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An estimated 80 percent of the surviving Colombian victims of human rights violations in the protracted (or drawn-out) internal conflict ravaging the country are women. Still, victims' voices and rights have largely been left out in the formal processes of the Government's Justice and Peace Bill from 2005 (Ley 975) which sets out the legal framework for the demobilisation and reintegration of former paramilitaries. In April, the Swedish Foundation for Human Rights sent an investigative delegation to Colombia to further study how victims' rights to truth, justice and reparation and their demands for recognition are guaranteed in the process generated by the Bill.

Through meetings with representatives from the State, civil society organisations and victims directly, and a cross-sectional seminar in Bogotá, the delegation's initial observations are that victims and the rights of victims are still not being placed at the centre of the process and that they therefore lack the information and protection necessary to ensure their rights; that there is a lack of coordination and capacity amongst the State institutions responsible for the implementation of the process and that women's rights have been made invisible in the Justice and Peace Bill itself and thereby in the mechanisms and procedures ensuring the implementation of the Bill.

The final report will be published at the end of August. Follow-up meetings and seminars have been held with key Swedish government and cooperation representatives as well as with parliamentarians on the role of Swedish development cooperation with Colombia, and there will be further follow-up activities through-out the year in Sweden, at the Inter-American Commission on Human Rights in Washington and in Colombia.

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