



Indicative, non exhaustive list of  
**CONFLICT-AFFECTED  
AND HIGH-RISK AREAS**  
under Regulation (EU) 2017/821

This report is an individual CAHRA report from the indicative, non-exhaustive, regularly updated list of conflict-affected and high-risk areas (CAHRAs) (as defined under Regulation 2017/821).

This report stems from a website presenting an indicative, non-exhaustive, and regularly updated list of conflict-affected and high-risk areas (CAHRAs) under Regulation 2017/821. This website and its associated reports were developed with funding from the European Union through call for tenders N° TRADE2018/G3/G11 (*Revised*).

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## COLOMBIA

<b>REGION(S)</b>	Norte de Santander	
<b>AREA STATUS</b>	 Conflict-affected area	
<b>RELEVANT COMMODITIES</b>	 Gold	 Tin
	 Tantalum and Niobium	 Tungsten

### Overview of assessment

Colombia is characterised by the presence of conflict-affected areas relevant to Regulation 2017/821. These include Arauca; Antioquia; Cauca; Nariño; Norte de Santander, and Valle de Cauca.

In June 2016, Colombia signed historic peace accords with armed guerrilla groups that had operated in the country since 1964 (RULAC, 2024). For decades, guerrilla groups led campaigns of violence against the state and became heavily involved in drug production. As a result, violence became endemic in large swaths of the country despite the government's attempts to bring it under control. Successive peace talks between the state and armed groups – particularly the Revolutionary Armed Forces of Colombia (Fuerzas Armadas Revolucionarias de Colombia, FARC) – failed over the course of the 1990s, 2000s and 2010s, but in 2016 FARC reached a peace agreement with the government (CFR, 2017).

However, the 2016 peace agreement has not brought an end to all conflict and violence in Colombia. Rather, it has led to the fragmentation of armed groups with dissident ex-FARC guerrillas ignoring agreement terms (Crisis Group, 2019; CFR, 2023). More broadly, the peace agreement has created a power vacuum that numerous armed groups are vying to fill (ICRC, 2019; RULAC, 2024; Crisis Group, 2023e). Violence is also reportedly committed by armed groups in the Colombia-Venezuela border regions, which currently host large numbers of Venezuelan refugees from the ongoing political instability in the neighbouring country (HRW, 2023). Several large, armed criminal structures continue to operate, mainly in drug trafficking, but also in extortion schemes and illegal gold mining, where multinational mining companies' staff and assets have been targets of sabotage and assassination (Crisis Group, 2017).

In efforts to widen peace talks to other groups and reach a 'total peace,' a new law enables the government to engage with all armed groups and criminal organisations in the country (RULAC, 2024; Crisis Group, 2022b & 2023h; Amnesty International, 2023). Successive rounds of negotiations with the National Liberation Army (ELN) guerrillas have occurred in November 2022 in Venezuela, in February 2023 in Mexico and in May 2023 in Cuba while ELN attacks reportedly continued (Crisis Group, 2022b, 2023a, 2023e & 2023h). 'Total peace' efforts continued as a ceasefire between the state security forces and the ELN, began in August 2023 (HIIK 2023; Crisis Group, 2023b & 2024a). In early 2024, peace talks led to a six-month extension of the ceasefire despite reports of internal disagreements within the ELN (Crisis Group, 2024a & 2024b).

Since July 2023, additional efforts to open negotiations with dissident FARC groups have continued despite setbacks following the October 2023 local elections. In the meantime, violent attacks and clashes continue including between dissident groups (HIIK, 2023; Crisis Group, 2023b, 2023c, 2023f, 2023g & 2024b). Since late 2023, there have been increased reports of violence perpetuated by the Gaitanista Self-Defence Force as well as clashes with the ELN and Colombian security forces. The criminal group has exploited the power vacuum opened by the peace agreement and its failed peace talks with the government to rapidly expand across northern Colombia (Crisis Group, 2024a & 2024c).

The motivations of armed groups are difficult to establish and appear to shift (Crisis Group, 2017). Armed groups often have a strong base and established authority in certain regions, making them difficult to eradicate

(HRW, 2023 & 2024). Crisis Group has also reported that gold mining is linked to armed conflict in Colombia. Armed groups have reportedly been involved in gold mining in various ways, including forcing miners to pay for permission to pan for gold or dredge it up, taking a percentage of production, or buying and selling through third parties (Crisis Group, 2017). Crisis Group has also reported that the Colombian government's policy of issuing mining permits solely to multinational corporations (MNCs) has led to conflict between MNCs and artisanal miners since the land to which MNCs receive rights is often already occupied by artisanal miners (Crisis Group, 2017).

Human Rights Watch (HRW) and Amnesty International have reported abuses against civilians committed by ELN, FARC dissidents, and paramilitary successor groups in various parts of the country (Amnesty International, 2022 & 2023; HRW, 2022, 2023a & 2024). The ILAB and Crisis Group also report that armed groups recruit children, where they are used as child soldiers, to conduct illicit activities including homicides, extortion, drug production and trafficking as well as in mining activities (ILAB, 2023; Crisis Group, 2021 & 2023f). The ILAB further reports that children have also reportedly been subjected to commercial sexual exploitation and human trafficking (ILAB, 2023). Crisis Group also reports that children were recruited to harvest coca crops at an accelerated rate during COVID-19-related lockdowns in 2020 and 2021 (Crisis Group, 2021).

Amnesty International and HRW report that at least 100,000 people have been displaced as a result of the current violence, including through 'mass displacement' (Amnesty International, 2022; HRW, 2024). HRW, Amnesty International and the OHCHR further report, death threats, killing and violence against human rights activists, journalists, and leaders of indigenous and Afro-Colombian communities (Amnesty International, 2022 & 2023; HRW, 2022, 2023a, 2023b & 2024; OHCHR, 2022). Amnesty International and HRW also report persistent gender-based violence, including acts of violence motivated by sexual orientation or gender identity (Amnesty International, 2023; HRW, 2024). These organisations also report that authorities used excessive force in response to protests between 2019 and 2021 (OHCHR, 2022; HRW, 2022, 2023a & 2024; Amnesty International, 2022 & 2023).

## **Relevance to the scope of Regulation 2017/821.**

The regions identified in Colombia are considered relevant to the scope of Regulation 2017/821 due to the following reasons:

- Colombia is characterised by the presence of gold production activities according to data from Opaxe (Opaxe RED, 2024).
- Colombia has reported exports of gold, including gold plated with platinum, unwrought, in semi-manufactured forms, in powder form, and gold compounds, as well as exports of tin ores and concentrates and exports of tantalum/niobium ores and concentrates from 2015 to 2022, according to the UN ComTrade database (UN DESA, 2024).
- Artisanal mining activities for gold, tin and tantalum are reported in the World Bank DELVE database (DELVE, 2023).
- Colombia is identified as part of the supply chain for gold ores and concentrates on the EU's Raw Materials Supply Chain Viewer (Ciuta & Ciupagea, 2019).
- Production activities for gold and tin are reported between 2014 and 2020, and tungsten reported in 2015 and 2016 in the British Geological Survey (BGS, 2023).

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