

5.7. Victim’s Unit (Unidad para la Atención y Reparación Integral a las Víctimas, UARIV)

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In 2011, then-President Juan Manuel Santos signed into law the Victims and Land Restitution Law (Ley de Víctimas y Restitución de Tierras) or Law 1448 of 2011, to provide protection and restitution for victims of the armed conflict and survivors of human rights violations, including state abuses, since 1985.1184F894 The Unidad para la Atención y Reparación Integral a las Víctimas (UARIV), also known simply as the Victims' Unit, was established under Colombia's 2011 Victims and Land Restitution Law (Law 1448).895 The UARIV is a public agency that evaluates claims from individuals and groups affected by internal armed conflicts.896 The mandate of the National System of Comprehensive Victim Support and Reparation and the entities that comprise it, is to implement existing reparation measures for torture victims, which also cover human rights defenders, social leaders and journalists.897 Initially created for a 10-year mandate starting in June 2012, its operation has been extended until June 2032.898 The UARIV operates across Colombia with 20 regional offices and 256 service points.899

Victims (from 1 January 1985 and after) must be registered in the Central Registry of Victims (RUV, Registro Único de Victimas) in order to access measures in Law 1448.900 Potential victims must register through the regional offices of the PGN, Office of the Ombudsperson, or Municipal Ombudspersons, submitting a statement (*declaración*) about the abuses suffered.901 The government of Colombia states that the Victims Unit 'evaluates each case individually and determines whether the victim meets the requirements for administrative compensation. If the victim is found to be entitled to compensation, an application process involving verification of the harm suffered is carried out'.902 The Dutch authorities write that '[t]he unit checks the relevant facts to decide whether or not to include the person in the register'. A confidential source interviewed by the Dutch authorities stated that this is 'an administrative check and not an actual investigation carried out by the unit'; evidence of the victim's statement may be submitted with the form but it is not mandatory.903 The OFPRA fact-finding mission report similarly stated that UARIV evaluates claims without requiring them to provide proof—the burden lies with the Colombian state.904 According to a Conflict Analyst interviewed by EUAA, the letters issued by the Victim's Unit 'do not carry a lot of legal weight' as the unit 'documents

what is said to them, but this is not necessarily the basis for taking further policy actions'. The analyst noted that, due to the way the law is formulated, there are certain types of violations, such as displacement, that mean a victim is automatically eligible for benefits, while other types of victimisation, like forced recruitment or sexual violence, have additional rules around compensation. As a result, often victims who approach UARIV only report one type of victimisation that allows them to obtain compensation, even if they have suffered a much larger set of issues.'905

During the 60-day review period when claims are assessed, displaced applicants may receive housing and financial aid ranging from 250 000 to 1 400 000 Colombian pesos (COP), depending on family size.906 If approved, victims are added to the national registry and may receive reparations including financial compensation, education support, medical care, or assistance in resettling or returning home.907 The government of Colombia indicated that 'once approved, the amount of compensation is established according to the severity of the harm and the impact suffered by the victim. All persons included in the Central Register of Victims who are eligible for such compensation are entitled to apply for this measure. This includes human rights defenders, social leaders and journalists.'908 They further note that 'the administrative compensation paid to victims of torture, or cruel, inhuman or degrading treatment is equal to 10 times the current legal monthly minimum wage and is paid directly to the victim. If the torture suffered by the victim caused personal injuries, the provisions of decision No. 848 of 2014 are applied and the victim is entitled to receive the amount corresponding to the physical or psychological harm suffered; however, the sum of these amounts may not exceed 40 times the current legal monthly minimum wage.'909

In September 2025, UARIV indicated that there were 10.11 million victims of the armed conflict who had been registered with the Victims Unit, and that 7.82 million had completed the requirements to receive compensation.910 The UARIV reported that out of the 7.7 million people recognised as victims in 2024, over 1.7 million had been compensated by the government.1185F911 I

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