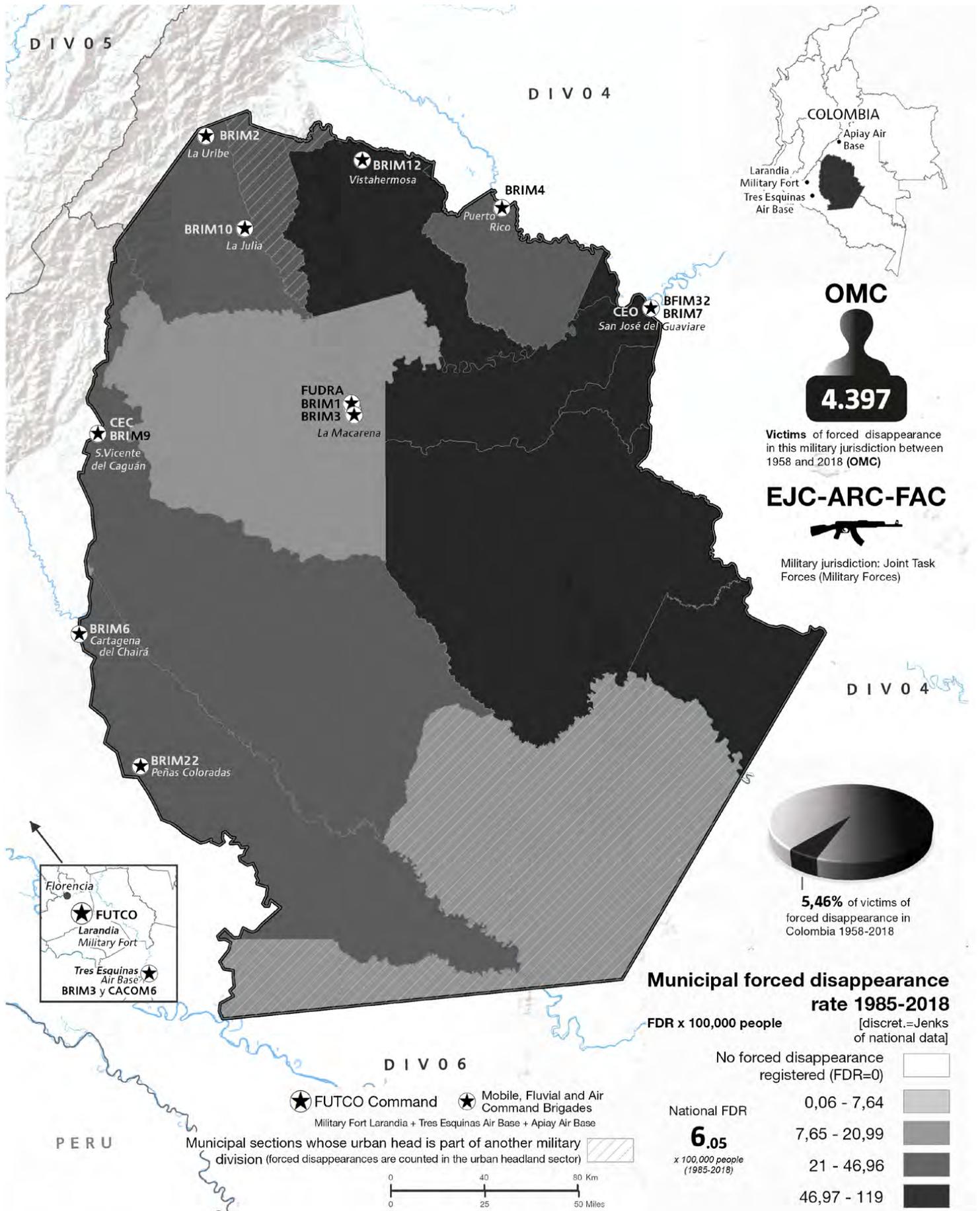


National forced disappearance rate 1985 - 2018

6.05

x 100,000 people

FORCED DISAPPEARANCE RATE IN THE OMEGA JOINT TASK FORCE (FUTCO)



Sources | Data: Memory and Conflict Observatory (OMC) of the National Center for Historical Memory (CNMH), September 2018 · FUTCO (EJC), 2019 · DANE, population projections, 2010 revision · Icons: Creando, 2017 · Base layers: CGFM, DANE, IDEAM, ESRI, USGS, NOAA

DEPARTMENTAL FORCED DISAPPEARANCE RATE OF WOMEN (RND)

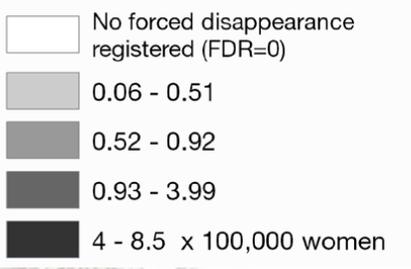


National forced disappearance rate of women 1985 - 2018

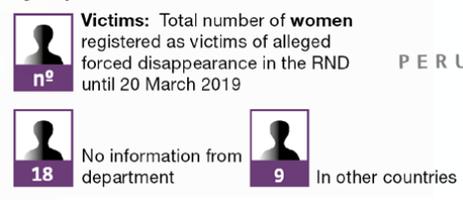
0.49
x 100,000 women

Departmental forced disappearance rate of women 1985-2018

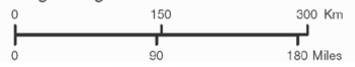
FDR x 100,000 women [discret.=Jenks]



Forced disappearance of women by department



The Galárraga sisters on the wall of Bogotá Victims of forced disappearance on January 1, 2001 in Putumayo. Image: Belligerarte



awareness of how forced disappearance affected and still affects women, which is felt to be reflected in *Mapoemas-poemapas*, a series of maps on forcibly disappeared women and women relatives of victims has been started. This is a first approach to geography 'of' gender. But they are not yet maps 'with' gender; they have not been transformed and subverted to tell other stories in other clearly feminist ways.

For the moment, we offer a sample of the map of the departmental TDF of women with data from the RND. Surely there is nothing more traditional and normative (and even patriarchal) than a departmental map of Colombia? [\[See Map 15\]](#)

200 maps

We have already made 200 maps on this bloody subject. To the above we can add maps of temporalities [\[See Map 17\]](#), maps on the relatives [\[See Maps 5 and 22\]](#), maps of rivers [\[See Maps 35, 36, 37 and 38\]](#), maps of impunity [\[See Maps 18, 19 and 20\]](#) and maps of graves and bodies found [\[See Map 39\]](#).

Forced disappearance is a dramatically geographical crime.

There are many threads to be unravelled and plots to be analysed. And there are many people and organisations that can contribute to revealing new angles related to forced disappearance from the perspectives of direct and indirect victims, from the territories, from the ethnic viewpoint, from historical traceability and from the transformations of the perpetrators and their techniques. In order for *desaparicionforzada.co* to be a starting point and not a port of arrival depends on all of us²². ♦

22 Contact the team of *desaparicionforzada.co* at info@hrev.org

DESAPARICIONFORZADA.CO

Section MAPS: <https://colombia.desaparicionforzada.com/mapas/>

Section DATA AND SOURCES: <https://colombia.desaparicionforzada.com/datos-y-fuentes/>

Posts:

Data on the Forced Disappearance of Persons from the Attorney General's Office: <https://colombia.desaparicionforzada.com/los-datos-de-la-desaparicion-forzada-de-personas-de-la-fiscalia-general-de-la-nacion>

Data on the Forced Disappearance of Persons from the National Institute of Legal Medicine and Forensic Sciences: <https://colombia.desaparicionforzada.com/los-datos-de-la-desaparicion-forzada-de-personas-del-instituto-nacional-de-medicina-legal/>

Data on the Forced Disappearance of Persons from the Single Registry of Victims: <https://colombia.desaparicionforzada.com/datos-y-fuentes/registro-unico-victimas/>

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MISINFORMING BY INFORMING: OMISSIONS, CONFUSIONS AND DISTRACTIONS FROM OFFICIAL SOURCES

The analysis of the four sources of official information reveals a series of state, government and institutional policies that explain, to a large extent, the chaos and distortion surrounding public information on forced disappearance in Colombia. This is a summary of the findings by analysed source:

National Missing Persons Register (RND)

The National Missing Persons Register is the first and necessary step in initiating the search for victims and delivering justice. As illustrated below, state politics in Colombia does not seem interested in confronting this crime against humanity.

1. None of the institutions that, according to legal norms, have the obligation to enter cases into the RND are doing so diligently. The cases filed by the Office of the Attorney General show this, as a result of their being only partially integrated (*Desaparicionforzada.co*, 2019).
2. The lack of coordination among state institutions is recognised by those very same institutions, which even created a technical roundtable to purify the different data and records. To date without any result (CCEEU, 2016; CINUC, 2017).
3. The very design of the National Missing Persons Register (application forms, concepts, etc.) is clearly deficient. Although the Commission for the Search of Disappeared Persons (CBPD) is legally responsible for any changes in the designs or processes, the CBPD has shown that it does not have the ‘political will of the institutions involved in order to carry out the mission entrusted to it’ (MTDF & CCEEU, 2016). On the other hand, the institution that coordinates RND’s information
4. As the recently created Search Unit for Presumed Disappeared Persons (UBPD)³ knows, it is very easy for the current government to financially deactivate any of its institutions. Such has also been clearly seen in Mexico with the dilated inception of the recently created National Search Commission (CNB)⁴.
5. INMLCF has up to three systems for publishing information on forced disappearances: LIFE platform, Forensis (and Masatugó) annual reports and monthly data published by the Violence Observatory (all three available on INMLCF’s website). Although they should contain the same data, the different natures of the systems make verification difficult. Whenever we have been able to intend to do so, the results did not coincide.⁵

1 See for example: <http://bit.ly/2YfyqBG>

2 See for example: <http://bit.ly/2YfyqBG>

3 <http://bit.ly/31UZ2KE>

4 See for example: <http://bit.ly/31WAb9m>

5 We verified it by doing our missing women mapping. On the one hand, we added the municipal data of forced disappeared women from 1938 to 2014, published in the Masatugó 2009–2014, with the municipal data of the corresponding Forensis and the Observatory data until March 2019. On the other hand, we consulted the data in the RND at the end of March 2019 and the imbalance is 667 people. The RND registers 3,308 missing women presumably forced to disappear, compared to 2,641 in the total Masatugó-Forensis-Observatorio data on violence.

6. LIFE (Location of Forensic Statistical Information), the georeferenced public consultation application of the National Missing Persons Register, uses an obsolete platform that doesn't allow downloading or exporting data. This platform retains errors or inaccuracies due to its design and data. The application consists of two online maps ('Country total' and 'By department') where you can consult the data aggregated by department and abroad, in the first one, or divided by municipality for each department, in the second one. The total figures for Colombia should be the same in both maps, but the sum of all municipal data does not coincide with the sum of all departmental data. This in turn does not coincide with the national aggregate available in the external module 'Public consultations' (<http://190.26.211.139:8080/consultasPublicas/>). The problem seems to lie in the fact that in some departments, the departmental figure ('total country' map) differs from that of the sum of all the data of the municipalities that make up that same department ('by department' map). It is to be assumed that the imbalance may correspond to the disappearances of which the department is aware, but not the municipality (without information on the municipality of occurrence). But that is not all. During our consultation we found some other anomalies such as the lack of segregated municipal data for the department of Quindío; the inclusion in Chocó of the non-existent municipality of Belén de Bajirá that was only a municipality in the period 2000–2007 (the data should be counted in the municipality of Riosucio); the lack of data from some municipalities, the high record of forced disappearances in other sources, such as the Cordobes of Montería and Tierralta⁶; or the existence of a marker located in the middle of the ocean on the 'total country' map, in which all the data labelled as 'without information-Colombia' has been placed (we assume that this is without information from the department or municipality of occurrence). The INMLCF cannot ignore the fact that many of the criminals wanted to make the bodies of their victims disappear by throwing them

both into the rivers and in the sea. This location for victims who lack geographic information, is not only confusing, but also completely inadequate.

7. The political and conceptual 'turn' of Forensis 2017. Phrases such as 'Something is definitely happening and should be reviewed with another lens that reaches beyond explanations of the armed conflict' (p.246); '(...) it is clear that the bulk of the disappearances of persons in Colombia are due to socio-economic causes and not to the armed conflict, as indicated in the initial introduction' (p.507); 'in Colombia the phenomenon of forced disappearance due to armed conflict has been overestimated, leaving aside other typologies, thus preventing us from seeing the true magnitude and its causes' (p.520); 'it is respectfully suggested that the academic community and the corresponding institutions should redirect the focus that until now has taken the armed conflict as the main cause of the disappearance of people in Colombia towards new research topics' (p.521). The National Institute of Legal Medicine and Forensic Sciences of a country with at least 80,472 documented victims of forced disappearance and an internal armed conflict of at least five decades should not embrace such claims that dilute the responsibility and character of this crime against humanity.

FGN SPOA crime statistics

8. The Office of the Attorney General (FGN) is part of the aforementioned Commission for the Search of Disappeared Persons (CBPD), and therefore a participant in the inter-institutional chaos described above. It is also the largest contributor in the entry of disappeared persons into the registry: 59% of disappeared persons (all categories) and 70% presumed disappeared persons are forced into the National Missing Persons Register (RND) by the FGN (*desaparicionforzada.co*, 2019). Moreover, the INMLCF is hierarchically dependent on the FGN so any dysfunction or politicisation of the FGN influences the entire RND mechanism. The FGN's

6 At the time of writing, June 2019, data does appear for the municipality of Tierralta (346 persons whose disappearance is allegedly forced). Montería still has no data, and instead, the (much smaller) data for the municipality of Buenavista appears in its place.

‘strange’ press release, in its fourth delivery of reports to the Special Jurisdiction for Peace (JEP)⁷, illustrates perfectly the misuse, legal incoherence and clearly political ends, of the terminology used for forced disappearance. As an example, it is indicated that the Fuerzas Armadas Revolucionarias de Colombia-Ejército del Pueblo (FARC-EP) are investigated for forced disappearance and that agents of the state are investigated for the retention and permanent concealment of persons (FGN, 2018).

9. The internal chaos, the product of recent reforms and internal reorganisations (especially since the last one in 2014), has practically dismantled the structure of the FGN needed for the investigation of forced disappearance crimes. ‘In this context, the so-called Thematic Axis Against Forced Disappearance and Displacement was created. This structure notably replaced and weakened the one that functioned as the newly created Search Unit for Presumed Disappeared Persons (UBPD), which was closed without ever achieving satisfactory results’ (MTDF de CCEEU, 2016). Reforming what has already been reformed is a bureaucratic strategy for everything to remain the same: inoperative.

10. Since September 2018, the FGN has begun inputting data both on its website and on Colombia’s open data portal. The good news is that all that information has been published, in a standardised format and with some metadata. The bad news, however, is that the way it has been done doesn’t always allow them to crosscheck all variables (e.g., victims, cases and their procedural status at the same time). The worst thing is that between the publication of the data of victims on 10 September 2018 (35,871 victims of forced disappearance) and that of 10 January 2019 (54,046 victims of forced disappearance) there is too much of a difference in such a short time (18,175 victims!) with no explanation.

Single Registry of Victims (RUV)

11. Unlike the RND, which does not allow the download or export of data, and the FGN, which follows the most standardised formats, the RUV publishes 25 downloadable files without much consideration for standards and usability. Neither the format of the files, the metadata offered, nor the system for the organisation of these files is sufficient or efficient. It is especially complex to understand and interpret the avalanche of (poorly organised) data that does not allow for the cross-referencing of variables. Thus, for example, with public access data it is possible to know the year of the forced disappearance or the sex of the person, but not, simultaneously, whether the person is a direct or indirect victim (family member).

12. The figures of the files available for download do not correspond to the single victim figures, as they are aggregates of data organised according to different variables. Using any of the available data aggregates introduces a distortion in departmental and municipal data, the sum of which is higher than the national single-victim figure (the data are somewhat ‘inflated’). In this regard, the RUV is satisfied with warning that ‘the sum of the column “total of downloaded data” does not reflect the total of single victims because a person may have been victimised in one or several municipalities’. For the April data we obtain too high an imbalance of 1,318 direct victims and 5,470 indirect victims. This data is necessary for the mapping, but extremely inconsistent.

13. In its legal design, the RUV incorporated several serious defects. On the one hand, all the institutions created from the Victims and Land Restitution Law have an expiration date that is far too short, thus creating a somewhat uncertain future for the victims. On the other hand, it maintains a large problem of under-registration, either because it was the state that defined restrictively who were victims and who were not, or because victims are registered only since 1985, which is too short a time span to encompass the entire armed conflict. Alternatively,

⁷ <http://bit.ly/2Xwjn8>

it may be because many relatives are not aware of the existence of the RUV or are afraid to register (it should not be forgotten that the state itself is one of the perpetrators of this crime).

Memory and Conflict Observatory (OMC) of the National Centre of Historical Memory (CNMH)

14. The online publication of the OMC website and the publication of data on forced disappearance (1958–2018) has meant a real turnaround in the information on forced disappearance published by a Colombian state body. This does not mean that we endorse or do not keep our critical eye on data, categories or concepts. That simply means that we know the WHAT, HOW and WHY of the data they have published. That is a fair amount given the panorama of state information on forced disappearance.

15. Irrespective of the OMC and the published data, there is the CNMH as an institution. Because of its role in telling the story of what happened, this institution will always be subject to the ups and downs of the government in power and the political situation. In this regard, it should be mentioned that it has been strongly criticized by the Colombian military establishment, which does not forgive the *Basta ya!* (Enough is Enough!) report, as demonstrated by the extensive criticism in its *Memorias del camino a la victoria. Relatos de memoria de la Fuerza de Tarea Conjunta Omega* (Memoirs of the Road to Victory. Stories from the memory of the Omega Joint Task Force, FUTCO, 2016), the struggle for the inclusion of the Ministry of Defence in the board of the CNMH, or the very controversial election of the new director of the state body. On the other hand, it must also be highlighted that criticism has arisen from other sectors, of a radically different nature, such as the victims of the Patriotic Union (UP), who initiated tutelary action against the publication of the report of the CNMH on the genocide of the UP. ♦





WHAT DISAPPEARS WITH EVERY DISAPPEARED PERSON?

By *Paco Gómez Nadal*¹

On 10 September 1976, the dictatorship led by Augusto Pinochet stripped former Defence Minister, Orlando Letelier, of his Chilean nationality. It seemed that persecution and humiliation – after two years of exile and torture in various detention centres around the country – should end there. Letelier became a stateless refugee in the United States, a country that had been a necessary collaborator and accomplice for his victimisers to be in power.

A few days earlier, on August 26, Letelier had published an essay that has become a reference to understanding the perverse logics that are camouflaged behind the brutality of the worst human rights violations. It was titled *The ‘Chicago Boys’ in Chile: Economic Freedom’s Awful Toll*², and its publication in *The Nation* was part of Letelier’s frantic advocacy work against Chile’s military regime.

‘Human rights violations, the system of institutionalised brutality, the drastic control and the suppression of all forms of significant dissent are discussed – and often condemned – as a phenomenon only indirectly linked, or indeed completely disassociated, from the classic policies of absolute “free market” implemented by the Military Board. (...) This disconnection in the analysis has been particularly characteristic in public and private institutions, which have publicly praised and supported the economic policies adopted by Pinochet’s government, while lamenting the “bad image” the board has earned through its “incomprehensible” persistence in torturing, imprisoning and persecuting all its critics. (...) While

the “Chicago Boys” have provided an appearance of technical respectability to the *laissez-faire* dreams and to the political greed of the old agrarian oligarchy and high bourgeoisie of monopolists and financial speculators, the military has applied the required force to achieve these objectives. Repression of the majorities and “economic freedom” for small privileged groups are in Chile two sides of the same coin.’

Letelier’s line of argument was clear: it was not possible to disassociate arbitrary detentions, systematic torture and massive forced disappearances from the economic project that was intended to be imposed through terror and political subjugation.

25 days after publishing this article and 11 days after losing his nationality, Orlando Letelier was dismembered and left bleeding to death in the middle of Washington’s Massachusetts Avenue, along with his assistant – and activist – Ronni Moffitt. The ‘successful’ attack, organised by Chile’s dreaded National Intelligence Directorate (DINA) and its US CIA partners, saw once again, blood and pain obscuring the real goals after the violence. Neither the fact that the attack happened in Washington, nor its becoming an international scandal, prevented the enforced dictatorship in Chile from lasting for 14 years longer, nor its strongman, Augusto Pinochet, from maintaining his status as a ‘life senator’ until 2002.

In 2007, a year after Pinochet had died a natural death, Canadian essayist Naomi Klein published *The Doctrine of Shock*, an enlightening essay that interconnected economic and political phenomena across the globe to demonstrate how

¹ Journalist and essayist, HREV member and editor of Colombiaplural.com

² <https://www.thenation.com/article/the-chicago-boys-in-chile-economic-freedoms-awful-toll/>

the imposition of a devouring economic model at the service of elites had required strategies of terror, of real social shocks, to pave the way. ‘Some of the most despicable human rights violations of this century, which until now were considered acts of sadism perpetrated by undemocratic regimes, were in fact a deliberate attempt to terrorise the people, and were actively articulated in order to clear the way for introducing the radical “reforms” that would bring this longed-for free market. In 1970s Argentina, the Junta’s systematic “disappearances” policy eliminated more than thirty thousand people, most of whom were left-wing activists. Such a policy was an essential part of the economic reform suffered by the country as a consequence of the imposition of the Chicago School prescriptions. Something similar happened in Chile, where terror was the accomplice to the same kind of economic metamorphosis.’ [[♦See Map 16](#)]

But Klein also hit the nail on the head: ‘This intellectual firewall [that dissociates violence from the economic and political project] was not erected just because the Chicago School economists did not acknowledge any connection between their politics and the use of terror. The particular way in which these acts of terror were described as acts “against human rights” rather than as tools for clearly political and economic purposes, helped to reinforce it.’ She dared to say that ‘by focusing purely on crimes rather than the reasons that motivated them, the human rights movement also helped the Chicago School escape from its first bloody lab virtually without a scratch. (...) The refusal to establish a connection between the state terror apparatus and the ideological project it served is a common feature of almost all human rights literature of this period.’

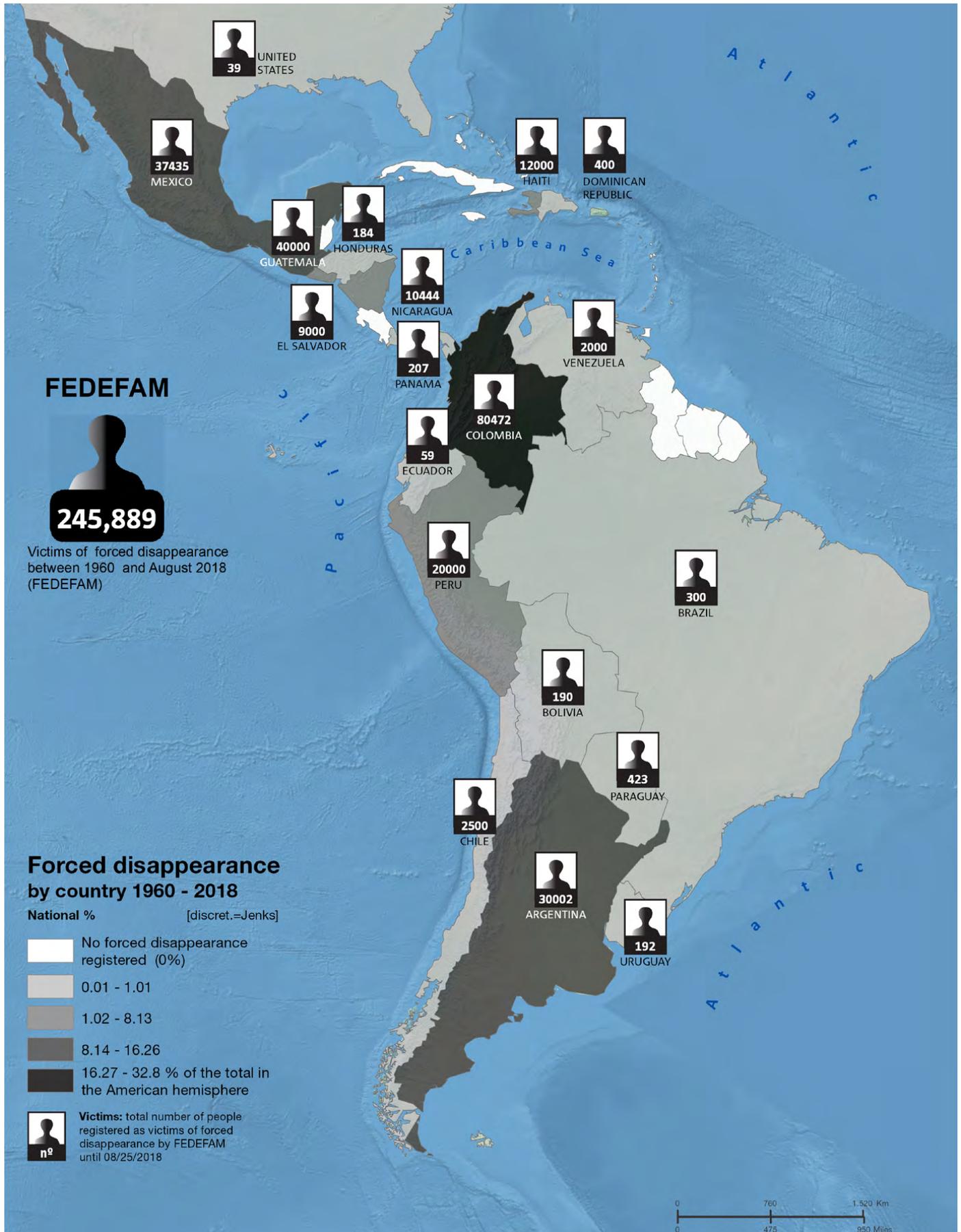
Before Naomi Klein and from that academic periphery that resonates so little

in colonised classrooms, the Cameroonian philosopher Achille Mbembe was much more direct and succinct in defining the devices of violence and their relationships with the economy: ‘A machine of war combines a plurality of functions. It has the traits of a political organisation and those of a commercial society. It acts through captures and depreciations and can yield enormous benefits [...] war machines forge direct links with transnational networks.’

Colombia. 2019

Letelier could have written about Argentina or Brazil ... in both cases he would have been right. He could also have written about this Colombia that already counts forcibly disappeared people by the tens of thousands, more than those registered in all of the Southern Cone in the 1970s. But in that hypothetical text, he would find difficult to dissect all the reasons behind the forced disappearance in the country. That is why the intention here is not to address the polyhedral reasons behind the name of each victim of forced disappearance in this long armed, political and social conflict that has bled the country. However, two clear ideas can be drawn from this *Cartography of Forced Disappearance in Colombia*: while tens of thousands of people have gone missing in a variety of circumstances that are difficult to list, an economic model of exploitation, dispossession and accumulation that could resemble a sophisticated long-breathed laboratory of the brutal forms of so-called post-capitalism (or radical neoliberalism) was being consolidated. The cartography proves that forced disappearance has been used methodically in the areas most affected by the so-called Colombian armed conflict (political, economic and social). [[♦See Map 11](#)] The latter, which could be interpreted as obvious, is not so evident to many sources and analysts in the country. ♦ □ 56

VICTIMS OF FORCED DISAPPEARANCE IN THE AMERICAS (FEDEFAM)





Wall of remembrance and memory where relatives and neighbours remember the victims of the Trujillo Massacre. © Rodrigo Grajales.

On the one hand, the repeated denial of conflict – due to both Uribism in the 21st century, and the military and economic elites that were there for decades – seeks to disassociate the violation of human rights from war. On the other hand, official and unofficial sources – from the Public Prosecutor’s Office to some media – permanently disseminate that the disappearance of a leader, a trade unionist or a social agent, has more to do with their personal life or the supposed criminal activities than with politics: an affair, a personal vendetta, an unpaid debt, a settling of old scores between gangs ... any excuse is good to disassociate forced disappearance from its intellectual

victimisers and the underlying reasons for it. This is a very convenient social, criminal and political unknown.

Or, as the Argentine dictator, Jorge Rafael Videla, explained, ‘the disappeared person is an unknown element, as long as they remain missing. If they were found they would be treated as X; if they were found to be dead, as Z. But while they are just missing, there is no protocol to apply to them. They are just an unknown, a missing person, someone without entity, someone who is just not there ... Neither dead nor alive, just missing.’³

It could be said, without overstating it, that if there is a violation of human rights that confirms the contemporary validity of *homo sacer*, a being whose murder has no repercussions since their life has no value (*naked life*, the ancient Roman concept rescued by Giorgio Agamben), this violation is forced disappearance. This crime, anchored at the root of the Colombian necropolitical⁴ state, does not seem to move the national consciousness or shake up the legal structures even though it goes unpunished in 99.51% of all cases. These levels of impunity would be unbearable in the instance of other crimes such as corruption. [♦See Map 18] In Colombia, a country that accumulates paradoxes and ethical dispossession, the state itself has been documenting the horror, or its memory, for years.

The report *Hasta Encontrarlos* (Until They Are Found), published in 2016 by the

3 Response of General Videla to journalist José Ignacio López at a press conference held on 13 December 1979.

4 The concept of Necropolitics was coined by Cameroonian Achille Mbembe who used it to point out the sovereignty of power based on the decisions of those who matter and those who do not, and therefore who deserves to live or die. A few years ago, Mbembe himself nuanced and expanded on his idea by going deeper into its complexity. He pointed out three characteristic features of the state of death that we inhabit: states where the exception has become the rule, sovereignties where the central project is the widespread instrumentalisation of human existence and sovereignties where power appeals to the emergency, and a ‘phantasmatic’ notion of the enemy.

National Centre for Historical Memory (CNMH), a state institution now 'assailed' by the state itself, identified at least three purposes in forced disappearance: '(1) Punishing political and social ideologies and practices and leaving sobering messages aimed at inhibiting them; (2) generating terror in order to gain and exercise control, thanks to the symbolic potential of this crime, and (3) concealing crimes by eliminating the bodies of their victims and erasing evidence, in order to prevent these crimes from ever being tried or to manipulate and misrepresent the figures.'

But the CNMH made the same mistake of analysing violence 'only' as such. Many questions could be added to the purposes it identifies: why social or political ideologies or practices are being inhibited, who benefits from stopping them, what is the relationship between political dissent and the success or failure of certain dispossession policies, who gives the order to generate terror, what for, who benefits from the manipulation of the figures, why is the judicial apparatus complicit in the prevailing impunity, to what necropower strategies does the systematic forced disappearance of people serve?

The absence, the mark.

Let's say that forced disappearance could be identified as a punitive tactic designed by, and in order to benefit particular sectors of the country. It could be framed as one of the four great sanction tactics pointed out by Michel Foucault⁵: marking⁶. The

'mark' implies leaving an indelible mark on 'the body, whether this body is visible or symbolic, physical or social, anatomical or statutory'. In his last exhibition⁷ the artist Fernando Arias used polyethylene boards like those used by butchers. He found an analogy in Paloquemao market between what happens on those boards and what happens in Colombian society.

He explains that 'the textures/wounds on the boards become scars. The bad smells stuck inside the cracks had to disappear, all traces of blood had to be erased. And so, I did it over and over again, as it is done in our country's reality, so that common people continue to believe that nothing ever happened here. Blood and bad smell disappear, but the scar, the mark, does not.'

We return to Foucault to understand that 'in the marking, it is easy to realise to what extent death is a specific physical operation, a work on the body, a ritualised way of inscribing the marks of power on an individual's [or the society's] body, their guilty status or a way to record the memory of the fault at least in the viewer's dread.'

In *Hasta Encontrarlos* it is clear that 'the marking and stigmatisation that may have motivated the violent event [forced disappearance] extends to the victim's kith and kin, and to the community. Fear of being attacked by armed people stimulates the breakdown of the social fabric. There is a fracture and a growing distance in the social and community relations with those who have been victimised. They are generated as a kind of self-protection. This

⁵ *La sociedad punitiva*. 2016, Fondo de Cultura Económica de Argentina (Spanish edition of Foucault's *The Punitive Society - Lectures at the Collège de France*)

⁶ The other three, according to the biopower philosopher, are: 'Exclusion, Organisation of and imposition of compensation and Lockdown'.

⁷ The exhibition is called '0566', responding to the number of social leaders killed since the peace agreement with the FARC was signed until the exhibition opening date: 28 March 2019. An electronic counter has been updating that figure at the display.

creates conditions for domination and control. In a context where solidarity and support are broken and the community is immobilised, the new behaviours and dynamics create the required scenario for the armed actors to become the authority.

Terror becomes collective, but nothing seems casual. For the construction of this text we asked people with diverse life experiences within Colombian society: a journalist who has walked the conflict endlessly, a woman who was a popular leader committed to marginalised sectors and a man who went into exile because of the armed conflict. Their names will not be mentioned here for obvious reasons, but they are indeed three qualified testimonies. The exiled believes that the main goal of forced disappearance is generating collective terror. He also believes that we should be aware of 'the classist and racist mentality of traditional sectors of power that leads to an explicit disregard for the lives of those dissenting from the model of society imposed by those privileged sectors'. Power, imposed model, dissent... Our witness also makes a connection with the logic derived from the shock doctrine imported into Latin America: 'Forced disappearance expresses the criminal nature of the security policies implemented by the state in its subaltern role to the security doctrine designed by Washington for the hemisphere. It also speaks of the inability or disdain of the traditional Colombian political class and institutions to undertake real changes towards modernisation, as well as of their interest in shielding and sustaining semi-feudal forms of income and land tenure. They use almost medieval methods to impose fear and punish the disobedient.'

The 'punishment', the 'brand', the punitive society that keeps the real and potential wayward ones at bay appears in almost every analysis. The journalist alerts about the evolution of the crime against humanity. In other words, it is already difficult to confine it to traditional legal definitions that weaved it in a direct and almost exclusively relationship with state actors. He explains that 'the matter had a very political nuance, especially in the eighties, with the National Security Statute implemented by President Julio César Turbay, which removed the muzzle from the military allowing for the torture and killing of opponents at a dramatic moment when left-wing forces had taken on a lot of relevance. But later, even though it still has political tints, it can no longer be said that the drama of the disappeared is only a product of the official repression. They have all been there: the narcos who hide the bodies to conceal evidence in their own vendettas, guerrillas who execute and bury in the bush, common crime ... Disappearing the corpse is a customary custom that everyone re-enacts.'

The custom settles in time and the tactics of terror spread. The Mexican essayist and philosopher Sayak Valencia would talk about the 'violence hypernormalisation', or as she expressed, 'Violence is becoming an ecosystem and a space of production of meaning: death semiotics'⁸.

The base leader defines it in a less academic, but more direct way: 'Contradicting any position in Colombia means finding yourself at risk of forced disappearance already, and I mean all of Colombia's armed groups, entering wherever and breaking the rules of the actor is enough reason to lose your right to life or to a life in peace. But I am much more interested by the role played by the

⁸ Martínez Andrade, Luis. *Feminismos a la contra* (Reverse feminism. Interviews of the global south), Editorial La Vorágine, 2019.

Colombian state, another dangerous actor, who for decades has been hiding the dark atrocities committed. I am just amazed at the lack of public solidarity; we seem to be acculturated on the subject and have become indifferent, indolent.’

Valencia believes, in consonance with our witness, that there is a ‘socialisation’ of violence, a kind of justification that converts the population into a quiet accomplice to crimes as brutal as forced disappearance. ‘You have to feel bad for being poor, therefore you must jump on the bandwagon of modernity and progress, through the neoliberal project, but you didn’t warn us that perhaps the price for accessing modernity would be to arrive to it in a coffin. We were not told that the manifest destiny of excolonial populations is to be post-mortem-ists.’

Utility

The CNMH report shows the immediate usefulness of the criminal act of disappearance beyond the deeper reasons. Their report speaks of three specific objectives that ultimately seek to conceal violence: the invisibilisation of the perpetrator’s responsibility, the masking of the dimensions of the exercise of violence and the manipulation of the figures on in-combat casualties.

In the first case, the perverse relationship between forced disappearance and impunity is explained, ‘Armed groups conceal victims or their bodies to avoid being attributed violent events, as these constitute irrefutable proof of their criminal activity. This means that, given the absence of evidence, the victims cannot prove their complaints; it also means, that the perpetrator’s responsibility becomes distorted and the traces of violence on the bodies are covered up.’



Pilgrimage in May 2018 of the relatives of the victims of the massacre in Trujillo. The bodies of the victims were thrown into the Cauca River.

📷 Rodrigo Grajales

Indeed, some passages of the report suggest that international and national pressure in the late 1990s around the violation of human rights in Colombia encouraged perpetrators to gradually replace targeted killing by disappearance. ‘It is no coincidence’, the investigators note, ‘that from 2001, forced disappearance prevails over targeted killings in the repertoire of paramilitary violence within the armed conflict. The AUC [*Autodefensas Unidas de Colombia*, (United Self-Defence Forces of Colombia)] considered their declaration as a terrorist group as an obstacle to their political recognition, so since then, it became a priority to reinforce the concealment of violence, but also to consider the option of political negotiation and demobilisation.’ The paradox (the more human rights demands, the greater the number of disappearances) appeared terrifyingly years after it had happened.

The second purpose (masking the dimensions of the exercise of violence) looks into the areas controlled by legal or illegal armed groups. These are, in most cases, ‘civilians [killed] and fighters from illegal groups, whose corpses do not appear – the latter buried clandestinely and executed in settlements of old scores or in court martial trials.’

Demobilised paramilitary commanders also confessed that this ‘masking’ was essential in order to prevent murder numbers from

growing in the departments where they operated, and therefore, to avoid drawing attention from national or International agencies.

In *Hasta Encontrarlos*, it is finally explained that the ‘manipulation of the figures on in-combat casualties, has had two expressions in the armed conflict in Colombia: the concealment of fighter’s corpses who died in clashes, usually belonging to subversive groups; and the practice of identity change on people presented as killed-in-combat against the National Army [false positives]’.

The researchers make a point on reminding us that the famous ‘false positives’ did not begin with Uribe’s ‘Democratic Security’. Maybe they became widespread then, but killing civilians and presenting the victim as a decommissioned guerrilla has been a recurring practice in the military. In fact, in 2019, The New York Times unveiled a new military strategy designed to increase rebels’ casualties in exchange for incentives. The news generated such an aggressive reaction from political sectors within Uribism that both the author and the photographer had to flee the country.

To follow on, this case contained in the database of the MOVICE, *Movimiento Nacional de Víctimas de Crímenes de Estado* (National Movement of Victims of State Crimes) may be illustrative: ‘A soldering assistant disappeared, tortured and killed by members of the Bagre military base, under major Orlando Alvarado, attached to the 11th infantry battalion, Junín, who was arrested in the sector known as La Cornalise. Hoffman was captured by the military at 2:30 a.m. and they kicked him, then gave him electric discharges, stripped him naked and threw him into the waters of the Tiguí River (...) His body was found lifeless during the Cuturú departmental police inspection in the municipality of Caucasia. The event was reported to César

Gaviria Trujillo, at the time a minister of the government. The commander of the 2nd Brigade, Brigadier General César Eugenio Barrios Ramírez, in a public statement on 1 April 1987, covered up the murder of three peasants at the hands of the same military base of Bagre. The statement claimed that they were guerrillas “decommissioned in combat”. Brutal, yes; random, not at all.

It is worth rescuing from our brief survey some authorised voices, a fourth opinion, of a collective of Colombians working for peace from outside the country – because doing it from inside would make them *homo sacer*. Their assessment of the final meaning of forced disappearance is illuminating and integrates many of the elements pointed out by the CNMH: ‘[forced disappearance] allows for a greater impact on the victim (whether an individual, a family or a community) and ensures greater room for impunity for the perpetrators. Greater terror, impunity, social and family rupture, re-enacting of the traumatic event for the relatives and political and social environment of the disappeared person. And it responds to an enabling context for the victimiser, helped by training manuals with decades of perfection in repressive practices’.

The denial, the power, the project

The living characters who populate this text have repeatedly pointed out the concealment, the silence, the dense veil that causes the tens of thousands of forcibly disappeared people and their relatives to look like a footnote in a national history book saturated with footnotes. Foucault believes that ‘the concealment, the denial of the civil war, the claim that the civil war does not exist, is one of the first axioms of the exercise of power’.

What hides behind forced disappearance is the exercise of power oriented towards

achieving certain ends. Such goals translate into complex networks that make difficult, but not impossible, reaching the project of origin controlling the mechanisms of forced disappearance.

Colombia is not the only place where these networks operate and perhaps a current parallel laboratory is Mexico. Anthropologist Olimpia Muñoz Ojeda, who has studied the repercussions of this crime in the Mexican state of Jalisco, says that the phenomenon of forced disappearance ‘is more complex than just saying that this is a matter of violence and its result. You see those networks with the state and you have a lot of threads to go through and investigate. We are gradually moving away from the temptation of blaming everything on the narcos – who may, indeed, be the most important element, but everything can be reduced to that – there are other interests of capital using disappearance. Human rights defenders and indigenous peoples are told “either you calm down or watch out for what is coming your way” and that does not happen just in Jalisco.’

These networks, these normalised intrigues of terror – or this ‘pedagogy of cruelty’, in the words of Rita Segato – have a history. Forced disappearance is not a new phenomenon, nor is the erasure of its traceability a 21st century trend. Large corporations have exercised it from parallel governments since the formal independence of Latin America. Regular or irregular local armies and mercenaries – let’s remember the filibuster William Walker – have basically served to protect their interests or extend their power. Chilean sociologist Marcos Roitman Rosenmann explains that at the beginning of the twentieth century, ‘state and oligarchic nation [in Latin America] were one and

the same thing. Countries were managed as private estates and their inhabitants considered as slaves or tenants, but never citizens. The plutocracy felt like lords and masters of the territory.’⁹

This went on until the border power struggles between the elites were gradually solved, and the worker and peasant movements got organised and started claiming their fundamental rights. That plutocracy interpreted the claims as an intolerable internal aggression, and the war against the ‘tenants’ has not ceased ever since. The breaking point was perhaps in 1959. When on January 1 of that year, the triumphant ‘bearded’ entered Havana, the oligarchies of the continent, with the help of the true owners of the capital, the United States, decided to crush the revolutionary utopia by any imaginable method.

The fear of the revolution of nobodies, of the ‘tenants’, imposed an inversed military logic: the inner enemy. Latin American armies and security forces have not guarded borders or seek international conflicts for decades. All energy – and perversity – is focused within borders. As Roitman recalls, ‘the National Security Doctrine, the internal enemy, the anti-subversive fight, the notion of total war, the low-intensity wars and the covert actions weave a plot where imperialism and the industrial–military–financial complex, led by the United States, stand in an exceptional position.’

Then ... what’s behind the forced disappearance? The same thing behind the forced mass displacement, the threats, the murder of journalists, the armed coups of the 1970s, the ‘legal’ or parliamentary coups of the 21st century ... a series of economic macroprojects led by stateless

♦ 64

9 Roitman Rosenmann, Marcos (2019). *Por la razón o la fuerza. Historia y memoria de los golpes de Estado, dictaduras y resistencias en América Latina* (By reason or force. History and memory of coups, dictatorships and resistances in Latin America) Akal, Madrid.

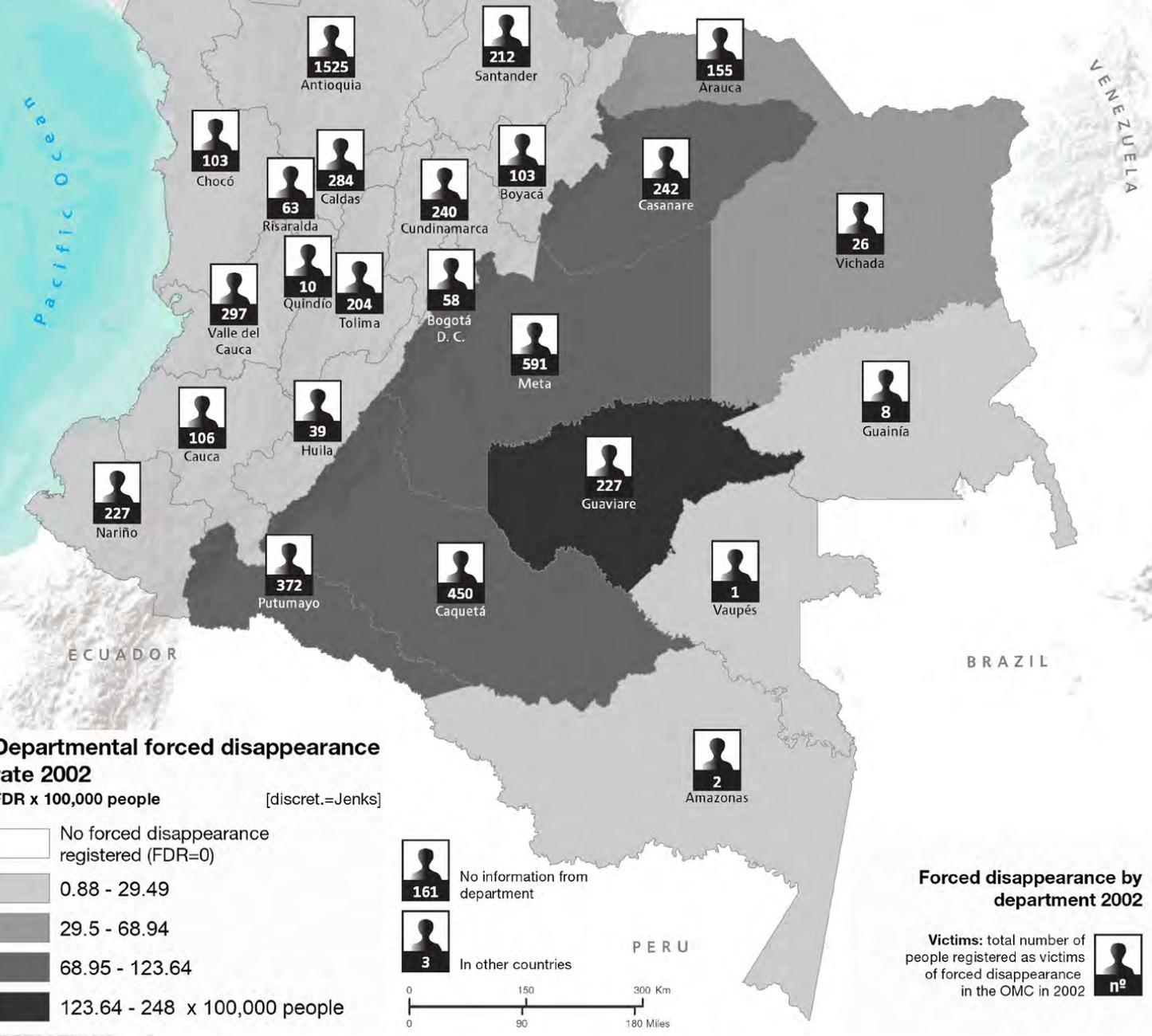
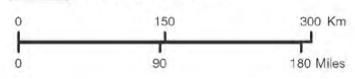
2002: THE YEAR OF THE GREAT CATASTROPHE. ANNUAL HIGH OF FORCED DISAPPEARANCES



National forced disappearance rate 2002
19.27
x 100,000 people

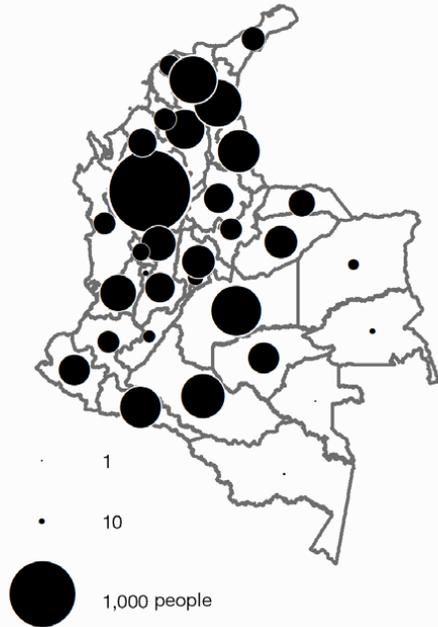


Forced disappearance by department 2002
Victims: total number of people registered as victims of forced disappearance in the OMC in 2002



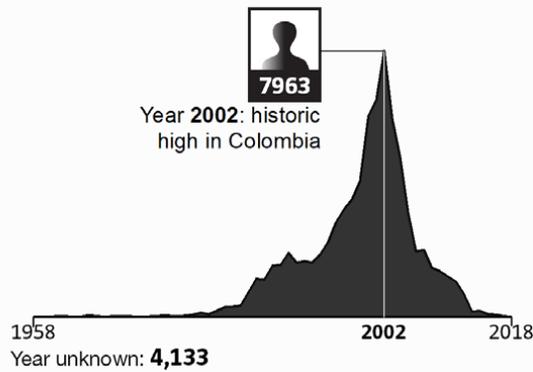
Sources | Data: Memory and Conflict Observatory (OMC) of the National Center for Historical Memory (CNMH), September 2018 · DANE, population projections, 2010 revision · Icons: Creando, 2017 · Base layers: DANE, IDEAM, ESRI, USGS, NOAA

Victims of forced disappearance in 2022 (OMC) [Proportional]



Those responsible for the state headquarters in 2002: outgoing President **Pastrana** and newly elected **Uribe Vélez** (May 2002)

Forced disappearance by year (OMC)



OMC
(CNMH)



Victims (persons) of forced disappearance in **6,553** cases (events) documented by the OMC (CNMH) in 2002

Forced disappearance of persons in 2002 according to other sources

UARIV



Single Register of Victims (RUV)
Direct victims | Indirect victims
(01/04/2019)

INMLCF



INMLCF (RN of NN & BPD, GCRNV, SIRDEC)
Alleged forced disappearance persons
(June 2017)

Departmental forced disappearance rate 2002

FDR x 100,000 people [discret.=Jenks]

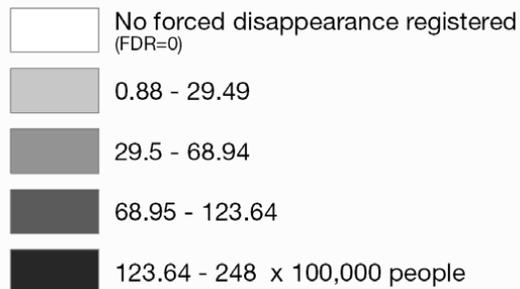




Image of *Magdalenas por el Cauca*, artistic intervention in the Cauca River by Gabriel Posada. In 2008, he reproduced the face of Rosa Elena Montoya, who died in 2011 without being able to recover the body of her missing son.

elites – money seems not to have a home country – that continue to be seen in Latin America – and, of course, Colombia – as a property from which to extract juicy capital gains in exchange for very little investment and with little resistance.

If the terrible Security Statute, implemented by the Government of Julius César Turbay between 1978 and 1982, was the response of an elite-controlled state to the subversive organisations of the time, that still dreamed of taking power and building state alternatives of socialist inspiration, the end of the twentieth century is marked by the retake of territorial control by the landowners in cahoots with the military forces. If the ‘ideological’ coverage of paramilitarism in the late 1990s was the anti-subversive fight, now it is a complex low-intensity war

related to territorial control, illicit crops and economic megaprojects (which go from hydrocarbons to dams, from agribusiness to tourism ...).

It is no coincidence that the year with the highest historical record of forced disappearances in Colombia is 2002, with 7,963 (National Centre for Historical Memory)[[♦SEE Map 17](#)]. In that year the implementation of the so-called Plan Colombia (PC) began: the Washington-subsidised militarisation of the country that Andrés Pastrana signed with Bill Clinton, key to the interior colonisation project led by Alvaro Uribe Vélez. According to the Colombian government’s own *Departamento Nacional de Planificación* (National Planning Department, DNP), the PC was an injection of \$9.6 billion from the United States and \$131 billion from the Colombian State that mainly went to fund the war (72%). The country’s business elites benefited in many ways without staining their hands with blood: the ‘new Military Forces’, on the offensive and reassembled, seized territory from the guerrillas, allowed for the flourishing of powerful forces, eliminated local dissent and, at the same time, increased in 11.6% exports to the United States.

In addition, as recognised by the DNP in its Plan Colombia balance sheet, ‘the PC provided an auspicious scenario for the extension of the current trade treaty (ATPA) in a new tariff agreement of the ATPDEA (Andean Trade Promotion and Drug Eradication Act)’. It was, as acknowledged by Washington, an economic ‘compensation’ for ‘commitment’ in the fight against drugs. The ATPDEA was functional until the 2012 bilateral Colombia–US Free Trade Agreement was signed. It entered into force in May that year.

Once again, the industrial–military–

financial complex operated smoothly during this period while 32,249 people¹⁰ were disappeared in the country between 1996 – the start of paramilitary expansion – and 2005 with Plan Colombia’s heyday and the total war unleashed by Uribe’s government under the euphemistic name of *Seguridad Democrática* (Democratic Security).

- The National Centre for Historical Memory itself presents the chronology of forced disappearance in the country as follows:
- 1970–1981. The irruption of forced disappearance: ‘containing the communist threat’.
- 1982–1990. The generalisation of forced disappearance: a changing war in a turbulent context.
- 1991–1995. Containment of forced disappearance: de-escalating and re-accommodating armed conflict in a new context.
- 1996–2005. The explosion of forced disappearance: paramilitary expansion, guerrilla strengthening and state crisis.
- 2006–2015. Disappearance decreases, but it doesn’t stop: false positives, the hatching of post-demobilisation groups and weakening of the guerrillas.

The disappearance of the disappearance

The context following the signing of the Final Peace Agreement between the government and the now-defunct guerrilla Revolutionary Armed Forces of Colombia – People’s Army (FARC-EP) in November

CHRONOLOGY OF DISAPPEARANCES

1958-1969	102
1970-1981	538
1982-1990	8,797
1991-1995	8,965
1996-2005	47,844
2006-2015	10,032
2016-2018	61
Unknown year	4,133

Source: OMC-CNMH.

2016 spread hope and expectations among the relatives of the victims of forced disappearance. Self-controlled hope and expectations since in Colombia there is too much history of betrayed agreements and commitments.

The agreements brought in a new entity that replaced those that failed before. The new one is called *Unidad de Búsqueda de Personas Dadas por Desaparecidas*, Search Unit for Presumed Disappeared Persons (UBPD) and its mandate covers all disappearances in the context of the conflict, i.e. not only the persons who have been forcibly disappeared are included, but also irregular fighters whose whereabouts are unknown or whose bodies have not been recovered. The UBPD is led by a renowned human rights defender, Luz Marina Monzón, but the reality is that under the current government the UBPD has suffered the same cuts as the *Comisión para el Esclarecimiento de la Verdad, la Convivencia y la No Repetición* (Commission for the Clarification of Truth, Coexistence and Non-Repetition, CEVCNR). This lack of political will foretells an uncertain future for the UBPD.

According to Monzón, in an ideal world, the UBPD should find the whereabouts of some 120,000 disappeared persons, and the *Comisión de la Verdad* (Truth Commission) – as it is known in short –

¹⁰ *Hasta Encontrarlos* Report (National Centre of Historical Memory, CNMH).

FORCED DISAPPEARANCES BY PRESIDENTIAL PERIOD (1958–2018)

President	Period	Victims	President	Period	Victims
Military Board Period	1958	2	César Gaviria	1990-1994	6,612
Alberto Lleras Camargo	1958-1962*	29	Ernesto Samper	1994-1998	11,178
Guillermo León Valencia	1962-1966	52	Andrés Pastrana	1998-2002	22,986 **
Carlos Lleras Restrepo	1966-1970	33	Álvaro Uribe Vélez	2002-2006	17,856
Misael Pastrana Borrero	1970-1974	46	Álvaro Uribe Vélez	2006-2010	6,216 ***
Alfonso López Michelsen	1974-1978	103	Juan Manuel Santos	2010-2014	2,428
Julio César Turbay	1978-1982	569	Juan Manuel Santos	2014-2018	214 ****
Belisario Betancur	1982-1986	2,145			
Virgilio Barco	1986-1990	587	Unknown year		4,133

* The Military Governing Board handed over the power on 7 August. From then on all periods are regular (7 August–7 August, from Lleras Camargo's 2nd period.)

** Maximum per four-year period

*** Maximum number of cases registered per president 24,072 (two Uribe periods).

**** 2,642 in Santos' two periods.

Source: OMC-CNMH

should determine the causes and reasons for these disappearances. In the midst of an armed conflict that does not end, but reconfigures itself, hundreds of people are engaged in this effort against many of the dominant powers, with very few economic and human resources. They fight also against the indifference of a public opinion that has been deprived of the 'moral imagination'¹¹ that would help them understand the pain caused by the persistent aggression against humanity that forced disappearance is.

In the words of Günter Anders: 'we must fight not just evil, but also stupidity, understanding as such a lack of imagination.' This lack of imagination and brutal media silence about the causes of forced disappearance across the country make the murder and concealment of the bodies of tens of thousands of people seem like only collateral damage of a 'development' fuelled by blood. ♦

11 A term highlighted by Günter Anders as a key element whose absence creates a gap between 'action' and its 'consequences' in Anders, G. (2010), *Mas alla de los limites de la conciencia* (Beyond The Limits of Consciousness, Spanish Edition), Barcelona, Paidós.





LOOKING FOR THEM IN A JUNGLE OF IMPUNITY

By *Adriana Arboleda Betancur*¹

Colombia, despite being a country with a woeful record of forced disappearances – as shown in this cartography – it only began to recognise this form of serious human rights violations less than two decades ago, even though the Constitution of 1991 stated in Article 12: ‘No one shall be subjected to forced disappearance, torture or cruel, inhuman or degrading treatment or punishment.’ This explains the high importance of victims’ family members and their organisations in achieving a legal framework to prevent crime, a real search for the missing, and a guarantee for victims’ rights, in line with international standards.

After the cycle of violence in the 40s and 50s, a form of counter-insurgency violence against any individual or collective considered a suspect or enemy of the establishment became consolidated in the country. Selective methods of aggression have been used to attack those who are considered enemies and must therefore be eliminated. The practice of forced disappearances as a state crime was one of the several strategies towards this goal implemented in the 1970s and 1980s. This form of political violence, based on the exercise of terror and on completely stripping those who suffer from it of their humanity, has been implemented using strategies of impunity that ensure that the state, its governments and its agents are not persecuted criminally and that the bodies of the victims are never found. Impunity is the essence of crime; it is part of its identity and represents the essential core of this serious violation of human rights that is now considered a crime against humanity.

This explains why until Law 599 of 2000, that criminalised the crime of forced disappearance, the non-recognition of this form of aggression in criminal law made difficult not only its prevention, but also the investigation of the facts. Hence, these events were treated as simple kidnappings. There were also a number of rules favouring perpetrators and thus, provoking an increase in the number of cases, while leaving family members looking for their loved ones, without the possibility of legal action.

Julius César Turbay Ayala’s government (1978–1982), was characterised by a systematic violation of human rights. During this period the National Security Statute² was passed, which not only restricted citizen rights, but also granted broad powers to military forces, military criminal justice systems and intelligence agencies. The rule made mass and arbitrary detentions easier and consequently led to forced disappearances and the absence of criminal investigation of the facts. The circle of impunity began with the stigmatisation and labelling of victims that are referred to as guerrillas, or helpers of the insurgency, in the reports of military intelligence. Later, it was the military who could detain people without any judicial control. They used that power to make people disappear in covert acts or with the support of paramilitary structures. This came full circle when the armed forces were allowed to investigate political crimes by applying military criminal justice. Although it is not the military today that see to all the actions, the system remains and impunity continues to reign.

The existence of norms that provide special powers to the military and police

¹ Human rights defender and director of the Corporación Jurídica Libertad (CJL).

² Decree 1923 of 6 September 1978.

partly explains the high number of forced disappearances that surpass the statistics for the same crime in the Southern Cone's dictatorships. According to the National Centre of Historical Memory (2016), between 1970 and 1981, 485 cases of forced disappearance were registered, of which 439 remain missing. Subsequently, forced disappearances became widespread between 1982 and 1990, a period in which 6,528 victims were documented (269 of the crimes were committed in 1982). All of them remain in impunity and no military personnel have ever been convicted for these acts.

By the mid-1980s, other patterns emerged that added to the practice of arbitrary detention, and favour the rise of forced disappearance: first, the creation of clandestine detention centres within the facilities of security agencies, such as the F2 or the military brigades, where the victims were tortured, killed and subsequently disappeared (as was in the case of the Palace of Justice). Later, momentum and expansion of the paramilitary strategy ensured that the military would not be investigated or tried for the crimes. First, death squads and later, paramilitary blocs, were responsible for directly committing the crimes or supporting covert actions by the military. The paramilitary project as a state policy allowed the counter-insurgency doctrine of the internal enemy to be applied. The goal was to wipe out the political opposition – as happened with the genocide of the Patriotic Union – and to control the territories. This was carried out in total impunity by state agents, governments, politicians and civilians who benefited from this strategy. These actors also profited from the fact that the crime of forced disappearance did not exist in

the legal system at that time. The cases reported by organisations and families were documented as missing people or simple abductions, thereby distorting the magnitude of the crime.

That is why investigations, such as those carried out by the National Centre of Historical Memory, find that the state was responsible for about three thousand cases only. This would represent only about 7% of the disappearances which happened throughout the armed conflict, much less than the responsibility attributable to the guerrillas, 24.3%, and the paramilitaries, 62.3%. 'Of those cases where the perpetrator is known, 52%, the distribution is as follows: paramilitary groups 26,475 (62.3%); guerrillas 10,360 (24.3%); post-demobilisation groups 2,764 (6.5%); state agents 2,484 (5.8%); state agents-paramilitary groups 388 (0.9%). Total number of recorded cases: 42,471.'³

The absence of a specific regulation on crime prevention and punishment, coupled with the paramilitary strategy, have helped the occurrence of crime and its ongoing impunity. In addition, the cases between the 1970s and 2000s are not only the least investigated, but also, there is no clear search and clarification strategy that might allow families to have clarity about what happened to their loved ones. About 99% of the events remain as forced disappearance, without any knowledge of what happened to the victims. That is to say, families are not only affected by the disappearance but they are also suffering as a result of the structural impunity of a state that assaults them and then refuses to investigate and punish those responsible.

³ <http://www.centrodememoriahistorica.gov.co/noticias/noticias-cmh/en-colombia-82-998-personas-fueron-desaparecidas-forzadamente>.

The crime of forced disappearance in Colombia

There are both international laws issued by the United Nations – many of which were subscribed to by Colombia – and international jurisprudence establishing the state's duty to ensure respect for victims' rights, to investigate crimes and punish those responsible, to adapt their internal regulation to match international standards, to compensate victims for the harm caused and to prevent crime. Despite all of this, Colombia only began to adapt its legislation with the issuance of the new Criminal Code, Law 599 of 2000, which established in article 165 the crime of forced disappearance.

Article 165 of the Penal Code: 'The individual who subjects another person to deprivation of his/her freedom whatever the form, followed by the concealment and refusal to recognise such deprivation or to give information on their whereabouts, depriving them of the protection of the law, will incur prison...?'

However, the way in which the criminal definition was established undermines the nature of the disappearance as a state crime, stating that it is a common crime that can be committed by any person, rather than a conduct that compromises the responsibility of state agents. In its original definition it was even stated that the individual should belong to an illegal armed group, though this was declared unconstitutional by the Constitutional Court. Contrary to the Criminal Code, the International Convention against Forced Disappearance defines it as:

'... arrest, detention, abduction or any other

form of deprivation of liberty **that are the work of state agents, or by people or groups of people acting with the authorisation, support or acquiescence of the state**, followed by the refusal to recognise such deprivation of liberty or the concealment of the fate or whereabouts of the missing person, depriving them of the protection of the law⁴.

This contradiction between national and international law favours the Colombian state and prevents the judicial power from being forced to investigate cases in depth, and therefore from establishing institutional responsibilities in the commission of crimes. Lacking a solid investigation methodology means that no criminality patterns, no contexts in which forced disappearances occurred, nor characteristics of the victims are ever established. In this context, analysis of the main perpetrators becomes neglected even to a greater degree. This is why 99% of all cases remain in total impunity, archived and forgotten on the shelves of oblivion of Colombian justice.

In addition, there is a lack of commitment and political will of the institutions and officials in charge of the matter. Not only do they fail to comply with the mechanisms established in the broad regulations that exist in the country on the issue today, but they also fail to advance the recommendations of the United Nations Working Group nor those of the United Nations Committee Against Forced Disappearances. Persistently, victims' and human rights organisations have questioned the lack of corrective measures on the procedures that promote impunity and do not guarantee the search for victims:

♦ □73

4 International Convention for the Protection of All Persons from Forced Disappearance, Article 2. Law 1418 of 2010. Review of Constitutionality: Judgment C-620 of 2011. Bold sections not part of the original text.

IMPUNITY FOR THE CRIME OF FORCED DISAPPEARANCE BY DEPARTMENT (OMC/SPOA)



Impunity for forced disappearance in Colombia



99.51%
Impunity

Calculated for cases of forced disappearance registered by the OMC, based on the procedural status of the cases in the SPOA



Impunity calculated for cases of forced disappearance registered by the OMC, based on the procedural status of the cases in the SPOA

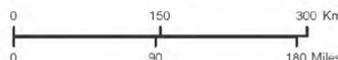
Proportionality (%) [discret.=Jenks]

- No cases registered
- 50% (less impunity)
- 51 - 98.34%
- 98.4 - 99.49%
- 99.5 - 100% (total impunity)

Only **337** crimes (cases) of forced disappearance committed in Colombia are at the stage of execution of sentences (SPOA, 10/10/2018)



Cases (crimes) Victims (persons) of forced disappearance documented by the OMC (1958-2018)



‘Similarly, investigation-wise, procedures are not clearly regulated to prevent state officials or authorities from, on the grounds of reserve information or national security, hindering urgent search mechanisms, the effectiveness of judicial investigations, or from denying access to military installations (art. 13.2 of the Declaration and article 12.3 of the Convention), or to documents or files that are presumed to contain clues or information that may help or assist in the search. As for prevention, there are no legal safeguards in terms of return, extradition and expulsion to prevent the risk of these mechanisms being used for forced disappearances (art. 8 of the Declaration and art. 16 of the Convention); there is poor regulation on official detainee records and their access by family members and legal representatives (art. 10 of the Declaration and arts. 17.3 and 18 of the Convention); there are no clear provisions on the protection of medical and genetic data collected in the search for missing persons (art. 19 of the Convention); and neither are there clear rules or legal procedures to verify with certainty the release of detainees, and to ensure safe conditions for the return to their homes of those who are released (art. 11 of the Declaration and art. 21 of the Convention)’⁵.

In order to overcome the state of impunity, human rights and relatives’ organisations have continued fighting to clarify the facts. A clear opportunity arising from the Peace Agreement signed between the Colombian State and the FARC, today a political party, is the creation of the *Unidad de Búsqueda de Personas Dadas por Desaparecidas* (Search Unit for Presumed Disappeared

Persons, UBPD), which aims to *search for and locate people presumed disappeared in the context of and because of the armed conflict*, which represents hope for thousands of families who are still waiting for their missing. However, care must be taken to make sure that the concept of **presumed disappeared persons**, which is humanitarian in nature, does not end up undermining the existence of forced disappearance as a state crime. In fact, it is a mistake for the UBPD documents to include, as part of their mandate, the search for the abductees when what should be clarified is that it is a question of locating the bodies of the abducted victims who have died in captivity.

In addition, it is essential not to lose sight that while UBPD has a humanitarian and extrajudicial mission to search for and locate victims of forced disappearance, the other mechanisms of the *Sistema Integral de Verdad, Justicia, Reparación y Garantías de No Repetición* (Integral System of Truth, Justice, Reparation and Guarantees of Non-Repetition, SIVJRNR) must advance in assuring truth and justice in relation to the other rights of the victims. The fight against impunity remains in place and the SIVJRNR mechanisms should be prevented from repeating the mistakes of the Justice and Peace jurisdiction⁶, which failed to clarify the facts, the responsibility of the intellectual authors and also failed to locate most of the victims. Cases such as the that of 13th Commune in the city of Medellín, in which the paramilitary chief of the Cacique Nutibara block, Diego Fernando Murillo Bejarano, acknowledged the existence of about 300 victims of forced disappearance, but did not provide any

▶ □ 75

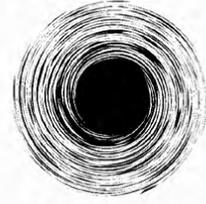
⁵ *Desapariciones forzadas en Colombia. En búsqueda de la justicia.* (Forced disappearances in Colombia. In pursuit of justice.) Colombia–Europe–United States Coordination Working Group on Forced Disappearances (CCEEU). Bogota, May 2012.

⁶ Jurisdiction emanating from Law 975 of 2005 that legalised the process of paramilitary demobilisation promoted by then president, Alvaro Uribe Vélez.

WIDESPREAD IMPUNITY. IMPUNITY FOR THE CRIME OF FORCED DISAPPEARANCE BY MUNICIPALITY (OMC/SPOA)

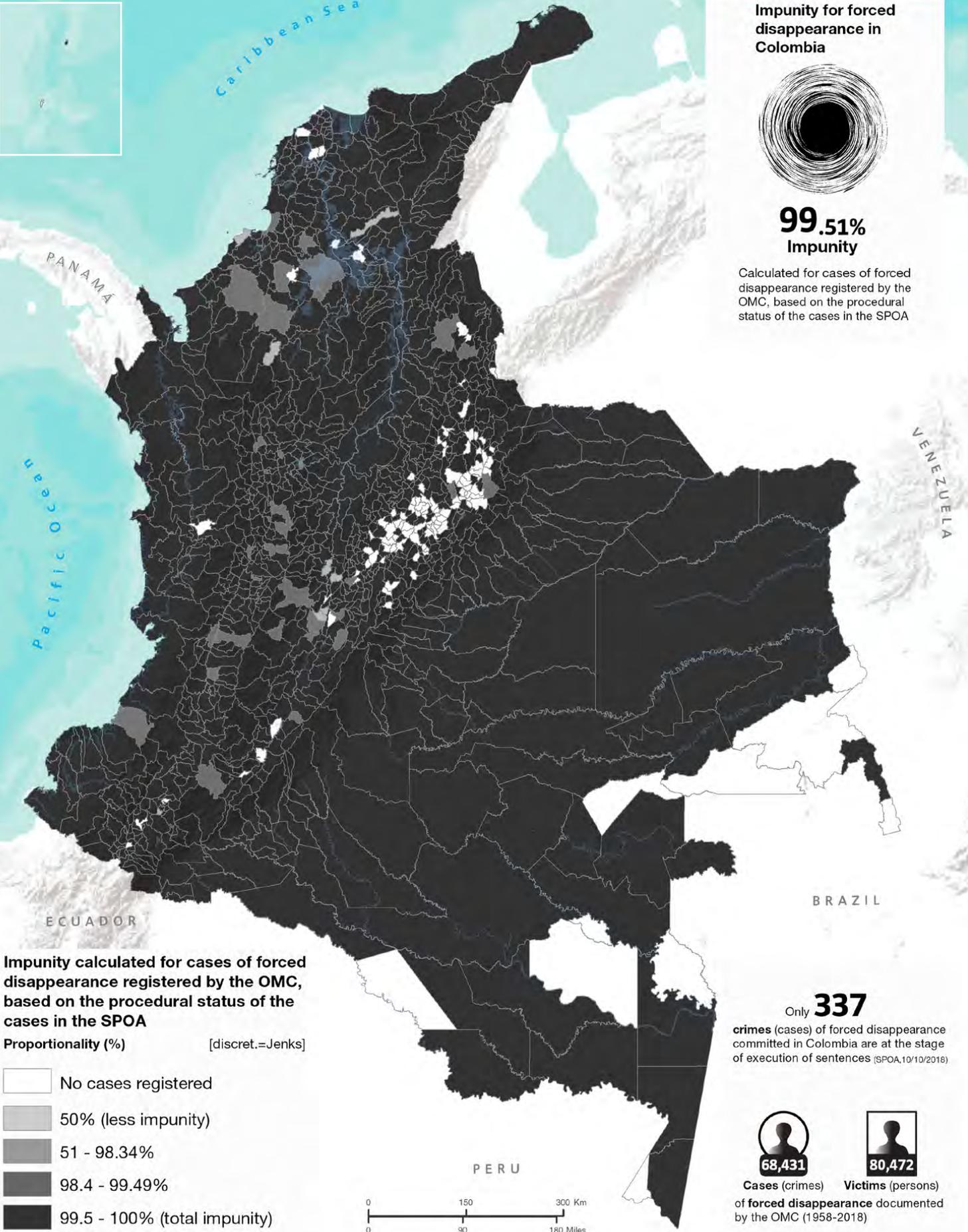


Impunity for forced disappearance in Colombia



99.51%
Impunity

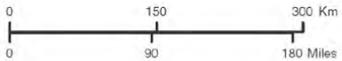
Calculated for cases of forced disappearance registered by the OMC, based on the procedural status of the cases in the SPOA



Impunity calculated for cases of forced disappearance registered by the OMC, based on the procedural status of the cases in the SPOA

Proportionality (%) [discret.=Jenks]

- No cases registered
- 50% (less impunity)
- 51 - 98.34%
- 98.4 - 99.49%
- 99.5 - 100% (total impunity)



Only **337** crimes (cases) of forced disappearance committed in Colombia are at the stage of execution of sentences (SPOA, 10/10/2018)



68,431 Cases (crimes)



80,472 Victims (persons)

of forced disappearance documented by the OMC (1958-2018)

Sources | Data: Memory and Conflict Observatory (OMC) of the CNMH, September 2018 · Oral Accusatory Criminal System (SPOA) of FGN, 10/10/2018 · DANE, population projections, 2010 revision · Icons: Creando, 2017 · Base layers: DANE, IDEAM, ESRI, USGS, NOAA

data for its discovery, cannot happen again. The strategy of recognising facts only for a profit is a mockery of both transitional justice and victims' rights.

An anti-impunity strategy, in cases of forced disappearance, should allow progress to be made in clarifying the facts in order to know both what happened to the missing, and the different levels of responsibility of the victimisers.

With regard to establishing the whereabouts of the victims, relatives' organisations have insisted that a research methodology could be implemented according to contexts and periods. The methodology of the Attorney General's Office to investigate on a case-by-case basis and to disperse them in offices across the country only promotes impunity.

Analysis and reporting by human rights and relatives' organisations shows patterns and particularities in the territories, allowing for events to be grouped, thus having greater certainty about where to search. For example, for victims of the 1980s and 1990s, progress in the investigation into cemeteries and the remains of unidentified persons found there is key. Today it is known that nearly 30,000 unidentified corpses are in cemeteries across the country. It is a priority to clarify these facts and move forward in their identification.

Finally, it is also important that the Special Jurisdiction for Peace (JEP) should

prioritise forced disappearance. The extent of the disappearances, the character of the victims and the responsibility of the state in the acts are sufficient criteria to open the case and demand the perpetrators' commitment to the truth as well as the location of the victims, as guarantees of reparation and non-repetition. The more than 1,500 military personnel in the Jurisdiction, who have already signed declarations of commitment, should be questioned about their responsibility in the commission of crimes of forced disappearance. They should report the cases, and establish whether the victims were killed and where their bodies were deposited. However, it is also essential that they indicate the causes and circumstances in which the disappearances were committed, which means highlighting the responsibility of the commanders and generals involved.

Under case 003 – 'Deaths illegitimately presented as casualties in combat by state agents', i.e. extrajudicial executions known as 'false positives' – the military is obliged to tell the truth about state policy that allowed the murder and forced disappearance of thousands of civilians to be presented as guerrillas killed in combat. Progress has been made in clarifying extrajudicial executions, but it should not be forgotten that hundreds of these victims were buried as unidentified persons in legal or clandestine cemeteries and their families still do not know their whereabouts. This is clearly forced disappearance and a state crime. ♦

WHERE IMPUNITY RULES. MUNICIPALITIES WITH 100% IMPUNITY IN FORCED DISAPPEARANCE (OMC/SPOA)



Caribbean Sea

Impunity for forced disappearance in Colombia



77.62%

Municipalities where impunity for forced disappearance is total (100% impunity)

79.77%

Continental area of Colombia where impunity is total

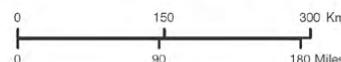
Municipalities where impunity for forced disappearance is total (100% impunity)

Data sources: OMC (CNMH), SPOA (FGN)

-  Total impunity
-  Partial impunity
-  Without registered cases

Number of municipalities and degree of impunity in forced disappearance

- 871** municipalities with total impunity
- 134** municipalities with partial impunity
- 117** municipalities without registered cases



WHY ASSESS IMPUNITY RATES?

By *Fidel Mingorance*

Impunity, like the crime of forced disappearance of people, has many edges or dimensions. However, in both cases, there are internationally accepted definitions or consensuses that enable a specific definition to be adopted that makes them operational.

What is meant by impunity?

To find this sense, we can go to the definition of impunity proposed by the United Nations in its updated *Set of Principles for the Protection and Promotion of Human Rights Through the Fight Against Impunity*:

‘Impunity means the impossibility, de jure or de facto, of bringing the perpetrators of violations to account – whether in criminal, civil, administrative or disciplinary proceedings – since they are not subject to any inquiry that might lead to their being accused, arrested, tried and, if found guilty, sentenced to appropriate penalties and to making reparations to their victims’¹.

Obviously, we can go beyond this definition by invoking the claims of truth, justice, reparation and guarantees of non-repetition demanded by victims. However, to assess the degree of impunity, this definition is more than enough.

Can impunity be assessed?

Can impunity really be assessed even if the actual magnitude of the crime is not known? Indeed, that’s the great question. Or at least one of them. It is clear that the fact that the existence of a crime is not known – nor, by extension, the existence

of the offender who committed it – makes any possible assessment of extension of impunity difficult. And that is precisely the picture usually found around the crime of forced disappearance of persons. It is not just that the absence of punishment – i.e. impunity – voraciously encourages crime, but also that the very nature of the crime entails a very high degree of impunity. Hiding and erasing any trace of the victim or information about their whereabouts are some of the typifying features of this crime against humanity.

What do we know?

For starters, we know what we don’t know. We don’t know how many victims of forced disappearance there are.

We know, however, that all existing data on forced disappearance suffer from a greater or lesser underregistration depending on the source. This means that the figures of impunity we work with should always be read or interpreted by adding ‘at least’, ‘no less than’ or ‘a minimum of’ before them.

Therefore, even if it is not indicated, if we sustain that in Antioquia there is 99.69% impunity for cases of forced disappearance documented by the CNMH, it should ALWAYS be read that ‘in Antioquia there is at least 99.69% impunity for cases of forced disappearance documented by the CNMH’.

In this example, we know that the universe of cases (crimes) that would allow us to calculate impunity would be 17,214 cases of forced disappearance documented by the CNMH, as committed in the Antioquia department and during the period between

¹ UN Economic and Social Council, report by Diane Orentlicher, independent expert responsible for updating the set of principles for combating impunity – updated Set of Principles for the Protection and Promotion of Human Rights Through the Fight Against Impunity, 8 February 2005, E/ CN.4/102/Add.1, <<https://undocs.org/en/E/CN.4/2005/102/Add.1>>

1958 and 15 September 2018. We don't know how many criminals were involved. We do not know how many cases or victims are left out of the documented CNMH record either. Today, it is impossible to even quantify the underregistration.

We also know that impunity in the department is not 100% because we know for a fact that there are some cases that have been tried and are now in the sentence execution procedural stage (they are punished cases). With the data published by the FGN, we will be able to know the proportion of cases that go unpunished because we will know those that have not.

Assessing impunity

If we follow the definition of impunity that started this text, we must quantify the 'impossibility, de jure or de facto, of bringing the perpetrators of violations to account in criminal proceedings'. According to the data we have, we need to know how many cases/crimes of forced disappearance are not at the sentence execution procedural stage (i.e., they have not been tried and the criminals have not been convicted nor are they serving the corresponding sentence).

To do this, we should keep in mind that:

We cannot know the degree of impunity for forced disappearance in Colombia because we do not know how many people have been forcibly disappeared, but we can calculate such degree of impunity according to known data from the CNMH and potentially from the RUV; lastly but more unlikely from RND (coordinated by INMLCF). That's a lot already.

Data from the FGN-dependent SPOA tell us how many cases/crimes of forced disappearance have reached the sentence execution stage. All the rest go unpunished.

There might be a few cases of forced disappearance tried and sentenced before the creation of SPOA (although not before its classification as a crime, in 2000). Nevertheless, if there are any, their number is negligible.

To evaluate the rate of impunity we use cases of forced disappearance registered and those that have already been tried and are in the sentence execution stage. In order to be able to use the victims' figures we should also know how many victims there were in the cases/crimes that have arrived at the sentence execution stage. This cannot currently be known from the data published by the FGN: crime count and procedural status are published as one item, and victims per crime as a separate item. However, the three variables i.e. crime count, victims and procedural status have not yet been published in relation to each other. It is advisable not to mix cases and victims (events and people) since in the same case/crime there can be several victims and several criminals (no. of crimes \neq no. of victims \neq no. of criminals).

Criminal reports should not be confused with crimes either, since not all criminal reports are necessarily actual crimes. In fact, the FGN should investigate all criminal reports to find out whether or not a crime has been committed. However, if what requires evaluation is the impunity rate of the Procedural System (SPOA), both criminal reports and procedural stage of cases should be used. Evaluating crime impunity is different, though, as other factors must be considered.

Taking these factors into account, we can now move on to giving a formula for impunity calculation.

Formulating impunity calculation is simple: we take the global number of forced disappearance cases of which we

want to find out the impunity rate. Then we subtract the cases that have reached the procedural system, been tried and the culprits sentenced.

Unpunished crimes = crimes of forced disappearance committed – punished crimes

Impunity is often expressed as a proportion, expressing the percentage of crimes that have gone unpunished. Total impunity equals 100% of unpunished cases and the absence of impunity would equal 0% of cases (all crimes tried and all offenders who committed the crimes serving the corresponding sentences).

Impunity = % of unpunished crimes in relation to the total number of crimes committed

If we adapt the formula to the data we currently have, we would find that

Impunity = [at least]% of unpunished crimes in relation to the total number of known crimes

Thus, to calculate the impunity rate of the crime of forced disappearance throughout the country, we take the 68,431 cases of forced disappearance documented by the OMC (CNMH) and subtract the 337 cases/crimes that are registered in the SPOA as in sentence execution stage. The remaining 68,094 offences – unpunished – represent 99.51% of the known crimes. The percentage of unpunished crimes is, at least/no less than/as a minimum, 99.51%.

The same calculation can also be done at the departmental and municipal level, since all the data used are municipally disaggregated. Therefore, for the aforementioned case of Antioquia, from the 17,214 known cases committed in that department we must subtract 54 cases in sentence execution stage registered in the

SPOA, to get an impunity rate of, at least, 99.69%. Applying the same formulation to its capital, Medellín, we would get an impunity rate of at least 99.39% (2,776 cases and 17 in sentence execution stage).

More questions

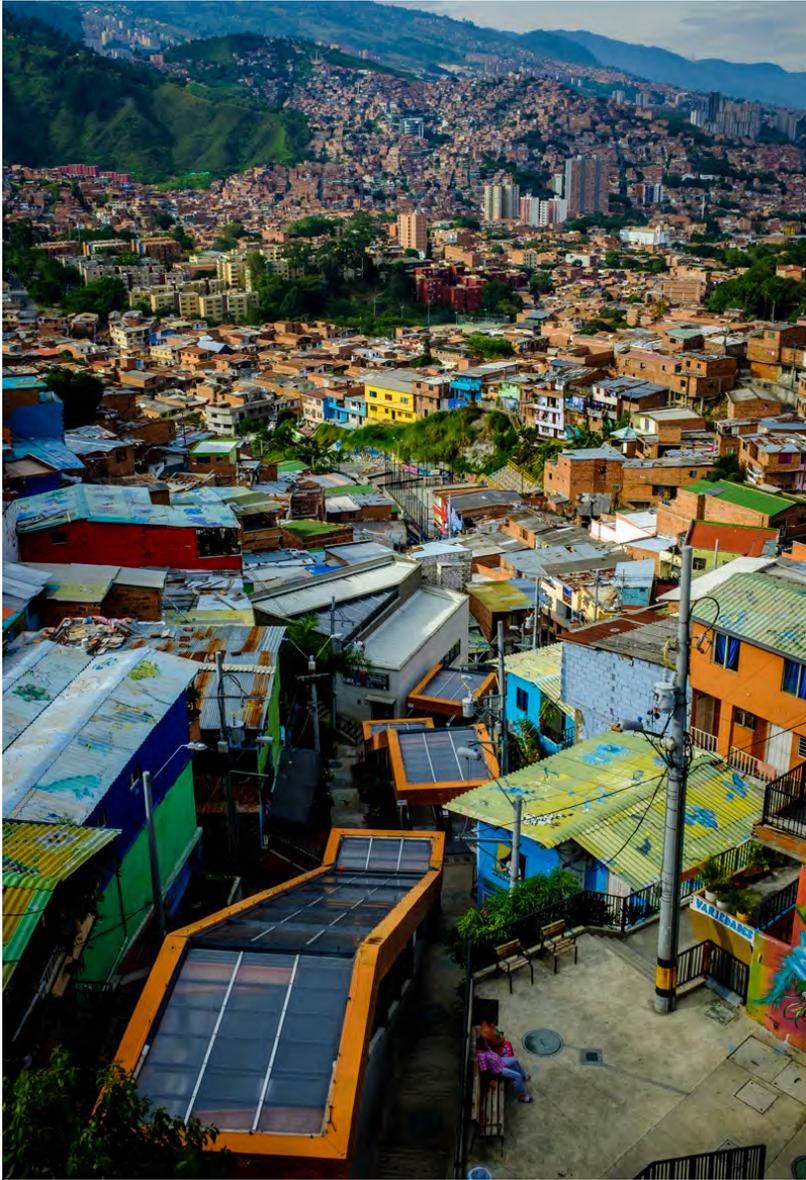
The issue of impunity has many edges and many factors must be analysed or thought out. Many questions have arisen during the analysis. Let's answer some of those that are pending in a simple Q&A exercise: we're going to raise some of the issues we have thought of and the solutions we've applied to them.

Why are CNMH data used and not others?

Ideally, a single data source for the calculations should be used, but at this point it is not possible. SPOA data do not allow us to estimate the universe of forced disappearance cases in Colombia. They only state how many of these potential crimes have entered the criminal justice system. The so-called pre-procedural, social or 'black figure' impunity (crimes that are not reported and are left out of the criminal system) is very high. In addition, the vast majority of criminal reports of forced disappearance are in investigation stage limbo (92.3% of them on 10 October 2018), so it is not even known whether or not they're crimes which have actually been committed (this will be determined in the following procedural steps).

According to the CNMH, FGN data are incorporated into its records, so we can assume that all crimes in the sentence execution stage registered in the SPOA are included among the cases documented by the CNMH. This would link all their data.

However, cases/events logged in the RUV have no connection to those registered by the FGN. We could work with the



Commune 13 in Medellín was the territory where the Army and paramilitaries executed Operation Orion, which left at least 300 people missing.
 📷 Felipe Alarcón Correa.

hypothesis that all such offences in the sentence execution procedural stage of the SPOA are also registered as crimes (events) in the RUV. That would be too great an assumption. In addition, it is known (particularly by victims' organisations) that there are many victims who are not registered in the RUV. The underregistration is greater there than in the CNMH which, in addition, already incorporates the RUV data in their registry.

What about the RND data? Is FGN not one of the data sources of RND?

Yes, FGN data should be included in the RND (although the figures don't quite add

up). The problem is that publicly accessible RND data refers to victims (people) and not to crimes (cases/events/facts).

A crime of forced disappearance at the sentence execution procedural stage may involve several victims and several criminals (there are cases where two, three or more people were forcibly disappeared). We could use the hypothesis that each case listed as punished in the SPOA, there is only one victim concerned, but if that is not the case, we would be biasing the calculation. In addition to this unreasonable assumption, and the large underregistration of this registry, the CNMH data also claim to incorporate the RND data.

Finally, the CNMH data incorporate data from the other sources, allowing it to get closer to the actual unknown number of forcibly disappeared persons in Colombia.

Is the formula we apply not the one known as the 'funnel method'?

Not strictly. As has been already explained, what we are calculating is not the impunity rate in the procedural system. The formulation is being applied to the Definition of Impunity given by the United Nations. With the calculation, we seek to find out the number of unpunished crimes (only out of known number of crimes since unfortunately we cannot do it based on the actual unknown quantity). Not all of this applies to our calculation. On the one hand, we know that there is a number of uniquely identified victims and documented cases (CNMH data). On the other hand, we also know that there are a certain number of crimes that have come to trial and in which the defendants have been convicted and are serving sentence (SPOA data). The ratio of both variables tells us to how many cases are unpunished.

Using CNMH data, as a universe of crimes, we add procedural impunity – based

WHAT ABOUT JUSTICE?

According to the Attorney General's Office, this is the status of the 54,046 cases (with 46,370 possible victims) that have been registered in the SPOA.

41,799 news items are in the inquiry stage.

1,574 news items are in the preliminary research stage

206 news items are in the research stage

891 news items are in the instruction stage

201 news items are marked as indictable

207 news items are in trial stage

1 news item is without data of the stage

337 news items are in the stage of execution of sentences

Source: SPOA. Court date for stage of proceedings: 10 October 2018

on SPOA data – to the other impunities (including pre-procedural and even post-procedural, although we will not enter now into the debate about the imprescriptibility of the crime of forced disappearance as a crime against humanity). The only blank is the sub-registration of the CNMH data.

Does the 'sentence execution' procedural stage mean the end of impunity?

Not necessarily. However, with the definition of impunity that we have used in mind, and knowing that perpetrators are held criminally responsible for their crimes, we can equate both concepts.

Moreover, it is not feasible for this team to review the sentences of the 337 cases of forced disappearance that are in the sentence execution stage. It is not appropriate to open up the necessary debate on the nature of the sentences and whether they cover the yearning for justice for victims and relatives either. As we have insisted, impunity and forced disappearance have many edges.

What is the point of quantifying impunity?

We honestly believe that it helps to combat

it. Following Argentina's proposal *El Siluetazo*, we think that after certain limits have been exceeded, numbers begin to carry a large emotional and political weight, and in Colombia all limits have been exceeded.

To give impunity a figure is to make it visible, to make it concrete and corporeal. When quantified it becomes operational for analysis and it can be placed on the map.

'In a society dominated by immediacy, showing the importance of what they wanted to make invisible and disappeared, becomes an ethical duty. Year after year we have painfully claimed the right to life, to freedom of thought and speech, all of which have been denied through systematic violence.

We have been persecuted and threatened for vindicating the names of the victims and for defending our right to know the truth of what happened to thousands of people who have been forcibly disappeared. It's not an easy job because it is a wound that does not close due to the injustice and impunity that remains in most cases' (Erik Arellana Bautista). ♦



MAPOEMS, POEMAPS

‘(...) the absent presence of what we love, God in their case, and the country I was driven out from in mine And the impossible company they gave me. That is a destination “that is not other than dying many deaths”, as Teresa of Ávila verified. And I died many times and even more with each piece of news of a murdered or missing friend or companion that enlarged the loss of the beloved. Argentina’s military dictatorship was responsible for 30,000 disappeared people, and it should be noted that although “disappeared” is a single word, it contains four concepts: the abduction of citizens, their torture, their murder and the disappearance of their remains in the fire, in the sea or on unknown soil. (...)’

Juan Gelman¹

Text and photographs by Erik Arellana Bautista²

In previous writings I have reflected on the value of testimony by offering my own. It’s not pleasant to talk about pain, about invisible wounds, about indelible traumas. Beneath that suffering-laden cloak there is an underground world equivalent to what the poet Aurelius Arthur detailed: ‘the flowering tree lives on what is buried.’ My testimony was reconstructed after I passed the phase of autism and mythomania caused by my mother’s enforced absence and ruthless separation from me. I didn’t know if she was dead or alive, I didn’t know if I should wait or go looking for her, I had no idea what they had done to her, even though I dreaded what they were capable of.

On the morning of 31 August 1987, I arrived at the Marian priests’ school and explained what had happened. My mother had not come back – apparently her enemies, the military, had kidnapped her. They understood what I was talking about ... Antonio Hernández, a seminarian, had also gone missing. I was told not to come back until the following week.

I started wandering from house to house. People were afraid: they did not know if by taking us in they were exposing themselves to danger. They locked doors on us. We changed addresses seven times. Then, the nightmares started ... what if she came back and couldn’t find us? Every night, the same interrupted act would wake me up among sweat and tears.

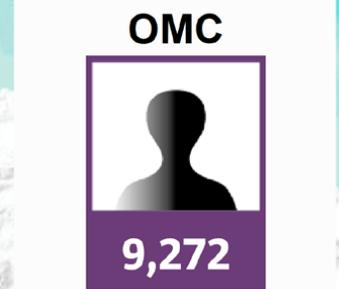
I walked the city, through many streets, trying to follow her trail. I went out to the demonstrations that demanded ‘human rights now!’, I encountered other families in meetings They were all families fragmented and affected by the indescribable impact of impotence. In 1988 the meeting of the FEDEFAM, the Latin American Federation of Associations of Relatives of the Detained-Disappeared was held in Bogotá, in the La Candelaria neighbourhood. There I saw – and wept disconsolately – the movie *La noche de los lápices (Night of the Pencils)*. I was fourteen years old and had an immeasurable rage against the country’s military and political system. My uncle Alfonso wrote the

► 85

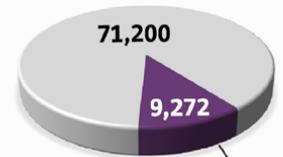
¹ Extract from the speech of the Argentine poet Juan Gelman (1930–2014) during his acceptance of the Cervantes Prize in 2007.

² Poet, documentary filmmaker and photographer, human rights defender and son of sociologist, economist and M-19 militant disappeared on 30 August 1987, Nydia Érika Bautista.

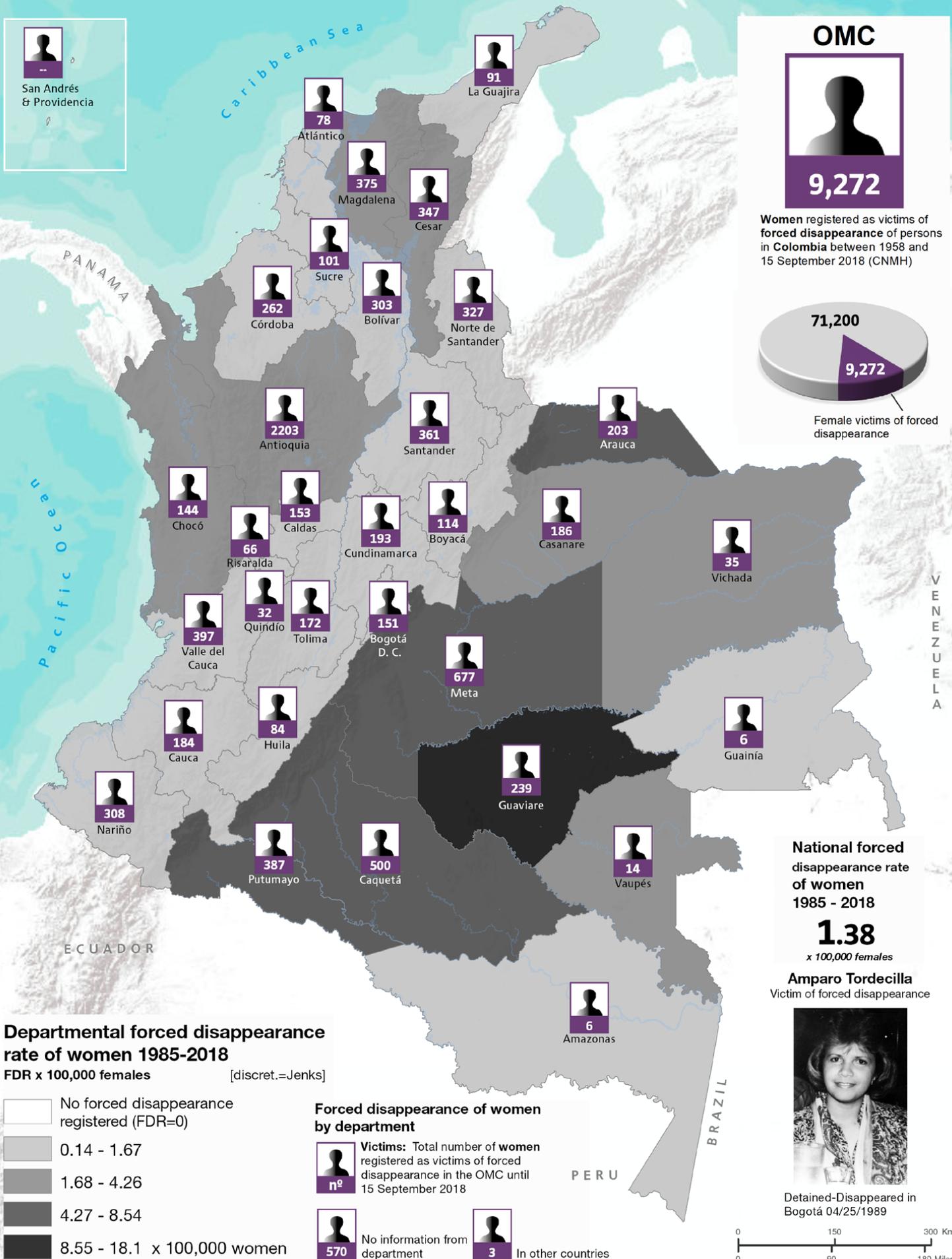
DEPARTMENTAL FORCED DISAPPEARANCE RATE OF WOMEN (OMC)



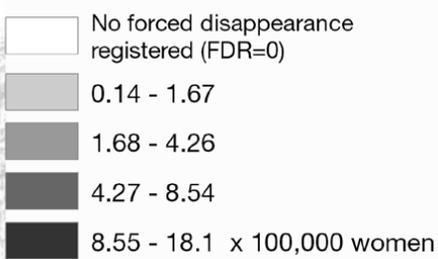
Women registered as victims of forced disappearance in Colombia between 1958 and 15 September 2018 (CNMH)



Female victims of forced disappearance



Departmental forced disappearance rate of women 1985-2018
FDR x 100,000 females [discret.=Jenks]



Forced disappearance of women by department



National forced disappearance rate of women 1985 - 2018

1.38

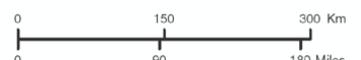
x 100,000 females

Amparo Tordecilla

Victim of forced disappearance



Detained-Disappeared in Bogotá 04/25/1989



poem *Lágrimas (Tears)*, and with it he won honourable mention in a literary contest of the Central University. I then remembered the poem in which I asked my mother to come with me in my christening and first communion. In that poem I pledged to continue her fight with her companions – who were mine too. By the age of twelve, I could already sense how lengthy the struggle for dignity would be. Through a poem in a yellowed obituary, with innocent words and tender love for a mother in hiding, an oath was taken. I discovered the impact of my verses when she attended the call, sensing that those would be her last days. With that stay in Bogotá, which would last approximately three months, she was risking her life. She had been arrested once before in Cali during a break-in [↪SEE Map 27]. The man responsible for her arrest, who was part of Cali's 3rd Brigade announced to his counterpart in Bogotá, the commander of the Charry Solano Battalion, that Nydia had left for Bogotá. They found her through the information extracted under torture from Christopher Triana, another young man who had disappeared on the night of Friday 28 August 1987. Three decades later we still don't know about Christopher's whereabouts. He was my aunt Yanette's boyfriend [↪SEE Map 21]

Three years passed until I was handed my mother in a black plastic bag. Dr Eduardo Umaña Mendoza³ decided to go to the site that an intelligence agent had described before the Attorney General's Office. Sergeant Bernardo Alfonso Garzón Garzón mentioned two names, that of Amparo Tordecilla and that of Nydia Érika Bautista. About Nydia he gave the exact place where the body had been dumped – a road that at the time led to the Llano – in Guayabetal Cemetery, and, thanks to my

³ Lawyer Eduardo Umaña, a reference in the defence of human rights in Colombia, was assassinated on 18 April 1998.



Demonstration of members of the Movice in Bogotá on 30 August 2018.

first communion pictures, the gravedigger remembered that beautiful young woman he had buried with a wooden Christ and a single shoe on 12 September 1987.

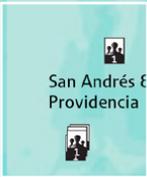
That is how she arrived, in a plastic bag, two days before I turned 16 and a few months before I finished high school. Nearly a thousand nights with the same nightmare, dreaming that she would come back alive, hearing rumours of her living in another country and raising other children. But the worse were the people who, in the name of ethics, justified her abduction and her murder. During those years I became a small merchant and businessman to help my father and pay part of my own expenses that were not covered by my uncles and my Aunt Yanette, who had custody of me.

Her burial came about thanks to my aunt's initiative. We put her in a wooden box, caressed her bones, watched over her for three nights and sang Colombia's anthem and the hymn of the M-19. All this after overcoming a bitter drunkenness that would make my liver explode. A marble plaque stated: '*Comrade Nydia Érika Bautista de Arellana*'. There her bones remained, in the pantheon of heroes of the Central Cemetery.

From that moment on I regained my

↪ 87

RELATIVES: INDIRECT VICTIMS OF FORCED DISAPPEARANCE (RUV)



RUV
(UARIV)



Relatives
Single indirect victims of forced disappearance registered in Colombia between 1984 and April 01 2019 (UARIV)

¿DÓNDE ESTÁN?

WHERE ARE THEY?

Forced disappearance of persons in Colombia: Relatives



One relative who is an indirect victim of forced disappearance

125,577 portraits: Each of the 125,577 victims of forced disappearance in Colombia are represented on the map by a portrait. The 125,577 portraits are randomly located throughout Colombian territory.

I did not sue [the state] thinking about financial compensation, what I wanted was to make them write the name of Luis Fernando Lalinde, because he was buried as an NN, they called him alias Jacinto

Fabiola Lalinde



speech and my words, and I knew what my life project would be: to vindicate her name and repeat it over and over again, to the point of exhaustion, until I got lost in the farthest recesses that my path has taught me: those of exile, those where I intended to agonise without hope ... in bars, bookshops, museums, galleries, on the streets or in the European Parliament, at the United Nations, in the German press, on social media, in books or before the Colombian Congress This, on the other hand, has led me to be forced to leave the country on three different occasions, but also to travel the world and discover that around the planet, under different circumstances and governments, forced disappearance of people is one of the most effective social control strategies. This, since it leaves no possible trace to be followed by those who, despite horror and terror, dare to make it achievable, those who follow invisible traces in a society that judges hastily and dares to justify what happened. A quest that at the same time, opposes a state that is determined to deny the appalling in order to exhaust the victims with their permanent tactic of attrition.

Now, after the return of the last train from exile, I have once again seen the faces of well-known people in the commemorations for the disappeared. Women who, in spite of everything, are still there with their posters and photographs of their lost, but not forgotten, loved one. They know who they are, the brave ones who shout at the state, at the government, at their institutions and at their officials, who do not intend to leave them alone until they fulfil their responsibility. They stand fighting, shouting, ‘Present, present, present’. [[SEE Map 22](#)]

Ours is a testimony full of dignity. After three forced exiles, even though many decide to call them ‘voluntary’; after



Performance ‘It happened, let’s go over what happened and demand that it not be repeated!’ (2013).

escaping two attempts to make me disappear – one when I was still a child, after the disappearance of Nydia Érika in August 1987, and a second one ten years later, when I was a literature student at the National University, in July 1997 – after having survived threats and persecutions following attempts to return to the country ... I can assure you that we have done our best to find a language that might, as humanly as possible, retell a story in which we were originally presented as losers, as victims stripped of rights. Naming our loved ones from the perspective of the way their killers decided to end their lives has been a way of humiliating both them and us with some sort of symbolic and psychological torture, but we will always name them from our love, from their dreams, struggles and conquests. [[SEE Map 23](#)]

Labyrinth with obstacles

Drifting, that’s the quest: a labyrinth that begins on dark nights that bring the smell of terror and an anguish that spreads in seconds like smoke, under traffic lights always set in red that prevented us from advancing towards that reunion with the beloved. In the street, we remained static under a lamppost in the corner, after a night where only shadows dared to move, clinging to photographs and memories, revolving against the steady passing of time in clocks and calendars ... we were held in



Wall of remembrance and memory where relatives and neighbours remember the victims of the Trujillo Massacre.

suspension as our faces grew old without finding them, while in our hearts the hope of a hug keep growing older. Hunters and predators of the same species travel in cars paid with public taxes, slowly and conscientiously eliminating any trace of the perpetration of a multiple crime. It is the torturers and those responsible for the disappearances, those who gave the orders, those who instructed the tormentors in methods and procedures, those who drew on their victims' skin with the cold thread of absence and the denial of their existence. In the reports they appear as 'unknown author', with no evidence, no witnesses, nor anyone to answer for the crime, such anonymous beings the great wizards of crime are. It should be noted that the Special Jurisdiction for Peace (JEP) today does not know the whereabouts of around 1,600 of the nearly two thousand members of the public force who after detention and before the JEP signed voluntary commitments to tell the truth and subsequently gained their freedom. This news hardly had any repercussion in the media. What has been mentioned however, is the fear and threats suffered by those who testified before the JEP, who confessed how civilian executions were planned and carried out in the so-called 'false positives' (extrajudicial executions) in order to present results in the counter-insurgent fight.

We, their relatives and our organisations, put a face on that love bathed in horror. A

transparent horror that covers and, in turn, wears out those who with affection and commitment refuse to accept the sentence imposed. With this pure chemistry of love, we exposed ourselves and built our own path, facing obstacles that led to our being persecuted, threatened, harassed and defamed, to finally lead us to exile and banishment for having claimed something basic: the right to a dignified existence.

The inception to our path of resistance to injustice was the courage of the mothers of the public university students who went even to the places where the orders to squadrons of undercover agents of the state had been issued. At the end of Julio César Turbay's government (1982), when prisons were stuffed with political prisoners under the State of Security Statute, the first cases of arbitrary detention began to be recorded – forced disappearances in Colombia.

At that time, the mothers and sisters of the so-called 'Collective Case 82' began to denounce the absence of their children. They and other families formed the *Asociación de Familiares de Detenidos-Desaparecidos* (Association of Relatives of Disappeared Detainees, ASFADDES). They had no resources for search or denunciation, nor the social or political knowledge needed. In the 1980s, a group of women began meeting regularly in order to look for students of Bogotá public universities and, thanks to the guidance of Father Javier Giraldo and with the advice of Eduardo Umaña Mendoza, they consolidated ASFADDES. They were housewives, members of working families, workers and peasants of humble origin who had sent their children to study at public universities with the idea of improving their living conditions.

These institutions were described as communist niches in the military manuals used to instruct aspiring colonels of

all Latin American armies in their promotion courses at the infamous dark School of the Americas⁴. The courses of torture, murder and concealment of the evidence (including the crime itself), had been put into practice against the disappeared students. Uncertainty became a mechanism of social and family torture, since it destabilised harmony and everyday life for those who dared set out on their quest. Shortly thereafter, it would be revealed that this practice included anyone who was considered an internal enemy according to the manuals issued by American intelligence agencies: people associated with social movements, grassroots organisations, trade unions or student groups were potential victims of detentions and subsequent murders, concealment and denial of their lives.

Until 1997, when I was still a student at the National University of Colombia, I helped the relatives of the disappeared to document their cases in an instinctive and precarious manner. One mother would come up to me and say, 'I gave all the paperwork to the victimisers and I don't have copies.' These were women who had left their homes to go out in desperate search for answers.

Following the example of the Argentine Mothers of Plaza de Mayo, they organised demonstrations on Thursdays, went out to marches, received anti-riot rubber bullets, tear gas and insults as any demonstrator would ... they were persecuted, harassed and threatened. Following threats against their lives, several of them fled the country with their families, as in my case.

ASFADDES had also succeeded in convicting at least sixty members of

state security agencies. In the case of the twelve students of 1982, 54 members of the police and army were found to be involved. Ms Josefa de Joya and her family had to go into exile in March 1999 due to threats and pressures as a result of this investigation. ASFADDES also succeeded in getting the head of the DAS anti-kidnapping unit (the defunct Administrative Department of Security) sentenced to fifty years for the collective disappearance of five people in 1995.

Because of their activities in defence of human rights and life itself, relatives of the disappeared and their organisations have been subjected to serious harassment and threats. In 1997, a five-kilogram dynamite bomb was planted at the ASFADDES sectional offices in Medellín and the facility was destroyed. On 11 July 2000, Mrs Elizabeth Caña Cano was murdered in Barrancabermeja. She had been a witness in the International Opinion Tribunal held the previous year in that same city.

Memories lived between disappearance, persecution and exile

My approach to memory began empirically. At the age of thirteen, I had to gather evidence that proved the existence of Nydia Érika Bautista: it wasn't enough to just say I had a mother who had given birth to me. I had to carry the pale image of her ID, a grey document, through the streets of my hometown, when disappearance was not considered even a crime in my country. Week after week looking to find her alive and asking if anyone could give us any detail of her whereabouts. In the late 1980s, making any reproduction on photographic paper was a real feat. We, the relatives of the disappeared were handing out photocopies and organising demonstrations and rallies

⁴ The official – and euphemistic – name of the School of the Americas was the Institute of the Western Hemisphere for Security Cooperation. From 1946 to 1984 it operated in the Panama Canal Zone. It remained under US control until 2000. Some sixty thousand military and police from Latin America graduated from there, some unfortunately infamous for being torturers, military dictators and, in general, for committing crimes against humanity.



Return in 2013 of the only seven bodies recovered and identified from the victims of the Pueblo Bello massacre. 36 victims are still missing.

to let society know how hundreds of citizens were being abducted by state agents under the counter-insurgency pretext. The paramilitary structures, including undercover state agents, were intellectual and material perpetrators of crimes against humanity.

When I was twenty, I began to take my first photographs in places such as Trujillo, during the commemorations celebrated by the Jesuit priest Javier Giraldo, in tribute to Father Tiberio Fernández and the hundreds of victims of the Valley Cartel in this region⁵. A girl would risk her life and years later she would have to go into exile for getting into the property where Father Tiberio's head was believed to be buried. Paramilitaries cut off the heads of their victims and scattered them in different places, some being so perversely macabre that they even played football with them.

Another night we would leave for Segovia

(Antioquia), in a caravan coming from Bogotá and Medellín, to escort the relatives of another massacre⁶. The *Luz de Luna* (Moonlight) theatre group told the story of Leonardo Gómez and a collective catharsis in the form of a theatrical 'mourning' flooded the school's football field with collective crying. After the play, Segovia was silent. In the dark and by candlelight, people spoke in low voices and told of how a little boy had dreamed the night before about the horror that had bathed in blood the corner where women, men and children had been massacred.

When I returned with these testimonies to Bogotá and upon leaving a meeting, I was intercepted by a group of armed men who knew we had the information and testimonies about the events in Segovia. Two men were pointing their cold guns at my head. A third man beat me up and asked them to shoot me. Something good protects me, I thought, because after a few minutes of blows I was still standing, trying to convince them that there was no need to shoot. I had gotten the message. I had the negatives of the photos documenting the disappearance of Nydia Érika inside my jacket. It was August 1995. In the media, the impeachment of the first brigadier general of the Republic Álvaro Velandia for human rights violations in the case of the disappearance of Nydia Érika⁷, was being reported.

My first research work consisted of typing into a rustic MS-DOS operating system computer two hundred names of people who had been denounced by ASFADDES

⁵ What it is known as the Trujillo Massacre consisted of a series of massacres in this area of the Cauca Valley between 1986 and 1994. An estimated 245 people were killed. Many of these bodies were dumped in the Cauca River to make them disappear.

⁶ The Segovia Massacre (Antioquia) occurred on 21 November 1988, eight months after the Patriotic Union electoral victory in the municipality. 46 people were killed and 45 others injured.

⁷ In 2013, a tribunal of associated judges annulled the dismissal of the brigadier based on procedural failures.

supported by CINEP⁸ database analysis. Names, places of birth, place where they had been disappeared if this was known. Likely authors and open processes, if there were any. Information that could be used to identify their possible whereabouts. Describing whether there were photographs of the victims; most of them were very humble and only few had or kept a single image. Stories such as that of the nineteen merchants in Santander⁹, the trade unionist leaders in Barranquilla, or the students in Bogotá. The disappeared and their circumstances were our topic of conversation. How to find out the truth if there were no institutions, legal tools or laws to hold on to in order to find them.

At that time, while supporting the documentation work of ASFADDES, I was studying at the Faculty of Literature, at the National University. University was a breath of fresh air for me. Cycling to classes in the faculty where my mother had studied was a way of reuniting with her. They were vital months of my existence, clinging to books and song lyrics, in the hallways and in the cafeteria, dismembering novels, dissecting authors, imagining worlds, living loves, punk concerts and the nascent Colombian rock, my first verses. The first articles we published in *Contagio*¹⁰, the communication project known at the time as Intercongregational Commission on Justice and Peace.

In the first issues we published the story of the disappeared from the Palace of Justice. A conversation between the military who

retook the Palace had been recorded on cassette and given to Dr Umaña Mendoza. On it, there is a voice that says, *¡Si está la manga que no aparezca el chaleco!* (If there's the sleeve, don't let the vest show up!). My first writing about the so-called 'social cleansing', about the young people of Usme, south of Bogotá, who were being killed for standing at corners.

We knew that our footsteps were closely followed, our activities watched, our movements assessed. They kept an eye on us. Everything became more evident one morning in July 1997. They came asking for me at the Faculty of Sociology, where our French literature lessons took place. During the half-term exams, instead of a copy, I got a paper that said in French 'they've come looking for you, they're waiting for you outside.' It wasn't exactly a romantic note. I handed my sheet over to the professor. I came out of the classroom and I could verify the unpleasant presence of two strong men with military-style haircuts. I was on the second floor. I jumped down the stairs, my heart pounding out of my chest and my self-preservation instinct on high alert. I ran as fast as my legs allowed me to, I crossed the avenue and jumped on the first transport to the centre. I went to the office from where ASFADDES operated, and I told them what had happened to me. We called Father Javier Giraldo, and he said I needed protection. Upon leaving the meeting, an informant announced that I was going to be accompanied by International Peace Brigades¹¹.

♦ □ 93

8 The Human Rights and Political Violence Database at CINEP has been doing its job continuously since late 1987.

9 These merchants of the Middle Magdalena were intercepted on their way to Medellín by soldiers in the hamlet of Puerto Araújo (Santander) and were forcibly disappeared near the property 'El Diamante', by the paramilitary group of Puerto Boyacá.

10 *Contagio* was born in 1995 in Bogotá as a semi-annual human rights magazine. 14 years later it was transformed into an on-line radio that remains a reference in alternative communication.

11 Excerpt from the text published by the Goethe University of Frankfurt under the title *Memoirs lived among disappearance, persecution and exile: the experience of relatives of the disappeared and their struggles for truth and justice*.

DEPARTMENTAL RATE OF FAMILY VICTIMIZATION FOR FORCED DISAPPEARANCE. INDIRECT VICTIMS (RUV)



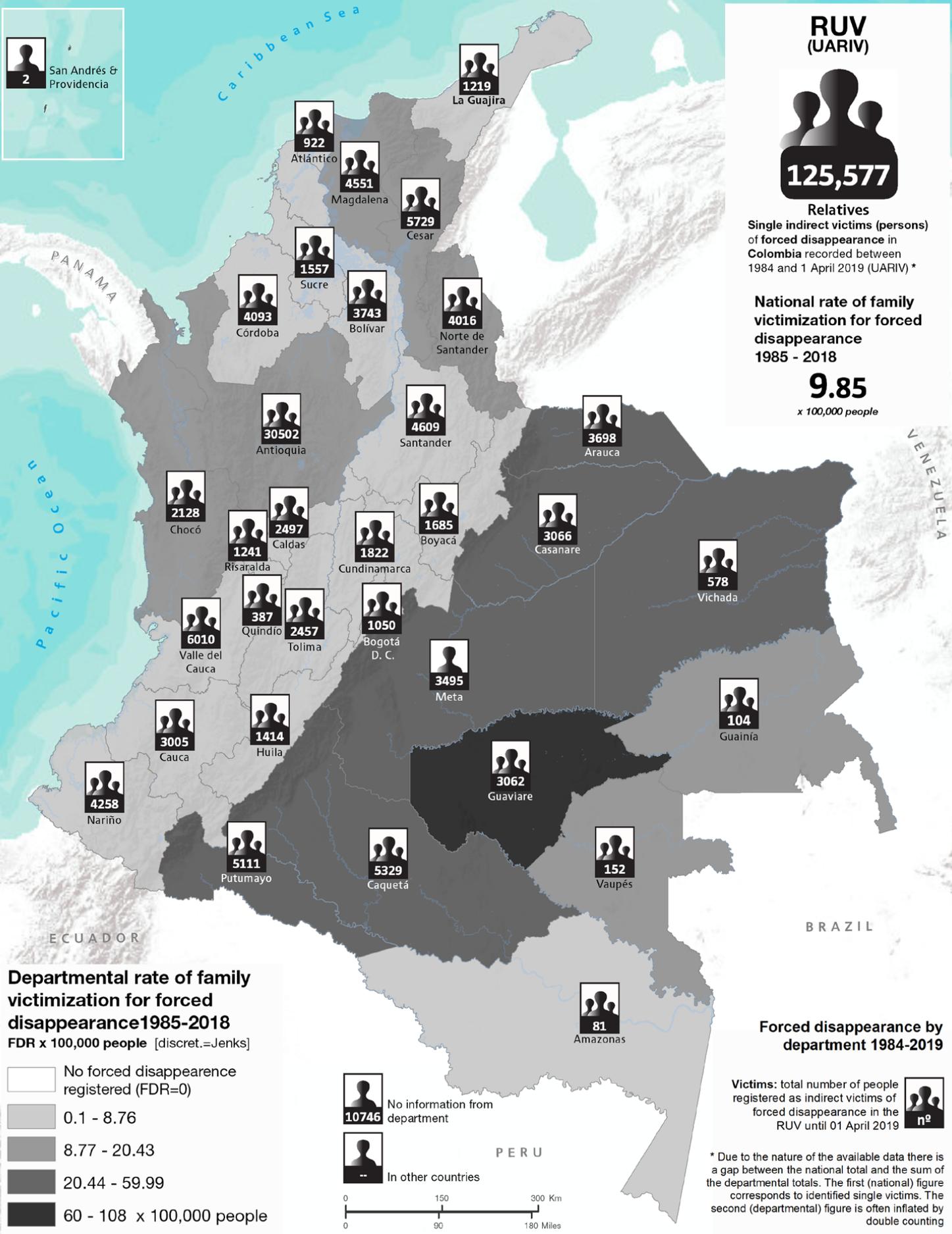
RUV (UARIV)

125,577

Relatives
Single indirect victims (persons) of forced disappearance in Colombia recorded between 1984 and 1 April 2019 (UARIV) *

National rate of family victimization for forced disappearance 1985 - 2018

9.85
x 100,000 people



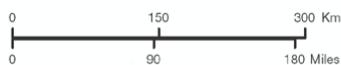
Departmental rate of family victimization for forced disappearance 1985-2018

FDR x 100,000 people [discret.=Jenks]

- No forced disappearance registered (FDR=0)
- 0.1 - 8.76
- 8.77 - 20.43
- 20.44 - 59.99
- 60 - 108 x 100,000 people

No information from department
10746

In other countries
..



Forced disappearance by department 1984-2019

Victims: total number of people registered as indirect victims of forced disappearance in the RUV until 01 April 2019 n°

* Due to the nature of the available data there is a gap between the national total and the sum of the departmental totals. The first (national) figure corresponds to identified single victims. The second (departmental) figure is often inflated by double counting

In the following years other relatives of the victims joined this organisation and we saw branches popping up in different regions of the country, hand-in-hand with other organisations such as *Familiares Colombia*, the Nydia Érika Bautista Foundation for Human Rights and many more that were born and raised as crime multiplied in different regions of the country. These organisations have carried out not only documentation and reporting, but an intense work of awareness-raising and political advocacy to obtain each of the rights, tools and documents need it to mitigate the impact of forced disappearances in the country.

With several ASFADDES leaders in exile, and thanks to the courage of those left at the helm of the organisation, the law criminalising forced disappearance was passed in 2000¹². As retaliation, they made Ángel Quintero and Claudia Monsalve¹³ disappear in Medellín, in the same city that houses emblematic sites such as *La Escombrera* or the victims of Operation Orion¹⁴, so linked to the forced disappearance in the collective memory. [\[▶SEE Map 29\]](#).

The difficulty of finding answers to who was responsible, how and why they did it, before a Justice Administration driven by a lack

of commitment, permeated by corruption and, in general, constrained and prone to defending the interests of the perpetrators, and with no interest in punishing those responsible for human rights violations and state crimes (which increases their seriousness), limited the possibility of effective access to truth and justice, and resulted in subsequent obstacles.

Some of the relatives of those who disappeared in 1985 during the retaking of the Palace of Justice, who have managed to receive the remains of their siblings, aunts and uncles, have waited more than thirty years – most of the parents of the disappeared have already died. As if that wait was not bad enough, upon returning the remains to their families, it was discovered that some of the bodies belonged to other disappeared victims and that they had been handed over to the wrong families – a serious mistake. Now, three decades later, those who thought they had buried their relatives receive the news, based on DNA testing, that the remains they thought they had buried didn't belong to their relatives, and that they have mourned the loss of their loved-ones on the tomb of others.

To reach this relative truth, a judgment of the Inter-American Court of Human Rights (IACHR)¹⁵ was needed. On a

▶ 95

In Spiller, Rolland & Schreij-ck (eds.). Colombia's historical memory, post-conflict and transmigration (p. 111–114). Ed. Peter Lang GmbH, Berlin.

12 Law 589 of 2000 was passed in July of that year and is the first to criminalise forced disappearance in Colombia. It was replaced in 2011 by Law 1448, which is known as the Victims Act.

13 On 6 October 2000, Ángel José Quintero Mesa and Claudia Patricia Monsalve Pulgarín, activists and human rights defenders, members of the Association of Relatives of Disappeared Detainees, ASFADDES, Medellín section, were held and disappeared in the crossroads of Carrera Bolívar and Calle Amador in Medellín.

14 Joint operation between the army and paramilitary units in Medellín Commune 13 between 16 and 17 October 2002. According to official sources there were 16 deaths and 200 people injured, but the neighbours of the commune claim there were almost 300 persons disappeared. Many of the bodies are considered to have been illegally buried in *La Escombrera*, already known as 'the largest mass grave in Latin America'.

15 The 2014 sentence determined that the state was responsible for forced disappearance, torture and at least one extrajudicial execution. It also noted how the state was responsible for the lack of judicial clarification of the facts and the violation of the right to personal integrity of the victims' relatives.

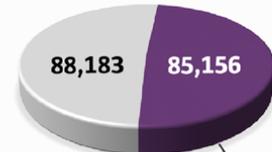
DEPARTMENTAL FORCED DISAPPEARANCE RATE OF WOMEN. DIRECT AND INDIRECT VICTIMS (RUV)



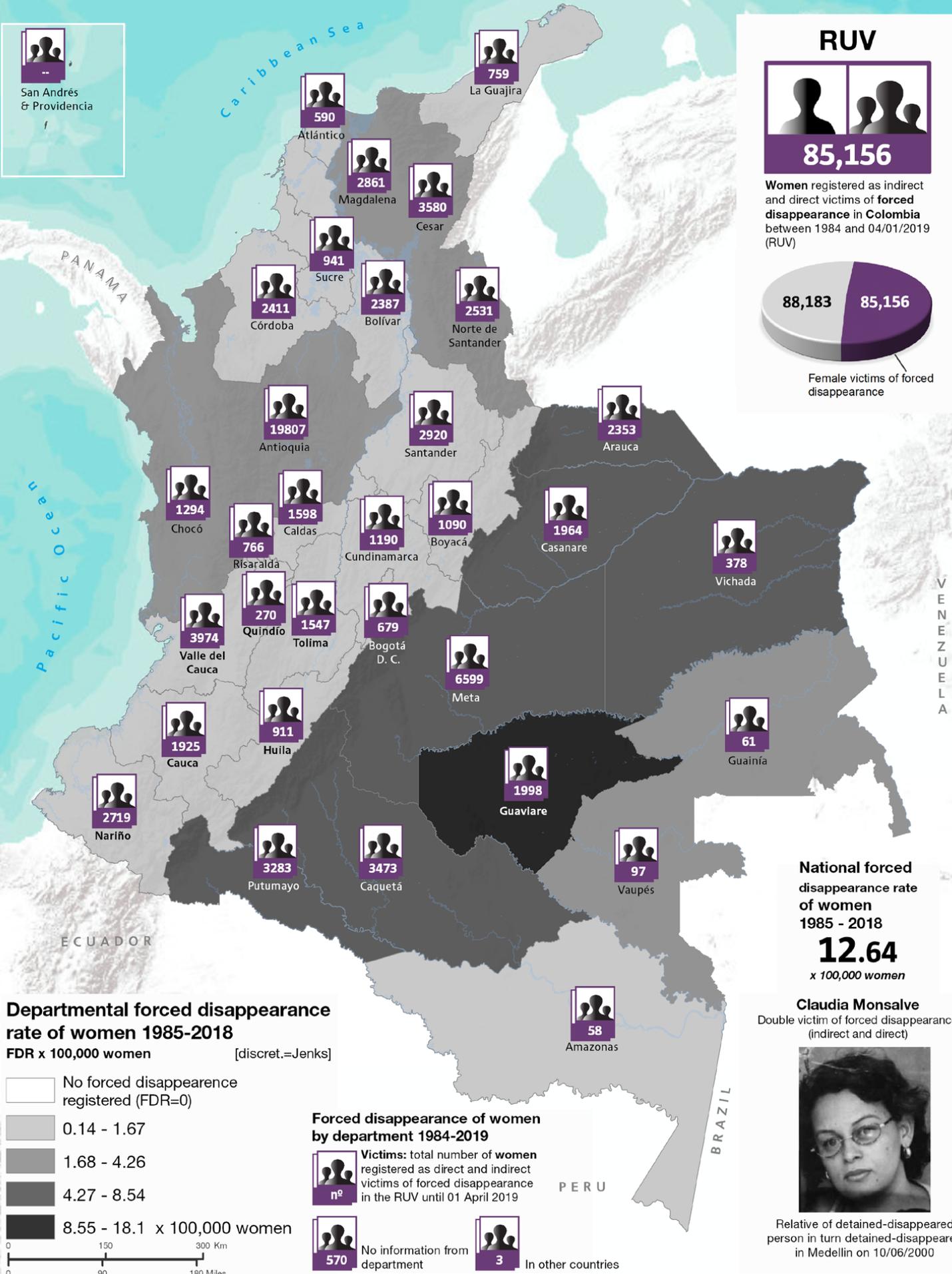
RUV



Women registered as indirect and direct victims of forced disappearance in Colombia between 1984 and 04/01/2019 (RUV)

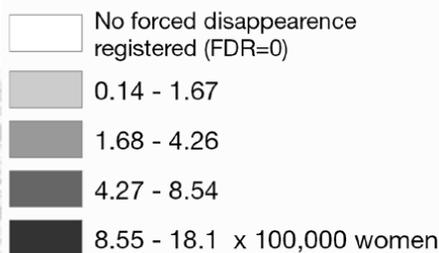


Female victims of forced disappearance



Departmental forced disappearance rate of women 1985-2018

FDR x 100,000 women [discret.=Jenks]



Forced disappearance of women by department 1984-2019

Victims: total number of women registered as direct and indirect victims of forced disappearance in the RUV until 01 April 2019



National forced disappearance rate of women 1985 - 2018

12.64
x 100,000 women

Claudia Monsalve

Double victim of forced disappearance (indirect and direct)



Relative of detained-disappeared person in turn detained-disappeared in Medellin on 10/06/2000

radio show Sandra Beltran recalls that, in November 1985, they didn't have a colour television nor a Betamax, and therefore, they were unable to record the news that, moreover, was censored by the then Minister of Communications, Noemí Sanín. Thanks to video evidence that appeared years later, it was possible to identify Sandra's brother, Bernardo Beltran, as he was leaving the Palace of Justice alive. With irony, she recounts how her brother 're-entered the Palace, shot himself, burned himself and then went to bury himself in a cemetery in Manizales.' This short account demonstrates how the right of the victims' relatives to justice has been mocked and shows both the infamy with which the right to truth of what happened is denied and the apathy of officials to clarify the facts. And yet, in this country, any recovery of the remains of the forcibly disappeared persons remains a triumph.

I report, then I'm an outcast

Territories are defined by borders. Suppose injustice is a territorial boundary defined by non-compliance with the law, it's the internal border and, by denouncing an injustice, you become an outcast because there is no one to answer your claims. I report, then I'm an outcast.

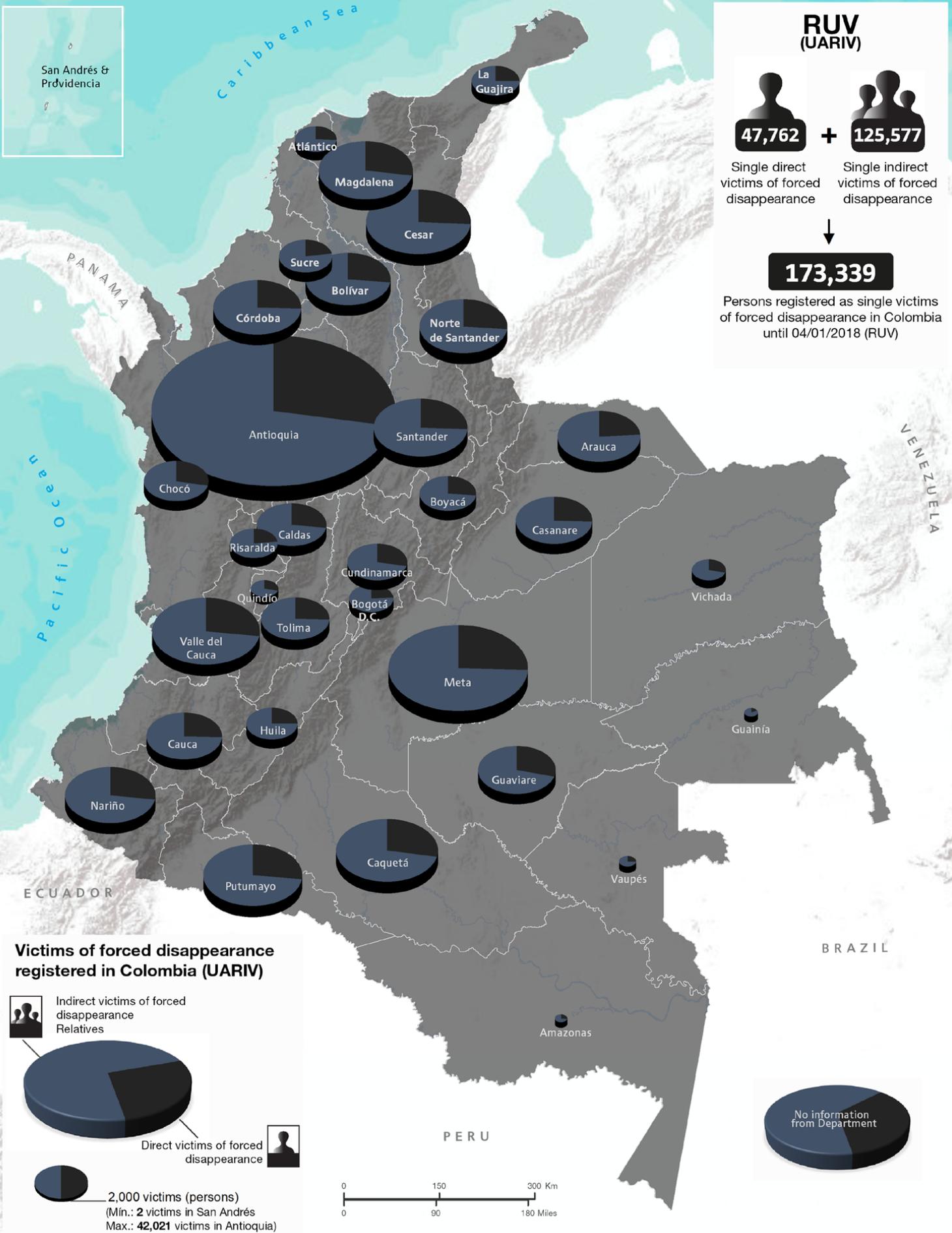
The state has historically singled out the victims. First, it impoverished them in order to subdue, exclude and dominate them. After the claim of the rights listed in the Political Constitution of 1991, it found itself with the obligation to comply with what was stated. With lag, pushiness and arrogance it looked at the victims and again breached its 'contract'. In Colombia's Political Constitution of 1991 it says: 'No one shall be subjected to forced disappearance, or cruel and inhumane treatment'. But the state has not

kept its word to protect citizens. Then that same state assumed the task of registering the victims, recognising them as such and giving them some kind of status. The *Ley de Víctimas* (Victims Act), through its institutions, such as the *Unidad para las Víctimas* (Victims' Unit), would determine what kind of victims would be accepted in the Single Registry of Victims (RUV), which would account for them from 1985 and that it would not contemplate fighters from insurgent groups, even if they were in a state of helplessness, such as Nydia Érika Bautista. Subsequently, it put a price on life in grams of gold and some were 'rewarded' by an appraisal quoted in pesos, a few grams for the tangible damage to which the victims were subjected during their captivity and a few more for the intangible, moral damage caused to their family.

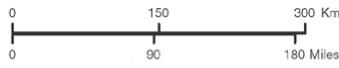
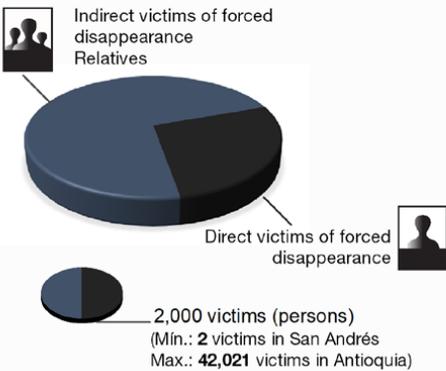
They thought families would keep quiet after the financial reparation. The media spread the idea that victims had received scandalous sums of money; they were presented as the newly rich, those who received more aid and benefits than the historical poor. Then, the frauds started: people posing as victims on official and unofficial lists to receive grants, food assistance and subsidies. This information was later used to deny the authenticity of the stories of pain and suffering told by the true victims. Several of these families had to sign a document confirming the 'alleged death' of the victims of forced disappearance in order to receive humanitarian aid. A very perverse picture. The dynamics of international cooperation, whose aid previously reached grassroots organisations directly, now went down the government's conducts to be administered and distributed by its victim care offices. Such change weakened relatives' organisations, and in particular those

► □ 97

DIRECT AND INDIRECT VICTIMS OF FORCED DISAPPEARANCE (RUV)



Victims of forced disappearance registered in Colombia (UARIV)



individuals who could not afford to be full-time activists, until they were left without resources or only with the possibility of ‘contracting’ with the state, if they had the ‘administrative capacity’ to do so. Survival is an additional, everyday obstacle.

What is the route for family and friends who, for love, decide to take that path? There was none. The task then was to build it. That was the social movement job. Some intellectuals committed to socio-political transformation, activists, thinkers and social fighters confronted the system, on the streets and in the courts, in Congress and in international bodies such as the United Nations Human Rights Committee, and in the Inter-American Court and Commission. Few were the lawyers engaged, but many the cases of forced disappearances.

In Colombia, the law that sanctions and recognises that forced disappearance is a crime was only passed in the year 2000. Until then, this violation of human rights was not a crime recognised by the Colombian state. A dozen bills that needed only the presidential sanction were rejected by four consecutive governments. And the International Convention for the Protection of All Persons from Forced Disappearance, December 2006, was only signed by Colombia in 2007, then ratified in 2010 by Law 1418, which only came into force in 2012¹⁶.

The formation of death squads and illegal far-right groups, the entrenchment throughout the national territory of drug trafficking structures that further weakened the state, and the upsurge in war would become the input that would make Colombia triple the number of forced disappeared persons of the Southern Cone

dictatorships over a three-decade period. In Colombia, otherness was eliminated at different levels. Critical thinking applied to the neoliberal model was dissolved in blood and fire. Different sections of leaders, activists of social organisations and workers, and even environmentalists, suffered the misfortune of being erased and their memory fell into the swamp of sadness; in the quicksand of uncertainty and unease, the great obstacle.

However, despite all the repression, we learned to understand the dark threads of power and its methods of social and political control. We learned to stand firm in the demands that became our flags, in the mottos that would be the anthems of fair collective causes, beyond numbers, names and identification data, as citizens of a nation that generated the conditions for this saga, with its unfinished inside tragedy, to be possible. In this place of exclusion, the voices of women replicated in tributes, demonstrations and marches, but also in academic, artistic, cultural, social and political events to give a face and a testimony to that institutionalised oblivion.

The constant and permanent suffering to which the relatives have been subjected by leaving nightmares embedded between their temples, is cruel and inhumane. Abandoning them in their need to find sound answers to their demands. Maltreating them in their dignity.

These elements should be taken into account in the formulation of proposals for articulated and inclusive work for those who are searching, but also for those who silently wait passively for a return. There are people who never went out to denounce, out of distress, out of fear, because they knew that

16 But it did not recognise the competence of the Committee against Forced Disappearance to receive and consider communications from persons who claim to be victims of a violation of the Convention, or communications filed on behalf of such persons. Colombia's first report to the Committee had to wait until 2016.

they would be exposed to the permanent risk of repeating the history of their loved ones. A decision within the family circle prohibited mentioning their names, in an act of self-censorship and self-protection. A generation later, Colombia has inherited unfinished duels similar to what happened in Spain with the victims of Francoism, or in Argentina with grandmothers who find grandchildren who choose to undergo DNA testing to verify their identity. Grandchildren who carry unresolved questions around truth and justice are seen in public acts that denounce and testify to the psychological, emotional, affective, physical, economic, social, cultural and transgenerational impact. Reparation and non-repetition guarantees are the last hurdle.

One of the most difficult aspects to tackle during the negotiation process between the FARC and the Colombian government was the issue of victims. Now, with the government of Iván Duque, only those who were victims of the guerrillas are recognised. The others are being discriminated against as reflected in the government's attitudes of ignoring or denying the existence of an armed conflict and, therefore, the state's responsibility to acknowledge and remedy its mistakes and to offer guarantees of non-repetition.

These months of Iván Duque's first year of rule have begun with the constant assassination of social leaders and political opponents, as well as the denial of certain freedoms, such as the freedoms of mobilisation and expression. The 'false positives' have resurfaced: the murder of innocent people portrayed as dead in combat. With the repositioning and consolidation of paramilitary groups and the entrenchment of drug cartels, the landscape of forced disappearances, rather than declining, can actually worsen. Faced with this situation, the configuration of alliances between organisations that carry

out advocacy work, psychological care and legal accompaniment and initiatives of memory and mobilisation, poses a great challenge of articulation to obtain a greater impact on the policies related to victims of forced disappearance and their families.

Each of these triumphs (decrees, laws, sentences, convictions, news, denunciations) is laden with love and pain. The women of the relatives' organisations of forced disappearances stood up to tell the world the horror that was happening, not only with their children and loved ones, but with so many human beings who had had their life, identity and the right to a good name or fair trial stolen. Those whose right to thinking and building a society capable of accepting diversity, plurality, difference and multiculturalism has been taken away. For a time, forced disappearance was the method of silencing social leaders, activists and members of political organisations or students, gradually proliferating to the absurd results we are counting today. That is why these triumphs are so valuable for those who, from defeat to defeat, raised the flags of dignity so that the affected families in Colombia could have these resources, tools, that may allow them to open doors in the hope of finding answers.

The topic is now dealt with by specialists, experts and analysts who publish reports, give workshops and present deliverables, renowned artists who make interventions that provoke reactions on social networks and who do cartography, like us. After years of work, finally some national and local media support actions against forced disappearances. Few cases have reached the front pages but news related to the subject appears regularly, whether it is a person's testimony, a report or chronicle of their fight against oblivion, or a brief account of their commitment to the cause

against disappearances. Although it has seldomly been the subject of fiction films, multiple documentaries have worked on this problem.

Internationally recognised artistic pieces have helped break the silence imposed. The renowned Medellín International Poetry Festival and *Prometeo* magazine published a compilation of *Poesía contra la edad sombría, poemas para los desaparecidos* (*Poetry against the Grim Age, Poems for the Disappeared*) (No. 108 December 2017). Authors from different parts of the world at different times gathered in this beautiful compilation of 210 pages. A beautiful tribute to the absent.

If the pessimism imprinted on me since my adolescence, cultivated with fervour and discipline for years, was not so deep-rooted in my bowels, I would say that the pain has not been useless, as expressed by the families to claim their triumphs. Perhaps, like the poet, a little hope and a bit of agony, because Juan Gelman was right, this is like dying many times, but also, being reborn.

Them (women)

They named each of the victims leaving in the magnetism of videocassette tapes the life experiences of their disappeared relatives and the conditions of vulnerability that the state refused to recognise. The laws proclaimed by the 1991 Constitution were in force. They had been imbued with the struggles for rights achieved during generations of armed confrontation and pressure from thousands of victims who forced a negotiated exit to war. There would be no victors, only defeated. When the far right took over the country in the



On the left, Luz Marina Hache, wife of Eduardo Loffsner Torres, arrested and disappeared in 1986 at age 31.

polls, the largest criminal structure in Colombia's recent history wiped out all the democratic advances made on paper.

The great theft of land was arranged through violent, bloody and ferocious expropriation. It was arranged from the Presidential Office, the ministries, the judiciary, executive and legislative powers – a parliament larger than all those in Europe and other countries in the world, with more than two hundred congressmen and representatives in the chamber and with salaries 40 times that of an unskilled worker.

In Colombia five people own what four million have, 20 families have rotated presidential power since the independence, eight million victims have been the official result of this absurd situation, half a million exiles for political reasons, another four million for economic or study reasons ... Figures, numbers without names, deprived of identity.

From what we were able to discover in the case of the *escrache*¹⁷ on the disappeared, actions become public discussions because crimes against humanity do not belong only to a social group or to a certain

¹⁷Translator's note: *Escrache* is the name given in Argentina, Paraguay, Uruguay and Spain to a type of demonstration in which a group of activists go to the homes or workplaces of those whom they want to condemn and publicly humiliate in order to influence decision makers and governments into a certain course of action.



collective; are, precisely, crimes against all humanity. For this reason, various organisations and collectives, each from their own perspective, raised the possibility of carrying out acts of indignation and repudiation towards facts and people who deserved to be exposed by name for their involvement in forced disappearances. Such was the case of General Álvaro Velandia Hurtado, who after being removed from office was reinstated 15 years later due to a procedural matter having not been informed of his dismissal within the stipulated periods – not for any lack of responsibility, either for action or omission, in the arbitrary detention, torture, murder and forced disappearance of Nydia Érika Bautista. For this reason, a series of symbolic protests showing outrage at this judicial decision were held on 72 Street and in front of the North Canton Battalion.

The walls speak

The walls keep talking about the same claims with new names; apparently only the numbers change. I remember vividly

a graffiti in a parking lot in the centre of Bogotá, in black paint on a yellow wall that said ‘*¡Mi mamá me mimaba, pero la desaparecieron!*’ (My mom pampered me, but they made her disappear). Over time, those messages transformed and became more visual. It was no longer just words, phrases and verbal denunciations. Shapes, figures, portraits and landscapes emerged in a society accustomed to the advertising immediacy. They began to pop up on the walls of Bogotá and other cities, and then in the villages, in sites of memory. Places of the cartography of violence that have been referenced by witnesses or survivors for a site of memory to be opened. Then, the cracked murals became references to a cry of dignity.

In the last decade, mural portraits of the disappeared have started popping up in the city for political reasons and are subsequently removed from the streets. But they reappear and they will continue to do so. Collectives such as *Dexpierte* and *Beligerarte*¹⁸, among others, have

18 Translator’s note: *Dexpierte* and *Beligerarte* are two made-up names that are plays on words similar to *despierte* (wake up) and *beligerante* (belligerent, at war). There is usage of *arte* (art) to add additional meaning and explanation as to the purpose of these groups.

chosen forced disappearance and human rights as the subject for their work in the public space. Cities such as Bogotá, Cali, Medellín or Barrancabermeja are the venues of their interventions, largely involving previous work with communities and with those affected: the victims of the armed, social and political conflict [► SEE [Maps 27, 28 and 29](#)].

Social organisations have also established contact with the graffiti movement and have performed dozens of acts that combine different live techniques that could be considered as urban performances. Among these groups we find *Antena Mutante* (Mutant Antenna), who, through cartographic projects, perform analysis of the use of public spaces in order to intervene in them with themes that cover confinement, questioning the prison system and the impossibility of moving freely because borders are controlled by armed actors. In these interventions the connection with the network is an important factor because their work with groups in other cities is constant and continuous, and expands the scenario analysed over two different territories. The connections with Brazil, Mexico, Argentina or Palestine in order to analyse the militarisation of the territories has been a line of research-intervention, connecting the street and the internet as public spaces, involving also collaborations with other groups of artists. An example of this is the intervention in Eduardo Umaña Square, in solidarity with Occupy-New York during the Low Lives festival. *Guache* and *Dexpierte* were present at the action.

Beligerarte and the Nydia Érika Bautista Foundation for Human Rights carried out the initiative '*Pasó, repasamos lo que pasó y*



Mural painted in the centre of Bogotá: 'My mom pampered me, and they made her disappear!'

exigimos que no se repita' (It happened, we reviewed what went on and we say never again) and they worked with disappeared persons' relatives on rights of public memorial through interventions in the city of Bogotá.

A mural portraying Nydia, that was started during the *escrache* against General Velandia and then re-intervened in tribute to the disappeared women on 72nd Street with 13th Avenue (financial centre of Bogotá), remained there for a few months and was then was changed for a fence in a car park for executives.

In the centre of Bogotá, the figure '20,000' was created with portraits of forced disappearance victims with the slogan '*jamás olvidaremos*' (we will never forget).

In Pueblo Bello (Antioquia), on a marathon night guarded by military men watching the event, on a wall on the great unpaved street, the faces of the forty-three men disappeared by order of the Castaño Clan reappeared. It was Fidel, the head of the clan who gave the order to take the peasants with the complacency of the army. These men never returned and twenty-five years later the relatives are still demanding justice¹⁹.

19 Excerpt from the text published by the Goethe University of Frankfurt under the title *Memoirs Lived Among the disappearance, persecution and exile: the experience of relatives of the disappeared and their struggles for truth and justice*. In Spiller, Rolland & Schreij-ck (eds.). *Colombia's historical memory, post-*

Mapping

In 1999 I made a first map proposal for Bogotá centre, together with the Spanish artist Pedro Campoy, in a project called *Urbanizando la memoria* (Urbanising memory). Instead of street numbers, the map had the names of thirty-five disappeared persons as a symbolic homage and as a way of both bringing the phenomenon of forced disappearances into the public view and opening the debate around it. In 2011 I participated in the formulation of the *Cartografía de la Memoria de Bogotá* (Cartography of Bogotá's Memory) for the *Centro de Memoria, Paz y Reconciliación del Distrito Capital* (Centre for Memory, Peace and Reconciliation of the Capital District) with the names of fifty victims of the conflict, for events that took place in the city of Bogotá. And three years ago we started the present work of mapping forced disappearance in Colombia. Composing this cartography is our act of poetic justice. Our intention has been to invite people who have not been directly touched by this horror and barbarism to question the effects of this absurdity on the lives of those who suffer, who do not know, who do not understand why something so cruel has happened to them, and to stand in solidarity with them.

When we began mapping this phenomenon, we tried to identify common places and references in the territories. We wanted to shape what happened with the figures given by different official sources – we knew of the under-registration, and we were aware of phenomena such as exhaustion that blurs hope and turns it into agony. Seeing the map of impunity, or the few municipalities from which no one was taken, generates a shuddering chill. We wanted to build devices that may allow mapping this relationship between natural

resource extraction – such as oil, gold or emeralds – with the extermination of entire communities [[SEE Map 26](#)].

This essay tries to uncover how the crimes committed and both their geographical location and that of the likely related interests that could have motivated them. It seeks to accompany the testimonies of the victims to help understand the extent of the damage caused over decades and to provide an interpretation tool from different angles and perspectives that may help overcome that dark night. We want it to serve as a guiding instrument, as a georeference amid so much confusion.

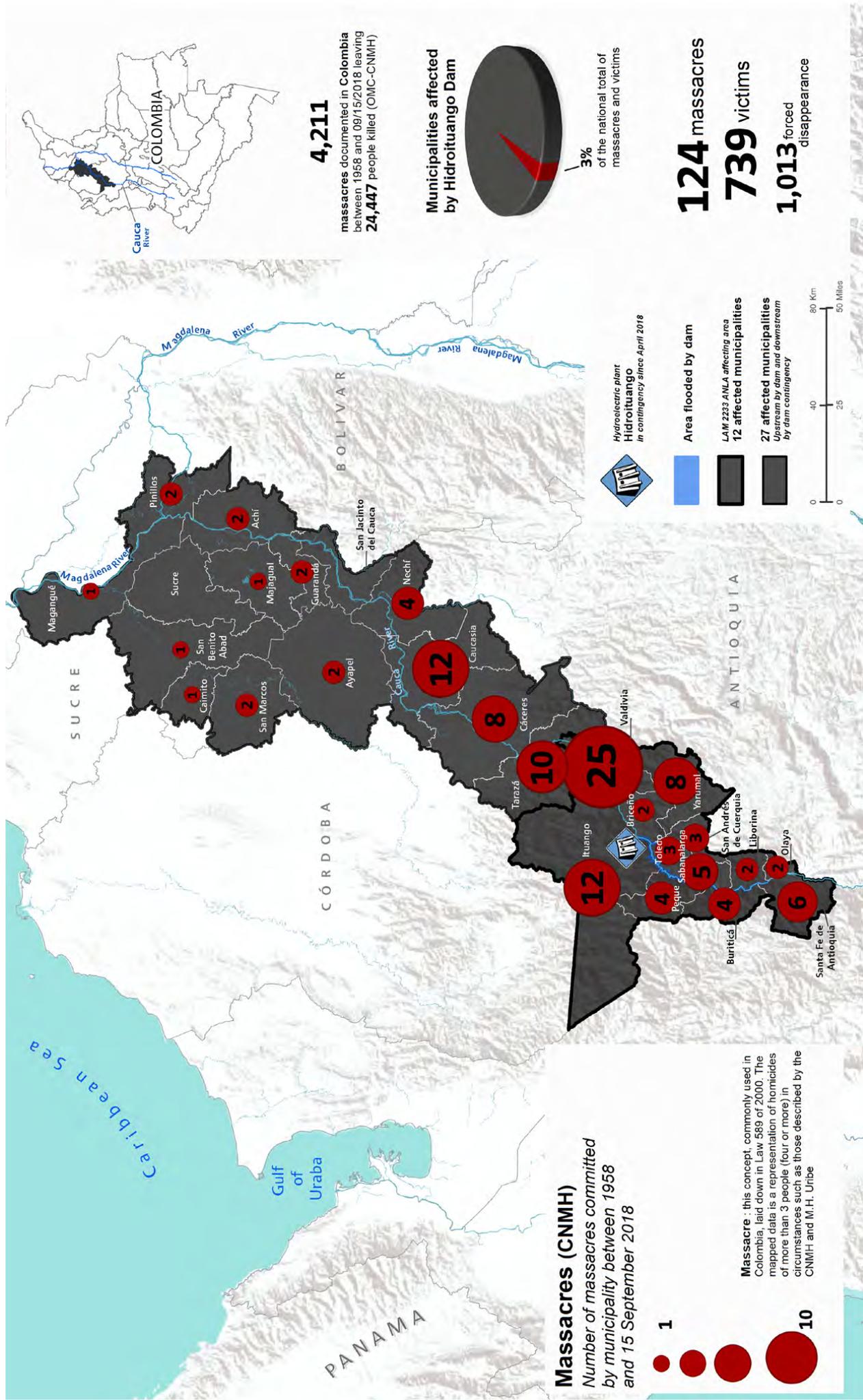
Mapping how hundreds of women and men have given themselves to the cause of re-dignifying those who were taken under the cover of night and fog, whom we would like to take back to the path of light, serves to find them, to help their families find psychological and emotional tranquillity, to contribute to the coexistence and reconciliation of society; it adds to the efforts to attain truth and historical memory, and, finally, to eradicate uncertainty and impunity from Colombia.

The maps selected here are part of a thorough and detailed work that has sought to respect the dignity of the victims and the struggle of their families. It's a poetic work, full of passion and thought. It is, as Rodolfo Walsh would say, our faithful commitment to bearing our testimony in difficult times.

Today there are relatives' organisations in different regions of the country with whom we want to share this tool so that the hope of finding each and every one of these victims of dehumanisation is kept alive. On our website there are other categories such as art and forced

conflict and transmigration (p. 123). Ed. Peter Lang GmbH, Berlin. Arellana Bautista, Erik (2018).

MASSACRES IN MUNICIPALITIES AFFECTED BY HIDROITUANGO DAM (OMC)



Sources | Data: Memory and Conflict Observatory (OMC) of the National Center for Historical Memory (CNMH), September 2018 · LAM 2233 ANLA, EPM, UNGRD, G, Vargas, 2018. Movimiento Ríos Vivos (MRV) 2018 · Icons: Iconoclastas · Base layers: DANE, IDEAM, ESRI, USGS, NOAA

disappearance, testimonies, voices, reflections and poetry. It is the resource we have come to in order to prevent the beauty of existence, with its multiple contradictions, from being forcibly taken from us, from being disappeared as well.

This work is an invitation to feeding resistance from different shores. It is a *poemap* or a *mapoem* in which we intend to organise that chaos of life because, as T.S Eliot would say, 'It is the function of all art to give us some perception of an order in life, by imposing order upon it'. The guiding sense that will lead us to find them.

This work is inspired by women who have left their imprints on the history of Colombia, raising awareness through their testimony, their struggle and their commitment to make visible the invisible and to leave traces of memory in places where horror had prevailed. Thanks to their perseverance we were able to know of the existence of **the San Juan brothers, Edilbrando Joya, Eduardo Lofsner, Leonardo Gómez, Pedro Movilla, Héctor Jaime Beltrán, Guillermo Rivera, Jaime Gómez, Faustino López, the Galárraga Meneses brothers** and **Nydia Érika Bautista**.

This work is dedicated to the resistance of organisations and collectives such as *Movimiento Nacional de Víctimas de Crímenes de Estado* (National Movement of Victims of State Crimes, MOVICE), *Familiares Colombia* (Colombia Relatives), *Familiares de los desaparecidos en el Palacio de Justicia en 1985* (Relatives of those disappeared at the Palace of Justice in 1985), *Asociación de familiares de Desaparecidos del Pacífico Colombiano* (Colombian Pacific Association of Relatives of the Disappeared), *Asociación Luz y Esperanza de la zona rural de Tumaco* (Light and Hope Association of rural Tumaco), *Madres de la Candelaria* (Candelarian Mothers) and all those people who, from different corners of the country and the planet, fight to eradicate these practices of systematic and massive elimination of thousands of human beings. ♦

DESAPARICIONFORZADA.CO

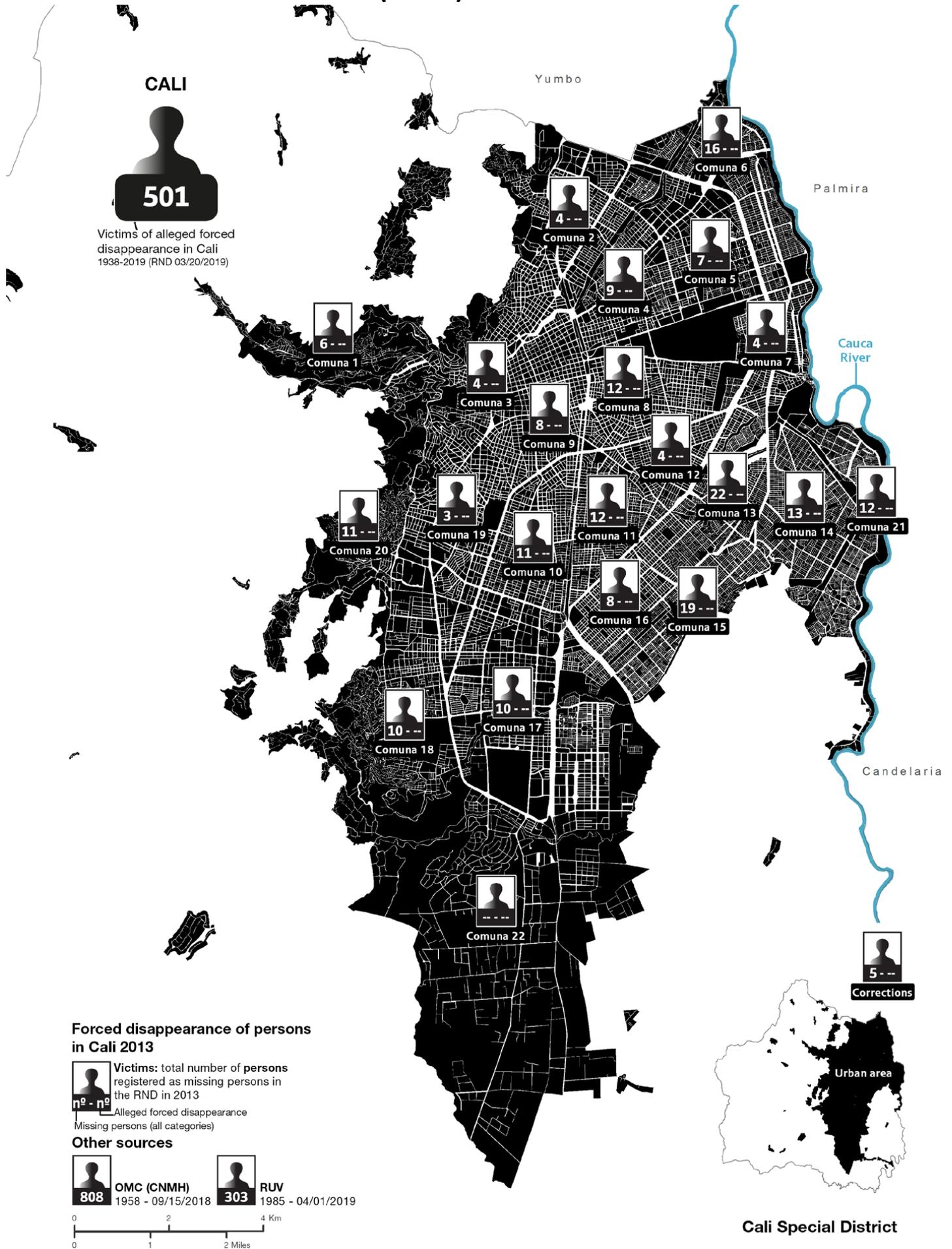
https://colombia.desaparicionforzada.com/desaparicionforzada_arte/poesia/

https://colombia.desaparicionforzada.com/desaparicionforzada_arte/muralismo-street-art/

<https://colombia.desaparicionforzada.com/acciones-performaticas/>

<https://colombia.desaparicionforzada.com/voces/>

VICTIMS OF FORCED DISAPPEARANCE BY COMMUNE IN CALI (RND)

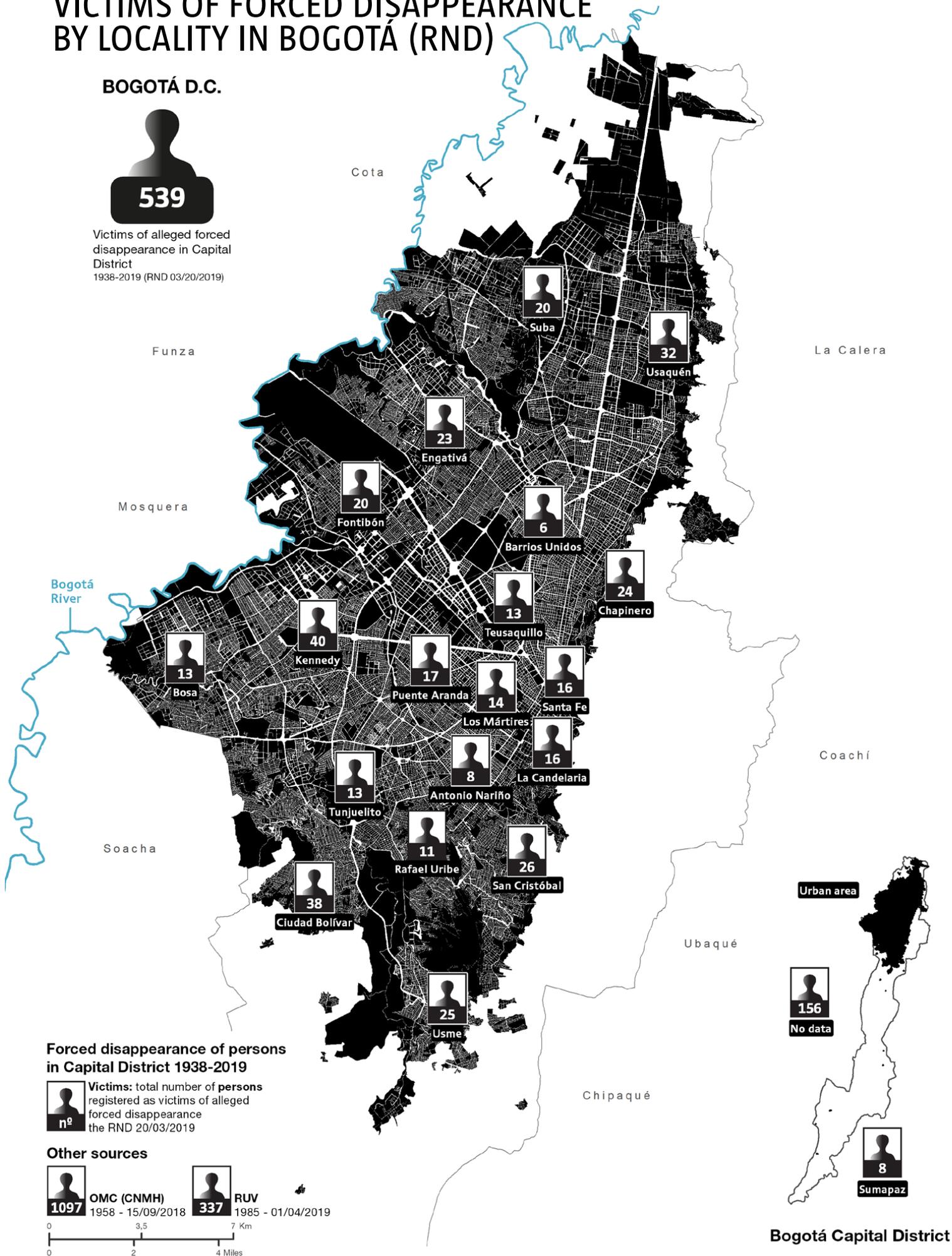


VICTIMS OF FORCED DISAPPEARANCE BY LOCALITY IN BOGOTÁ (RND)

BOGOTÁ D.C.



Victims of alleged forced disappearance in Capital District
1938-2019 (RND 03/20/2019)



Forced disappearance of persons in Capital District 1938-2019

Victims: total number of persons registered as victims of alleged forced disappearance the RND 20/03/2019

Other sources

OMC (CNMH) 1958 - 15/09/2018

RUV 1985 - 01/04/2019

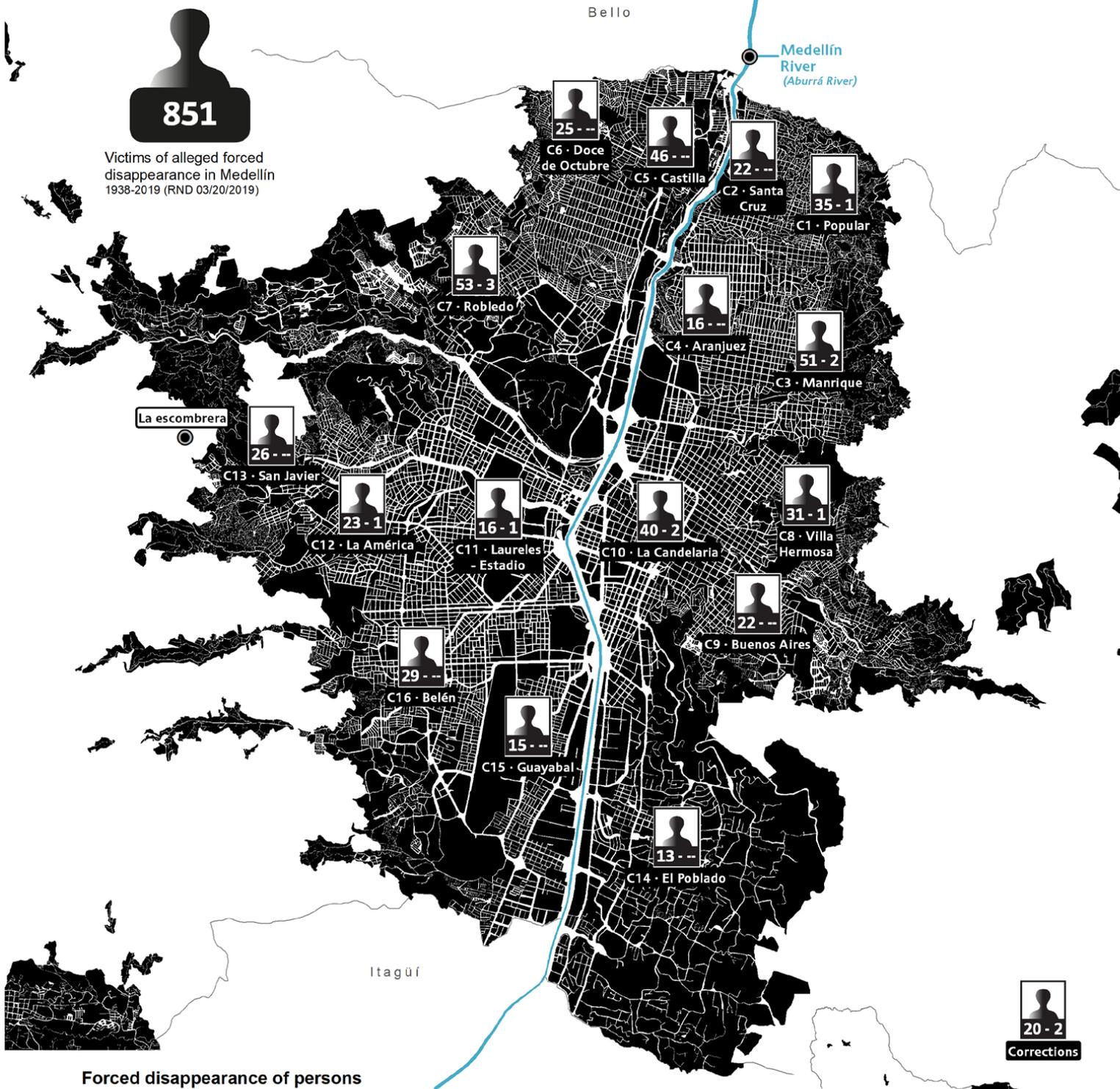


VICTIMS OF FORCED DISAPPEARANCE BY COMMUNE IN MEDELLÍN (RND)

MEDELLÍN



Victims of alleged forced disappearance in Medellín 1938-2019 (RND 03/20/2019)



Forced disappearance of persons in Medellín 2014

Victims: total number of persons registered as missing persons in the RND in 2014

Alleged forced disappearance
Missing persons (all categories)

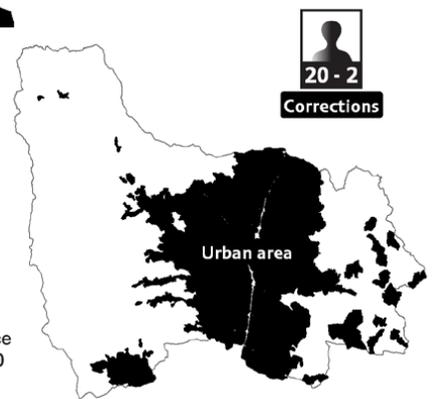
Other sources

2977 OMC (CNMH) 1958 - 09/15/2018
1445 RUV 1985 - 04/01/2019



La Escombrera - La Arenera: depending on the source it is estimated that there could be between 104 and 300 victims of forced disappearance buried here

Medellín River: no consolidated figures. Between 2012 and 2014 it was reported that 196 bodies were recovered from the river (FGN)



Municipality of Medellín

VICTIMS OF FORCED DISAPPEARANCE BY HYDROGRAPHIC AREA

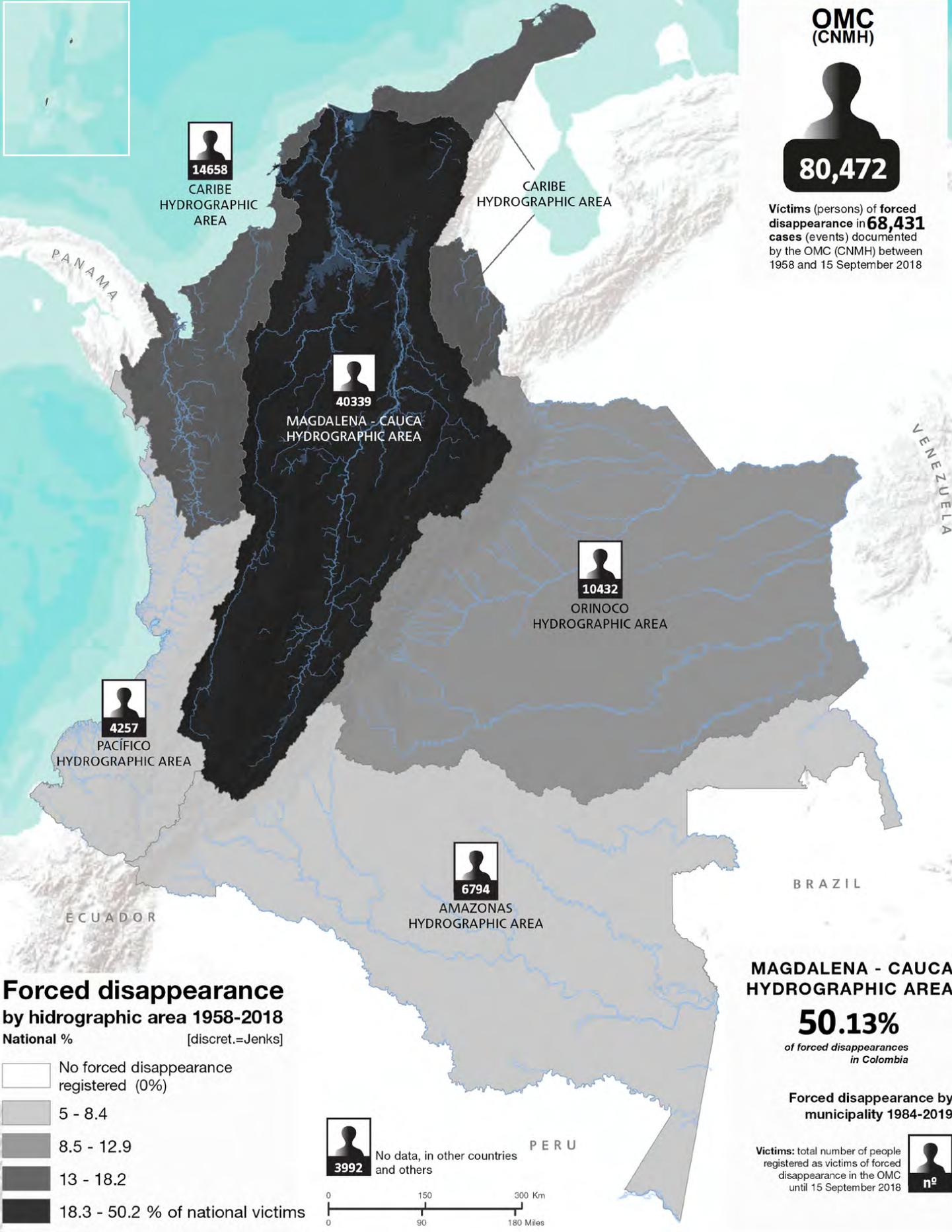


OMC (CNMH)



80,472

Victims (persons) of forced disappearance in **68,431** cases (events) documented by the OMC (CNMH) between 1958 and 15 September 2018



Forced disappearance by hidrographic area 1958-2018

National % [discret.=Jenks]

-  No forced disappearance registered (0%)
-  5 - 8.4
-  8.5 - 12.9
-  13 - 18.2
-  18.3 - 50.2 % of national victims



3992 No data, in other countries and others

PERU

0 150 300 Km
0 90 180 Miles

MAGDALENA - CAUCA HYDROGRAPHIC AREA

50.13%
of forced disappearances in Colombia

Forced disappearance by municipality 1984-2019

Victims: total number of people registered as victims of forced disappearance in the OMC until 15 September 2018



nº

Sources | Data: Memory and Conflict Observatory (OMC) of the National Center for Historical Memory (CNMH), September 2018 · DANE population projections, 2010 revision · IDEAM, 2013 · Icons: Creando, 2017 · Base layers: DANE, IDEAM, ESRI, USGS, NOAA

COLOMBIAN RIVERS, PLACES OF LIFE, NOT DEATH

By *Isabel Cristina Zuleta*¹

Those who think that Colombian rivers will help them hide their crimes against the population are wrong. To say that a river flows is undoubtedly pointless, but fundamental to understanding that they are not static but rather, dynamic places; the contrary of still waters.

Over time, a river and its changing currents not only transform the place through which they flow. But their meanders and speed also change depending on its flow rate, which in turn depends on the rains, on the changes in its tributaries, on groundwater, on the uses of its waters, etc.

A river can be as unpredictable as human behaviour, of which the understanding continues to escape us, despite having studied it for centuries.

I can say that, although they have some elements in common, each river is different; so, to assume that they are good places to hide the dead is to ignore what a river truly is. Rivers are not just the water that we see flowing on their surface. They are also the mountains or valleys that surround them, the aquatic and terrestrial biodiversity, the forests through which they flow and the riverbanks themselves, the animals that depend on them, their tributaries and the groundwaters. But rivers are also the communities that settle around them, adopting their relationship with the waters as a way of life that tends to make them become a fundamental part of individual, family and collective existence.

One who throws a corpse into a river intends for their crime to go unpunished. They seek to silence the dead who have much to say. Different sciences have tried to understand the language of death and

the dead. Water destroys some of the truth that a corpse could tell, but rivers, along with their own water people, have created their own ways of protecting the truth and preventing it from passing into eternal oblivion.

Rescuing bodies that are washed down the river is part of the spiritual tradition of many of the water peoples. Such is the case in the Cauca River Canyon, in the department of Antioquia, where the water people only rescue corpses showing signs of violence. They believe that there are deities in the Cauca River who demand lives in exchange for maintaining the life of the river, which is superior to human life. They do not rescue the corpses of those who drowned in order to bury them on the river banks or in nearby cemeteries; only those who died though shouldn't have. They collect corpses for the sole purpose of giving them peace by burying them. It is clear that for all the water cultures I know, water is not considered a burial place, but land is.

Each body that falls into the water is conceived as in a state of torment. This is the view taken by their families and the communities that see them float past. The resting place for the dead is on dry land and this belief becomes a moral obligation for the living who, despite not knowing the identity of the corpses in almost all cases, come to pull them out of the waters and bury them along the river banks or in nearby cemeteries, often hoping that these bodies will be found by their relatives one day. With this, the very objective of making the body disappear is counteracted in a collective action, without apparent connection. The motivation is nothing but the sense of humanity that is given to us by culture and flowing waters.

♦ □ 112

¹ Representative of *Ríos Vivos de Colombia* (Colombia Living Rivers)

MUNICIPAL FORCED DISAPPEARANCE RATE IN MUNICIPALITIES AFFECTED BY HIDROITUANGO DAM (OMC)

Search, identification and delivery of missing persons

GRUBE (FGN)

Consolidated data September 2017

159 **84**

Exhumations

Bodies identified and handed over to their relatives

Tribute to victims of forced disappearance in the canyon of the Cauca River



Action of Cuerpos Gramaticales on the Pascadero bridge in Ituango/Toledo on 09/19/2017

Municipal forced disappearance rate

1985-2018

FDR x 100,000 people [discret=Jenks]

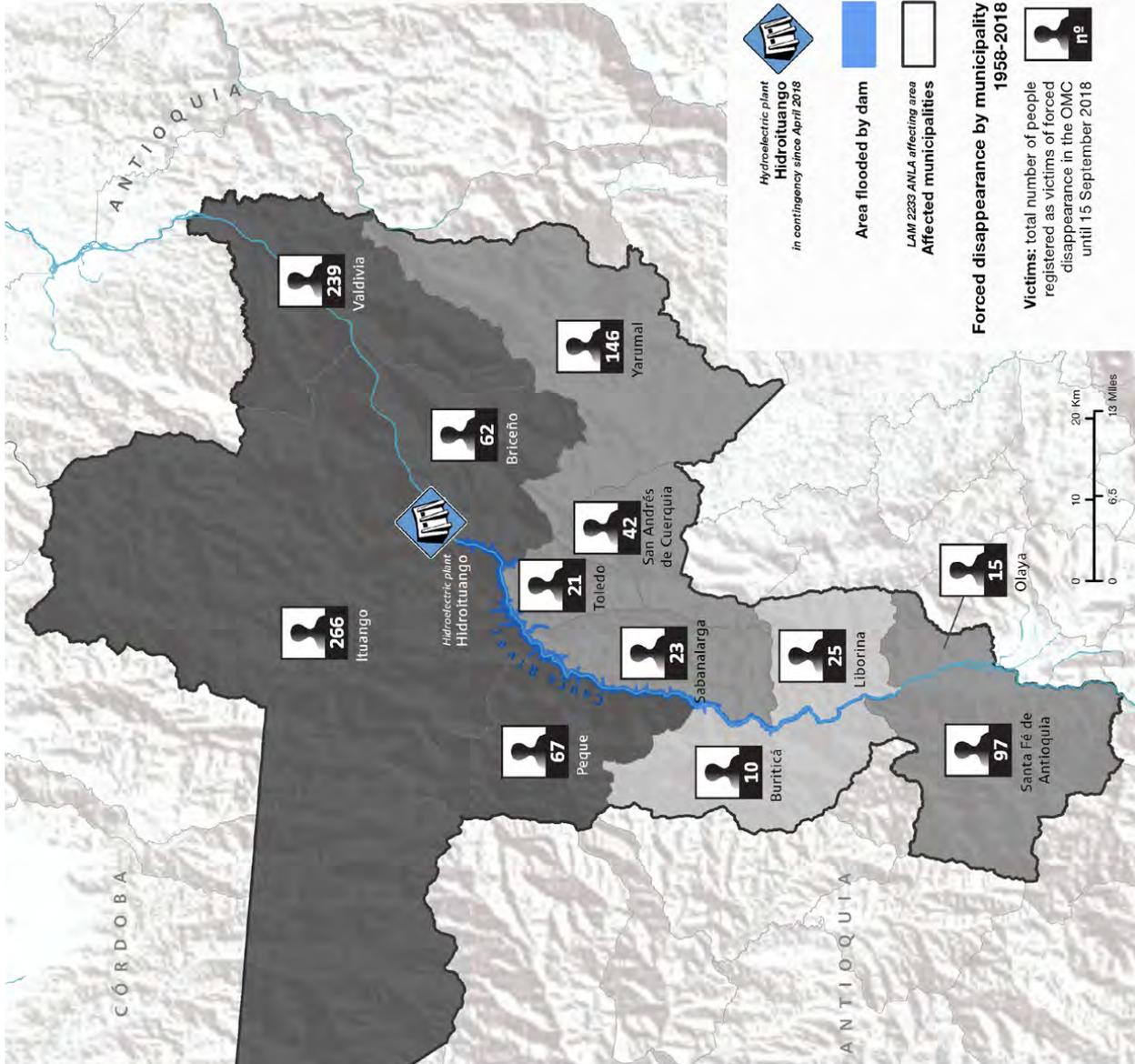
No forced disappearance registered (FDR=0)

0.06 - 7.64

7.65 - 20.99

21 - 46.96

46.97 - 119 x 100,000 people



Hydroelectric plant **Hidroituango** in contingency since April 2018

Area flooded by dam

LAW 2233 ANLA affecting area Affected municipalities

Forced disappearance by municipality 1958-2018

Victims: total number of people registered as victims of forced disappearance in the OMC until 15 September 2018



80,472

Victims (persons) of forced disappearance documented by the OMC (CNMH) between 1958 - 2018

AFFECTED MUNICIPALITIES BY HIDROITUANGO DAM

1,013

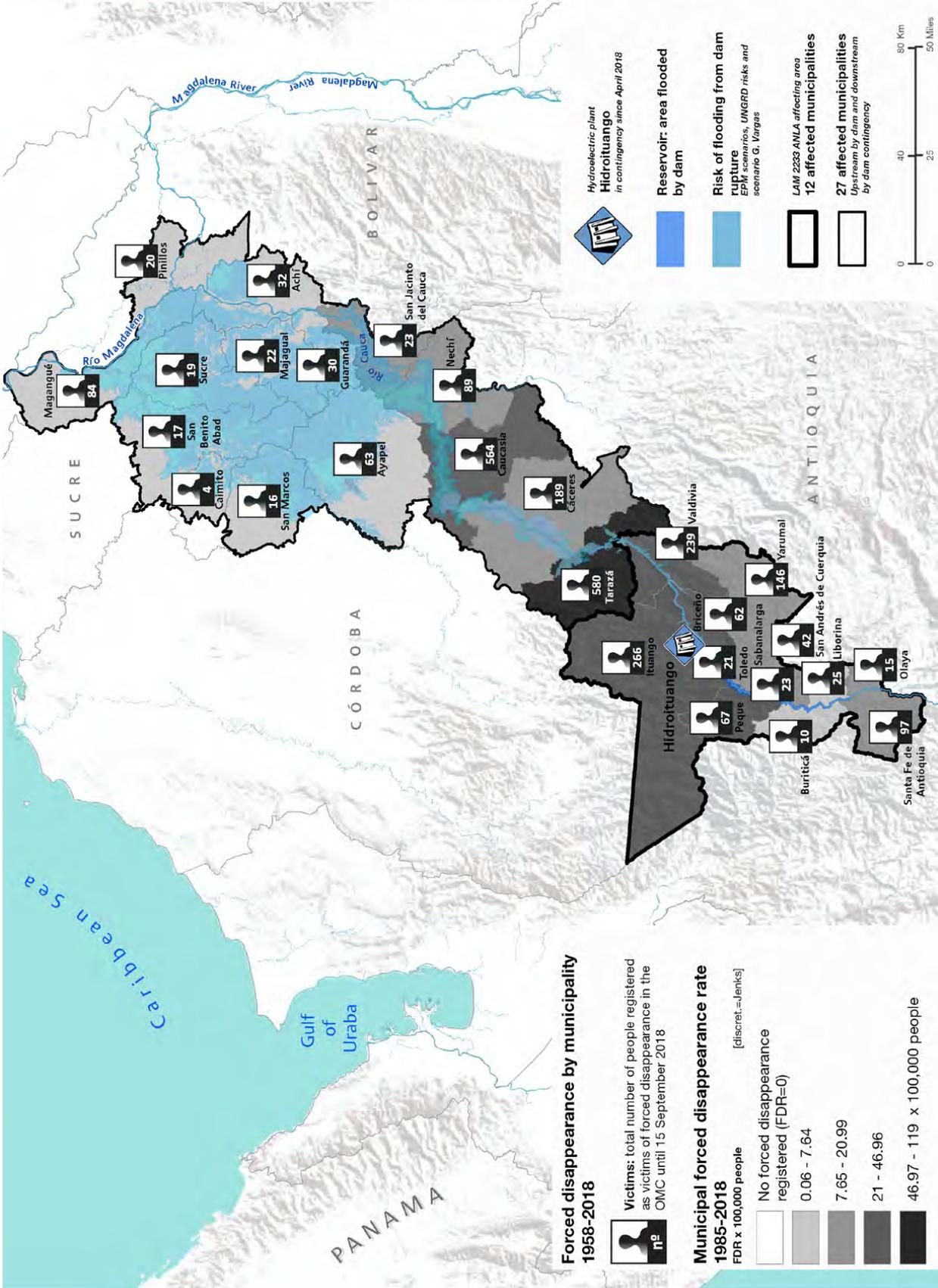
Victims of forced disappearance in the 12 affected municipalities (affected according to the approved environmental license-LAM 2233)



1.26% of the National victims

Sources | Data: Memory and Conflict Observatory (OMC) of the National Center for Historical Memory (CNMH), September 2018 · LAM 2233 ANLA, 2018. Movimiento Ríos Vivos (MRV) 2018 · DANE, population projections, 2010 revision · Image: Contagio Radio, 2017 · Icons: Creando, 2017 · Iconoclastas · Base layers: DANE, IDEAM, ESRI, USGS, NOAA

MUNICIPAL FORCED DISAPPEARANCE RATE IN THE 27 MUNICIPALITIES AFFECTED BY HIDROITUANGO DAM (OMC)



Sources | Data: Memory and Conflict Observatory (OMC) of the National Center for Historical Memory (CNMH), September 2018 · LAM 2233 ANLA, EPM, UNGRD, G, Vargas, 2018. Movimiento Ríos Vivos (MRV) 2018 · Icons: Iconoclastas · Base layers: DANE, IDEAM, ESRI, USGS, NOAA



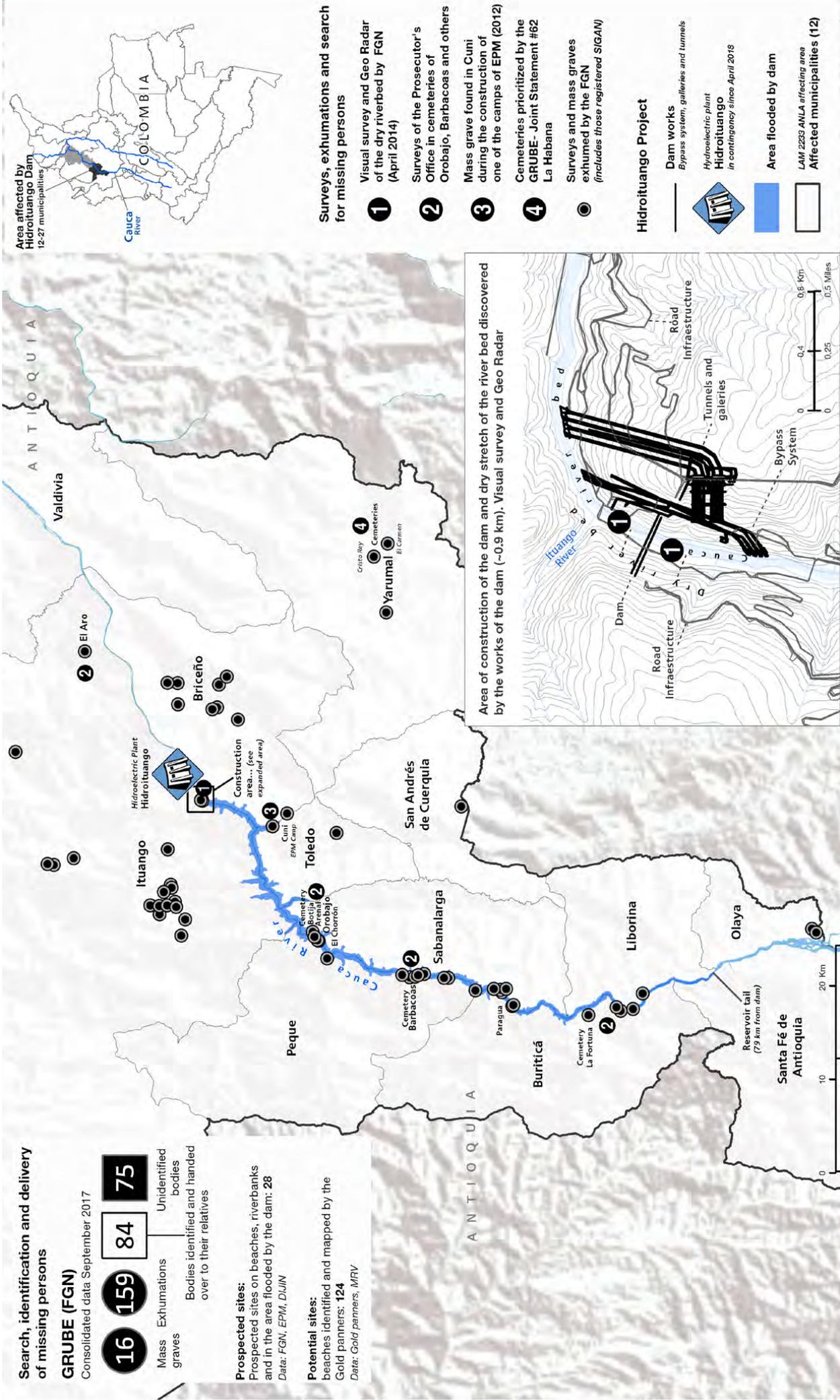
Image of the Hidroituango dam. 📷 *Federico Ríos.*

Nature, in this case rivers, are victims of the armed conflict in Colombia, not only because of the damage that has been caused by polluting them, diverting them, bombing them, planting anti-personnel landmines at their source, devastating the forests they sustain, but also because of their transformation into a morgue – a reality that is alien to them. A river has the right to flow freely, carrying mountain sediments rather than the burden that we humans impose on them. The rights of the rivers are not granted by humans; they exercise these rights at the making of their first decisions. They should be subjects of protection for us since, both human life, and in this case, human death as well, depend on them. But above all, they are

decision-makers and they have decided to reveal the truth of thousands of dead people who have been thrown into their waters.

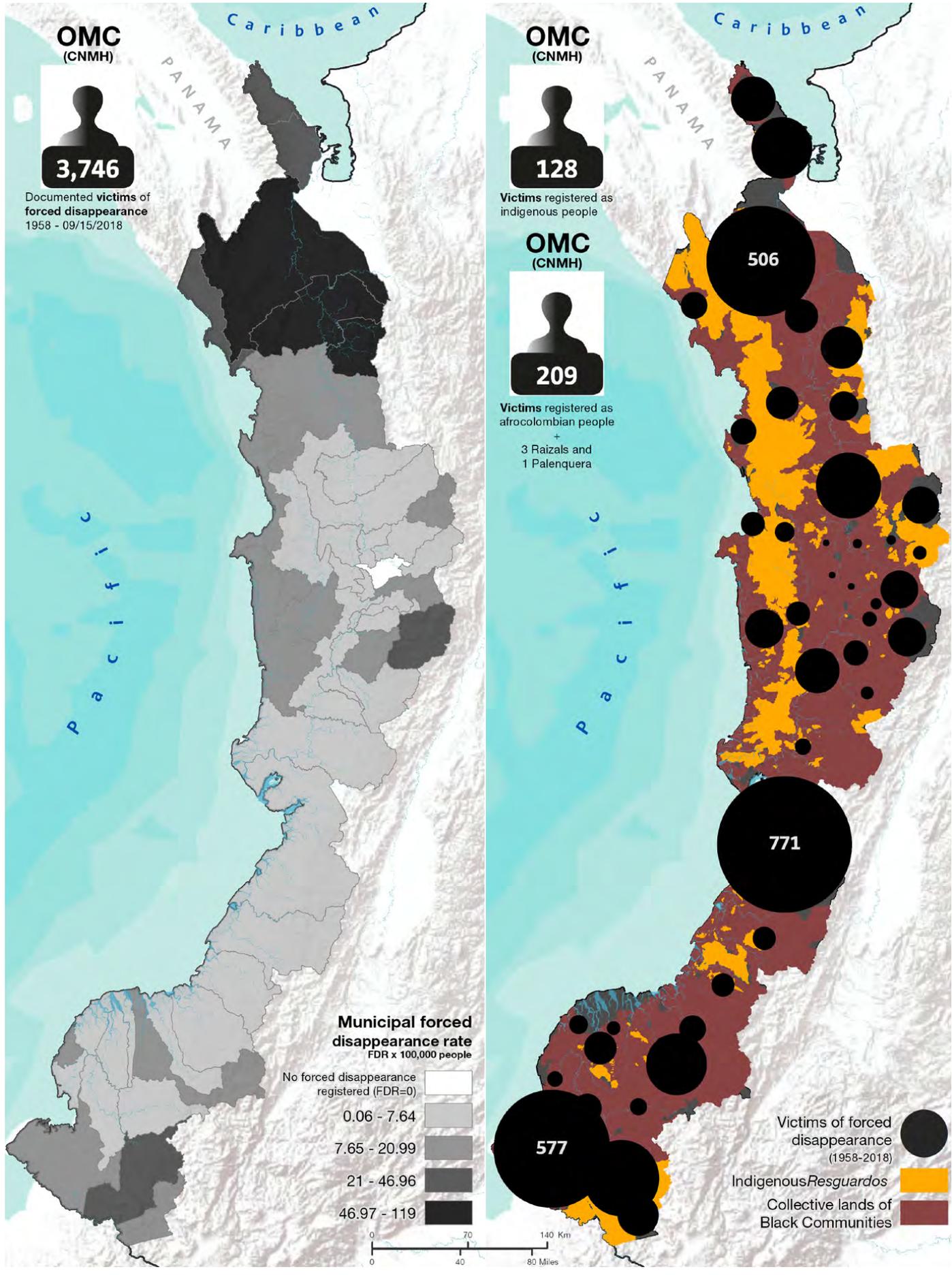
Colombia's rivers have flown down, stained with blood. We, the inhabitants of the riverbanks, have seen with stupor this stain flow past in the direction of the sea, and in some cases in the direction of hydroelectric plants that obstruct the flow of rivers. But the bodies have stayed with us, with those who respect death and therefore the sense of life. Not only is it possible to search for the missing in the rivers, but also a legal obligation for the state, and a moral and ethical one for Colombian society. ♦

SURVEYS, EXHUMATIONS AND SEARCH FOR MISSING PERSONS. MUNICIPALITIES AFFECTED BY HIDROITUANGO DAM



Sources | Data: GRUBE (FGN) 2017 · FGN; EPM; DIJIN. LAM 2233 ANLA, 2018. Movimiento Ríos Vivos (MRV) 2018, Gold panners · Icons: Iconoclastas · Base layers: DANE, EPM, IDEAM, ESRI, USGS, NOAA

MUNICIPAL RATE AND VICTIMS OF FORCED DISAPPEARANCE IN PACIFIC TERRITORIES (OMC)



THE NEAR TRUTH

By *Yenny Ortiz Heredia and
Jesús A Flórez L.*¹

In the middle of the 80s of the 20th century, it was common to see on different walls of Bogota, in the city centre, graffiti of the following content: “The missing are in the hills”. The affirmation did not have recognized authorship, but it coincided with the discourse of public officials – civilians and military – who publicly denied the existence of the ‘phenomenon’ of disappearance, because at the time this scourge was not yet typified as a crime in the national legislation and, therefore, in this official ‘account’, those persons claimed as missing were not so, but “were in the hills”. That is to say, that they had gone to swell the ranks of the diverse subversive or guerrilla organisations, whereby these persons and their relatives resulted in being doubly victimised.

However, it was common to hear the testimonies of relatives and neighbours about unidentified people who took citizens away in cars, often of official use, never to be seen again. This was recorded in the Historical Memory work carried out in Buenaventura in relation to acts of violence in the 80s: ‘Well, that’s how I remember, when I was very young, they talked about the “broom”, which was basically a figure of the state. Then when you grow up you understand that they were the ones in charge of the so-called social cleansings that were carried out in the municipality. Then, this person or this group of people would appear, and the young people they called thieves and the rest of it would vanish and be taken to the Devil’s curve where they would be torture and stabbed. In other words, the issue of them appearing

all stabbed today is not new, but something that had already occurred in the past².

Today, the so-called Final Agreement for the End of Conflict and the Construction of Stable and Lasting Peace, signed on 24 November 2016 between the Colombian state, represented by the national government, and the former guerrilla of the FARC-EP, has created the space to address this reprehensible and unacceptable practice of forced disappearance. For this, the Integral System of Truth, Justice, Reparation and Guarantees of Non-Repitition (SIVJRNR), of which the Search Unit for Presumed Disappeared Persons in the context of armed conflict (UBPD) is part.

Since the intentional concealment of the multiple crimes committed in the framework of armed conflict, as well as many others, especially those committed through the practice of institutionalism that generate corruption, is the basis of impunity, we can safely assume that the most significant missing factor is the truth.

Therefore, the first major task is to make the truth ‘appear’, to reveal the deception and disclose the accumulation of fallacies publicised, not infrequently by the mass media, which have been constituted in truth to hide the true facts, damage and perpetrators.

The truth is perhaps what is most sought after by the victims of armed conflict and of all the violations of human dignity. That is why at the same time, truth becomes

♦ □ 117

1 Advisory Team to the Pacific Inter-Ethnic Truth Commission (CIVP).

2 Interview with community leader in March 2015. Published by Flórez L., Jesús A. and Ruiz, Adriel in the case of Buenaventura in the book *Violencia en cinco ciudades de Colombia (Violence in five cities in Colombia)*, edited by Guzmán, Álvaro. Editorial UAO. 2018.

PLACES OF MEMORY AND TRUTH



Places of memory

Centro Integral de Formación y Fortalecimiento Espiritual y Cultural Wiwa – CIFFEC

Centro de Memoria del Conflicto

Museo Comunitario de San Jacinto

Casa de la Cultura y la Memoria de Las Palmas

Lugar de Memoria el Lago y la Sábana de los Sueños - La Pelona

Museo Itinerante de Memoria y la Identidad de los Montes de María

Casa de la Memoria de El Salado

Quiosco de la Memoria

Centro Social y Comunitario Remanso de Paz

Casa de la Memoria y los Derechos Humanos de las Mujeres Organización Femenina Popular

Lugar de Memoria del Atrato

Museo Casa de la Memoria de Medellín

Centro de Acercamiento para la Reconciliación, CARE

Salón del Nunca Más

Centro de Memoria, Paz y Reconciliación

Museo Nacional de la Memoria

Colectivo Sociojurídico Orlando Fals Borda

Capilla de la Memoria de Fundescodes

Casa de las Mujeres y Hombres de Triana

Galerías y grupo de teatro El Tente

Movice Valle

Galería de la Memoria Tiberio Fernández Mafla - Fundación Guagua

Rutas del peregrinaje de la Memoria de El Castillo

Casa de la Memoria de la Costa Pacífica Nariñense

Museo Caquetá

La Piedra de San Lorenzo

Bosque de la Memoria

Museo de la Memoria Histórica Tras las Huellas de El Placer

La Casa de la Memoria Viva de los Hijos del Tabaco, Coca y Yuca dulce

the most feared enemy by those who perpetrated these violations, as they are not willing to contribute with justice, redress and the guarantee of non-repetition for the victims.

It is for this reason that, in Colombia, the debate and reflection regarding clarification of the truth cannot be postponed. Tens of thousands of complaints made by victims, social organisations and the movement of human rights defenders regarding the multiple violations of these rights have emerged forcefully, in order for their stories to remain in memory while contributing to the construction of these truths.

In the case of forced disappearance, it will only be possible to arrive at the truth through the story of each one of the affected social sectors and from each territory. That is why the work on memory and truth that are being carried out in urban and rural contexts are so important, whether through the houses of memorial, chapels of memorial, museums of memorial, memorial galleries, circuits, territorial brands and monuments of memorial, most of them grouped in the Colombian Network of Places of Memorial (RCLM), which to date includes 30 spaces for reflection, training and exhibition of memory³.

Another initiative presented to the public on 22 May 2019 is the Pacific Inter-Ethnic Truth Commission (CIVP)⁴, which arose as a result of the work to defend the territory. This has been carried out by indigenous ethnic-territorial and Afro-Colombian organisations in this region, accompanied by the Catholic Church, for nearly four decades. In order to do this work, the territory has been organised into 10 sub-regions: five in Chocó, one



Act for Peace in Quibdó (Chocó).  *Rafael Gómez.*

in the Cauca Valley, one in Cauca and three in Nariño; 47 municipalities, within which there are indigenous reserves and collective-held territories of black communities. These ethnic territories together represent approximately 7 million hectares.

This truth about forced disappearance demanded by the pained expressions of the relatives of victims should also include regular and irregular combatants, who probably died in wartime confrontation, but whose bodies have not appeared, as has been observed in many regions of Colombia.

These two examples, the RCLM and the CIVP, indicate that the search for truth must emerge from the territories, since it has been within each of them where the violations and damage have occurred. However, it is worth pointing out the challenges that this indicates, given that the construction of territorial truth implies a variety of forms from which an equal number of challenges derive as will be outlined below.

Political Territory

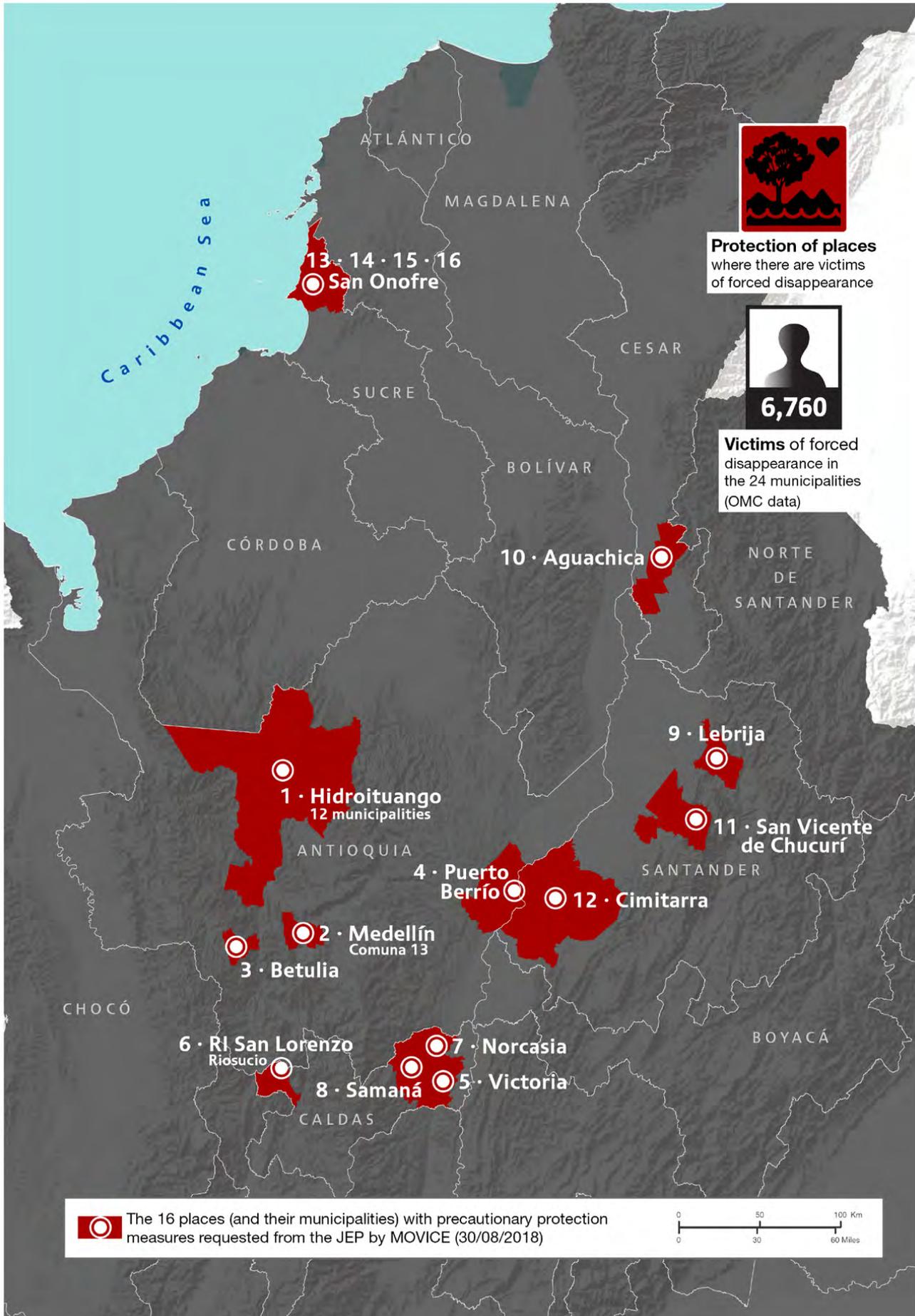
Taking into account the political-administrative order, the truth that has to be revealed in the territories is closely linked to the practice of electoral politics

➔ 119

³ <http://redmemoriacolombia.org/site/>

⁴ <https://pacificocolombia.org/comision-interetnica-de-la-verdad-de-la-region-del-pacifico/>

PROTECTION, CARE AND PRESERVATION OF PLACES. PRECAUTIONARY MEASURES REQUESTED BY MOVICE BEFORE THE JEP (2018)



and the exercise of governability, since it is known that one of the structural causes of armed conflict in Colombia is precisely political exclusion. Therefore, disappearance, assassination and exile have emerged in people and social movements and in alternative political parties that have sought participation outside the liberal-conservative bipartisan monopoly which has been protected by theocratic legitimacy. A more than emblematic example is the territorial extermination of the Patriotic Union, the A Luchar movement or the civic movements.

This realm of clarification carries with it many risks, since in the course of implementation of the aforementioned 2016 Peace Agreement, the persecution of social leadership has been exacerbated, demanding among other causes, precisely political inclusion. Therefore, the work to unravel the truth is done, as in other times, in the midst of persecution, threat and murder; in other words, it is the truth of the so-called post-conflict without being genuinely so.

Socio-economical Territory

The second point of reference for the search for truth from the territories is the concept of the socio-economic region, since in many cases both legal and illegal armed groups defined their actions in accordance with the economic networks that cross the borders of the political-administrative order and create new limits, thus configuring appropriations of space and imposing a logic favouring warlike interventions and controls of the civilian population. This explains in many cases the forced displacement, accompanied by assassinations and disappearances, whose purpose was the spread of landowners by means of legal and illegal land usurpation to establish, among others, extensive livestock or

agro-industry projects, such as the oil palm in the Altillanura, in the Magdalena Medio, the Bajo Atrato, the Cauca coast and Nariño.

The clarification thus has to do with the relationship between war and transformation of property and use of land and subsoil, sponsored by national and multinational business players.

In this context it will also be necessary to clarify the origin of drug trafficking and its gradual link with the deepening, sharpening and degradation of armed conflict, and, of course, the role played by the public establishment in all its aspects: legislative, judicial and executive with the Armed Forces.

Territory and environment

A third consideration is the environmental dimension, which defines a territoriality from the predominant ecosystem in an area, be it the tropical rainforest, the dry Andean forest, the mountains, valleys, plains and coasts, whose environmental supply has been prey to the unfolding of war. In order to appropriate it and consume the mining, hydrocarbon and biogenetic extractivism, there have been, in not few cases, 'ecocides' that have put at risk the sustainability of many populations. That is why the truth will be linked to this identification, whose wounds are reflected in the damage caused to water sources and currents such as, for example, the Atrato, Cauca, Magdalena, Caquetá and Putumayo rivers, among others.

In order to arrive at these truths, it will be necessary to work hard to unite the use of appropriate technology with the testimony of nature itself, which speaks through its wounds and that of the victims, including the missing who are linked to environmental movements.



Aerial view in the Chocó. 📷 *Steven Cagan.*

Ethnic territories

Another form of construction of territory is that which comes from the appropriation and ancestral settlement of native or indigenous peoples, which still preserve in many cases, semi-nomadism, particularly in the jungle areas and savannahs. This results in the very wide and complex territorial boundaries, since in general, mobility and settlement correspond to seasonal periods of fruit and root production, as well as to the reproduction of game. Consequently, the violations committed in these territories present an even greater challenge for the clarification of truth, as is the case, for example, with the Nukak-Maku community, which, like 30 other ethnic groups out of the country's 102, is at high risk of extinction.

As for the population coming from the execrable crime of the slave trade in African territory, a crime which has yet to be recognised by the heirs of the former Spanish-Lusitanian empire, they have had to and have known how to recreate a settlement which has constituted another

ethnic territoriality, now known as Afro-Colombian.

In both cases of broad ethnic territoriality, the search for truth is linked to the persistent violation of colonialism in its first imperial phase and in the second and present form of internal colonialism. This has been consummated in the last few decades of internal warfare, thus consolidating various manifestations of racism against indigenous and Afro-Colombian peoples and deepening historical inequity to the point of ethnocide.

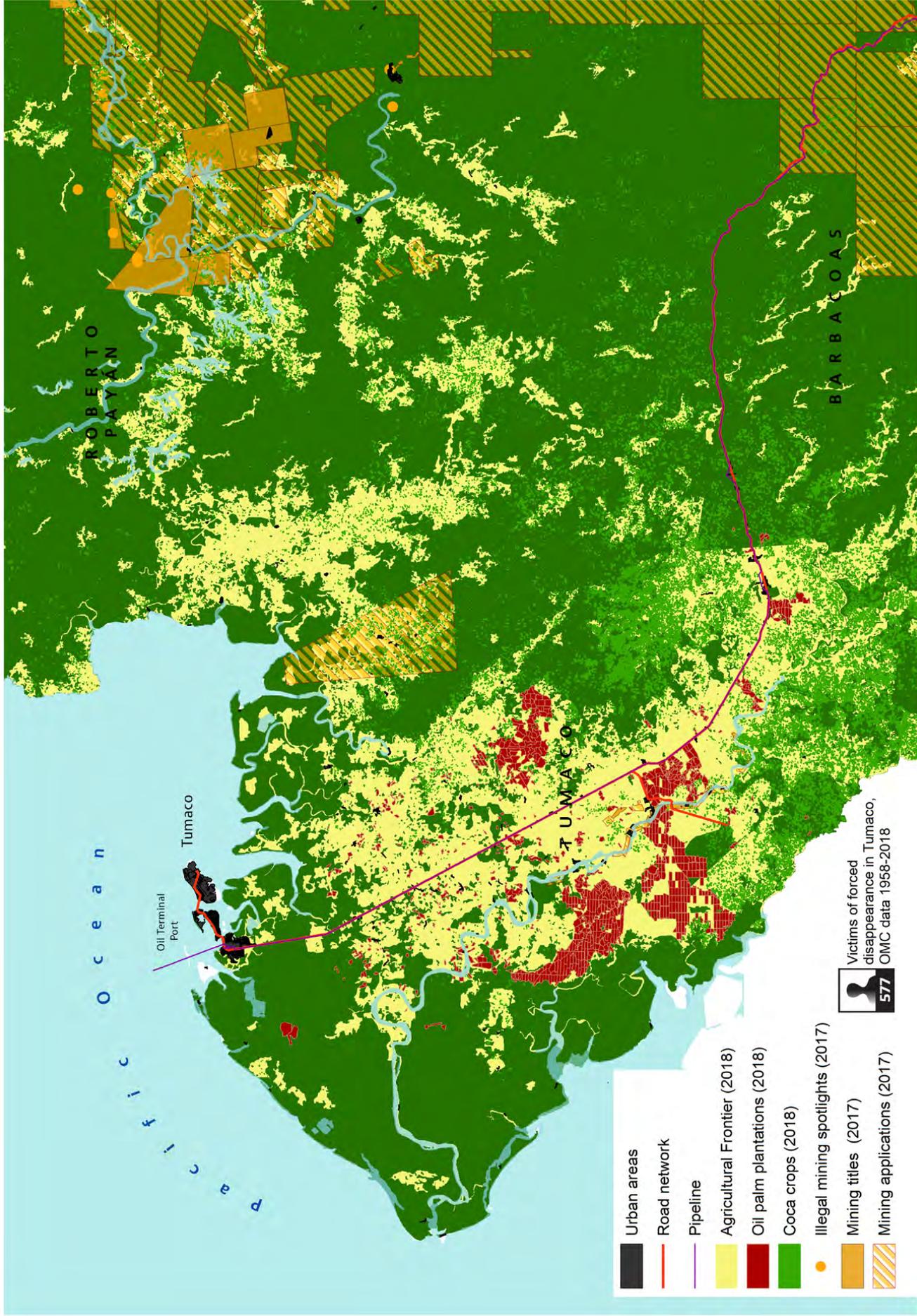
Territory-body

The internal armed conflict has left an immeasurable trail of exploitation of human bodies, particularly of women who have been regarded as 'war trophies'. This has resulted in abusive carnal access, the infliction of wounds for this purpose or for sexual slavery, among many humiliations.

For several years, women's rights movements have begun to build this other truth, as did the Pacific Women's Route, which published a report called *La Verdad* ➔

IN THE BACKGROUND: ECONOMIC NETWORK IN TUMACO

Map 37



Sources | Data: UPRA, 2018 - UNODC, 2019. ANLA, 2018. CMC, 2019 · INVIAS, IGAC, 2017-2018. Anothers: 2018-2019 · Icons: Creando, 2017 · Base layers: DANE, IDEAM, IGAC

VICTIMS OF FORCED DISAPPEARANCE BY DEPARTMENT (OMC, 1958–2018)

DEPARTAMENT	VÍCTIMS	TDF*	% OF TOTAL
ANTIOQUIA	19,794	11.10	24.60
ATLÁNTICO	707	1.05	0.88
BOGOTÁ. D.C.	1,097	0.54	1.36
BOLÍVAR	2,812	4.90	3.49
BOYACÁ	1,116	2.80	1.39
CALDAS	1,691	5.51	2.10
CAQUETÁ	3,290	25.46	4.09
CAUCA	1,488	3.81	1.85
CESAR	3,755	13.39	4.67
CÓRDOBA	2,714	5.78	3.37
CUNDINAMARCA	1,478	2.05	1.84
CHOCÓ	1,593	11.02	1.98
HUILA	749	2.36	0.93
LA GUAJIRA	874	3.78	1.09
MAGDALENA	3,906	10.82	4.85
META	5,281	20.96	6.56
NARIÑO	2,292	4.72	2.85
NORTE DE SANTANDER	2,980	7.70	3.70
QUINDIO	285	1.75	0.35
RISARALDA	650	2.41	0.81
SANTANDER	3,661	6.05	4.55
SUCRE	945	3.95	1.17
TOLIMA	1,655	3.76	2.06
VALLE DEL CAUCA	3,874	3.01	4.81
ARAUCA	1,688	27.39	2.10
CASANARE	1,219	13.54	1.51
PUTUMAYO	2,928	31.19	3.64
SAN ANDRÉS.			
PROVIDENCIA Y SANTA CATALINA	4	0.20	0.00
AMAZONAS	31	1.61	0.04
GUAINÍA	41	4.05	0.05
GUAVIARE	1,794	62.77	2.23
VAUPÉS	73	6.53	0.09
VICHADA	362	21.30	0.45
NO INFORMATION	3,582	0.27	4.45
EXTERIOR	65	0.00	0.08
TOTAL COLOMBIA	80,474	6.05	100.00

* Missing persons x every 100, 000 inhabitants.

To advance in the identification of the truth in this conception of the body as a territory is the greatest challenge, since until now a generic view of the violation of human rights has predominated, hiding the reality of the specificity of the gender dimension, where abuse and forced disappearance emerge. This not only concerns women, but also the population recognised in the movements grouped under the LGBTIQ nomination (Lesbians, Gays, Bisexuals, Transsexuals, Intersexuals and Queer), because in this warlike conflict there was abuse and discrimination based on sex and gender from those armed with right-wing ideology towards those of the left.

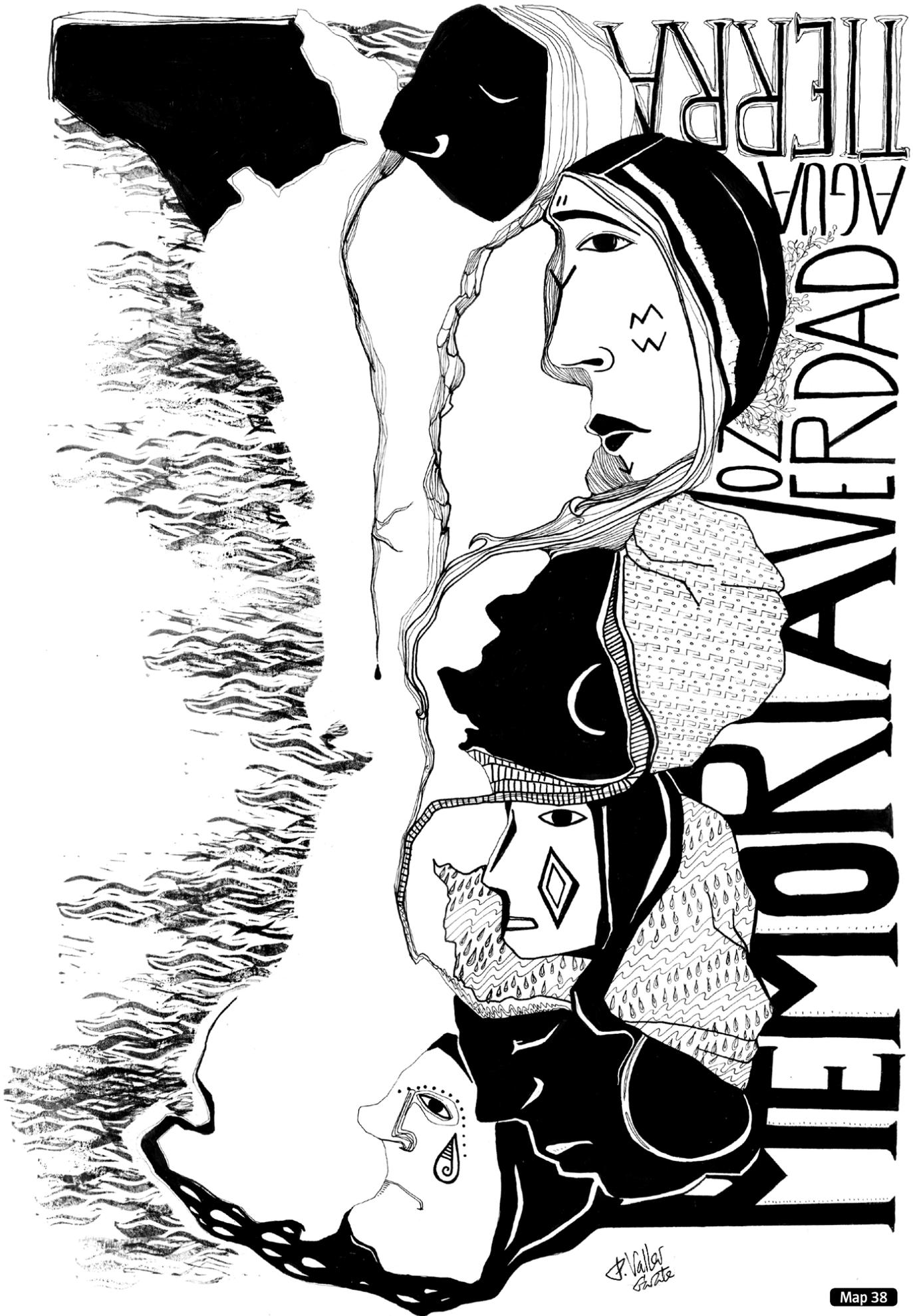
The search for truth from the territories must follow the chronological path of unfolding of armed conflict as this has its geographical origin in the centre-south of the country. It soon spread to the east and northeast of Colombia, later towards the west and southwest and in the last 20-odd years, it has become embedded in the Pacific. With this, it has left distinctive marks in each territory, while maintaining presence in the two greatest causes of this confrontation: access to land and political participation.

Many victims of forced disappearances have been erased up to the last physical expression of their bodies. Others remained below any of the multiple water currents, the majority perhaps in yet-to-be-found ditches. Many others unburied and exposed to become carrion for other species, while being helplessly watched by those who were obligated to look and remain silent.

de las Mujeres (Women's Truth). It reflects a thousand testimonies collected in each of the regional territories, with multiple accounts or conditions of indigenous women, peasants, Afro-Colombians, labourers, union members and more.

Today, Colombia has the opportunity to progress in the clarification of truth and advance towards obtaining justice, to achieve redress and demand the prevention of future repetition of events. The path passes through a context of struggle for

MEMORY, VOICE, TRUTH, WATER AND EARTH.
PACIFIC WOMEN'S MORPHOMAP





32

33

31

34

36

35

COMBATting ABSENCE: FORENSIC SCIENCE & THE POLITICS OF RECOGNITION FROM A GLOBAL PERSPECTIVE

...In that Empire, the Art of Cartography attained such Perfection that the map of a single Province occupied the entirety of a City, and the map of the Empire, the entirety of a Province. In time, those Unconscionable Maps no longer satisfied, and the Cartographers Guilds struck a Map of the Empire whose size was that of the Empire, and which coincided point for point with it. The following Generations, who were not so fond of the Study of Cartography as their Forebears had been, saw that that vast Map was Useless, and not without some Pitilessness was it, that they delivered it up to the Inclemencies of Sun and Winters. In the Deserts of the West, still today, there are Tattered Ruins of that Map, inhabited by Animals and Beggars; in all the Land there is no other Relic of the Disciplines of Geography.

Suárez Miranda, Viajes de Varones Prudentes, Libro Cuarto, Cap. XLV, Lérida, 1658”.

“On Exactitude in Science” by Jorge Luis Borges
Collected Fictions, translated by Andrew Hurley

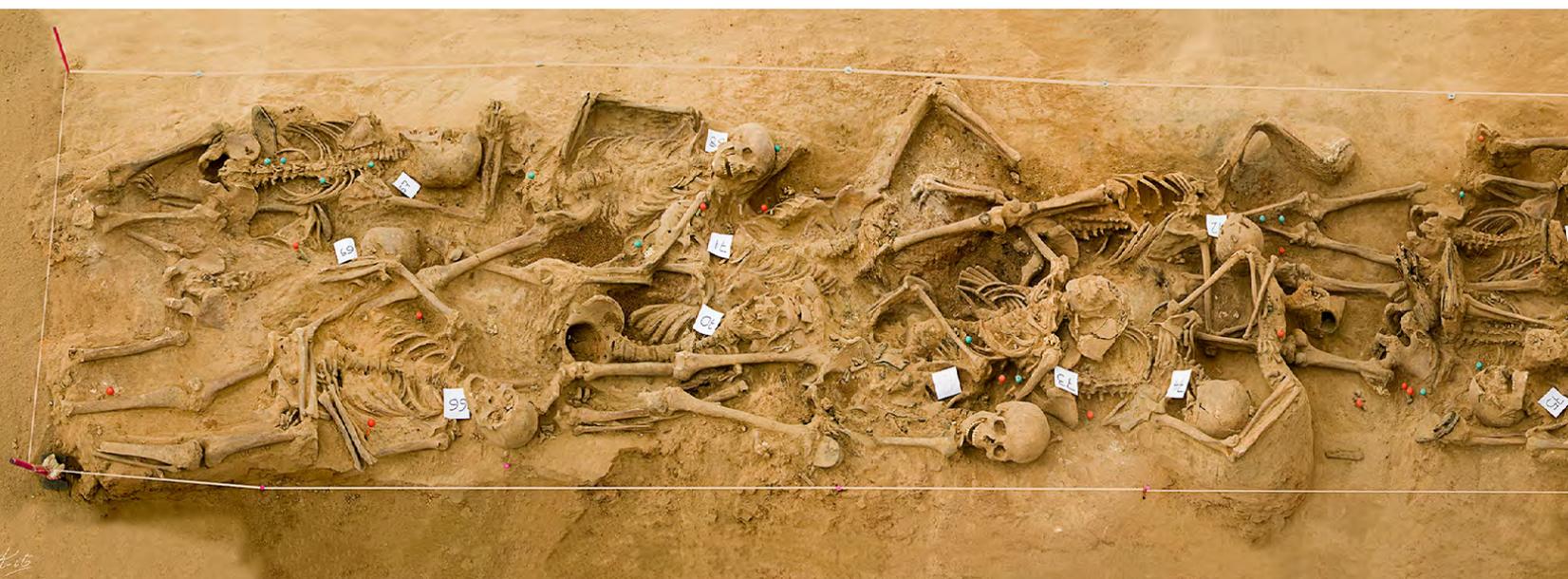
By Lee Douglas¹

On a Thursday afternoon in September 2010, the Puerta del Sol Plaza in downtown Madrid rumbled with the daily influx of pedestrians who crisscrossed through the public square, initiating their commutes back home. At the center of the plaza, amidst the after-work frenzy, members of the *Plataforma contra la Impunidad del Franquismo* clustered together near the large statue overlooking the bustling thoroughfare. Exchanging warm embraces and the occasional chuckle, the growing crowd of memory activists rhythmically chattered as they pulled laminated placards and posters from their backpacks and purses. Soon after, the cluster of men and women morphed into a solemn procession. Walking in pairs or groups of three, members of the Platform slowly circled around the plaza’s innermost fountain. As they progressed, they lifted large sticks with black, white, and sepia-toned portraits of *desaparecidos*

tacked to their edges. The event, then in its eighteenth week, was part of a growing repertoire of performative tactics employed to call public attention to the lasting effects of violence experienced under Francisco Franco’s long dictatorship (1939-1975). Although, at the time, these weekly manifestations were relatively new in Spain, they were uncannily recognizable as a local iteration—perhaps even, an intentional imitation—of the famous Thursday walks made by the mothers of Argentina’s *desaparecidos*, who since the late 1970s have diligently made present their missing children by parading photographic images of the disappeared in key plazas throughout the country.

On this particular Thursday, Spanish memory activists would stray from custom and implement a new way of making present and visible the traces of twentieth-century fascist violence. As the Puerta del Sol grew heavy with the daily onslaught of commuters and passersby, members

¹ Socio-cultural anthropologist and documentary filmmaker living in Madrid. For over a decade she has carried out research and audiovisual work on political violence, forced disappearance and the interconnections between forensic science and social memory in Latin America and Spain.



of the Platform unrolled a life-size aerial photograph of an unearthened mass grave. Within minutes, the intermingled limbs and uncomfortably twisted spines of twenty-nine skeletons were plastered onto the plaza's uneven, cobblestone surface. Once the haunting photograph was completely unfurled, those carrying photographs of the disappeared broke off from the rhythmic train of people solemnly circling around the plaza. As if securing the perimeter of a crime scene, they approached the image and fixed it to the stony ground by placing the poster-size portraits of their disappeared kin around the border of the artificial mass grave, artfully framing an equally artful superimposition of human remains frozen in a state of disarray. Like the true-to-scale map described by Jorge Luis Borges in his short story "On Exactitude in Science," the life-size photograph reproduced the scene of a forgotten crime with scalar precision.

Originally taken in 2007 during the La Andaya exhumation in the Province of Burgos, the shocking photograph of twenty-nine skeletons and the performative practices that made it suddenly appear in Madrid's most transited public square provide a rich entryway into the complex world of contemporary Spanish memory politics, whereby the kind of those who fell

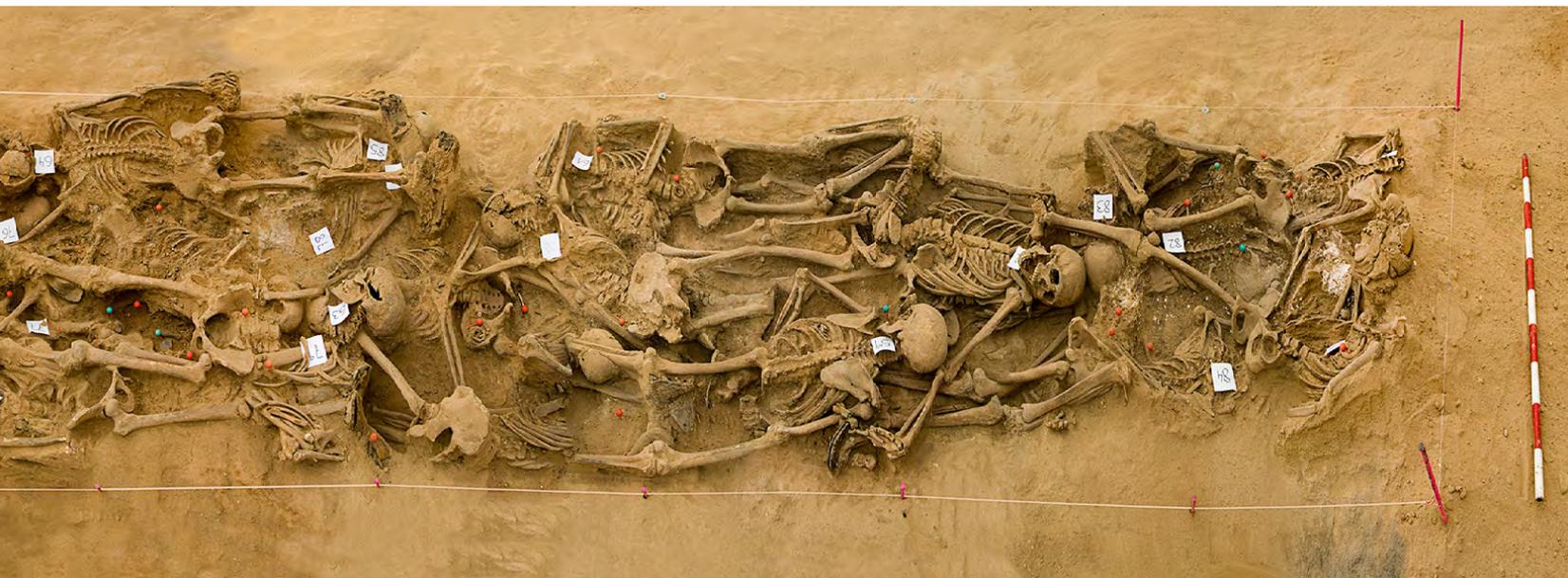
The La Andaya aerial photograph stretched out in the Puerta del Sol Plaza in Madrid. Photograph courtesy of Óscar Rodríguez Alonso.

victim to 20th-century fascist violence seek the recognition of those crimes committed during the Spanish Civil War and the ensuing Franco regime. However, the image also speaks to a larger global phenomenon, in which forensic science is deployed to evidence and make material forms of mass violence. In places across the globe, forensic science is mobilized to locate, unearth, and return the missing to their surviving kin. In this process, forensic expertise becomes enmeshed in

the difficult task of proving and evidencing crimes in a wide variety of contexts: in local and international courtrooms, in the public displays of resistance in plazas and city streets, in the private sphere of the home. In this way, mass grave exhumations—regardless of their geographic context—are enmeshed in the politics of recognition. They are part and parcel of collective calls to address the mechanics of political violence. By extension, they are tools for situating silenced, marginalized experiences with forms of violence that seek to disappear and make anonymous communities, at the center of conversations that interrogate the "official" historical record while also proposing alternative political futures in which the voices of the missing are present, palpable, and audible.

Made to be Seen: Thinking with/through Forensic Evidence

I write this text from Spain, where forensic science plays a particular and unique role in the politics of recuperation



A close-up of the life-size image. N°4, La Andaya, Lerma – Burgos, Spain. © K-ito, *Sociedad de Ciencias Aranzadi*.

and recognition linked to a particular history of violence. The local uptake of forensic and techniques and technologies first began in 2000, almost two decades after they were introduced as tools for evidencing state violence in Latin America's Southern Cone. Indeed, this very turn to science as a mode of literally and discursively unearthing the crimes of the past was linked to how victims' kin and memory activists looked to Latin America as a model for addressing state and paramilitary violence in ways that could help push the intimate everyday experience with forced disappearance into a public and political realm of debate. This, of course, seems somewhat inconceivable, when reading this text from Colombia where political violence is anything but resolved. However, the ways in which Spanish memory activists look to Latin America—together with the ongoing north-south exchange between forensic experts, victims' kin, and memory workers—shed light on how the phenomenon of mass violence generates responses that, although locally specific, are also globally relevant. By thinking through how mass graves exhumations make forms of violence visible and legible in such different contexts, we can perhaps envision how the missing might play a more active role in producing a alternative political futures where these acts of violence cannot go unrecognized. I argue that it is by thinking through and with forensic evidence and its modes of display in Spain, that we can perhaps reflect on the political and social valence of mass

grave exhumations projects in other geographic contexts.

The photograph that I have described, as well as its public display, must be understood in relation to the particularities of Francoist violence and the Spanish culture of amnesia that were forged both during the regime and the country's transition to democracy that began with Franco's death in 1975. Since the initial inception of Spain's so-called "pact of silence," the generational distance from dictatorial repression has expanded, further reinforcing a culture of forgetting. As a consequence, the worlds of absence that victims' kin inhabited during the regime were soon matched by an increasing dearth of knowledge regarding the lives of those who experienced political violence first hand. It is from within this context of silence, absence, and disinformation that the aerial photograph of the La Andaya mass grave becomes heavy with meaning. It is evidence of a crime that continues to be unrecognized by the Spanish state, visual proof of events that continue to remain un-seeable—unknowable—to the majority of Spaniards, including those who transited through the Puerta del Sol Plaza on that warm Thursday night in early September. It speaks to the Sisyphean task of pushing the Spanish state to recognize the crimes of the past in a context where amnesty, cultural forgetting and economic austerity limit how forensic science can be

► □ 129

SEARCH, IDENTIFICATION AND DELIVERY OF MISSING PERSONS (GRUBE)

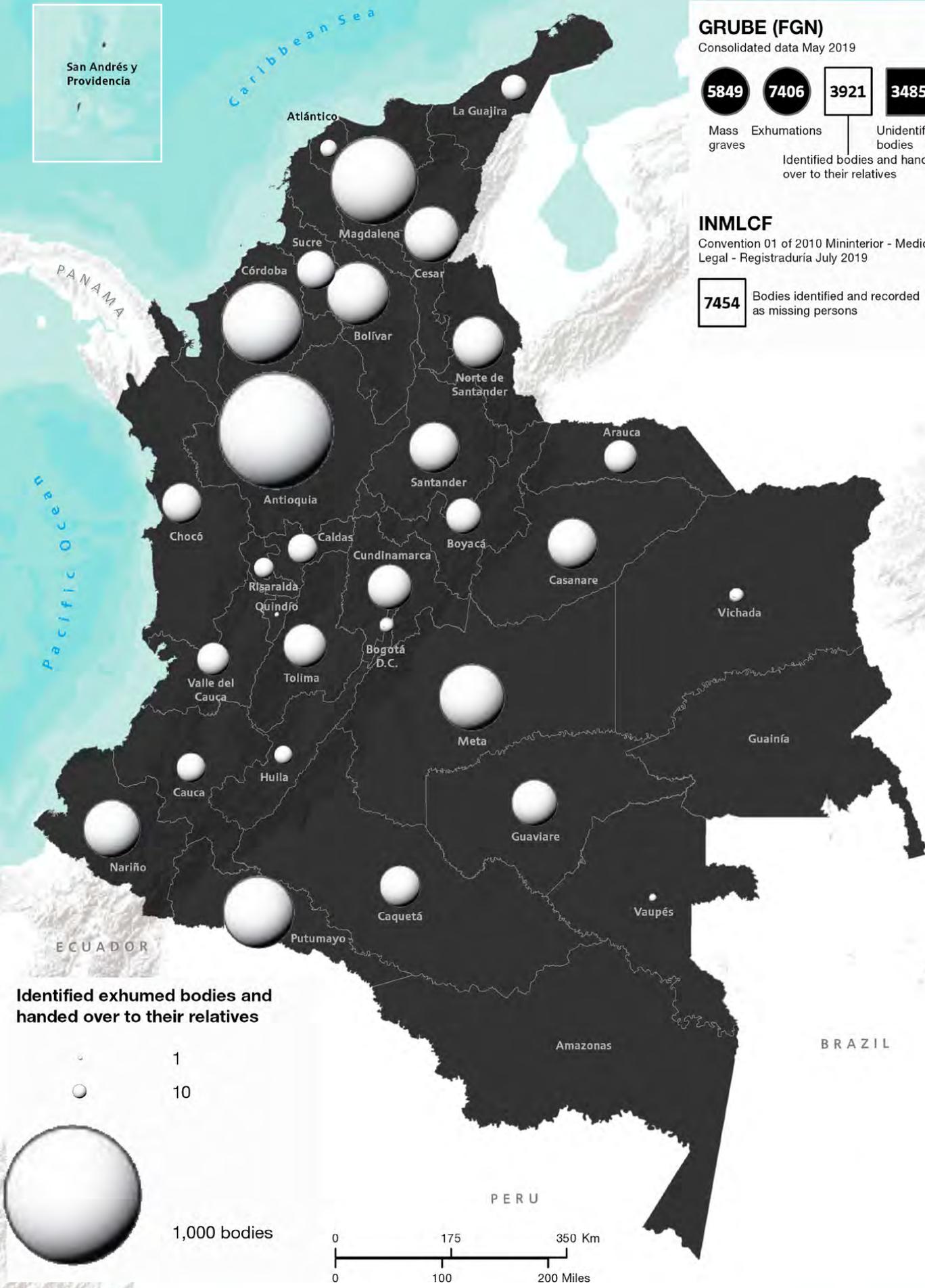


GRUBE (FGN)
Consolidated data May 2019

5849	7406	3921	3485
Mass graves	Exhumations	Identified bodies and handed over to their relatives	Unidentified bodies

INMLCF
Convention 01 of 2010 Mininterior - Medicina Legal - Registraduría July 2019

7454 Bodies identified and recorded as missing persons



Sources | Data: Internal working group for search, identification and delivery of missing persons (GRUBE) of the Office of the Attorney General (FGN). National Institute of Legal Medicine and Forensic Sciences (INMLCF), 2019. Base layers: DANE, IDEAM, ESRI, USGS, NOAA

mobilized. The aerial view provided by this life-size image allows us to see the vastness of Spain's project of recuperation and retrieval. More importantly, once unfurled in the center of Madrid's busiest public square, the image becomes one of many examples of how evidence produced for scientific purposes can be re-fashioned, repurposed, and tenaciously mobilized in contemporary, post-dictatorship Spain, where forensic evidence of political violence is not sequestered by the law, but is instead made to be seen.

In Spain, the application of forensic methods to the study of Spain's recent past occurs at the unruly boundaries of legal procedure. Due to the lasting effects of Spain's post-dictatorship Amnesty Law, exhumation projects are not overseen by judicial entities. Instead, they are carried out "as if" they were official forensic investigations in which scientific evidence and forms of documentation could be submitted and validated by courts of law. As such, these initiatives inhabit what I call the "subjunctive mood"—a state of being in which forensic practice is carried out "*como si fuera,*" or as if it could be recognized by the law. In the Spanish context, where bones, DNA, and photographs are barred from entering courts of law and official administrative circuits, the public circulation and display of different forms of forensic evidence that makes it possible for the missing to speak beyond the grave.

The Spanish Amnesty Law was passed on October 15, 1977, almost two years after the death of Francisco Franco. It was quickly celebrated as one of the Transition's most important and defining pieces of legislation. In the most general of terms, the law expanded the partial amnesty that had been granted to political prisoners in 1976 while also dilating the purview of legal forgiveness, thereby permitting



Installation of the photo of La Andaya next to the photos of the disappeared at the Puerta del Sol in Madrid. © Óscar Rodríguez Alonso.

previously committed crimes defined by the regime as political rebellion and insurrection to be erased and forgotten. Hailed by both the left and right, the law was widely interpreted as a concerted effort to encourage political conciliation and consensus. By erasing perpetrators and their original acts of violence from the surface of the criminal map, the Amnesty Law allowed political elites to abandon the rancor and violence that had characterized the past in order to start anew. It was not a legislative answer to injustice, but rather an attempt to wipe the slate clean of a past marked by acts of violence committed from all sides. Ironically, more than two decades after its original ratification, the law would be used to prevent courts from hearing cases regarding the human rights abuses committed under Franco.

Etymologically, amnesty comes from the Greek word *amnistia*, which means "oblivion" or "forgetting." Although the legal meaning of the word points to the erasure of the effects of particular crimes rather than an enforced kind of forgetfulness, this etymological root provides some insight into how legal amnesty is linked to the larger Spanish culture of forgetting. In recent literature on the *Transición*, cultural critiques describe what is known as "Transition Culture" (Martínez 2012; see also Rodríguez López 2013), a term which refers, to the "culture of consensus" adopted during

the Transition that positioned dissent as a dangerous, menacing threat to the democratic process, rather than an essential ingredient to it. However, Transition culture also refers to the emergence of a particular kind of post-authoritarian common sense, a field in which particular things, events, and sensations can be expressed (Fernández-Savater 2013). By establishing a new field of perception, Transition Culture also delimits, creating clear, established boundaries that also determine what cannot or should not remain visible, thinkable, and audible in everyday Spanish life. In this framework, the Transition and its endless pursuit of consensus and conciliation is characterized as a political process—a process, which curiously has not yet come to an end—in which particular narratives and forms of knowledge have been excised from a new and imposed post-dictatorship common sense. Following this logic, amnesty not only institutionalized forms of administrative, legal oblivion during the tumultuous post-dictatorship years, it also fed into the establishment of a profound culture of forgetting in which victims of Francoist violence were again denied a voice.

The “as if” status of Spanish exhumation projects—the subjunctive mood in which forensic science is trapped—refers to a particular set of administrative, legal, and even cultural impossibilities. It emphasizes the inability of forensic knowledge to seamlessly enter into public discussions about the past. However, the subjunctive status of these initiatives invests these projects with an ability to project forward. With evidence barred from entering courts of law, forensic scientists and victims’ kin must always look towards future possibilities. They must imagine new alternative futures in which the fruits of their labor can be woven into shared understandings about the past. In this sense, the subjunctive mood of forensic

science provides a realm of possibility, in which the production of new kinds of knowledge seeks to carve out a new field of common sense where the tensions between memory and forgetting—between absence and presence—can allow for a more multi-vocal rendition of the past and a more horizontal and democratic mode of imagining the future. The subjunctive status of the mass grave exhumation projects in Spain forces evidence, like the aerial photograph, into they public sphere where they make visible and audible voices from the past. At the same time, this public display of forensic evidence—the rawness of as mass grave made visible—also points towards an alternative political future where ideas about belonging and democratic change include the experiences of those who were made to disappear.

This use of visual evidence resonates with similar strategies deoloyed in Latin America, where images of *desaparecidos* have played a fundamental role in making absence present. In the early 1980s, the Madres de Plaza de Mayo used the ID photographs of their missing children as strategy that would push intimate experiences with state violence from the private sphere of the home to the public sphere of the street. The choice to use this particular genre of photography was intentional. The images used by the for purposes of identification and control became the visual evidence that proved the missing’s very existence. Their public display negated the States inability to recognize bodily absence and its implication in this strategy of elimination. In this sense, photographs of the disappeared were not only evidence of life, but also of the mechanics of forced disappearance. In both Latin America and Spain, photographic evidence of life and death help situate the tragedy of disappearance as a phenomenon that demands recognition. It is by thinking with

and through the different forms of evidence that are unearthed and made public in mass grave exhumation projects that makes these endeavors an important step in recognizing, understanding, and making sense of political violence.

An Aerial View, an Atlas Reimagined: Producing New Bodies of Knowledge

Regardless of geographic location and the political contexts that frame specific histories of violence, the forensic techniques and technologies deployed in mass grave exhumation projects does a particular kind of work that is everything but scientific. This is not to deemphasize the scientific validity of the work that forensic teams do. In fact, as would be true for any observer of mass grave exhumations and the larger realm of post-conflict memory politics, I can see the powerful ways in which scientific can expertise can make crimes recognizable to the public, to the state, and to the world. However, the evidence produced in these must also be transformed into something else. As this very report demonstrates, it is through this labor of narration that we are able to produce knowledge that is not only valuable scientifically and judicially, but that is also indicative of other forms of approaching, understanding, and mobilizing the recent past. In this sense, forensic practice can be interpreted as something that moves beyond biological experimentation and measurement in order to inhabit other epistemological worlds, other ways of knowing the present and imagining the future.

Argentine scholar Elizabeth Jelin uses the term “the labors of memory” (2003) to describe the diverse practices that are used to make the past bear on the present in meaningful ways in post-dictatorship Latin America. Focusing on the labor that is exerted to make visible dictatorial



Real-scale image details. © Óscar Rodríguez Alonso.

repression, she argues that memory must also be understood as a kind of active engagement, a mode of making claims and narrating experiences in ways that traverse the individual and the collective. This conceptualization emphasizes the labor exerted to produce evidence, to insert it into narrative form, to make it useful in calls for recognition, to mobilize it, and to make it move. Framing forensic practice as a kind of labor underscores how scientific expertise is deployed in order to transform photographs—like that of the La Andaya mass grave—and other kinds of evidence, like those described in the report that follows, into new forms of knowledge that change how we understand the past, as well as how we imagine the future.

The aerial photograph of the La Andaya exhumation was originally taken with a specific forensic purpose in mind: to accurately record the anatomical position of the human remains being uncovered. The image is the product of an expansive, detailed set of forensic practices—indeed, a carefully crafted methodology—that seeks not only to recover and recuperate victims’

corpses, but also to document the process through which this evidence is revealed. Once in the laboratory, forensic experts bring together these layers of evidence in order to determine the identity of those who were killed and the circumstances surrounding their deaths. Forensic experts use this kind of image as a way of stepping back in order to see the larger picture, a way of visualizing and imagining the violent acts that produced a particular crime. The aerial view of the photograph—like the aerial view of the historian—provides distance and perspective, a kind of widened interpretative frame that is relatively new in contemporary Spain. Whether blown-up and put on display in life-size proportions or inserted into a forensic report as a way of to frame, explain, and contextualize the minute, detailed forms of data collected by forensic teams, the image is both expansive and exact. Like in Borges' short story, this tension between immensity and precision is uncontrollable and haunting.

However, there are ways in which this image loses this disturbing tone. In his text, cited at the beginning of this Introduction, Borges conjures a fantastical empire where the art of cartography has become so meticulous and so accurate that the geographic territory in question can only be represented through is precise, scalar reproduction. While certainly a literary exercise in imagination, the story is also a reflection, indeed a critique, of the relationship between modern science, its focus on modes of measurement, and the forms of power embedded in the possibilities afforded by scientific precision. In his account, Borges asks readers to consider what might be lost in the pursuit of an exactitude that only serves to replicate the world in its precise form and shape. However, when victims' kin display the life-size aerial photograph of the La Andaya mass grave, the exactitude of science that the author describes is, instead,

deployed as a call to action, to undo the structures of power that maintain historical silence in post-Franco Spain. As memory activists unfurl the photograph, they are—in effect—rolling back the curtain, revealing and making visible forms of fascist violence that have long been invisible in Spanish society. While it is important to memory activists that this carefully crafted forensic image reveals the scientific process—that it reveals forensic science's commitment to measurement and methodical observation—the photograph's exactitude is mobilized with very different objectives in mind. Translating scientific data, that is contextualizing it and narratively piecing together all that is unearthed, recovered, and revealed in these projects, are part and parcel of the arduous labor exerted to craft new bodies of historical knowledge in contemporary Spain.

As in Borges' story, the exactness promised by forensic science is very much a part of this story. It is not to be discarded. However, the life-size aerial photograph stretched out and made to be seen in the center of Madrid draws our attention to something else, to *how* the evidence extracted through forensic practice is made to do a particular kind of work. Here, the life-size image is perhaps less like Borges' gargantuan map and more akin to the eighteenth- and nineteenth-century scientific atlas images described by Lorraine Daston and Peter Galison in their book *Objectivity* (2010). In their text, the authors approach the scientific atlas as a source of insight into how epistemic virtues and empirical work produced new forms of understanding and conceiving of scientific practice. They argue that, "Scientific atlas images are images at work" (Ibid: 19). Compendiums of images are not simply representations of the natural world plotted onto paper; instead, they are the "working objects" that train scientific collectivities to see. By tracking scientists' concerns

about how to objectively transform the natural world into image form, the authors draw our attention to how images have been used to train the scientific eye and to mold the scientific virtues that push forms of empirical research. In Spain, forensic images and other forms of paper evidence that are exhumed and produced in mass grave exhumation projects are deployed to train the Spanish public to see and view recent history in different, more nuanced ways. In this context, forensic evidence—or, what could be understood as a new *body* of historical knowledge—is produced, deployed, and put on display in order to establish a new common ground on which to stand—a common ground where mass graves are made present, rather than kept absent and invisible. This report is yet one example of how evidence of mass crimes is narrated and made public. It too, like the aerial photograph of a Spanish mass grave, constitutes a new body of historical knowledge.

Mass grave exhumation projects unearth more than human remains. They unearth and make visible photographic images and archival documents. They also make victims' testimonies audible. In doing so, forensic experts, together with memory activists, families of the missing, and a plethora of other actors in Spain, Colombia, and the world, are creating a new kind of atlas, a new map that more adequately describes and brings into view the worlds of absence that have pervaded the lives of victims and their kin. This labor is necessary if we are to understand how the past inhabits the present and, perhaps more importantly, what kind of future we might hope to bring into being.

The report that follows includes a wide range of evidence somehow linked to Colombia's own battle with absence, to its attempt to address a complex history of violence that traverse its past, but also its

present. The maps included in the following pages, like the photograph of the La Andaya mass grave makes the tragedy of political violence and forced disappearance visible. They are petrifying visualizations of the ghosts that haunt everyday life in both geographic locales. They allow readers to sense the gravity of the violence wrought by complex conflicts. They are reminders of the labor exerted to create a new atlas, a new aerial view in which disappeared bodies, incomplete archival traces, and images of bones help carve out a new historical record in which absent bodies are made present and historical narratives are made audible. It is through the engagements with diverse forms of evidence that forensic experts, victims' kin, memory activists, and ourselves combat absence and produce knowledge that promises to create a new historical map, a new geographical representation in which the disappeared can play a more active role in the constitution of new political futures. ♦

EPILOGUE

MONUMENT TO THE MISSING

I think of the talismans
they left forgotten in a sack,
on the hanging shirts that reveal their shapes
as if they were the dresses
of their bony dress.
I compile an inventory of voids,
of boats that ran aground in the fog.
If bending corners to nowhere
it's wizard's art, are they wizards?
If music is made out of the fabric of silence
they are silent music. Hidden airborne air?
Are they disobedient bodies,
reluctant to fill a space again,
to carry on writing up minutes,
greeting the neighbour and grooming in the mirror a going-to-work
and coming-back-home face?
If theirs were enchanting arts
we could leave the windows open
waiting for them to come back
with their top hats and hares in their hands,
at the end of a farewell function.
Relatives huddling in morgues,
snooping around in hospitals
that breathe at a jerky pace,
They watch each other's faces go by like hours
in the rattling presses of the newspapers,
just as some search for men with torches
and others seek their love
at the forgotten property office.
We hardly realized they took
with them a lost piece of the city: the dead-end street no one wants to go back to,
a portion of air that hopes to be inhabited.
They're not ghosts. They're not endriagos¹
entangling threads in the sewing room,
children of the fog at the break of day.

¹ Endriagos refers to a literary monster that looks like a hybrid between a human, a hydra and a dragon and it's probably based on the mythological chimera. The name was first used in the Iberian chivalric romance *Amadis of Gaul*.

An old song that sounds in pace
makes us believe that we will find them,
breaking faith with their home call,
with their very lustrous dance shoes
returning from another city that is now their own.
But the song ends,
It becomes the underworld.
It doesn't matter that might be
the unleavened bread of statistics,
the same vague stories recorded in the loss book.
Their radio still at the same point on the dial,
a love somewhere,
a word about to be uttered.
If they finally came back after a decades-long wait
Would they recognize
their own portraits on the walls,
on the yellowing posters at the police stations,
on the banners they hold up in demonstrations,
in old newspaper clippings,
kept amongst family pictures by their relatives?
The night cup keeps their fingerprints.
Some fled from themselves
touched by their shadow,
others were loaded in ghost cars
pushed and shoved into the void.
All this assaults me when the mayor of the city
with his Pierrot face,
with his grieving expression coming out of the Art Museum,
asks a sculptor what material should be used to erect
a monument to the disappeared,
who being non-solid, like the days and like God,
also vanish into the thin air.

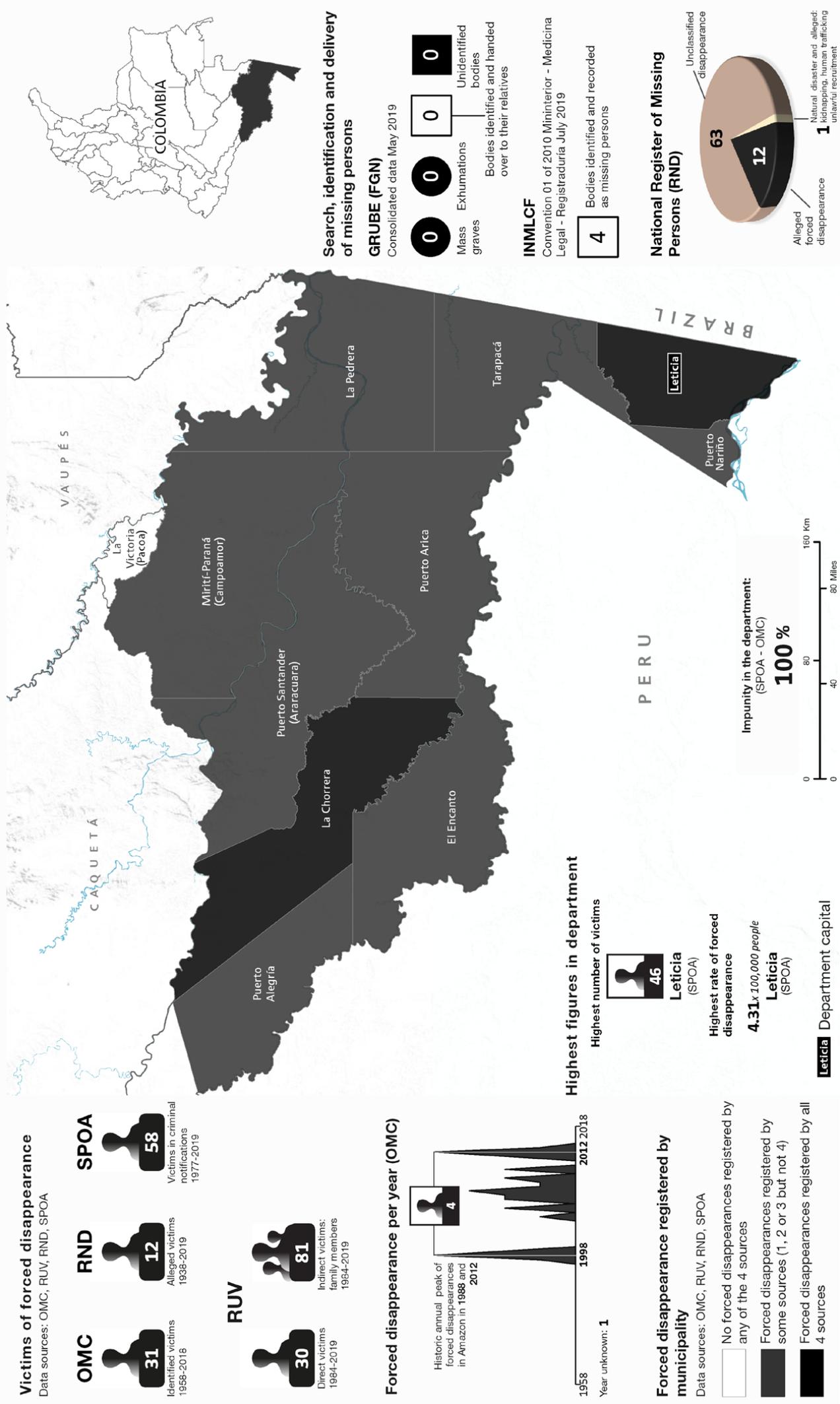
Juan Manuel Roca
"Temporada de Estatuas" (Visor, 2010)



DEPARTAMENTALS MAPS

FORCED DISAPPEARANCE IN AMAZONAS.

SOURCE SYNTHESIS (OMC, RUV, RND, INMLCF, SPOA & GRUBE DATA)



Sources | Data: Memory and Conflict Observatory (OMC), 09/15/2018. Single Register of Victims (RUV), 04/01/2019. National Register of Missing Persons (RND), 03/20/2019. Oral Accusatory Criminal System (SPOA), 05/29/2019. GRUBE (FGN), 05/31/2019. Convention 01 (INMLCF), 07/25/2019. Icons: Creando, 2017. Base layers: DANE, IDEAM, ESRI, USGS, NOAA

FORCED DISAPPEARANCE IN ANTIOQUIA. SOURCE SYNTHESIS (OMC, RUV, RND, INMLCF, SPOA & GRUBE DATA)

Victims of forced disappearance

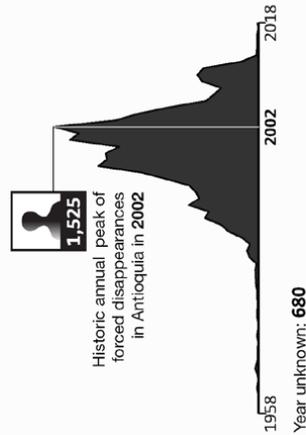
Data sources: OMC, RUV, RND, SPOA



RUV

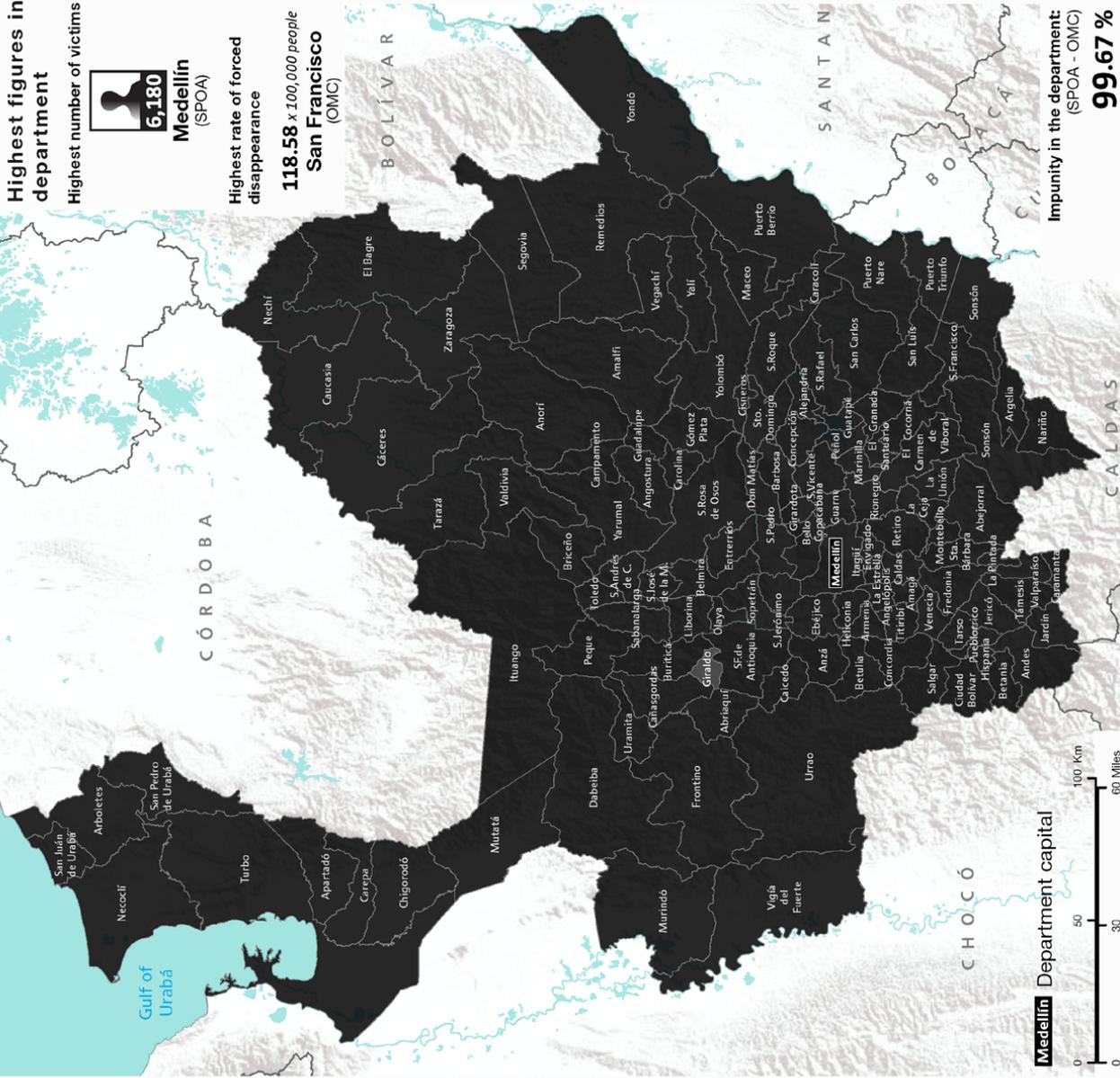
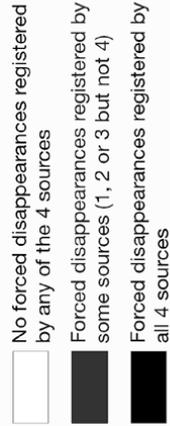


Forced disappearance per year (OMC)



Forced disappearance registered by municipality

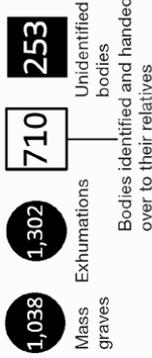
Data sources: OMC, RUV, RND, SPOA



Search, identification and delivery of missing persons

GRUBE (FGN)

Consolidated data May 2019



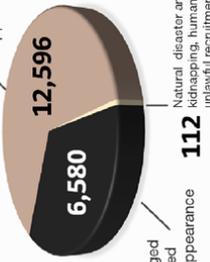
INMLCF

Convention 01 of 2010 Ministerio - Medicina Legal - Registraduría July 2019



National Register of Missing Persons (RND)

Unclassified disappearance



19,288 persons registered as missing in the RND until March 20, 2019. **12,703** are still missing.

Sources | Data: Memory and Conflict Observatory (OMC), 09/15/2018, Single Register of Victims (RUV), 04/01/2019, National Register of Missing Persons (RND), 03/20/2019, Oral Accusatory Criminal System (SPOA), 05/29/2019, GRUBE (FGN), 05/31/2019, Convention 01 (INMLCF), 07/25/2019 Icons: Creando, 2017. Base layers: DANE, IDEAM, ESRI, USGS, NOAA

FORCED DISAPPEARANCE IN ARAUCA.

SOURCE SYNTHESIS (OMC, RUV, RND, INMLCF, SPOA & GRUBE DATA)

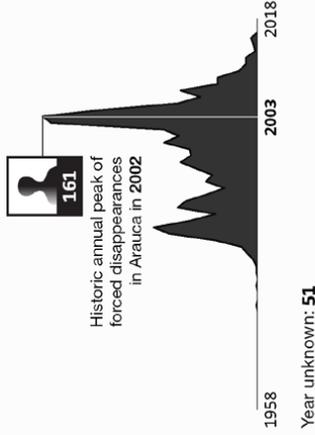
Victims of forced disappearance
Data sources: OMC, RUV, RND, SPOA



RUV

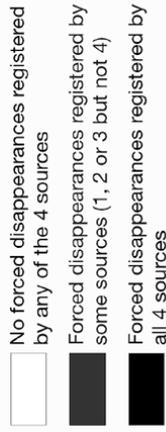


Forced disappearance per year (OMC)



Forced disappearance registered by municipality

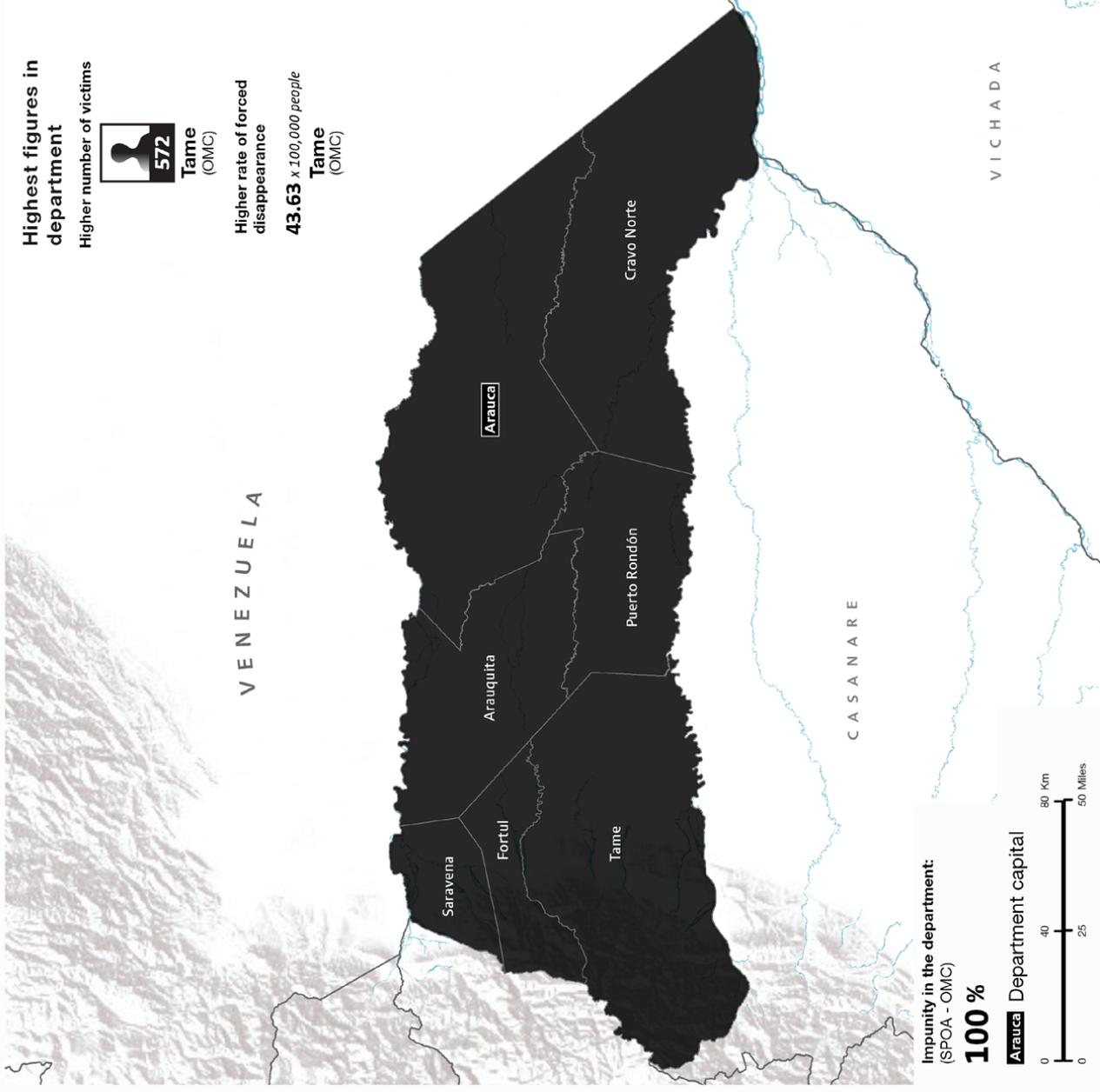
Data sources: OMC, RUV, RND, SPOA



Highest figures in department
Higher number of victims



Higher rate of forced disappearance
43.63 x 100,000 people



Impunity in the department:
(SPOA - OMC)

100 %

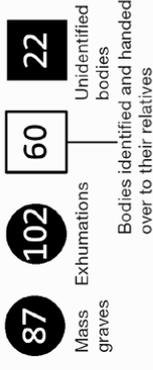
Arauca Department capital



Search, identification and delivery of missing persons

GRUBE (FGN)

Consolidated data May 2019

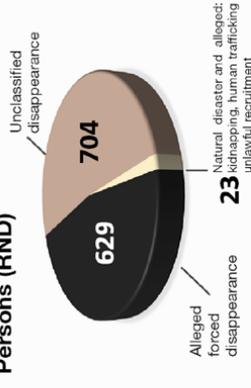


INMLCF

Convention 01 of 2010 Ministerio - Medicina Legal - Registraduría July 2019



National Register of Missing Persons (RND)



1,356 persons registered as missing in the RND until March 20, 2019. 1,249 are still missing.

Sources | Data: Memory and Conflict Observatory (OMC), 09/15/2018. Single Register of Victims (RUV), 04/01/2019. National Register of Missing Persons (RND), 03/20/2019. Oral Accusatory Criminal System (SPOA), 05/29/2019. GRUBE (FGN), 05/31/2019. Convention 01 (INMLCF), 07/25/2019. Icons: Creando, 2017. Base layers: DANE, IDEAM, ESRI, USGS, NOAA

FORCED DISAPPEARANCE IN ATLÁNTICO. SOURCE SYNTHESIS (OMC, RUV, RND, INMLCF, SPOA & GRUBE DATA)

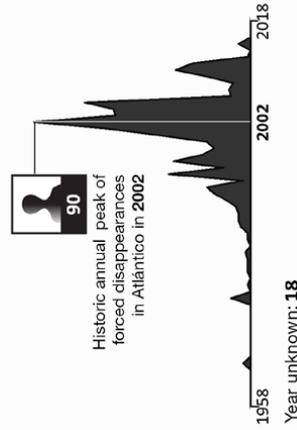
Victims of forced disappearance
Data sources: OMC, RUV, RND, SPOA



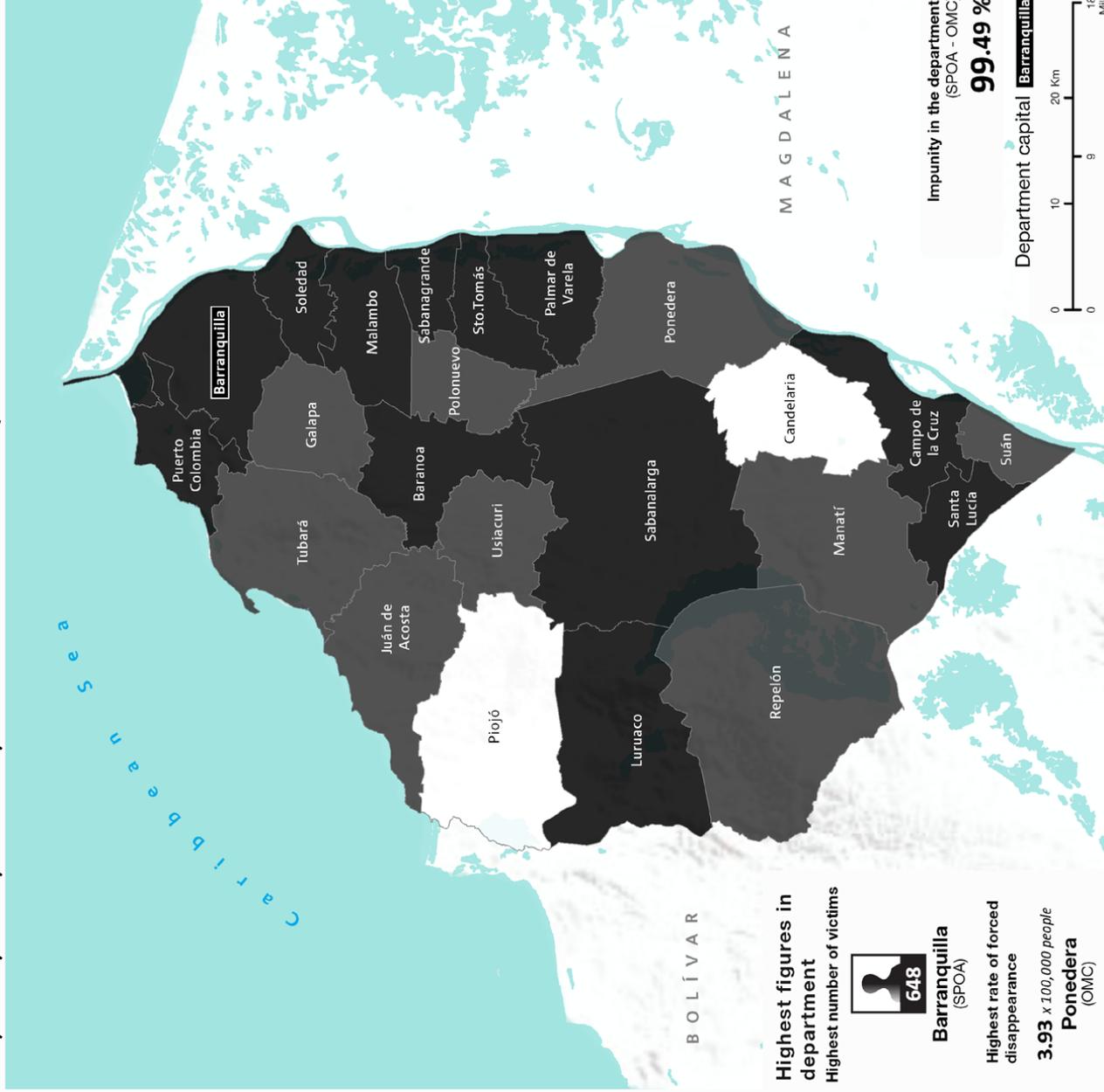
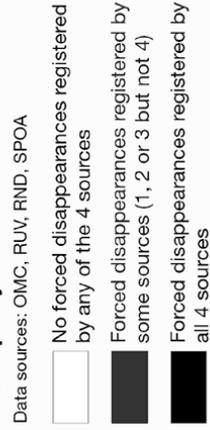
RUV



Forced disappearance per year (OMC)



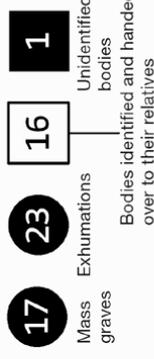
Forced disappearance registered by municipality



Search, identification and delivery of missing persons

GRUBE (FGN)

Consolidated data May 2019

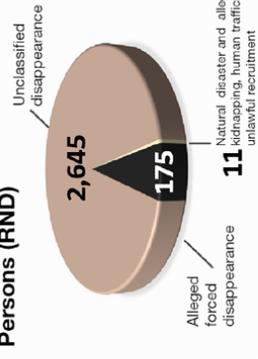


INMLCF

Convention 01 of 2010 Ministerio - Medicina Legal - Registraduría July 2019



National Register of Missing Persons (RND)



2,831 persons registered as missing in the RND until March 20, 2019, **1,294** are still missing.

Sources | Data: Memory and Conflict Observatory (OMC), 09/15/2018, Single Register of Victims (RUV), 04/01/2019, National Register of Missing Persons (RND), 03/20/2019, Oral Accusatory Criminal System (SPOA), 05/29/2019, GRUBE (FGN), 05/31/2019, Convention 01 (INMLCF), 07/25/2019 Icons: Creando, 2017. Base layers: DANE, IDEAM, ESRI, USGS, NOAA

FORCED DISAPPEARANCE IN BOGOTÁ D.C.

SOURCE SYNTHESIS (OMC, RUV, RND, INMLCF, SPOA & GRUBE DATA)

Victims of forced disappearance

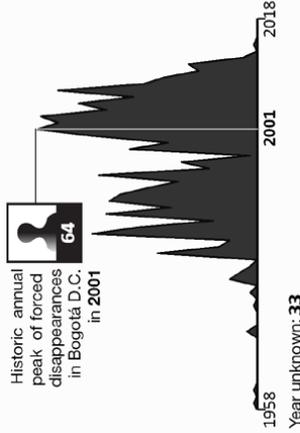
Data sources: OMC, RUV, RND, SPOA



RUV

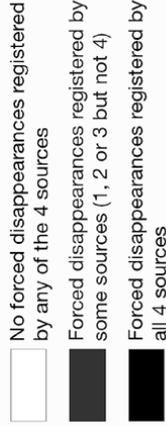


Forced disappearance per year (OMC)



Forced disappearance registered by municipality

Data sources: OMC, RUV, RND, SPOA

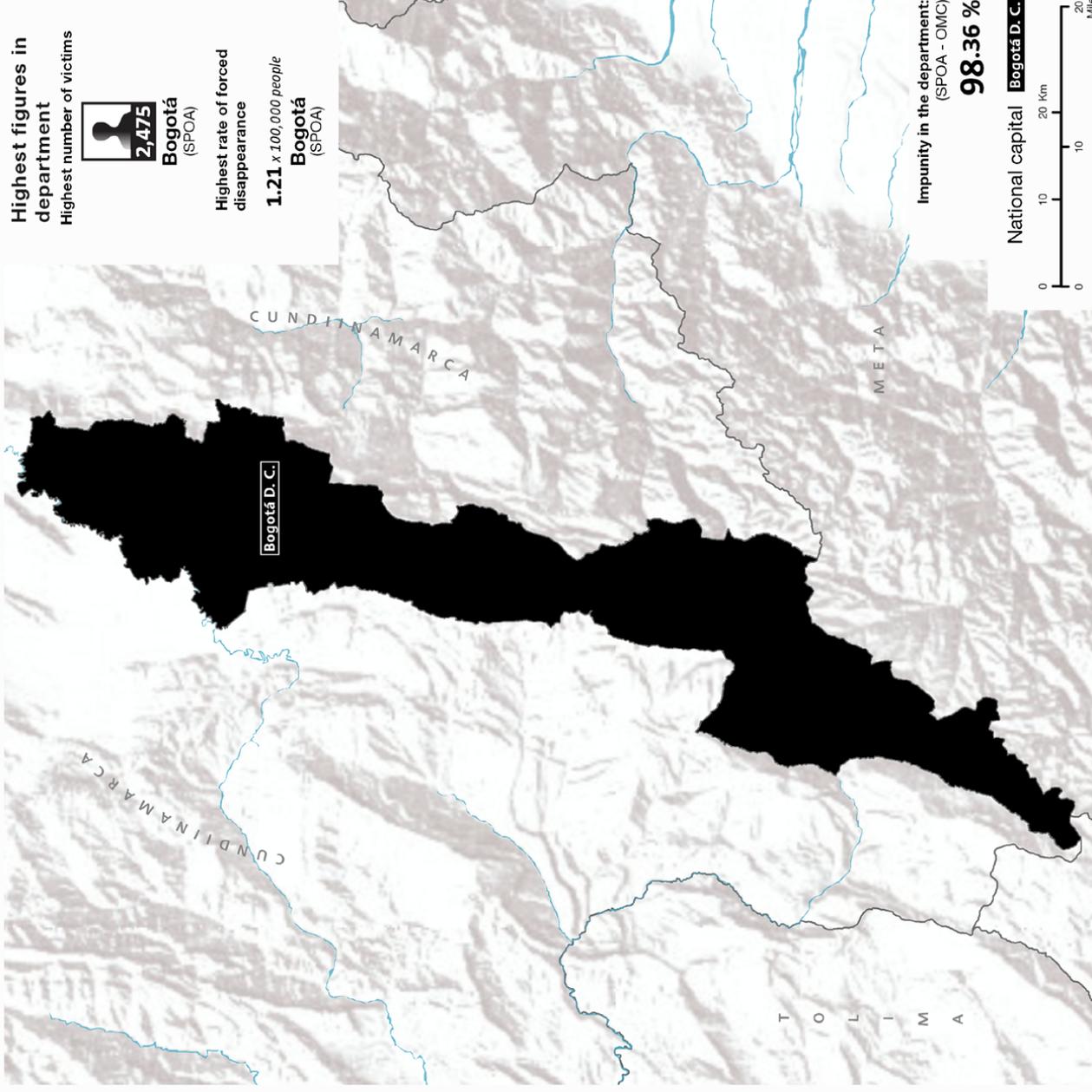


Highest figures in department
Highest number of victims



Highest rate of forced disappearance

1.21 x 100,000 people
Bogotá (SPOA)



Impunity in the department: (SPOA - OMC)

98.36 %

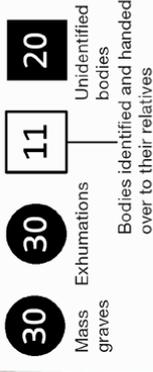
National capital **Bogotá D.C.**



Search, identification and delivery of missing persons

GRUBE (FGN)

Consolidated data May 2019



INMLCF

Convention 01 of 2010 Ministerio - Medicina Legal - Registraduría July 2019

236 Bodies identified and recorded as missing persons

National Register of Missing Persons (RND)

Unclassified disappearance



Alleged forced disappearance
Natural disaster and alleged kidnapping, human trafficking, unlawful recruitment

Sources | Data: Memory and Conflict Observatory (OMC), 09/15/2018. Single Register of Victims (RUV), 04/01/2019. National Register of Missing Persons (RND), 03/20/2019. Oral Accusatory Criminal System (SPOA), 05/29/2019. GRUBE (FGN), 05/31/2019. Convention 01 (INMLCF), 07/25/2019. Icons: Creando, 2017. Base layers: DANE, IDEAM, ESRI, USGS, NOAA

42,992 persons registered as missing in the RND until March 20, 2019. **26,357** are still missing.

FORCED DISAPPEARANCE IN BOLÍVAR. SOURCE SYNTHESIS (OMC, RUV, RND, INMLCF, SPOA & GRUBE DATA)

Victims of forced disappearance

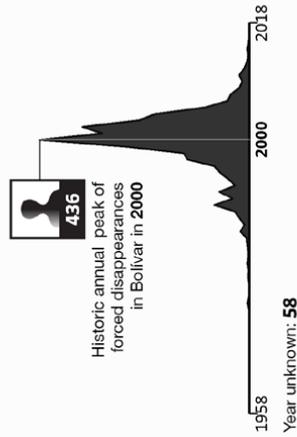
Data sources: OMC, RUV, RND, SPOA



RUV

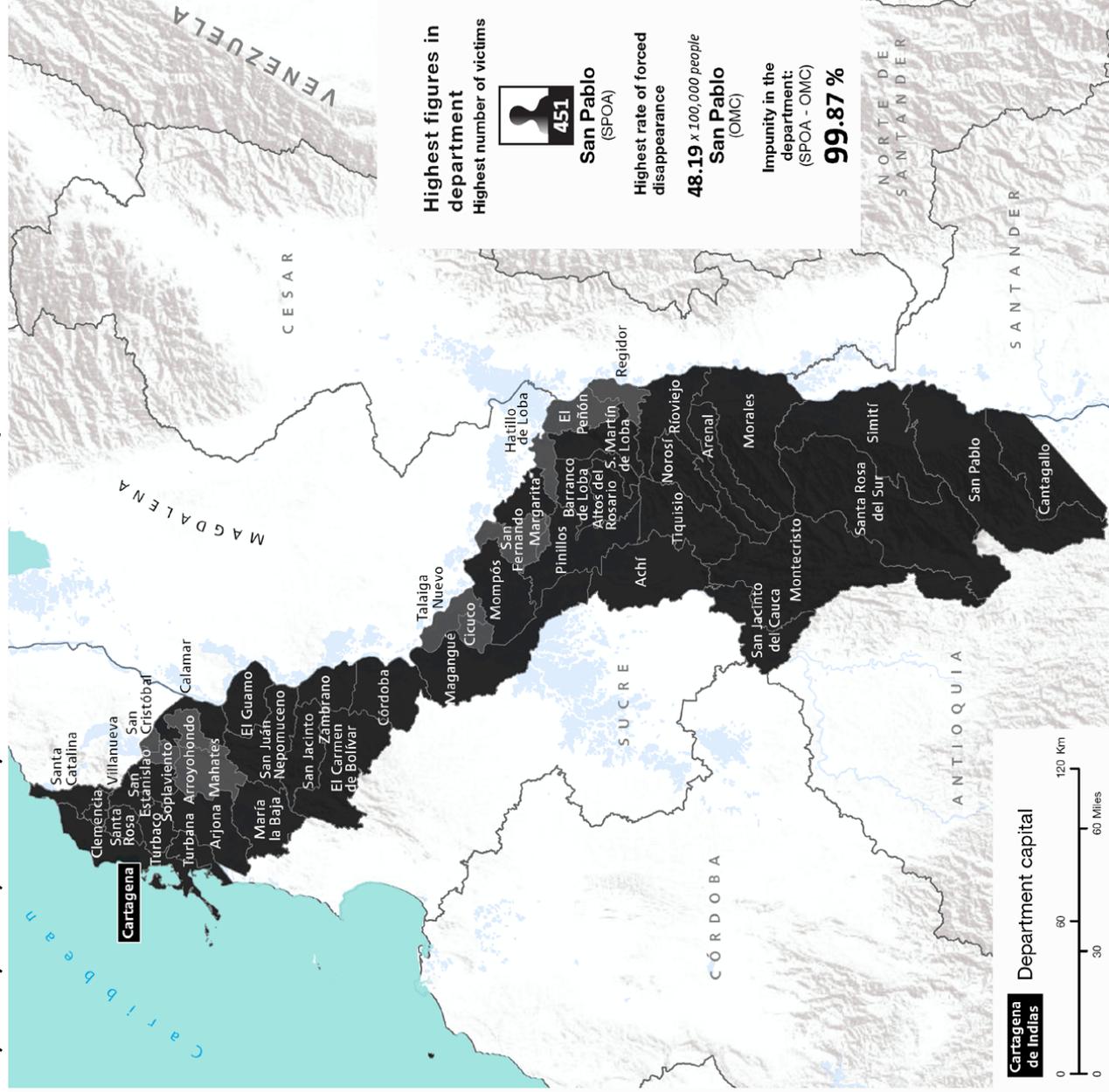
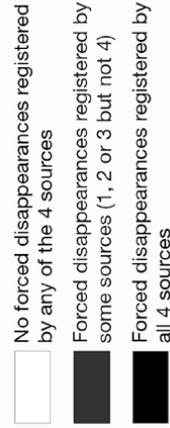


Forced disappearance per year (OMC)

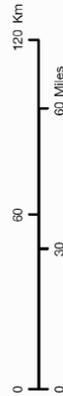


Forced disappearance registered by municipality

Data sources: OMC, RUV, RND, SPOA



Department capital
Cartagena de Indias



Highest figures in department

Highest number of victims



Highest rate of forced disappearance

48.19 x 100,000 people

San Pablo (OMC)

Impunity in the department: (SPOA - OMC)

99.87 %



Search, identification and delivery of missing persons

GRUBE (FGN)

Consolidated data May 2019



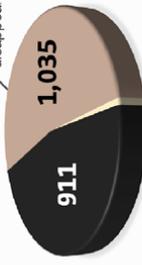
INMLCF

Convention 01 of 2010 Ministerio - Medicina Legal - Registraduría July 2019

67
Bodies identified and recorded as missing persons

National Register of Missing Persons (RND)

Unclassified disappearance



Sources | Data: Memory and Conflict Observatory (OMC), 09/15/2018, Single Register of Victims (RUV), 04/01/2019, National Register of Missing Persons (RND), 03/20/2019, Oral Accusatory Criminal System (SPOA), 05/29/2019, GRUBE (FGN), 05/31/2019, Convention 01 (INMLCF), 07/25/2019 Icons: Creando, 2017. Base layers: DANE, IDEAM, ESRI, USGS, NOAA

1,961 persons registered as missing in the RND until March 20, 2019, 1,691 are still missing.

FORCED DISAPPEARANCE IN BOYACÁ.

SOURCE SYNTHESIS (OMC, RUV, RND, INMLCF, SPOA & GRUBE DATA)

Victims of forced disappearance

Data sources: OMC, RUV, RND, SPOA

OMC **1,117** Identified victims 1958-2018

RND **439** Alleged victims 1938-2019

SPOA **1,091** Victims in criminal notifications 1977-2019

RUV

601 Direct victims 1984-2019

1,685 Indirect victims: family members 1984-2019

Highest figures in department

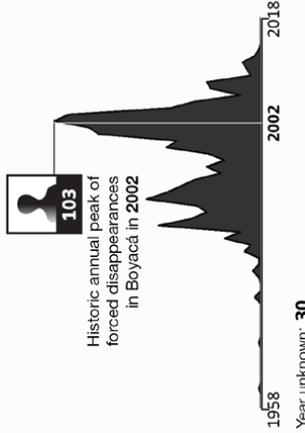
Highest number of victims

518 **Puerto Boyacá (OMC)**

Highest rate of forced disappearance

35.44 x 100,000 people **Puerto Boyacá (OMC)**

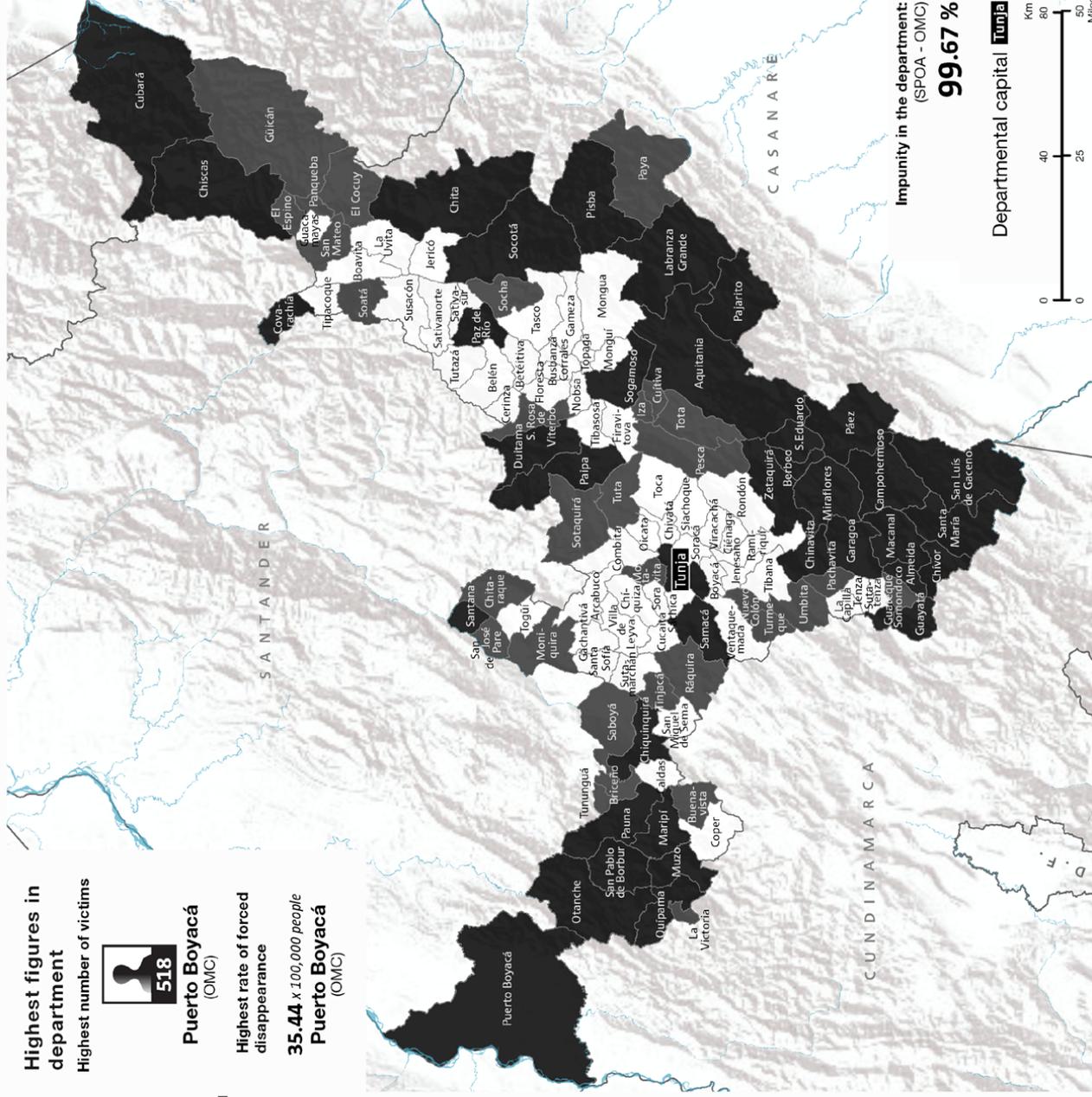
Forced disappearance per year (OMC)



Forced disappearance registered by municipality

Data sources: OMC, RUV, RND, SPOA

- No forced disappearances registered by any of the 4 sources
- Forced disappearances registered by some sources (1, 2 or 3 but not 4)
- Forced disappearances registered by all 4 sources



Impunity in the department: (SPOA - OMC) **99.67 %**

Departmental capital **Tunja**



Search, identification and delivery of missing persons

GRUBE (FGN)

Consolidated data May 2019

98 Mass graves

134 Exhumations

70 Bodies identified and handed over to their relatives

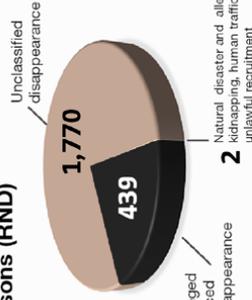
33 Unidentified bodies

INMLCF

Convention 01 of 2010 Ministerio - Medicina Legal - Registraduría July 2019

149 Bodies identified and recorded as missing persons

National Register of Missing Persons (RND)



2,211 persons registered as missing in the RND until March 20, 2019. **1,256** are still missing.

Sources | Data: Memory and Conflict Observatory (OMC), 09/15/2018. Single Register of Victims (RUV), 04/01/2019. National Register of Missing Persons (RND), 03/20/2019. Oral Accusatory Criminal System (SPOA), 05/29/2019. GRUBE (FGN), 05/31/2019. Convention 01 (INMLCF), 07/25/2019. Icons: Creando, 2017. Base layers: DANE, IDEAM, ESRI, USGS, NOAA

FORCED DISAPPEARANCE IN CALDAS. SOURCE SYNTHESIS (OMC, RUV, RND, INMLCF, SPOA & GRUBE DATA)

Victims of forced disappearance

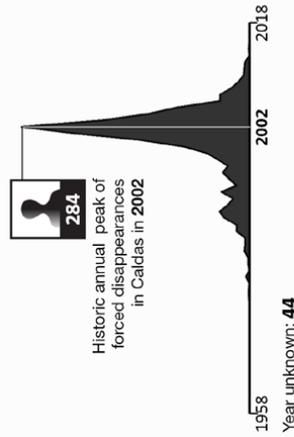
Data sources: OMC, RUV, RND, SPOA



RUV

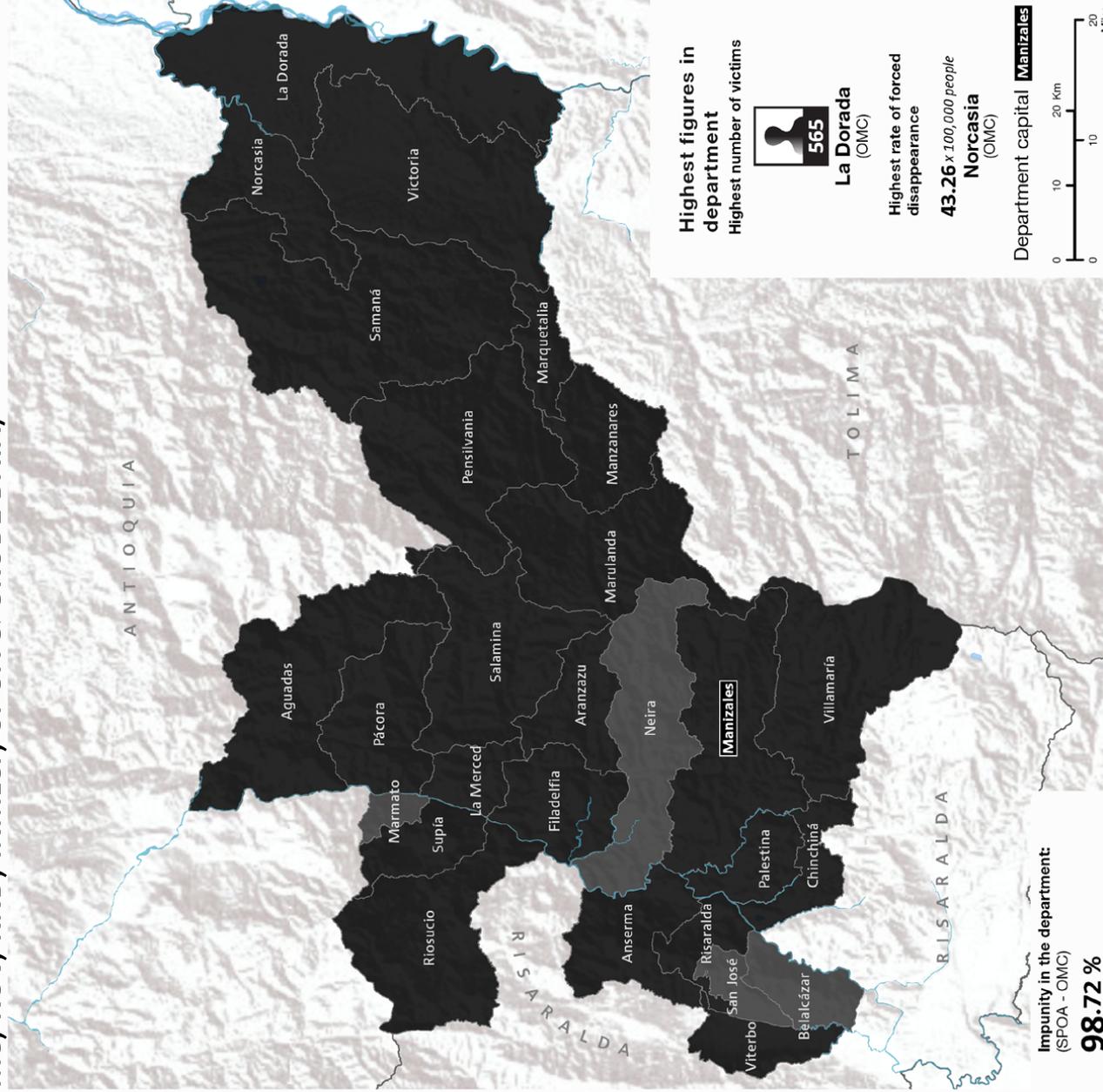
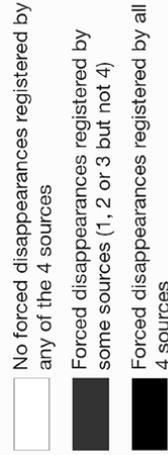


Forced disappearance per year (OMC)



Forced disappearance registered by municipality

Data sources: OMC, RUV, RND, SPOA



Impunity in the department: (SPOA - OMC)

98.72 %

Highest figures in department

Highest number of victims



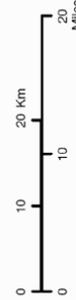
La Dorada (OMC)

Highest rate of forced disappearance

43.26 x 100,000 people

Norcasia (OMC)

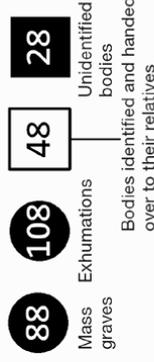
Department capital **Manizales**



Search, identification and delivery of missing persons

GRUBE (FGN)

Consolidated data May 2019



INMLCF

Convention 01 of 2010 Ministerio - Medicina Legal - Registraduría July 2019



295 Bodies identified and recorded as missing persons

National Register of Missing Persons (RND)

Unclassified disappearance



4,057 persons registered as missing in the RND until March 20, 2019, **1,997** are still missing.

Sources | Data: Memory and Conflict Observatory (OMC), 09/15/2018. Single Register of Victims (RUV), 04/01/2019. National Register of Missing Persons (RND), 03/20/2019. Oral Accusatory Criminal System (SPOA), 05/29/2019. GRUBE (FGN), 05/31/2019. Convention 01 (INMLCF), 07/25/2019. Icons: Creando, 2017. Base layers: DANE, IDEAM, ESRI, USGS, NOAA

FORCED DISAPPEARANCE IN CAQUETÁ.

SOURCE SYNTHESIS (OMC, RUV, RND, INMLCF, SPOA & GRUBE DATA)

Victims of forced disappearance

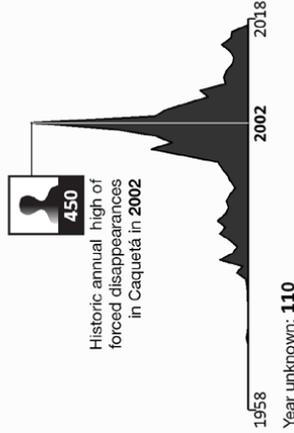
Data sources: OMC, RUV, RND, SPOA



RUV

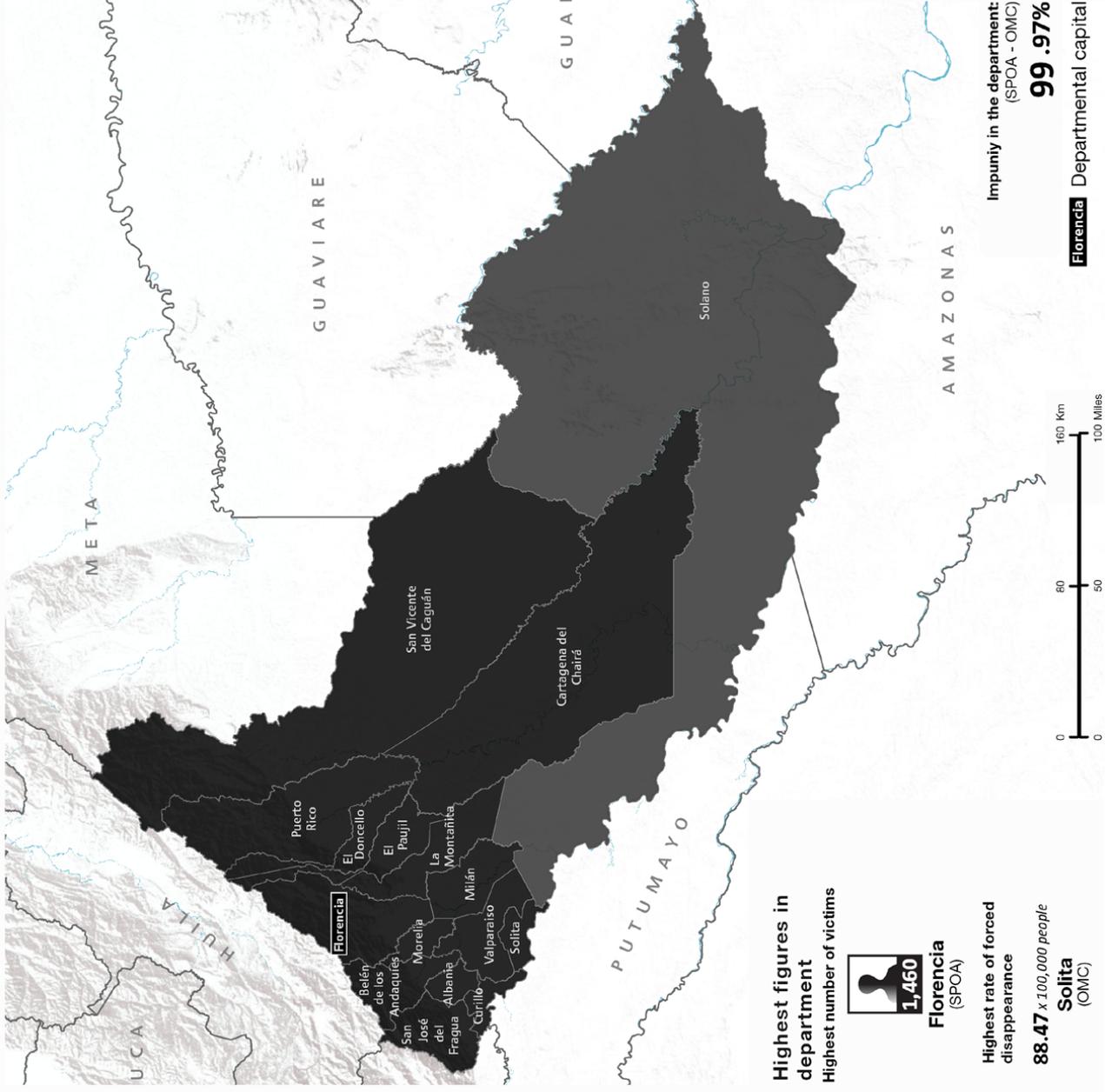
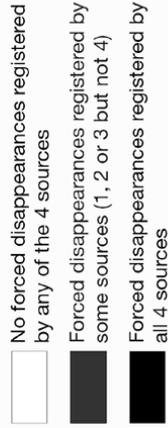


Forced disappearance per year (OMC)



Forced disappearance registered by municipality

Data sources: OMC, RUV, RND, SPOA



Highest figures in department
Highest number of victims



1,460
Florencia (SPOA)

Highest rate of forced disappearance

88.47 x 100,000 people

Solita (OMC)

Impunity in the department: (SPOA - OMC)

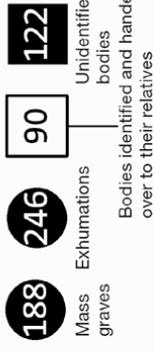
99.97%

Florencia Departmental capital

Search, identification and delivery of missing persons

GRUBE (FGN)

Consolidated data May 2019



INMLCF

Convention 01 of 2010 Ministerio - Medicina Legal - Registraduría July 2019

142 Bodies identified and recorded as missing persons

National Register of Missing Persons (RND)

Unclassified disappearance



Alleged forced disappearance
Natural disaster and alleged kidnappings, trafficking
unlawful recruitment

Sources | Data: Memory and Conflict Observatory (OMC), 09/15/2018. Single Register of Victims (RUV), 04/01/2019. National Register of Missing Persons (RND), 03/20/2019. Oral Accusatory Criminal System (SPOA), 05/29/2019. GRUBE (FGN), 05/31/2019. Convention 01 (INMLCF), 07/25/2019. Icons: Creando, 2017. Base layers: DANE, IDEAM, ESRI, USGS, NOAA

2,409 persons registered as missing in the RND until March 20, 2019. **2,186** are still missing.

FORCED DISAPPEARANCE IN CASANARE.

SOURCE SYNTHESIS (OMC, RUV, RND, INMLCF, SPOA & GRUBE DATA)

Victims of forced disappearance

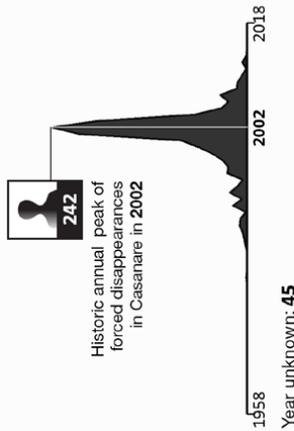
Data sources: OMC, RUV, RND, SPOA



RUV

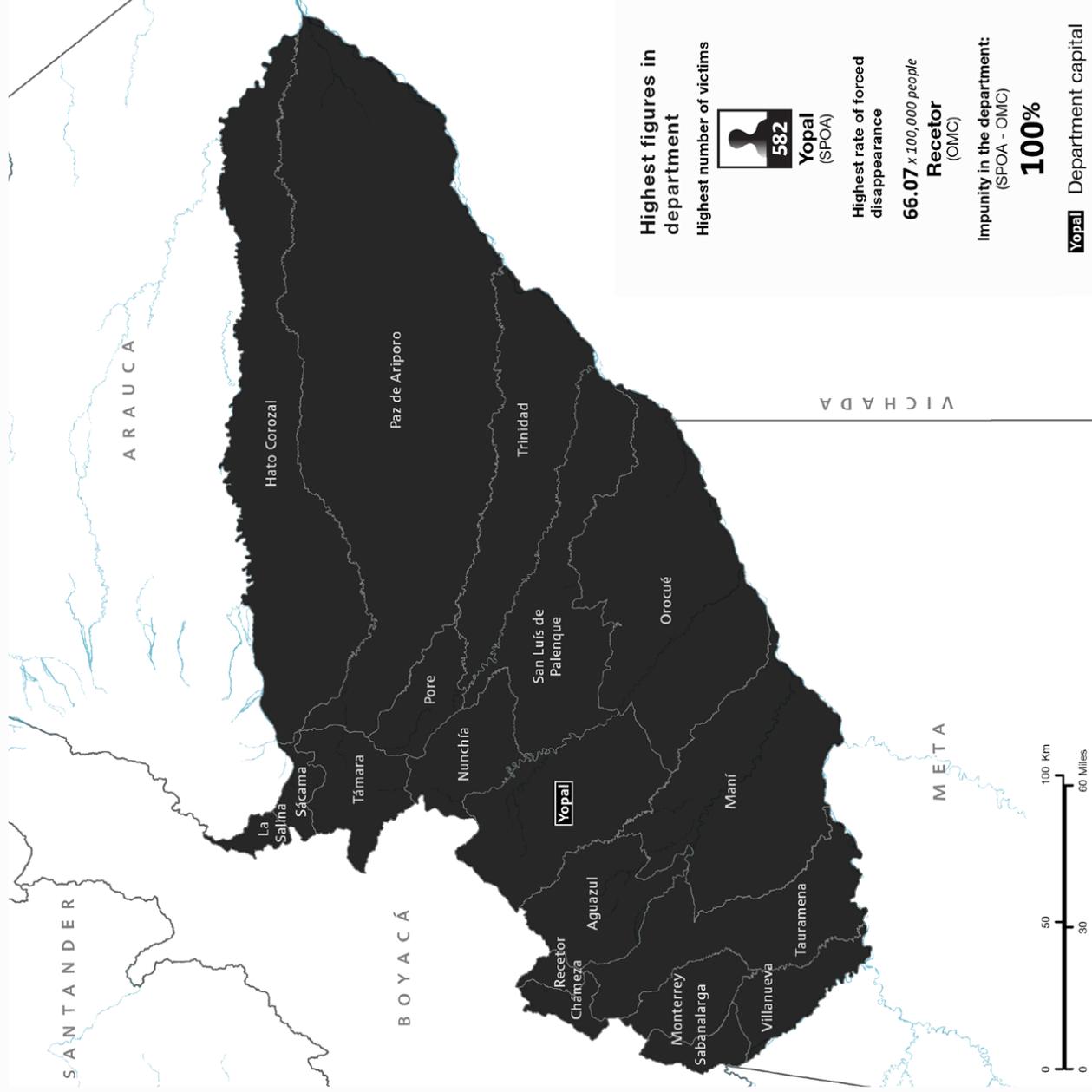
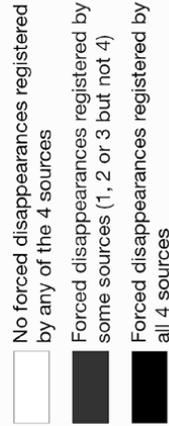


Forced disappearance per year (OMC)



Forced disappearance registered by municipality

Data sources: OMC, RUV, RND, SPOA



Highest figures in department

Highest number of victims



Highest rate of forced disappearance

66.07 x 100,000 people
Receptor (OMC)

Impunity in the department: (SPOA - OMC)

100%

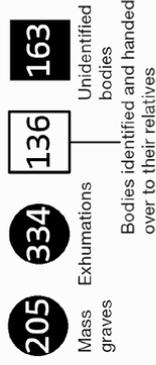
Yopal Department capital

Sources | Data: Memory and Conflict Observatory (OMC), 09/15/2018. Single Register of Victims (RUV), 04/01/2019. National Register of Missing Persons (RND), 03/20/2019. Oral Accusatory Criminal System (SPOA), 05/29/2019. GRUBE (FGN), 05/31/2019. Convention 01 (INMLCF), 07/25/2019 Icons: Creando, 2017. Base layers: DANE, IDEAM, ESRI, USGS, NOAA

Search, identification and delivery of missing persons

GRUBE (FGN)

Consolidated data May 2019



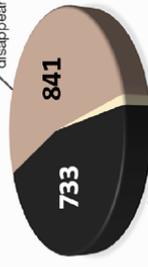
INMLCF

Convention 01 of 2010 Ministerio - Medicina Legal - Registraduría July 2019



National Register of Missing Persons (RND)

Unclassified disappearance



18 Natural disaster and alleged: kidnapping, human trafficking unlawful recruitment

1,592 persons registered as missing in the RND until March 20, 2019. **1,333** are still missing.

FORCED DISAPPEARANCE IN CESAR. SOURCE SYNTHESIS (OMC, RUV, RND, INMLCF, SPOA & GRUBE DATA)

Victims of forced disappearance

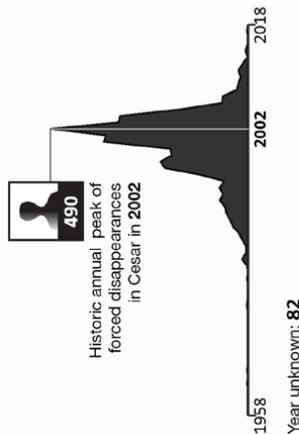
Data sources: OMC, RUV, RND, SPOA



RUV

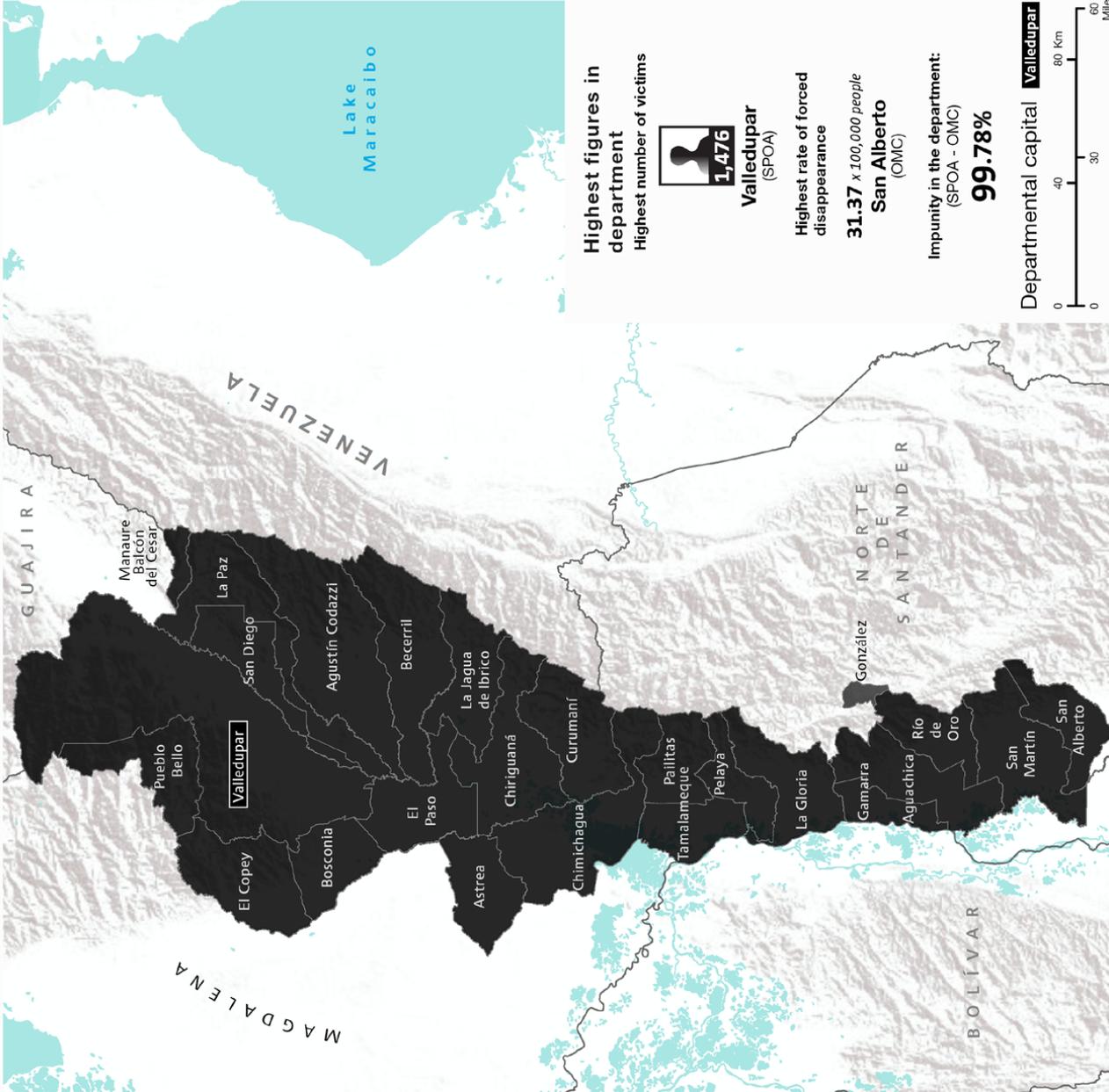
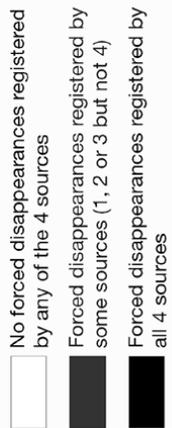


Forced disappearance per year (OMC)



Forced disappearance registered by municipality

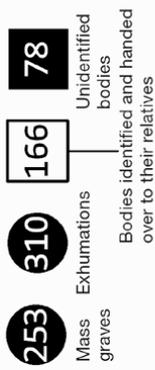
Data sources: OMC, RUV, RND, SPOA



Search, identification and delivery of missing persons

GRUBE (FGN)

Consolidated data May 2019



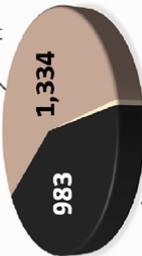
INMLCF

Convention 01 of 2010 Ministerio - Medicina Legal - Registraduria July 2019



National Register of Missing Persons (RND)

Unclassified disappearance

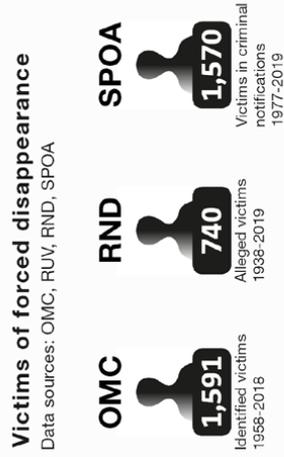


Sources | Data: Memory and Conflict Observatory (OMC), 09/15/2018, Single Register of Victims (RUV), 04/01/2019, National Register of Missing Persons (RND), 03/20/2019, Oral Accusatory Criminal System (SPOA), 05/29/2019, GRUBE (FGN), 05/31/2019, Convention 01 (INMLCF), 07/25/2019 Icons: Creando, 2017. Base layers: DANE, IDEAM, ESRI, USGS, NOAA

2,831 persons registered as missing in the RND until March 20, 2019. **2,010** are still missing.

FORCED DISAPPEARANCE IN CHOCCÓ.

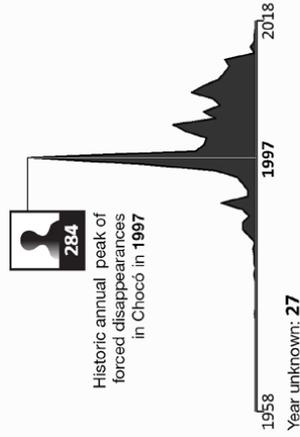
SOURCE SYNTHESIS (OMC, RUV, RND, INMLCF, SPOA & GRUBE DATA)



RUV



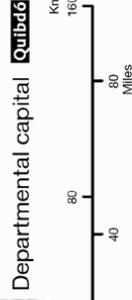
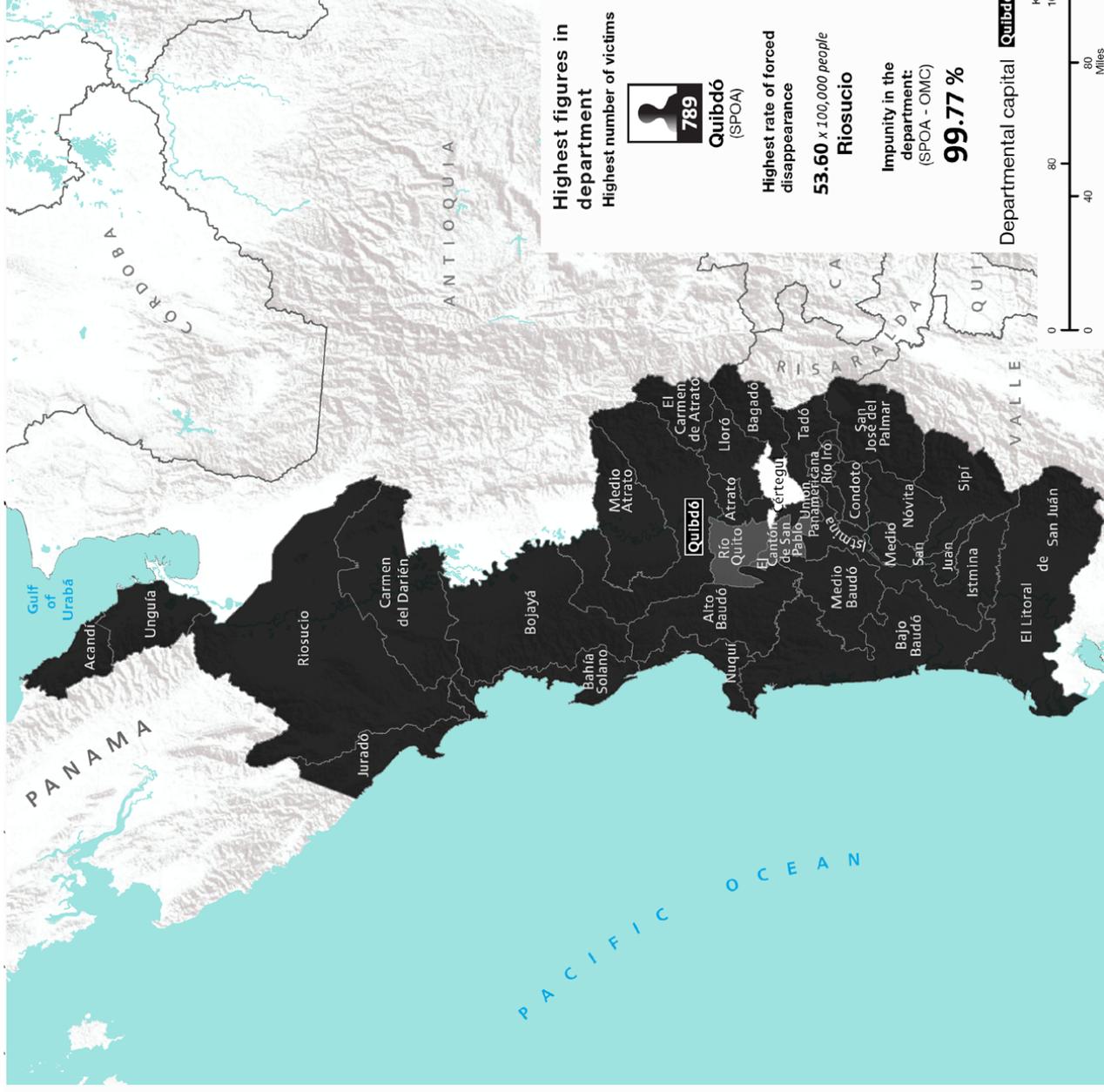
Forced disappearance per year (OMC)



Forced disappearance registered by municipality

Data sources: OMC, RUV, RND, SPOA

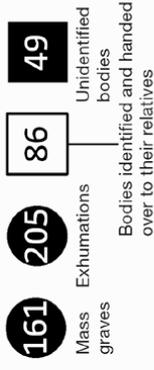
- No forced disappearances registered by any of the 4 sources
- Forced disappearances registered by some sources (1, 2 or 3 but not 4)
- Forced disappearances registered by all 4 sources



Search, identification and delivery of missing persons

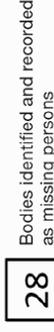
GRUBE (FGN)

Consolidated data May 2019

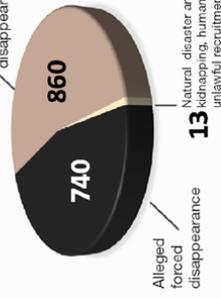


INMLCF

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National Register of Missing Persons (RND)



1,613 persons registered as missing in the RND until March 20, 2019. **1,429** are still missing.

Sources | Data: Memory and Conflict Observatory (OMC), 09/15/2018. Single Register of Victims (RUV), 04/01/2019. National Register of Missing Persons (RND), 03/20/2019. Oral Accusatory Criminal System (SPOA), 05/29/2019. GRUBE (FGN), 05/31/2019. Convention 01 (INMLCF), 07/25/2019. Icons: Creando, 2017. Base layers: DANE, IDEAM, ESRI, USGS, NOAA

FORCED DISAPPEARANCE IN CÓRDOBA. SOURCE SYNTHESIS (OMC, RUV, RND, INMLCF, SPOA & GRUBE DATA)

Victims of forced disappearance

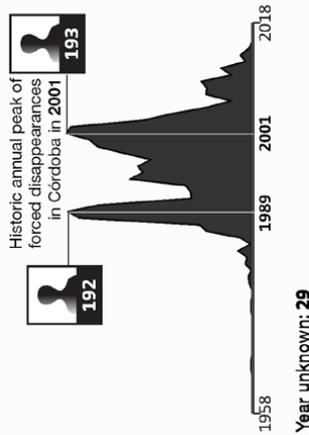
Data sources: OMC, RUV, RND, SPOA



RUV

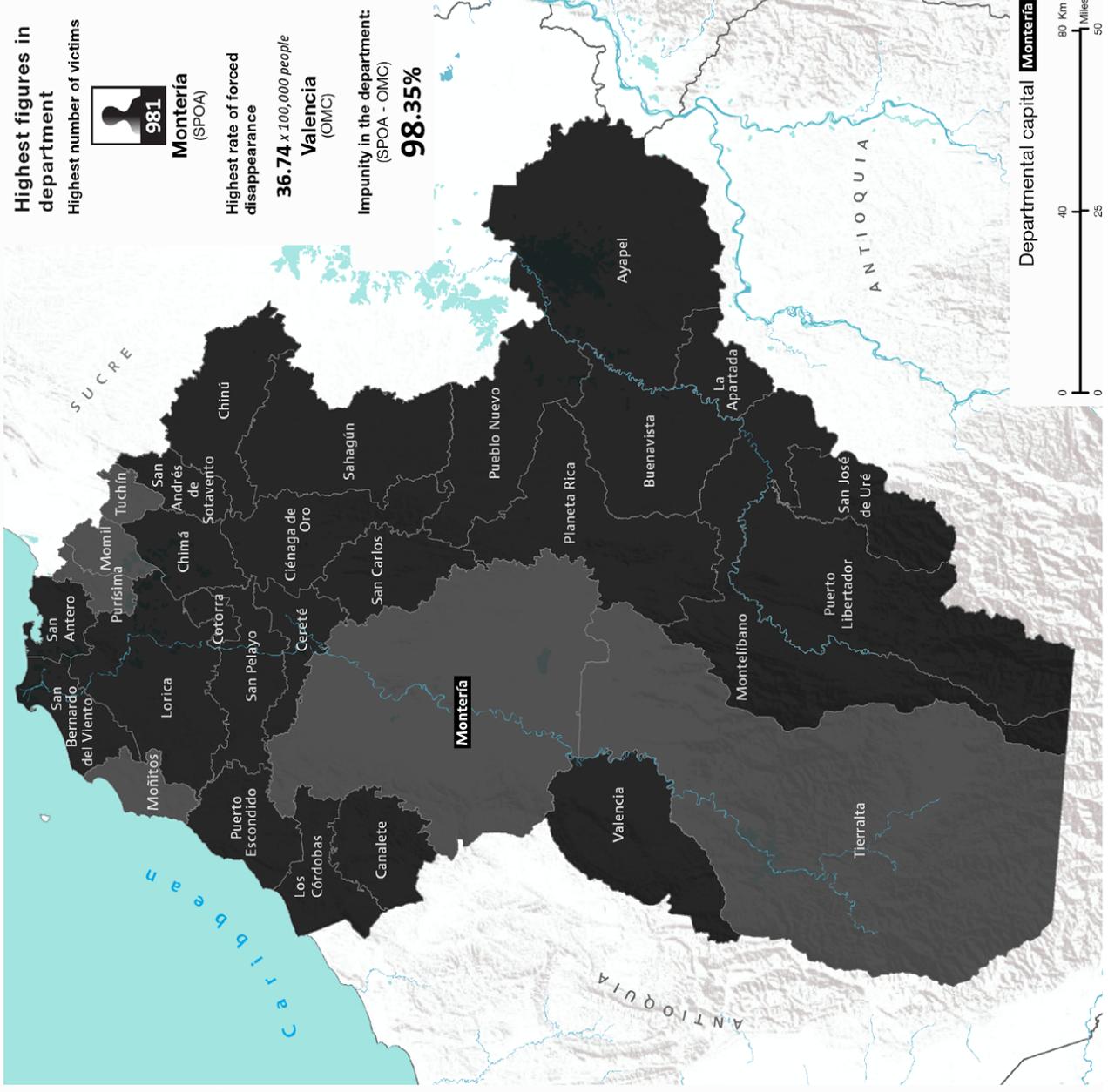
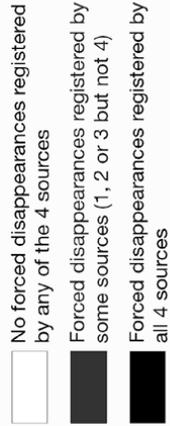


Forced disappearance per year (OMC)



Forced disappearance registered by municipality

Data sources: OMC, RUV, RND, SPOA



Highest figures in department
Highest number of victims



Highest rate of forced disappearance

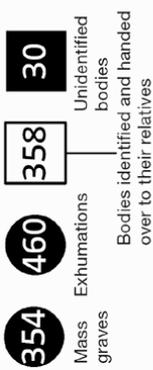
36.74 x 100,000 people
Valencia (OMC)

Impunity in the department: (SPOA - OMC)
98.35%



Search, identification and delivery of missing persons

GRUBE (FGN)
Consolidated data May 2019



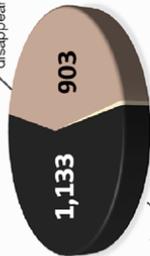
INMLCF

Convention 01 of 2010 Ministerio - Medicina Legal - Registraduría July 2019

124
Bodies identified and recorded as missing persons

National Register of Missing Persons (RND)

Unclassified disappearance



Sources | Data: Memory and Conflict Observatory (OMC), 09/15/2018. Single Register of Victims (RUV), 04/01/2019. National Register of Missing Persons (RND), 03/20/2019. Oral Accusatory Criminal System (SPOA), 05/29/2019. GRUBE (FGN), 05/31/2019. Convention 01 (INMLCF), 07/25/2019. Icons: Creando, 2017. Base layers: DANE, IDEAM, ESRI, USGS, NOAA

2,046 persons registered as missing in the RND until March 20, 2019. 1,823 are still missing.

FORCED DISAPPEARANCE IN CUNDINAMARCA. SOURCE SYNTHESIS (OMC, RUV, RND, INMLCF, SPOA & GRUBE DATA)

Victims of forced disappearance

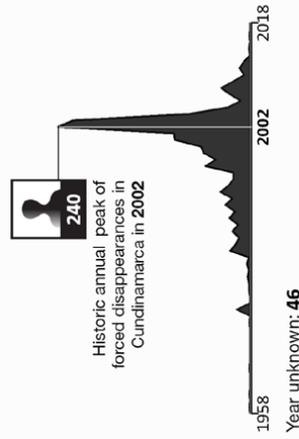
Data sources: OMC, RUV, RND, SPOA



RUV

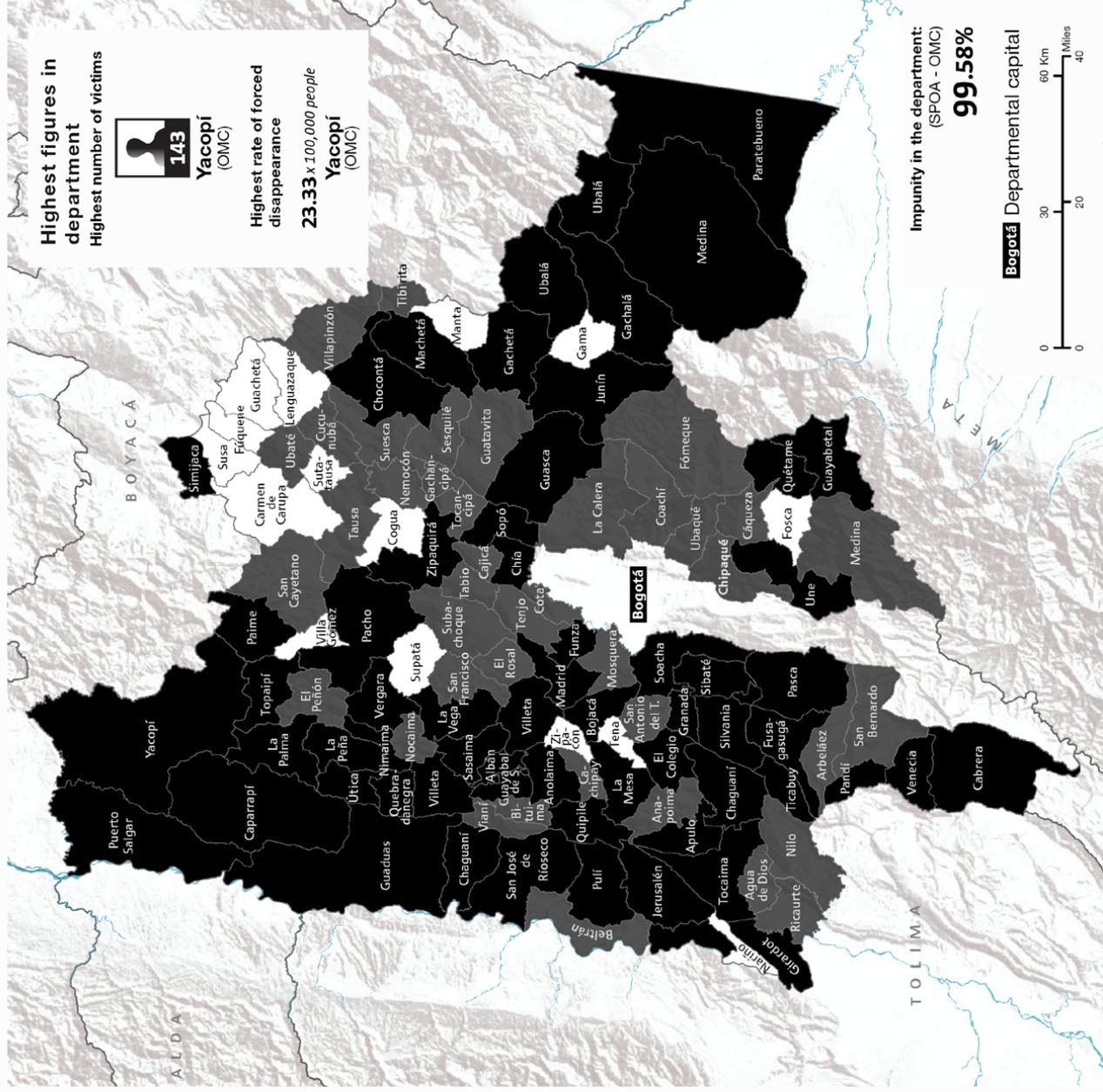
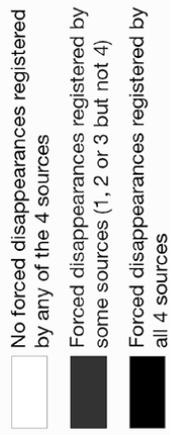


Forced disappearance per year (OMC)



Forced disappearance registered by municipality

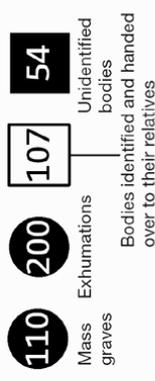
Data sources: OMC, RUV, RND, SPOA



Search, identification and delivery of missing persons

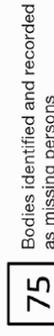
GRUBE (FGN)

Consolidated data May 2019

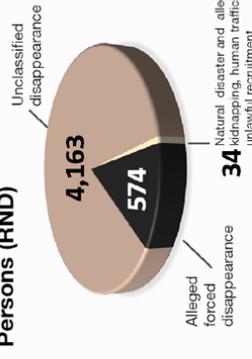


INMLCF

Convention 01 of 2010 Ministerio - Medicina Legal - Registraduría July 2019



National Register of Missing Persons (RND)



4,771 persons registered as missing in the RND until March 20, 2019. **3,374** are still missing.

Sources | Data: Memory and Conflict Observatory (OMC), 09/15/2018. Single Register of Victims (RUV), 04/01/2019. National Register of Missing Persons (RND), 03/20/2019. Oral Accusatory Criminal System (SPOA), 05/29/2019. GRUBE (FGN), 05/31/2019. Convention 01 (INMLCF), 07/25/2019. Icons: Creando, 2017. Base layers: DANE, IDEAM, ESRI, USGS, NOAA

FORCED DISAPPEARANCE IN GUAINÍA. SOURCE SYNTHESIS (OMC, RUV, RND, INMLCF, SPOA & GRUBE DATA)

Victims of forced disappearance

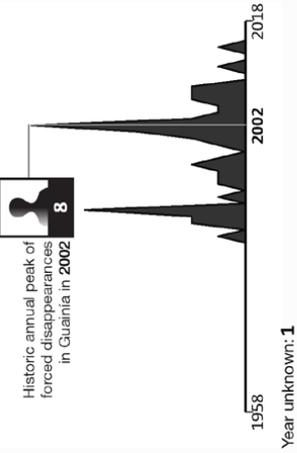
Data sources: OMC, RUV, RND, SPOA



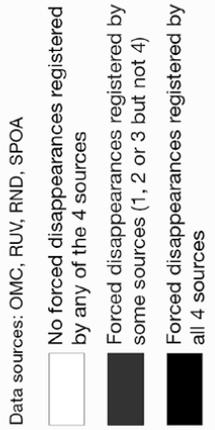
RUV



Forced disappearance per year (OMC)



Forced disappearance registered by municipality

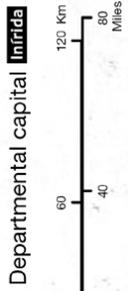


Highest figures in department
Highest number of victims



Highest rate of forced disappearance
17.35 x 100,000 people
Barranco Mina (SPOA)

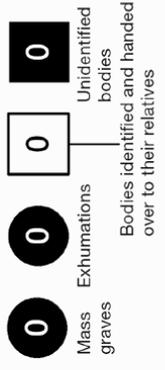
Impunity in the department: (SPOA - OMC)
100%



Search, identification and delivery of missing persons

GRUBE (FGN)

Consolidated data May 2019

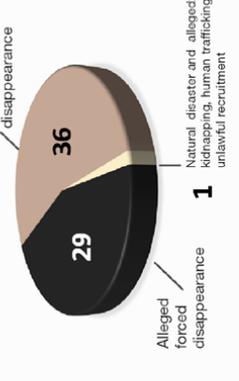


INMLCF

Convention 01 of 2010 Ministerio - Medicina Legal - Registraduría July 2019



National Register of Missing Persons (RND)



66 persons registered as missing in the RND until March 20, 2019. **60** are still missing.

Sources | Data: Memory and Conflict Observatory (OMC), 09/15/2018. Single Register of Victims (RUV), 04/01/2019. National Register of Missing Persons (RND), 03/20/2019. Oral Accusatory Criminal System (SPOA), 05/29/2019. GRUBE (FGN), 05/31/2019. Convention 01 (INMLCF), 07/25/2019. Icons: Creando, 2017. Base layers: DANE, IDEAM, ESRI, USGS, NOAA

FORCED DISAPPEARANCE IN GUAVIARE.

SOURCE SYNTHESIS (OMC, RUV, RND, INMLCF, SPOA & GRUBE DATA)

Victims of forced disappearance

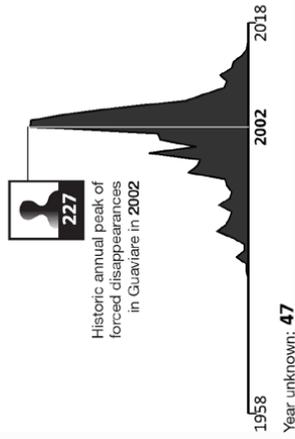
Data sources: OMC, RUV, RND, SPOA



RUV

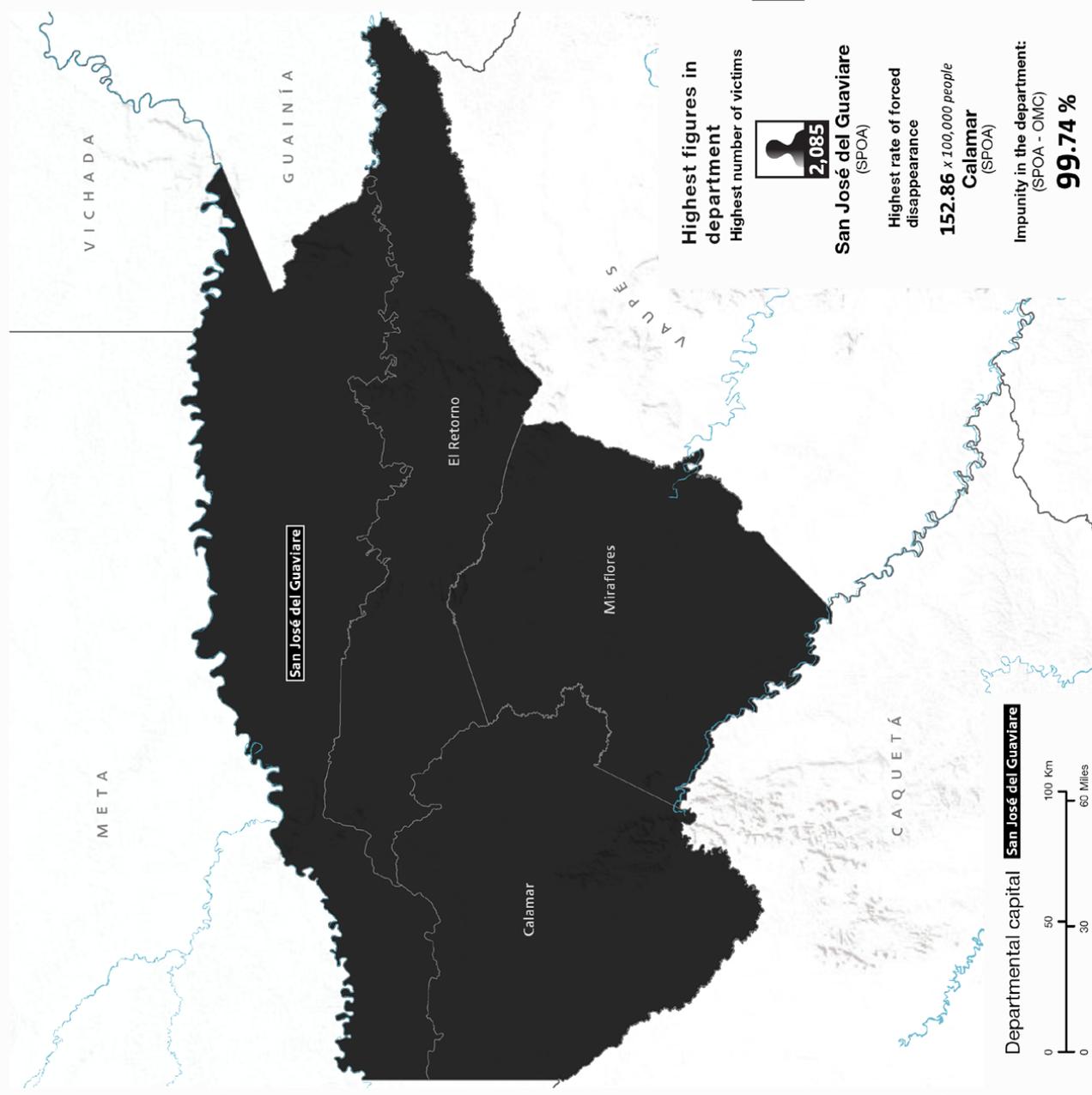
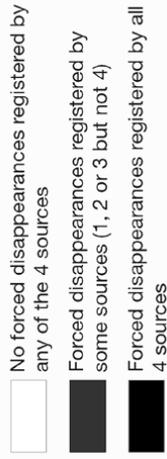


Forced disappearance per year (OMC)



Forced disappearance registered by municipality

Data sources: OMC, RUV, RND, SPOA



Departmental capital **San José del Guaviare**



Highest figures in department

Highest number of victims



San José del Guaviare (SPOA)

Highest rate of forced disappearance

152.86 x 100,000 people

Calamar (SPOA)

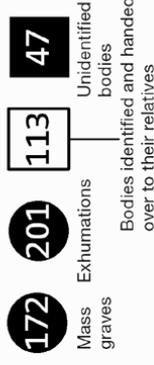
Impunity in the department: (SPOA - OMC)

99.74 %

Search, identification and delivery of missing persons

GRUBE (FGN)

Consolidated data May 2019



INMLCF

Convention 01 of 2010 Ministerio - Medicina Legal - Registraduría July 2019



Bodies identified and recorded as missing persons

National Register of Missing Persons (RND)

Unclassified disappearance



54 Natural disaster and alleged: kidnapping, human trafficking unlawful recruitment

1,845 persons registered as missing in the RND until March 20, 2019. **1,701** are still missing.

Sources | Data: Memory and Conflict Observatory (OMC), 09/15/2018. Single Register of Victims (RUV), 04/01/2019. National Register of Missing Persons (RND), 03/20/2019. Oral Accusatory Criminal System (SPOA), 05/29/2019. GRUBE (FGN), 05/31/2019. Convention 01 (INMLCF), 07/25/2019. Icons: Creando, 2017. Base layers: DANE, IDEAM, ESRI, USGS, NOAA

FORCED DISAPPEARANCE IN HUILA. SOURCE SYNTHESIS (OMC, RUV, RND, INMLCF, SPOA & GRUBE DATA)

Victims of forced disappearance

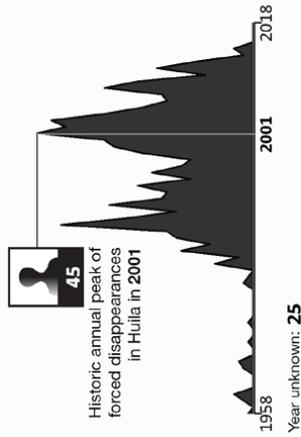
Data sources: OMC, RUV, RND, SPOA



RUV

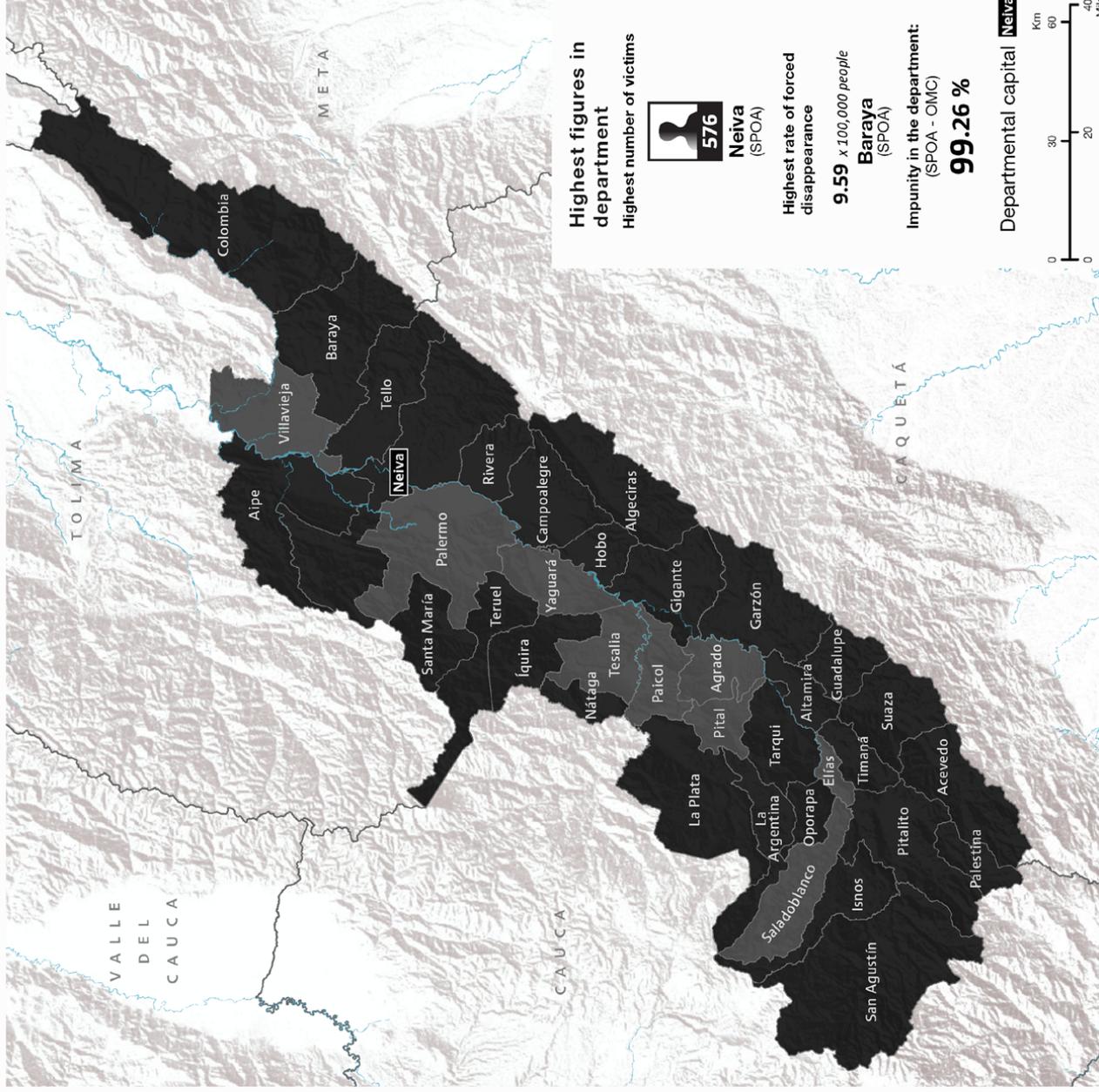
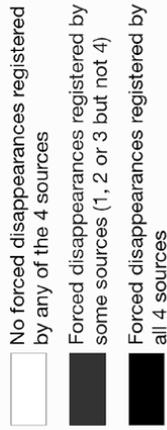


Forced disappearance per year (OMC)



Forced disappearance registered by municipality

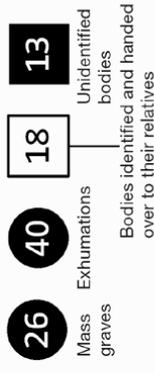
Data sources: OMC, RUV, RND, SPOA



Search, identification and delivery of missing persons

GRUBE (FGN)

Consolidated data May 2019



INMLCF

Convention 01 of 2010 Mininterior - Medicina Legal - Registraduría July 2019



National Register of Missing Persons (RND)

Unclassified disappearance



2,321 persons registered as missing in the RND until March 20, 2019. **1,455** are still missing.

Sources | Data: Memory and Conflict Observatory (OMC), 09/15/2018. Single Register of Victims (RUV), 04/01/2019. National Register of Missing Persons (RND), 03/20/2019. Oral Accusatory Criminal System (SPOA), 05/29/2019. GRUBE (FGN), 05/31/2019. Convention 01 (INMLCF), 07/25/2019 Icons: Creando, 2017. Base layers: DANE, IDEAM, ESRI, USGS, NOAA

FORCED DISAPPEARANCE IN LA GUAJIRA. SOURCE SYNTHESIS (OMC, RUV, RND, INMLCF, SPOA & GRUBE DATA)

Victims of forced disappearance

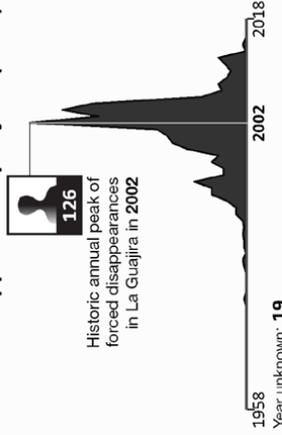
Data sources: OMC, RUV, RND, SPOA



RUV

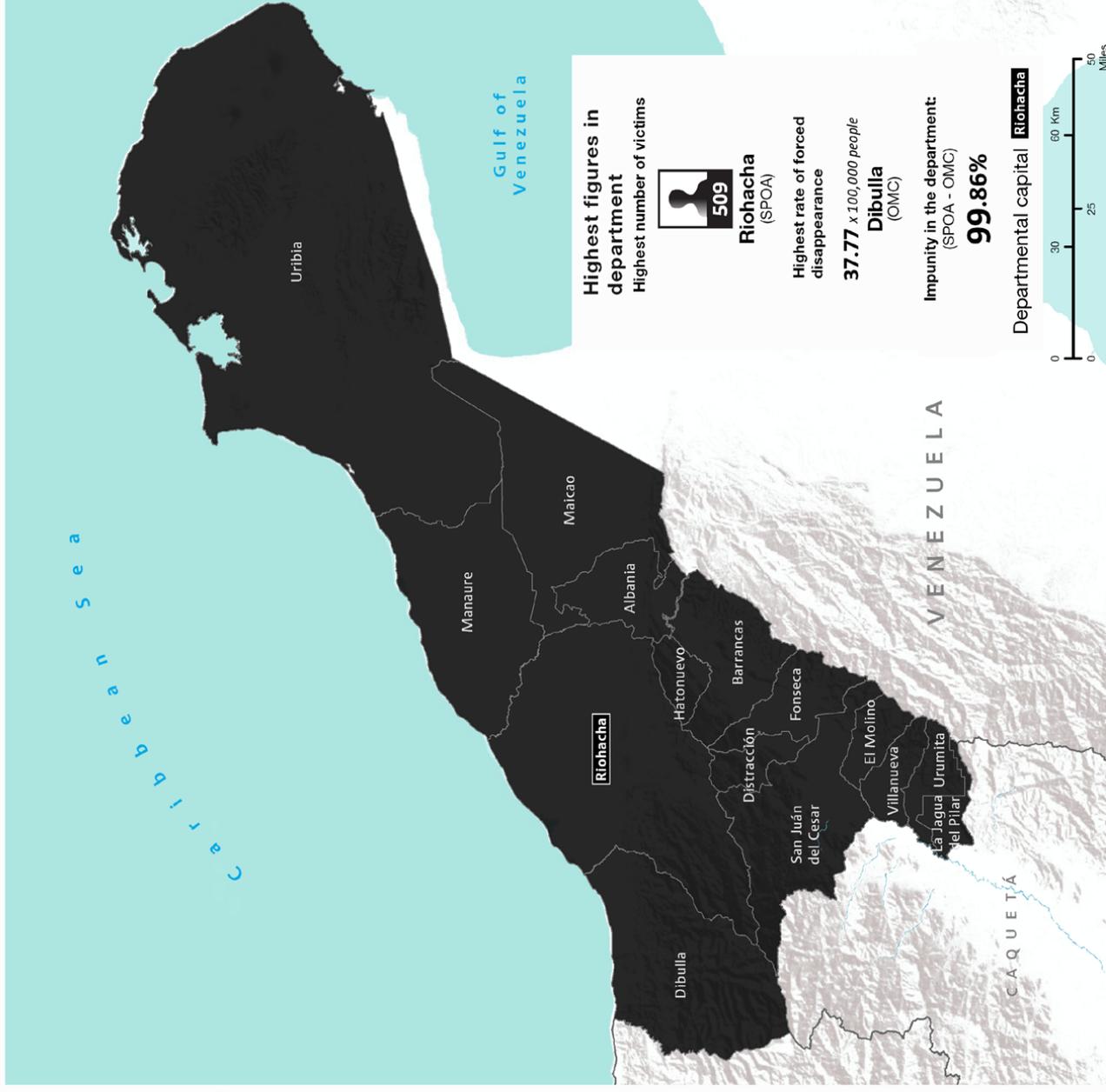
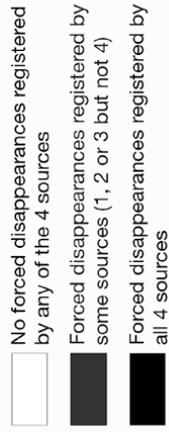


Forced disappearance per year (OMC)



Forced disappearance registered by municipality

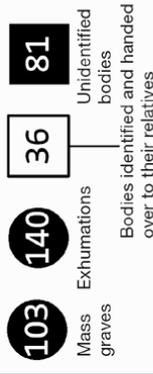
Data sources: OMC, RUV, RND, SPOA



Search, identification and delivery of missing persons

GRUBE (FGN)

Consolidated data May 2019

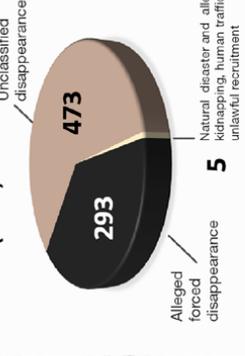


INMLCF

Convention 01 of 2010 Ministerio - Medicina Legal - Registraduria July 2019



National Register of Missing Persons (RND)



771 persons registered as missing in the RND until March 20, 2019. **684** are still missing.

Sources | Data: Memory and Conflict Observatory (OMC), 09/15/2018. Single Register of Victims (RUV), 04/01/2019. National Register of Missing Persons (RND), 03/20/2019. Oral Accusatory Criminal System (SPOA), 05/29/2019. GRUBE (FGN), 05/31/2019. Convention 01 (INMLCF), 07/25/2019. Icons: Creando, 2017. Base layers: DANE, IDEAM, ESRI, USGS, NOAA

FORCED DISAPPEARANCE IN MAGDALENA. SOURCE SYNTHESIS (OMC, RUV, RND, INMLCF, SPOA & GRUBE DATA)

Victims of forced disappearance

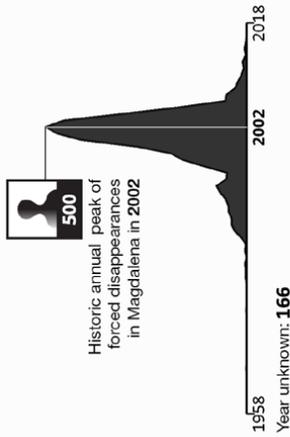
Data sources: OMC, RUV, RND, SPOA



RUV

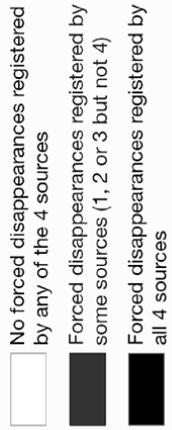


Forced disappearance per year (OMC)



Forced disappearance registered by municipality

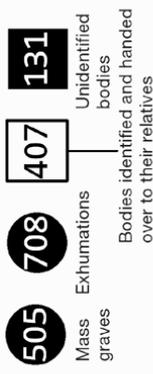
Data sources: OMC, RUV, RND, SPOA



Search, identification and delivery of missing persons

GRUBE (FGN)

Consolidated data May 2019



INMLCF

Convention 01 of 2010 Ministerio - Medicina Legal - Registraduría July 2019



National Register of Missing Persons (RND)

Unclassified disappearance



10 Natural disaster and alleged kidnappings, trafficking unaccounted for

Sources | Data: Memory and Conflict Observatory (OMC), 09/15/2018. Single Register of Victims (RUV), 04/01/2019. National Register of Missing Persons (RND), 03/20/2019. Oral Accusatory Criminal System (SPOA), 05/29/2019. GRUBE (FGN), 05/31/2019. Convention 01 (INMLCF), 07/25/2019. Icons: Creando, 2017. Base layers: DANE, IDEAM, ESRI, USGS, NOAA

3,307 persons registered as missing in the RND until March 20, 2019. **2,305** are still missing.

FORCED DISAPPEARANCE IN META. SOURCE SYNTHESIS (OMC, RUV, RND, INMLCF, SPOA & GRUBE DATA)

Victims of forced disappearance

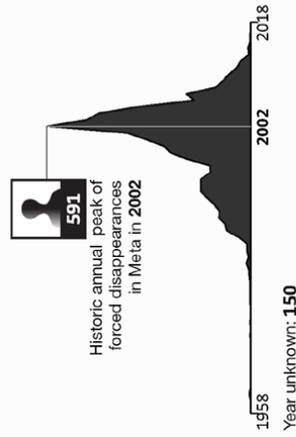
Data sources: OMC, RUV, RND, SPOA



RUV

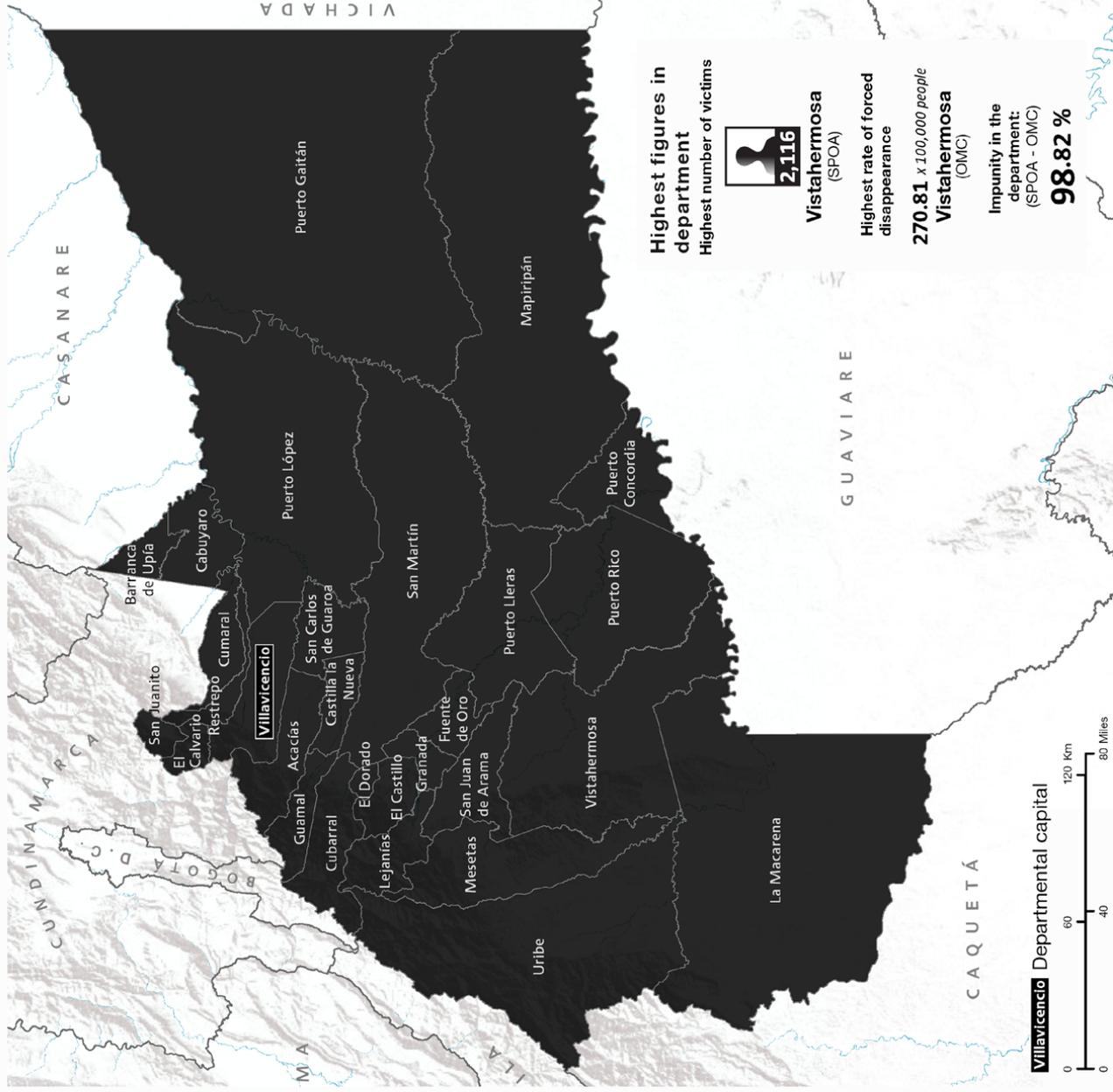
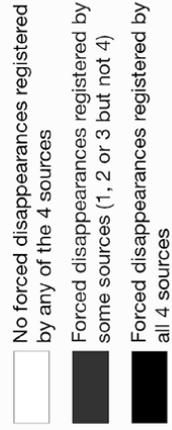


Forced disappearance per year (OMC)



Forced disappearance registered by municipality

Data sources: OMC, RUV, RND, SPOA



Highest figures in department
Highest number of victims



Vistahermosa
(SPOA)

Highest rate of forced disappearance

270.81 x 100,000 people
Vistahermosa
(OMC)

Impunity in the department:
(SPOA - OMC)

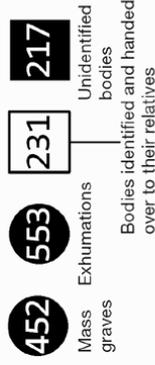
98.82 %



Search, identification and delivery of missing persons

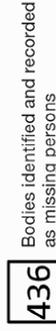
GRUBE (FGN)

Consolidated data May 2019



INMLCF

Convention 01 of 2010 Ministerio - Medicina Legal - Registraduría July 2019



Bodies identified and recorded as missing persons

National Register of Missing Persons (RND)

Unclassified disappearance



Alleged forced disappearance

176

Natural disaster and alleged kidnapping, human trafficking, unlawful recruitment

2,243

Unclassified disappearance

3,757

Sources | Data: Memory and Conflict Observatory (OMC), 09/15/2018. Single Register of Victims (RUV), 04/01/2019. National Register of Missing Persons (RND), 03/20/2019. Oral Accusatory Criminal System (SPOA), 05/29/2019. GRUBE (FGN), 05/31/2019. Convention 01 (INMLCF), 07/25/2019. Icons: Creando, 2017. Base layers: DANE, IDEAM, ESRI, USGS, NOAA

FORCED DISAPPEARANCE IN NARIÑO. SOURCE SYNTHESIS (OMC, RUV, RND, INMLCF, SPOA & GRUBE DATA)

Victims of forced disappearance

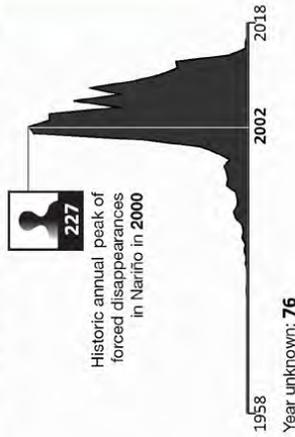
Data sources: OMC, RUV, RND, SPOA



RUV

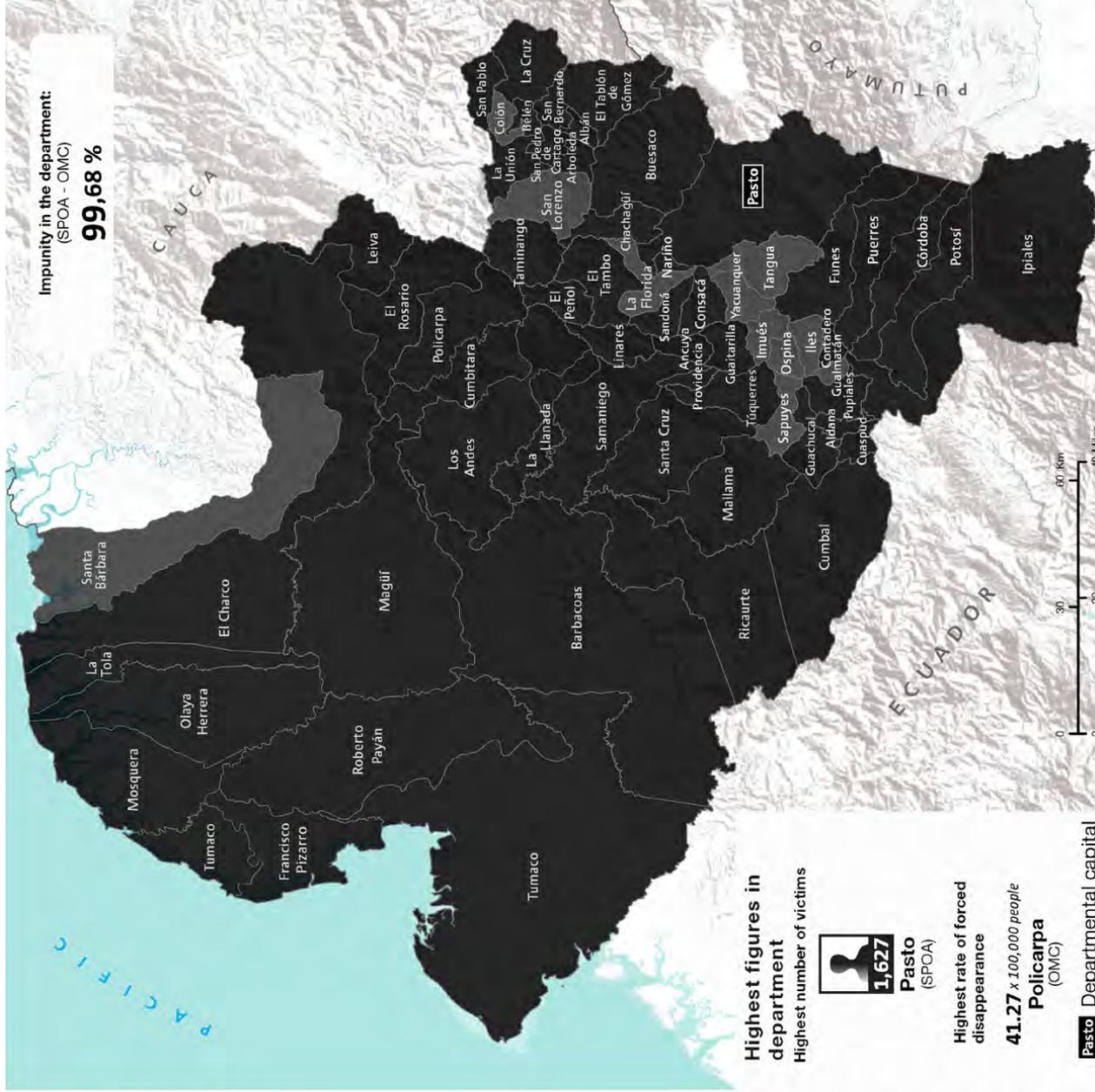
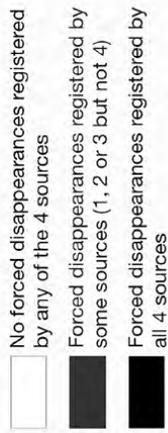


Forced disappearance per year (OMC)



Forced disappearance registered by municipality

Data sources: OMC, RUV, RND, SPOA



Sources | Data: Memory and Conflict Observatory (OMC), 09/15/2018. Single Register of Victims (RUV), 04/01/2019. National Register of Missing Persons (RND), 03/20/2019. Oral Accusatory Criminal System (SPOA), 05/29/2019. GRUBE (FGN), 05/31/2019. Convention 01 (INMLCF), 07/25/2019 Icons: Creando, 2017. Base layers: DANE, IDEAM, ESRI, USGS, NOAA



Search, identification and delivery of missing persons

GRUBE (FGN)

Consolidated data May 2019



INMLCF

Convention 01 of 2010 Minterior - Medicina Legal - Registraduría July 2019



National Register of Missing Persons (RND)

Unclassified disappearance



Alleged forced disappearance: 23
Natural disaster and alleged: kidnapping, human trafficking unlawful recruitment

3,486 persons registered as missing in the RND until March 20, 2019. **2,884** are still missing.

FORCED DISAPPEARANCE IN NORTE DE SANTANDER.

SOURCE SYNTHESIS (OMC, RUV, RND, INMLCF, SPOA & GRUBE DATA)

Victims of forced disappearance

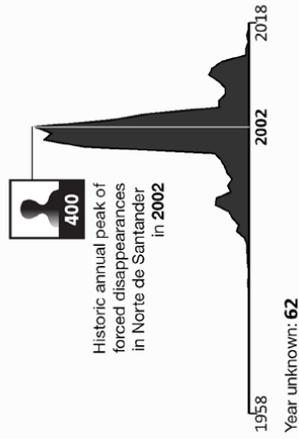
Data sources: OMC, RUV, RND, SPOA



RUV

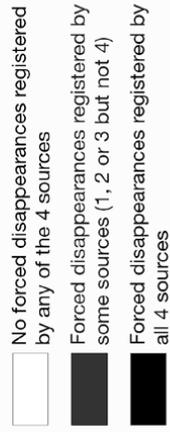


Forced disappearance per year (OMC)



Forced disappearance registered by municipality

Data sources: OMC, RUV, RND, SPOA

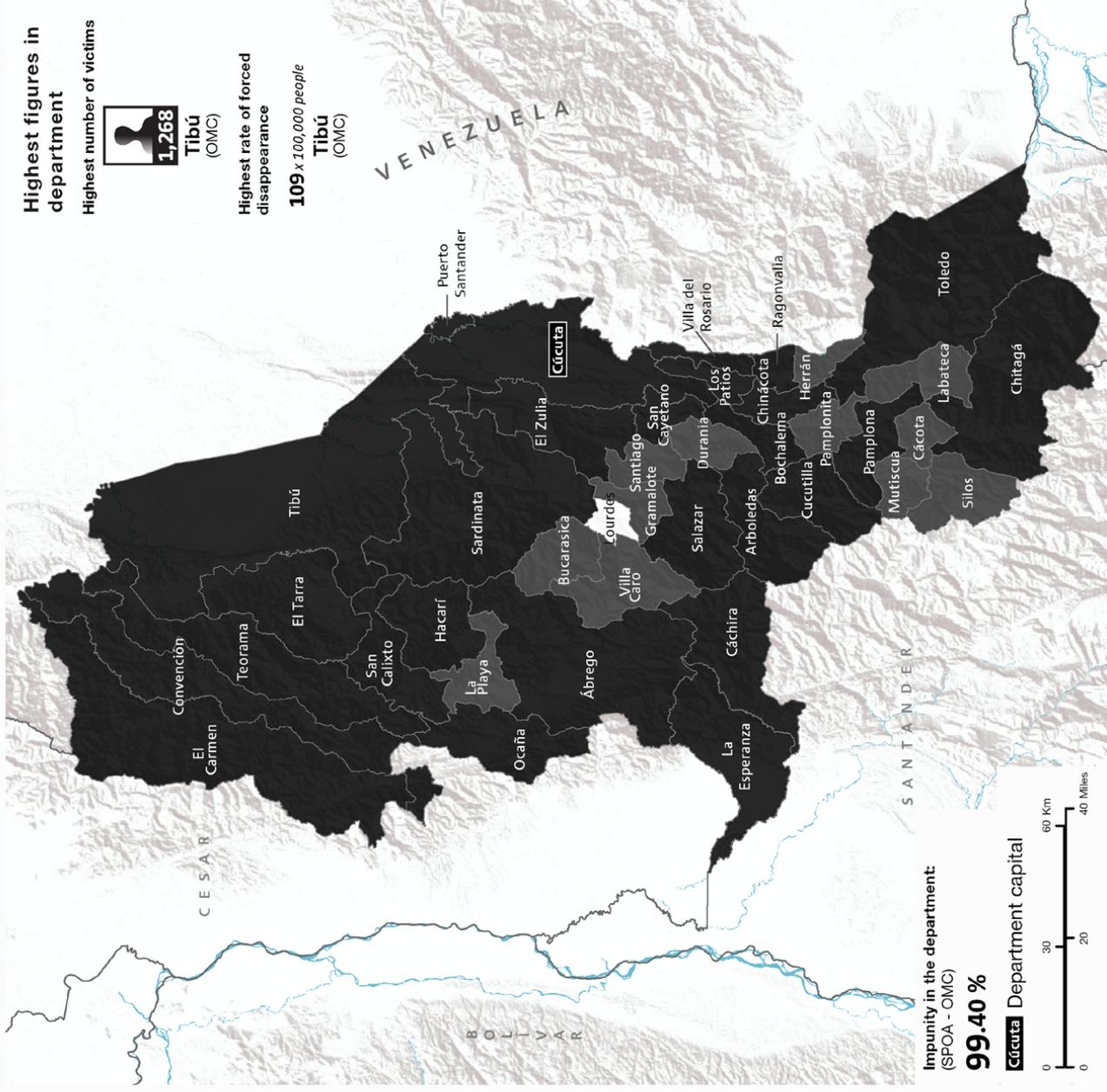


Highest figures in department

Highest number of victims



Highest rate of forced disappearance



Search, identification and delivery of missing persons

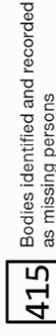
GRUBE (FGN)

Consolidated data May 2019



INMLCF

Convention 01 of 2010 Ministerio - Medicina Legal - Registraduría July 2019



National Register of Missing Persons (RND)

Unclassified disappearance



18 Natural disaster and, alleged kidnapping, human trafficking unlawful recruitment

5,120 persons registered as missing in the RND until March 20, 2019. 3,814 are still missing.

Sources | Data: Memory and Conflict Observatory (OMC), 09/15/2018. Single Register of Victims (RUV), 04/01/2018. National Register of Missing Persons (RND), 03/20/2019. Oral Accusatory Criminal System (SPOA), 05/29/2019. GRUBE (FGN), 05/31/2019. Convention 01 (INMLCF), 07/25/2019. Icons: Creando, 2017. Base layers: DANE, IDEAM, ESRI, USGS, NOAA

FORCED DISAPPEARANCE IN PUTUMAYO. SOURCE SYNTHESIS (OMC, RUV, RND, INMLCF, SPOA & GRUBE DATA)

Victims of forced disappearance

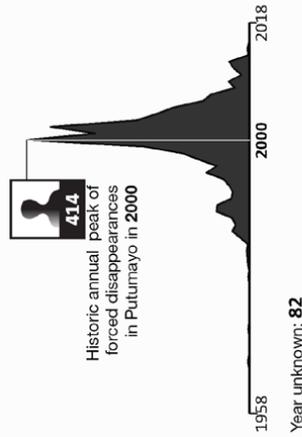
Data sources: OMC, RUV, RND, SPOA



RUV

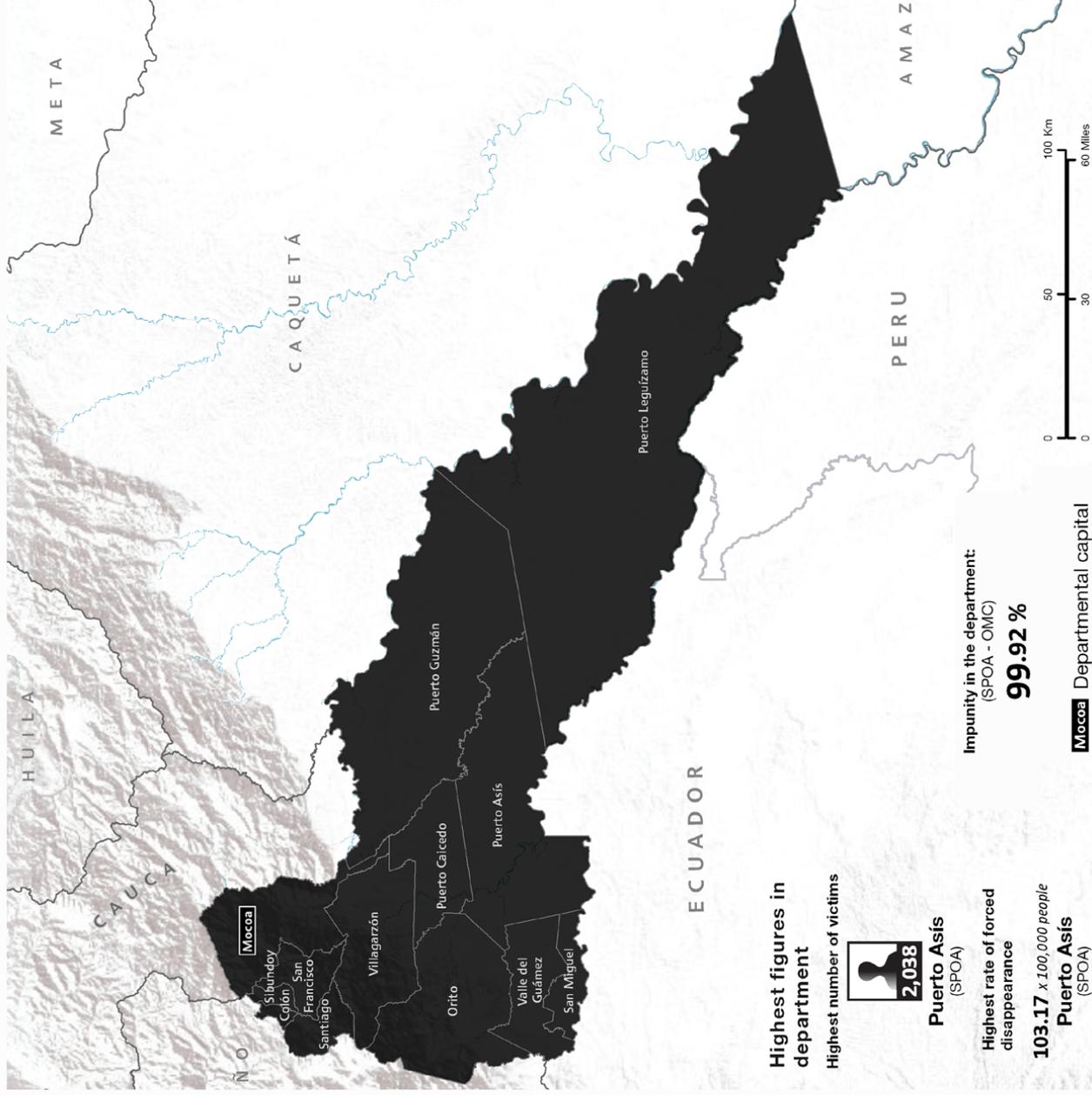
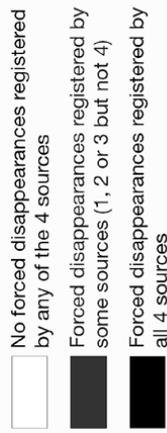


Forced disappearance per year (OMC)



Forced disappearance registered by municipality

Data sources: OMC, RUV, RND, SPOA

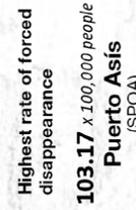


Highest figures in department

Highest number of victims



Highest rate of forced disappearance



Impunity in the department: (SPOA - OMC)

99.92 %

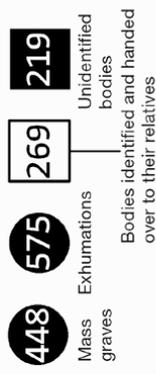
Mocoa Departmental capital



Search, identification and delivery of missing persons

GRUBE (FGN)

Consolidated data May 2019

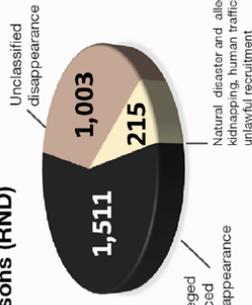


INMLCF

Convention 01 of 2010 Ministerio - Medicina Legal - Registraduría July 2019

25 Bodies identified and recorded as missing persons

National Register of Missing Persons (RND)



2,729 persons registered as missing in the RND until March 20, 2019. **2,385** are still missing.

Sources | Data: Memory and Conflict Observatory (OMC), 09/15/2018, Single Register of Victims (RUV), 04/01/2019, National Register of Missing Persons (RND), 03/20/2019, Oral Accusatory Criminal System (SPOA), 05/29/2019, GRUBE (FGN), 05/31/2019, Convention 01 (INMLCF), 07/25/2019 Icons: Creando, 2017. Base layers: DANE, IDEAM, ESRI, USGS, NOAA

FORCED DISAPPEARANCE IN QUINDIÓ.

SOURCE SYNTHESIS (OMC, RUV, RND, INMLCF, SPOA & GRUBE DATA)

Victims of forced disappearance

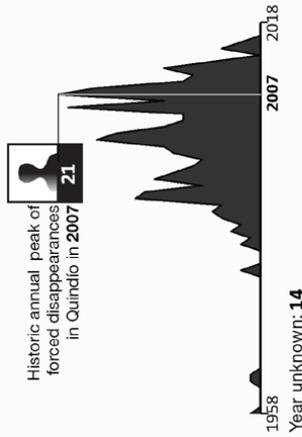
Data sources: OMC, RUV, RND, SPOA



RUV

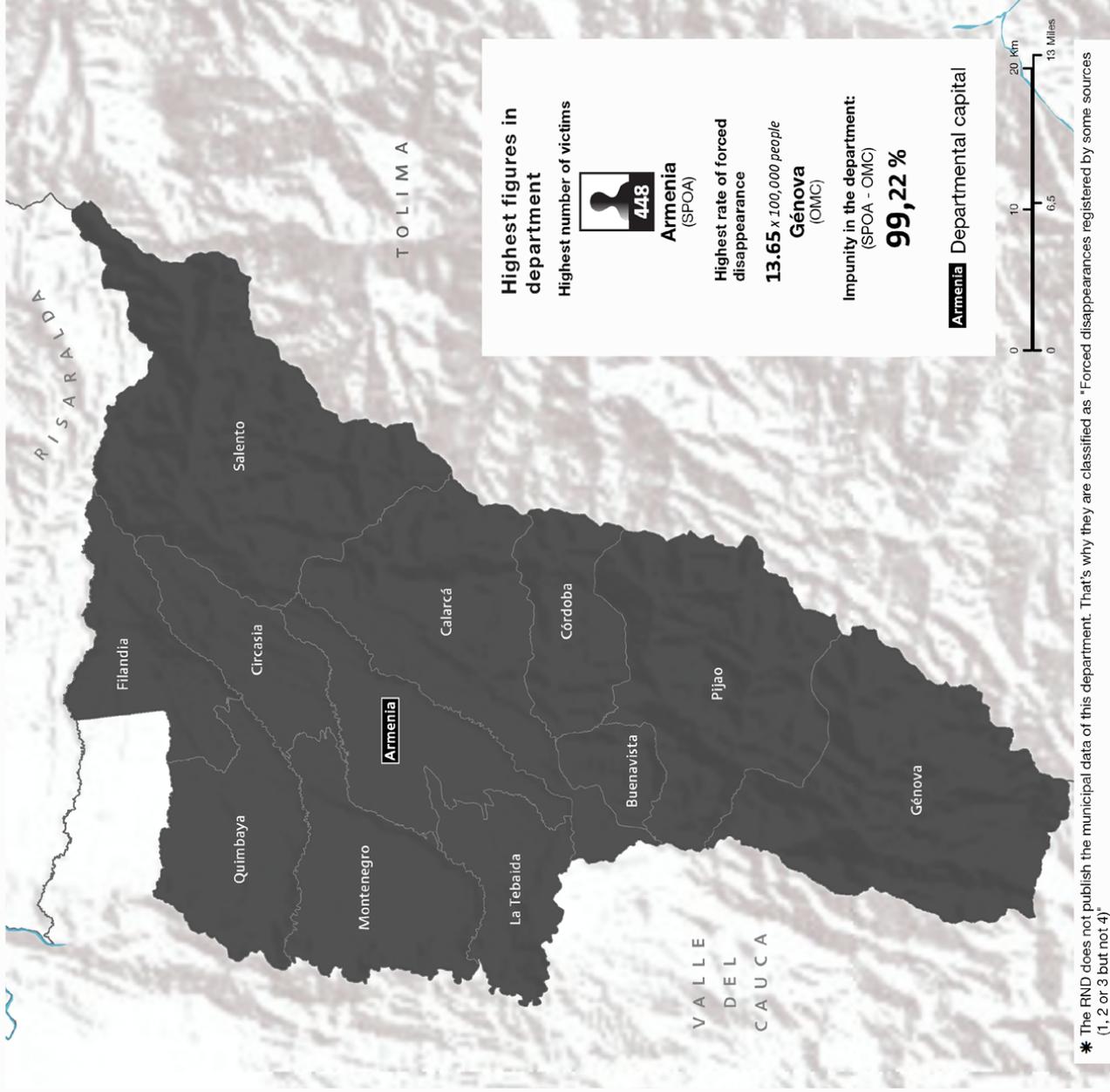
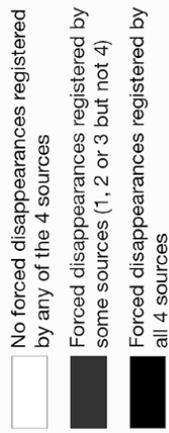


Forced disappearance per year (OMC)



Forced disappearance registered by municipality*

Data sources: OMC, RUV, RND, SPOA



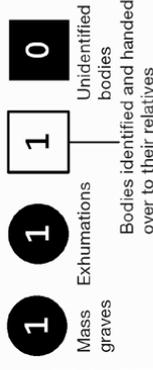
* The RND does not publish the municipal data of this department. That's why they are classified as "Forced disappearances registered by some sources (1, 2 or 3 but not 4)"



Search, identification and delivery of missing persons

GRUBE (FGN)

Consolidated data May 2019



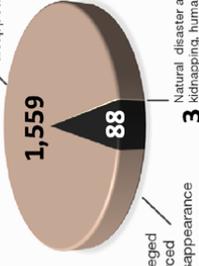
INMLCF

Convention 01 of 2010 Ministerio - Medicina Legal - Registraduría July 2019



National Register of Missing Persons (RND)

Unclassified disappearance



1,650 persons registered as missing in the RND until March 20, 2019. 722 are still missing.

Sources | Data: Memory and Conflict Observatory (OMC), 09/15/2018. Single Register of Victims (RUV), 04/01/2019. National Register of Missing Persons (RND), 03/20/2019. Oral Accusatory Criminal System (SPOA), 05/29/2019. GRUBE (FGN), 05/31/2019. Convention 01 (INMLCF), 07/25/2019. Icons: Creando, 2017. Base layers: DANE, IDEAM, ESRI, USGS, NOAA

FORCED DISAPPEARANCE IN RISARALDA. SOURCE SYNTHESIS (OMC, RUV, RND, INMLCF, SPOA & GRUBE DATA)

Victims of forced disappearance

Data sources: OMC, RUV, RND, SPOA

OMC **650** Identified victims 1958-2018

RND **208** Alleged victims 1958-2019

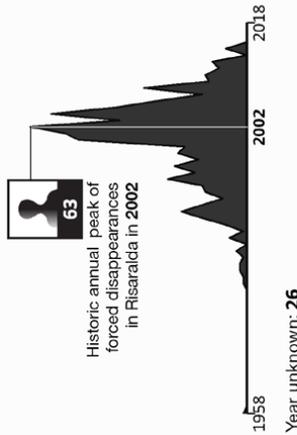
SPOA **1,014** Victims in criminal notifications 1977-2019

RUV

382 Direct victims 1984-2019

1,241 Indirect victims: family members 1984-2019

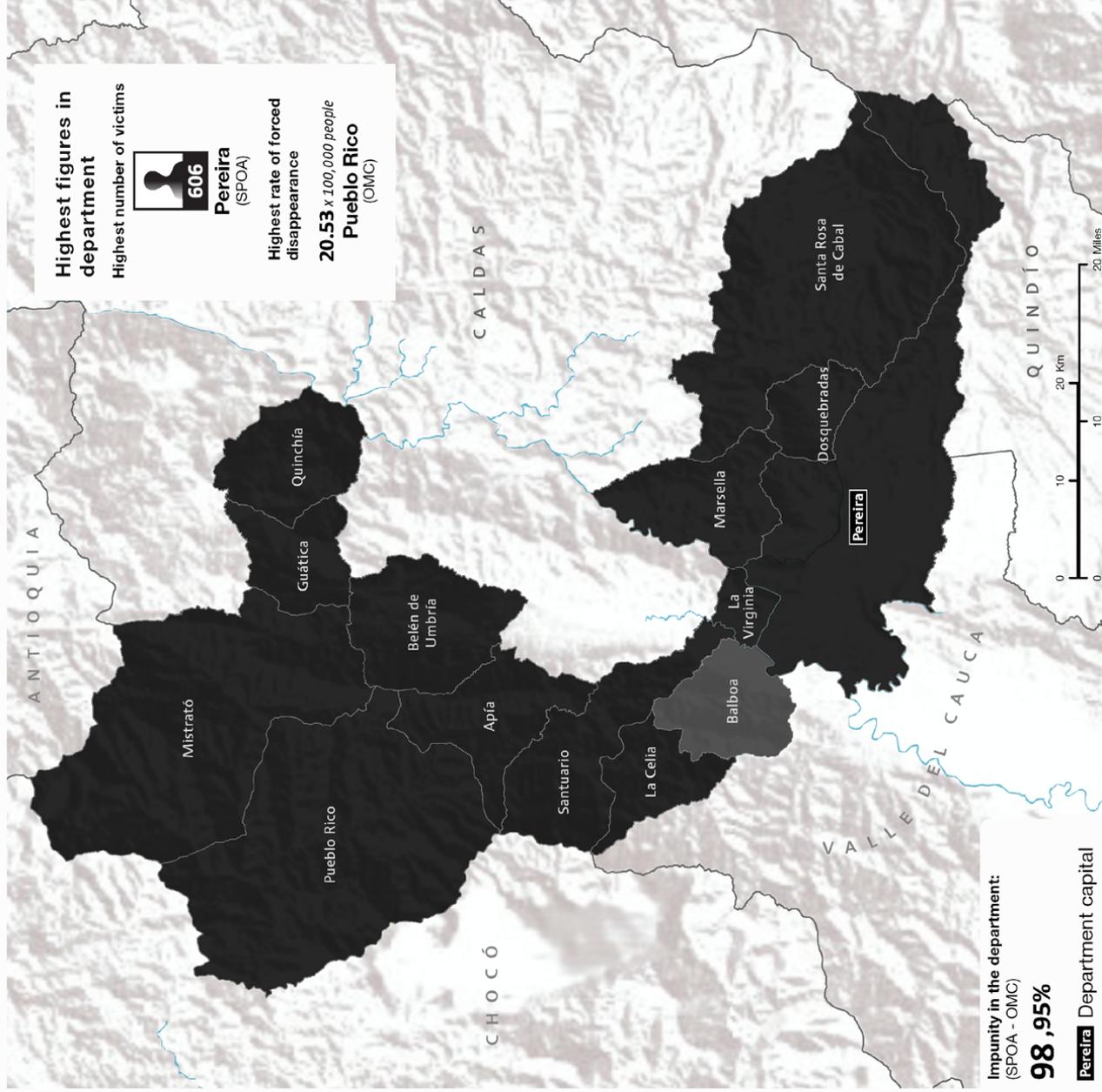
Forced disappearance per year (OMC)



Forced disappearance registered by municipality

Data sources: OMC, RUV, RND, SPOA

- No forced disappearances registered by any of the 4 sources
- Forced disappearances registered by some sources (1, 2 or 3 but not 4)
- Forced disappearances registered by all 4 sources



Highest figures in department
Highest number of victims

606 **Pereira** (SPOA)

Highest rate of forced disappearance
20.53 x 100,000 people
Pueblo Rico (OMC)

Impunity in the department: (SPOA - OMC)

98,95%

Pereira Department capital



Search, identification and delivery of missing persons

GRUBE (FGN)

Consolidated data May 2019

19 Mass graves

28 Exhumations

22 Bodies identified and handed over to their relatives

2 Unidentified bodies

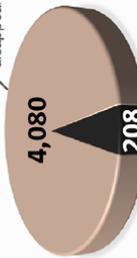
INMLCF

Convention 01 of 2010 Ministerio - Medicina Legal - Registraduría July 2019

468 Bodies identified and recorded as missing persons

National Register of Missing Persons (RND)

Unclassified disappearance



4,080 Alleged forced disappearance

208 Unclassified disappearance

7 Natural disaster and alleged: kidnapping, human trafficking unlawful recruitment

4,295 persons registered as missing in the RND until March 20, 2019. **1,866** are still missing.

Sources | Data: Memory and Conflict Observatory (OMC), 09/15/2018. Single Register of Victims (RUV), 04/01/2019. National Register of Missing Persons (RND), 03/20/2019. Oral Accusatory Criminal System (SPOA), 05/29/2019. GRUBE (FGN), 05/31/2019. Convention 01 (INMLCF), 07/25/2019. Icons: Creando, 2017. Base layers: DANE, IDEAM, ESRI, USGS, NOAA

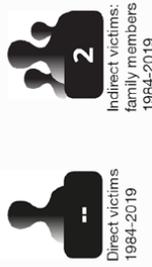
FORCED DISAPPEARANCE IN SAN ANDRÉS Y PROVIDENCIA. SOURCE SYNTHESIS (OMC, RUV, RND, INMLCF, SPOA & GRUBE DATA)

Victims of forced disappearance

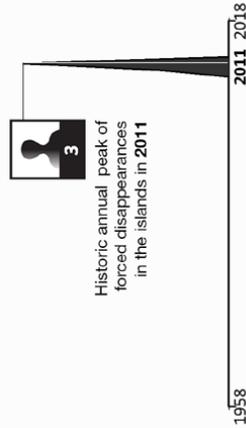
Data sources: OMC, RUV, RND, SPOA



RUV



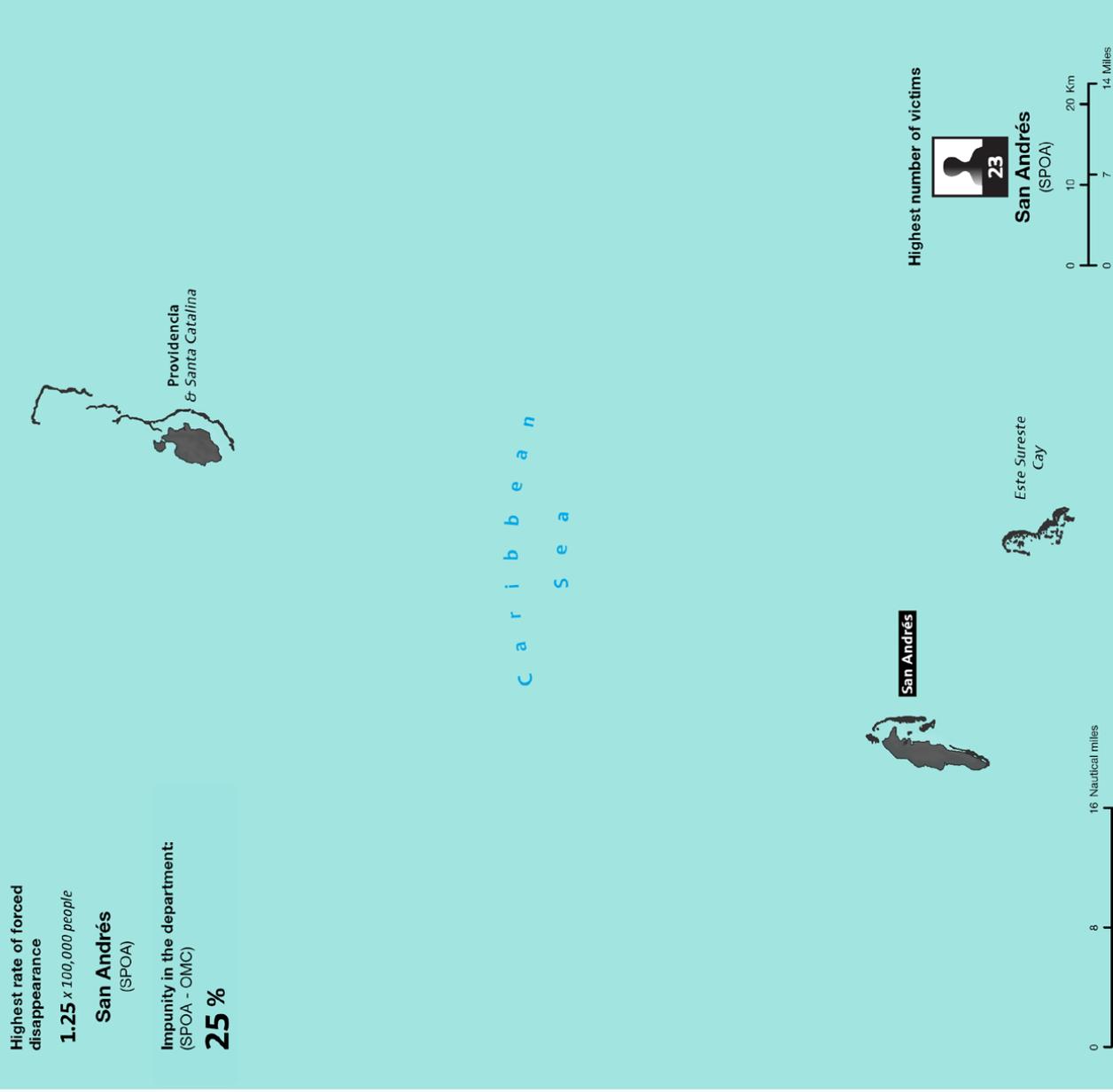
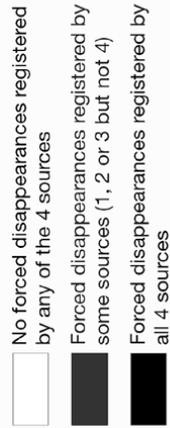
Forced disappearance per year (OMC)



San Andrés Departmental capital

Forced disappearance registered by municipality

Data sources: OMC, RUV, RND, SPOA



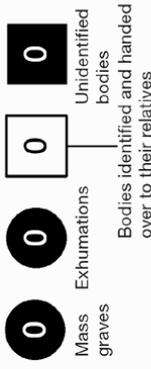
COLOMBIA



Search, identification and delivery of missing persons

GRUBE (FGN)

Consolidated data May 2019

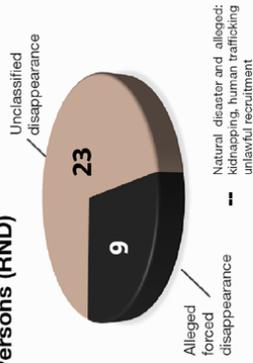


INMLCF

Convention 01 of 2010 Mininterior - Medicina Legal - Registraduría July 2019



National Register of Missing Persons (RND)



32 persons registered as missing in the RND until March 20, 2019. 26 are still missing.

Sources | Data: Memory and Conflict Observatory (OMC), 09/15/2018. Single Register of Victims (RUV), 04/01/2019. National Register of Missing Persons (RND), 03/20/2019. Oral Accusatory Criminal System (SPOA), 05/29/2019. GRUBE (FGN), 05/31/2019. Convention 01 (INMLCF), 07/25/2019. Icons: Creando, 2017. Base layers: DANE, IDEAM, ESRI, USGS, NOAA

FORCED DISAPPEARANCE IN SANTANDER. SOURCE SYNTHESIS (OMC, RUV, RND, INMLCF, SPOA & GRUBE DATA)

Victims of forced disappearance

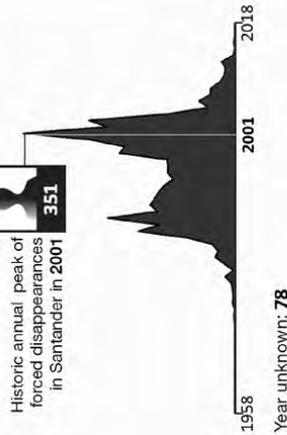
Data sources: OMC, RUV, RND, SPOA



RUV



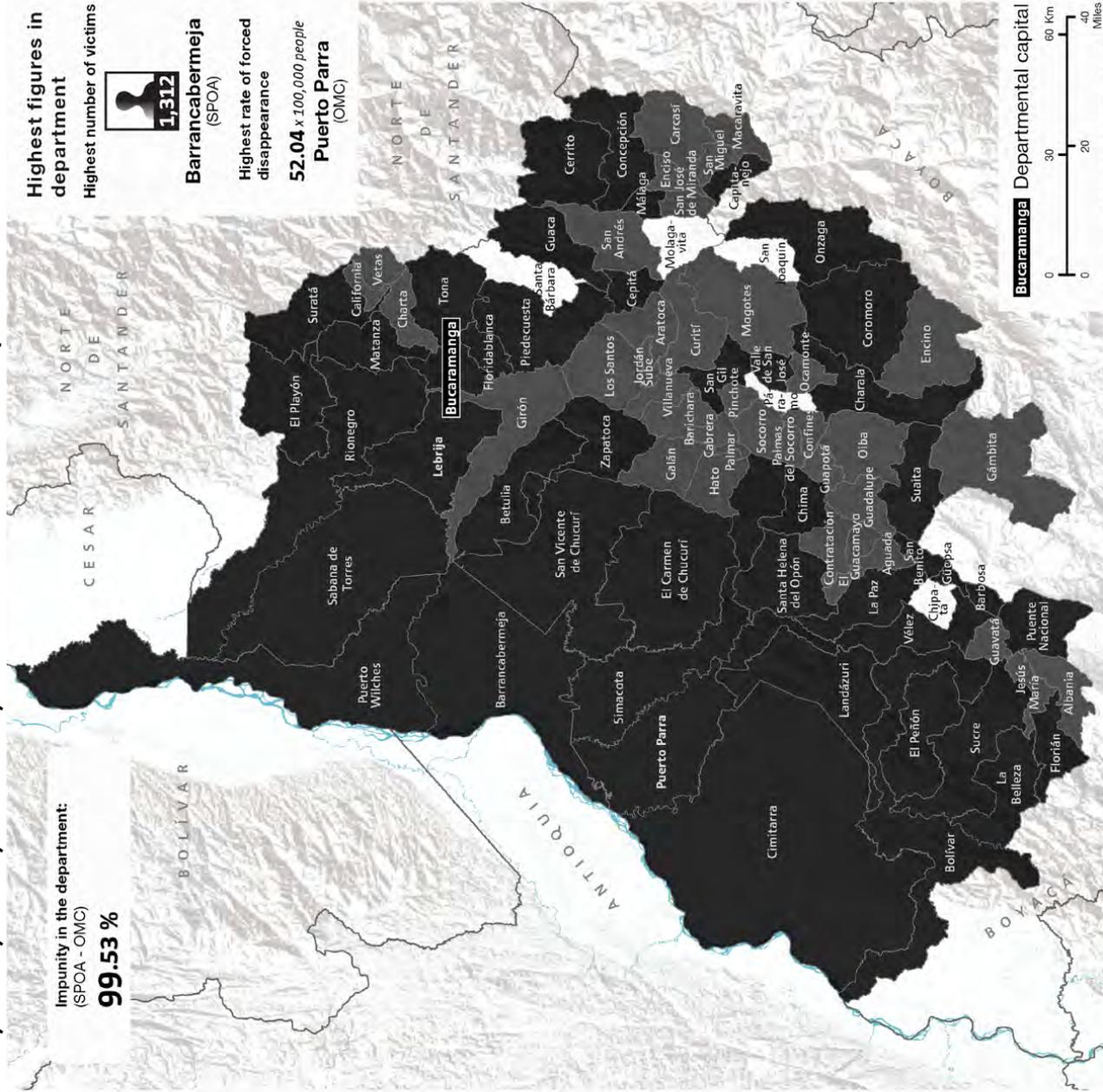
Forced disappearance per year (OMC)



Forced disappearance registered by municipality

Data sources: OMC, RUV, RND, SPOA

- No forced disappearances registered by any of the 4 sources
- Forced disappearances registered by some sources (1, 2 or 3 but not 4)
- Forced disappearances registered by all 4 sources



Impunity in the department: (SPOA - OMC) **99.53 %**

Highest figures in department

Highest number of victims



Barrancabermeja (SPOA)

Highest rate of forced disappearance

52.04 x 100,000 people

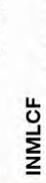
Puerto Parra (OMC)



Search, identification and delivery of missing persons

GRUBE (FGN)

Consolidated data May 2019



INMLCF

Convention 01 of 2010 Ministerio - Medicina Legal - Registraduria July 2019



National Register of Missing Persons (RND)

Unclassified disappearance



Alleged forced disappearance: **13**
Natural disaster and alleged kidnapping, human trafficking, unlawful recruitment

Sources | Data: Memory and Conflict Observatory (OMC), 09/15/2018. Single Register of Victims (RUV), 04/01/2019. National Register of Missing Persons (RND), 03/20/2019. Oral Accusatory Criminal System (SPOA), 05/29/2019. GRUBE (FGN), 05/31/2019. Convention 01 (INMLCF), 07/25/2019. Icons: Creando, 2017. Base layers: DANE, IDEAM, ESRI, USGS, NOAA

3,361 persons registered as missing in the RND until March 20, 2019. **2,343** are still missing.

FORCED DISAPPEARANCE IN SUCRE. SOURCE SYNTHESIS (OMC, RUV, RND, INMLCF, SPOA & GRUBE DATA)

Victims of forced disappearance

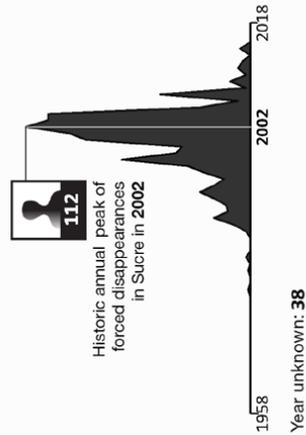
Data sources: OMC, RUV, RND, SPOA



RUV

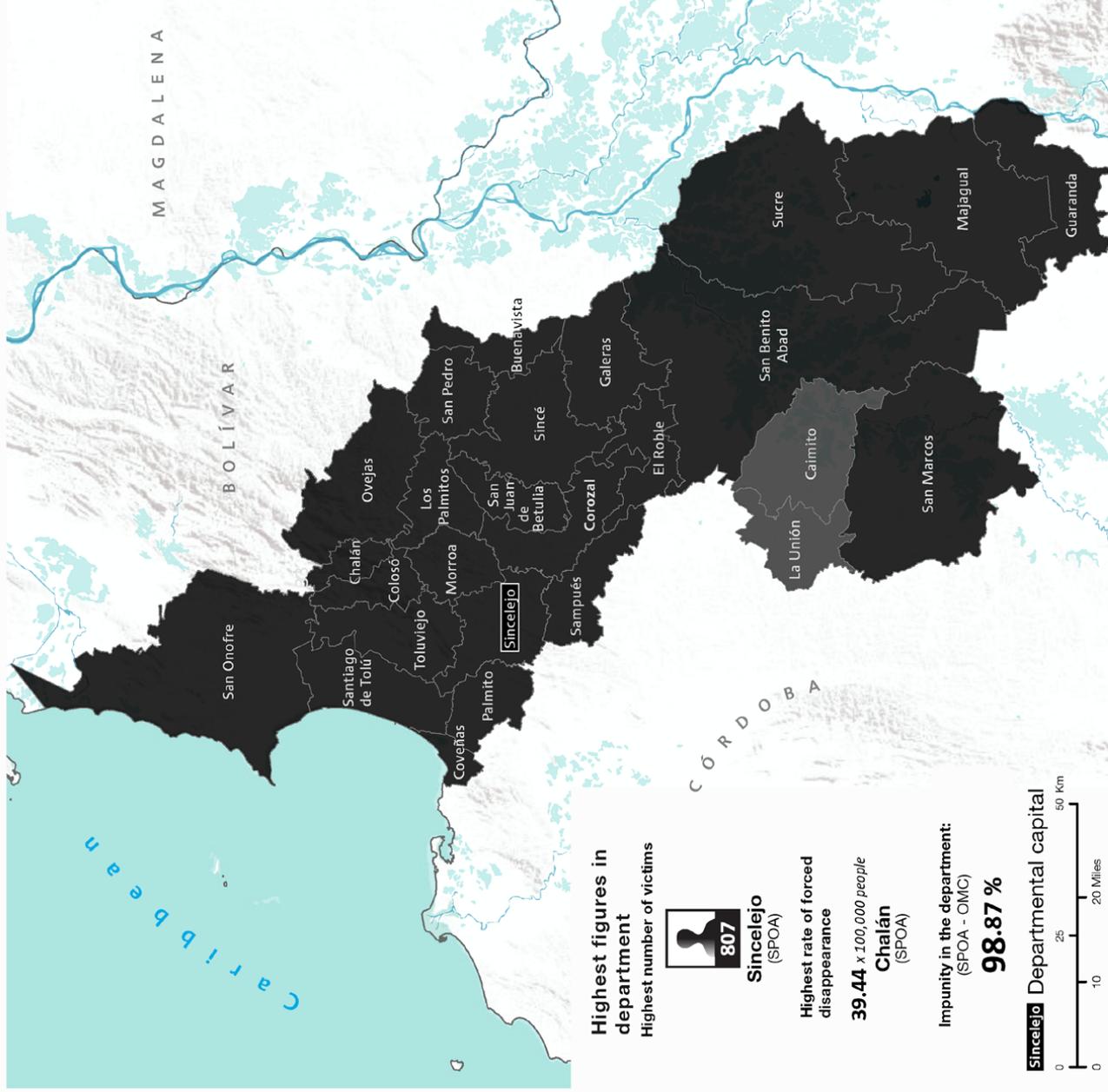
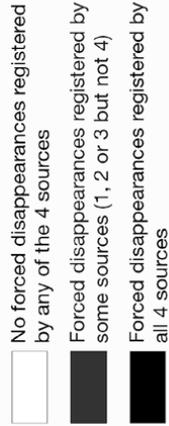


Forced disappearance per year (OMC)



Forced disappearance registered by municipality

Data sources: OMC, RUV, RND, SPOA



Highest figures in department

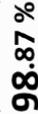
Highest number of victims



Highest rate of forced disappearance



Impunity in the department: (SPOA - OMC)



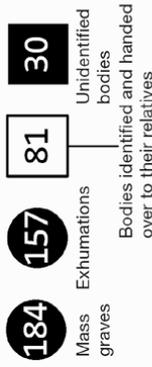
Sincelejo Departmental capital



Search, identification and delivery of missing persons

GRUBE (FGN)

Consolidated data May 2019



INMLCF

Convention 01 of 2010 Ministerio - Medicina Legal - Registraduría July 2019



National Register of Missing Persons (RND)

Unclassified disappearance



Natural disaster and alleged: kidnapping, human trafficking unlawful recruitment **2**

766 persons registered as missing in the RND until March 20, 2019. **677** are still missing.

Sources | Data: Memory and Conflict Observatory (OMC), 09/15/2018. Single Register of Victims (RUV), 04/01/2019. National Register of Missing Persons (RND), 03/20/2019. Oral Accusatory Criminal System (SPOA), 05/29/2019. GRUBE (FGN), 05/31/2019. Convention 01 (INMLCF), 07/25/2019. Icons: Creando, 2017. Base layers: DANE, IDEAM, ESRI, USGS, NOAA

FORCED DISAPPEARANCE IN TOLIMA. SOURCE SYNTHESIS (OMC, RUV, RND, INMLCF, SPOA & GRUBE DATA)

Victims of forced disappearance

Data sources: OMC, RUV, RND, SPOA

OMC 1,655



Identified victims 1958-2018

RND 575



Alleged victims 1938-2019

SPOA 1,734



Victims in criminal notifications 1977-2019

RUV

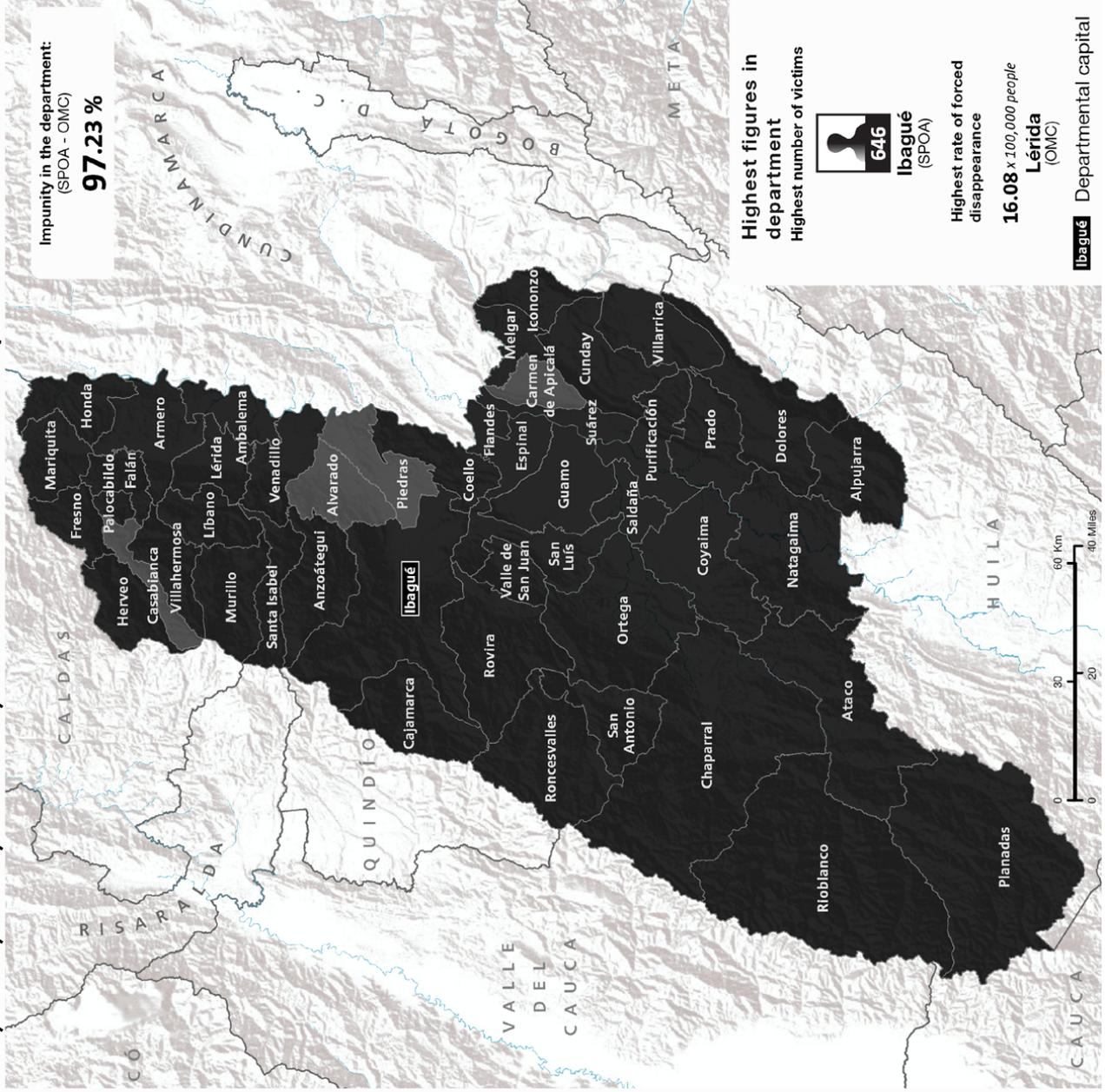
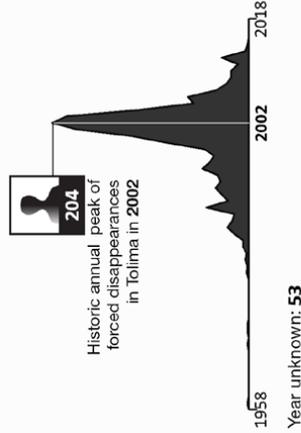


846
Direct victims 1984-2019



2,457
Indirect victims: family members 1984-2019

Forced disappearance per year (OMC)



Highest figures in department
Highest number of victims



646
Ibagué (SPOA)

Highest rate of forced disappearance
16.08 x 100,000 people
Lérída (OMC)

Ibagué Departmental capital

Search, identification and delivery of missing persons

GRUBE (FGN)

Consolidated data May 2019



163
Mass Exhumations



211
Bodies identified and handed over to their relatives



101
Unidentified bodies

34
Bodies identified and handed over to their relatives

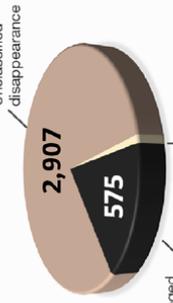
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470
Bodies identified and recorded as missing persons

National Register of Missing Persons (RND)



3,514 persons registered as missing in the RND until March 20, 2019. **2,189** are still missing.

Sources | Data: Memory and Conflict Observatory (OMC), 09/15/2018. Single Register of Victims (RUV), 04/01/2019. National Register of Missing Persons (RND), 03/20/2019. Oral Accusatory Criminal System (SPOA), 05/29/2019. GRUBE (FGN), 05/31/2019. Convention 01 (INMLCF), 07/25/2019. Icons: Creando, 2017. Base layers: DANE, IDEAM, ESRI, USGS, NOAA

FORCED DISAPPEARANCE IN VALLE DEL CAUCA.

SOURCE SYNTHESIS (OMC, RUV, RND, INMLCF, SPOA & GRUBE DATA)

Victims of forced disappearance

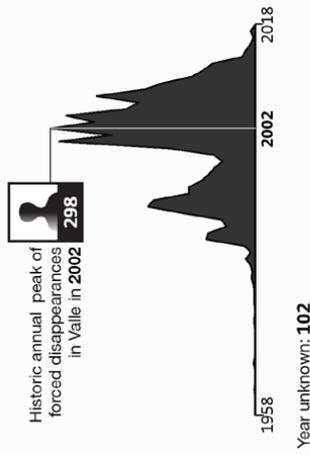
Data sources: OMC, RUV, RND, SPOA



RUV

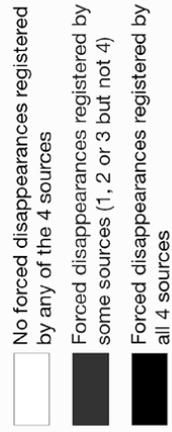


Forced disappearance per year (OMC)



Forced disappearance registered by municipality

Data sources: OMC, RUV, RND, SPOA



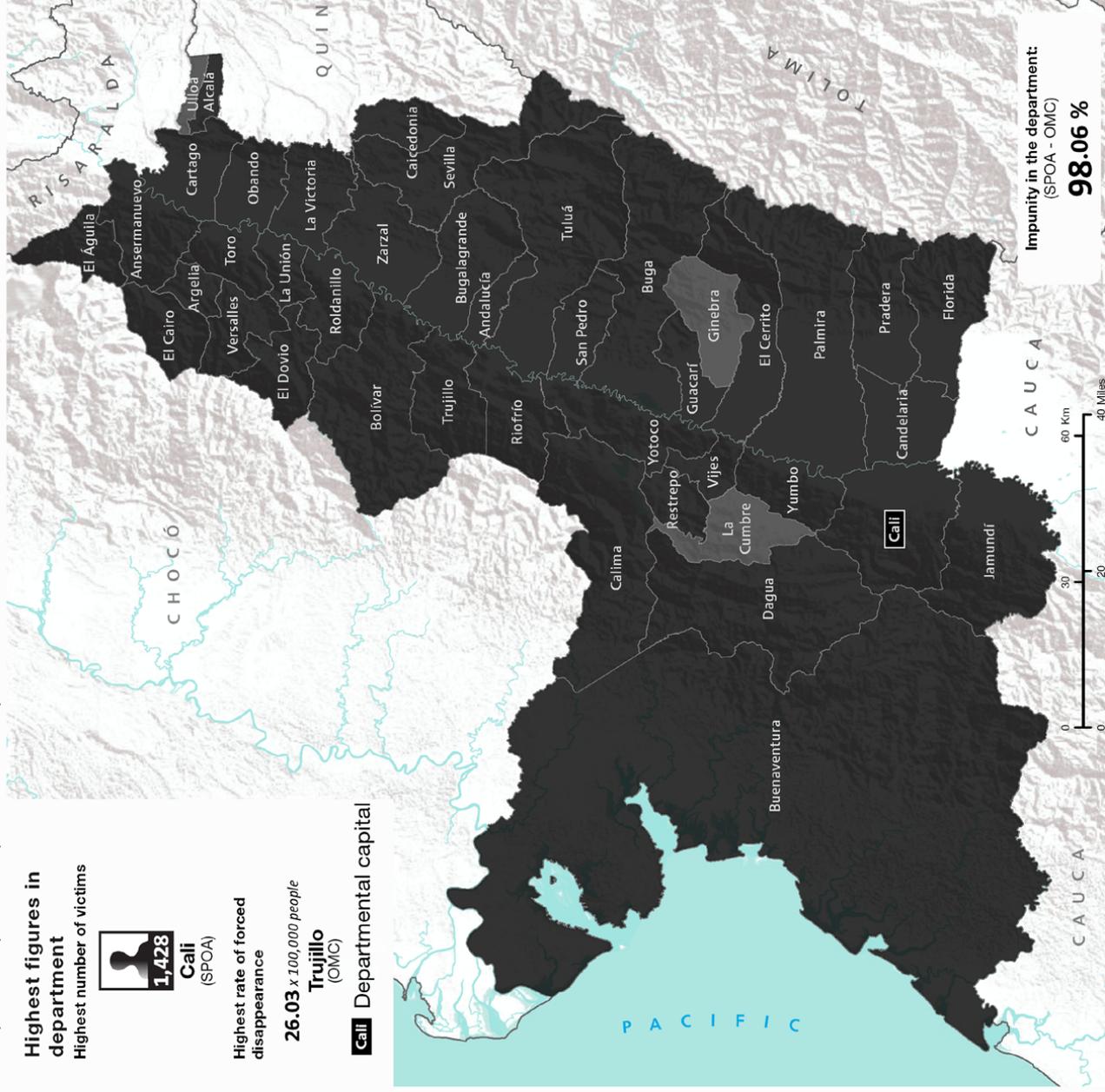
Highest figures in department
Highest number of victims



Highest rate of forced disappearance

26.03 x 100,000 people
Trujillo (OMC)

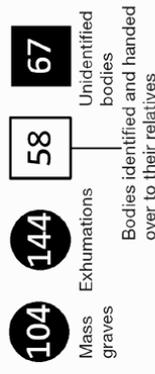
Cali Departmental capital



Search, identification and delivery of missing persons

GRUBE (FGN)

Consolidated data May 2019



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National Register of Missing Persons (RND)

Unclassified disappearance



8,751 persons registered as missing in the RND until March 20, 2019. **12,455** are still missing.

Sources | Data: Memory and Conflict Observatory (OMC), 09/15/2018. Single Register of Victims (RUV), 04/01/2019. National Register of Missing Persons (RND), 03/20/2019. Oral Accusatory Criminal System (SPOA), 05/29/2019. GRUBE (FGN), 05/31/2019. Convention 01 (INMLCF), 07/25/2019. Icons: Creando, 2017. Base layers: DANE, IDEAM, ESRI, USGS, NOAA

FORCED DISAPPEARANCE IN VAUPÉS. SOURCE SYNTHESIS (OMC, RUV, RND, INMLCF, SPOA & GRUBE DATA)

Victims of forced disappearance

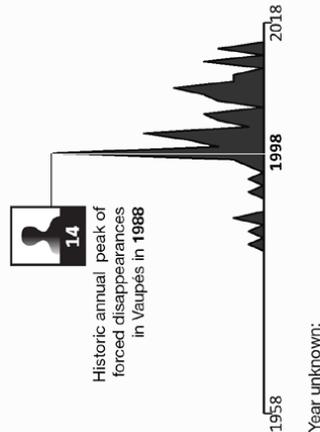
Data sources: OMC, RUV, RND, SPOA



RUV

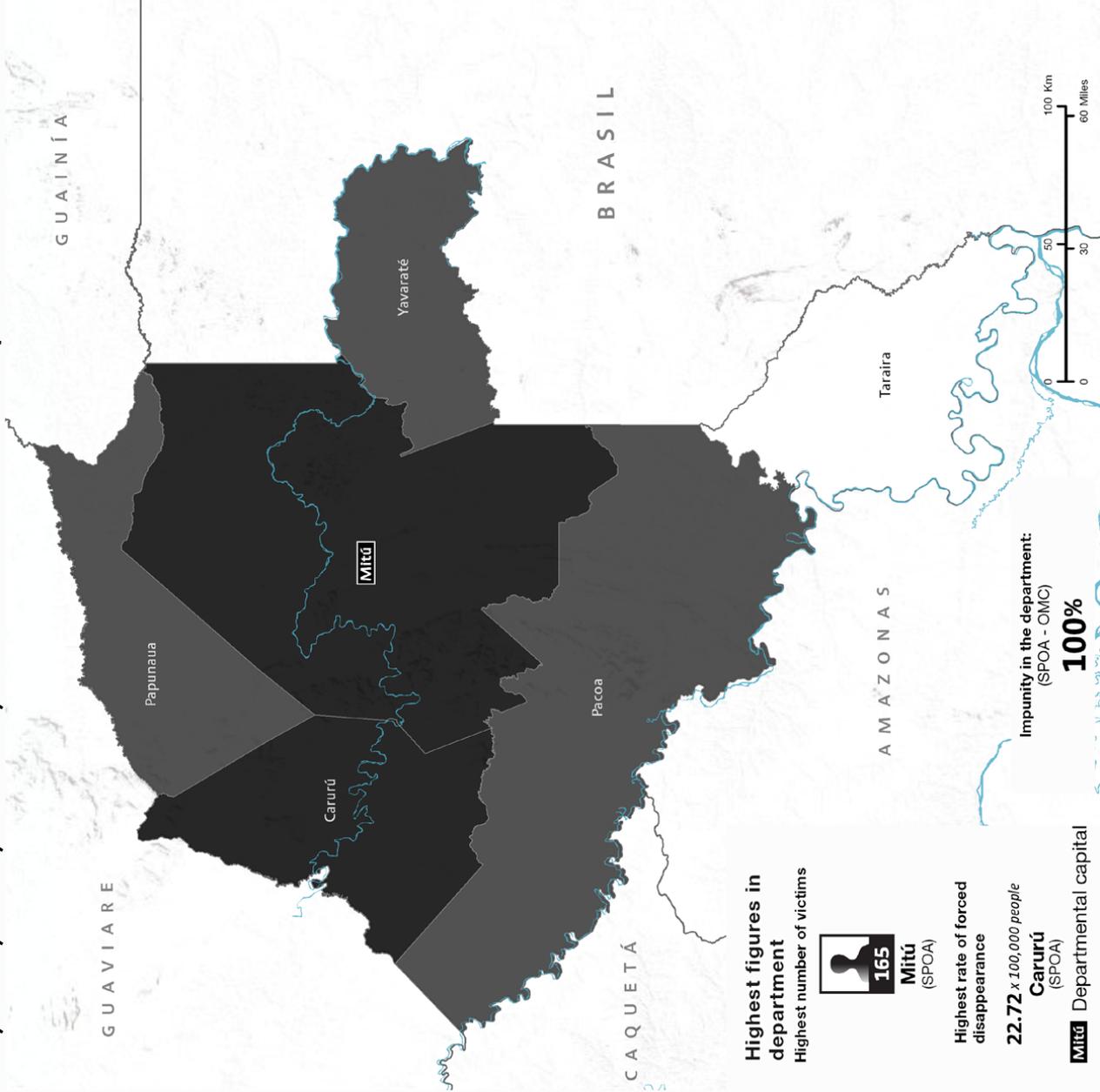
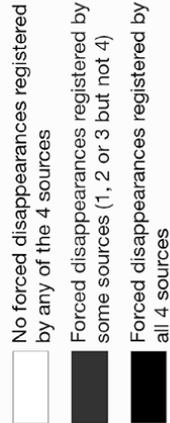


Desaparición forzada por año (OMC)



Forced disappearance registered by municipality

Data sources: OMC, RUV, RND, SPOA



Highest figures in department
Highest number of victims



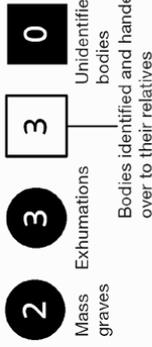
Highest rate of forced disappearance
22.72 x 100,000 people



Search, identification and delivery of missing persons

GRUBE (FGN)

Consolidated data May 2019

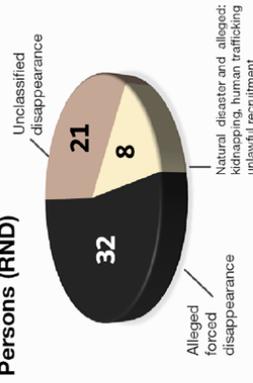


INMLCF

Convention 01 of 2010 Ministerio - Medicina Legal - Registraduría July 2019



National Register of Missing Persons (RND)



Sources | Data: Memory and Conflict Observatory (OMC), 09/15/2018. Single Register of Victims (RUV), 04/01/2019. National Register of Missing Persons (RND), 03/20/2019. Oral Accusatory Criminal System (SPOA), 05/29/2019. GRUBE (FGN), 05/31/2019. Convention 01 (INMLCF), 07/25/2019 Icons: Creando, 2017. Base layers: DANE, IDEAM, ESRI, USGS, NOAA

61 persons registered as missing in the RND until March 20, 2019. **57** are still missing.

FORCED DISAPPEARANCE IN VICHADA. SOURCE SYNTHESIS (OMC, RUV, RND, INMLCF, SPOA & GRUBE DATA)

169

Map 72

Victims of forced disappearance

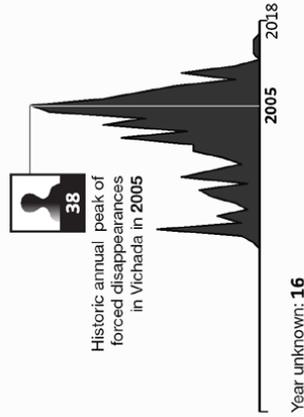
Data sources: OMC, RUV, RND, SPOA



RUV

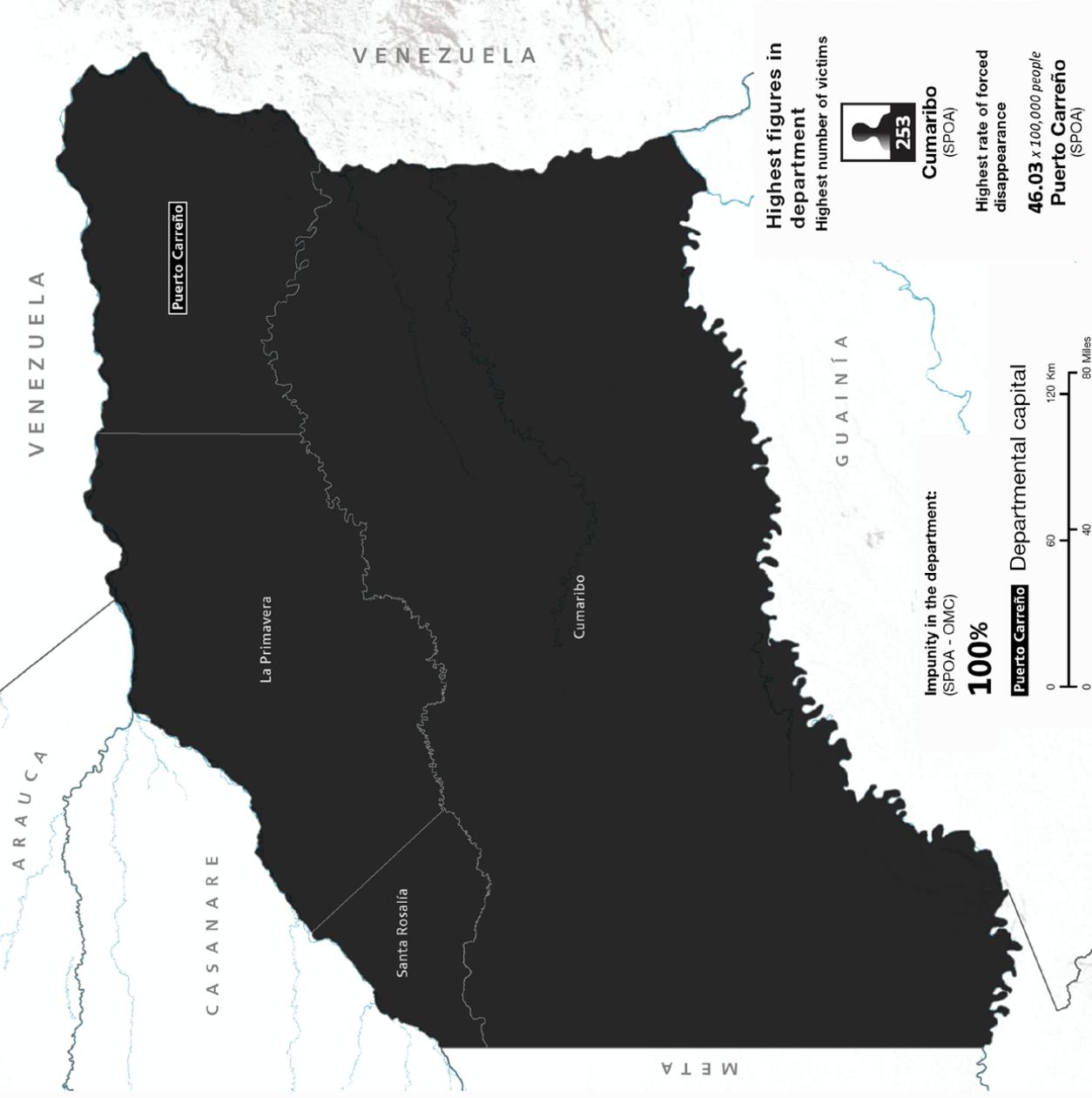
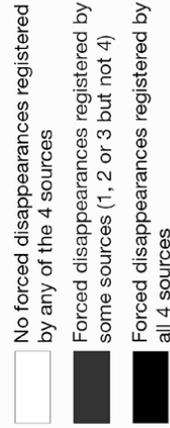


Forced disappearance per year (OMC)



Forced disappearance registered by municipality

Data sources: OMC, RUV, RND, SPOA



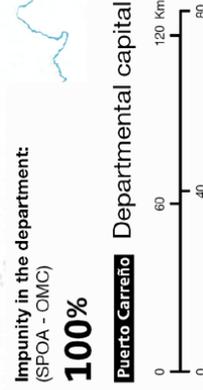
Highest figures in department



Cumanaribo (SPOA)

Highest rate of forced disappearance

46.03 x 100,000 people
Puerto Carreño (SPOA)



Search, identification and delivery of missing persons

GRUBE (FGN)

Consolidated data May 2019



11 Bodies identified and handed over to their relatives

1 Unidentified bodies

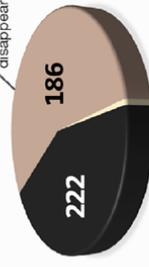
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3 Bodies identified and recorded as missing persons

National Register of Missing Persons (RND)

Unclassified disappearance



420 persons registered as missing in the RND until March 20, 2019. **392** are still missing.

Sources | Data: Memory and Conflict Observatory (OMC), 09/15/2018. Single Register of Victims (RUV), 04/01/2019. National Register of Missing Persons (RND), 03/20/2019. Oral Accusatory Criminal System (SPOA), 05/29/2019. GRUBE (FGN), 05/31/2019. Convention 01 (INMLCF), 07/25/2019. Icons: Creando, 2017. Base layers: DANE, IDEAM, ESRI, USGS, NOAA

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