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## Limited Ceasefire Violations Suggest FARC Command Still in Control

Written by [James Bargent](#) | Friday, 30 May 2014



FARC negotiators in Havana

The lack of major violations to the unilateral ceasefire declared by the FARC for Colombia's election season indicates the central command retains broad control over field units, but the unruly 36th Front remains a serious concern.

According to conflict monitoring group the Center of Resources for Conflict Analysis (CERAC), there were four violations of the ceasefire jointly called by the

Revolutionary Armed Forces of Colombia (FARC) and the National Liberation Army (ELN) for the period May 20 to 28. The FARC were responsible for all four, but none of the violations resulted in deaths or injuries.

The first violation came a day after the start of the ceasefire, when the FARC's 36th Front planted explosives -- which the army disabled -- at an electrical tower in a rural zone of the Antioquia department.

According to CERAC, the general observation of the ceasefire "reveals a greater level of command and control in the interior of the armed group. This reveals a genuine consolidation of the FARC as an organization."

Overall so far in 2014, attacks launched by the FARC have dropped 57.8 percent compared to the same period in 2013, according to monitoring group the Peace and Reconciliation Foundation.

The levels of attacks are closely connected to the peace talks in Havana, which have led the FARC to become more preoccupied with the public relations impact of their actions, Peace and Reconciliation's coordinator [Ariel Avila told El Espectador](#).

"They have learned to adjust the rhythm of the conflict to the rhythm of the peace talks," he said, increasing attacks when talks stall and reducing actions when progress is made.

### InSight Crime Analysis

The election ceasefire represented the third time the FARC had declared a unilateral pause in hostilities since peace talks began in 2012. Each of these ceasefires [has seen limited violations](#), with this latest arguably the most successful at halting actions, although also the shortest.

This is a positive sign for peace talks, as it suggests the FARC retain control over field units -- control which will be critical when it comes to enforcing any agreement struck between guerrilla leaders and the government.

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However, the 36th Front remains a concern. The front has been the [main violator of each of the previous ceasefires](#), and the fact it continues to follow this trend increases the likelihood this is a deliberate message rather than a breakdown in communication.

As InSight Crime has [noted previously](#), the 36th Front is a prime candidate to break away rather than demobilize in the case of a peace deal. It is wealthy, heavily involved in criminal activities, and led by a commander who has clashed with the FARC hierarchy.

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