New challenges in Colombia

Why in news?

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Colombia has made an integration pact with FARC rebels to gain pace in the country, now the deal is finding new difficulties for its success.

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Background of the deal:

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- On 23 June 2016, the Colombian government and the FARC rebels signed a historic ceasefire deal, bringing them closer to ending more than five decades of conflict.
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- However, on October 2, 2016, a majority of the Colombian public rejected the deal.
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- The Colombian government and the FARC on November 24 signed a revised peace deal and the revised agreement was to be submitted to Congress for approval.
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- The House of Representatives unanimously approved the plan on November 30, a day after the Senate also gave its backing.
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About Colombian civil war:

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- The Colombian Conflict **began in the mid-1960s** and is a low-intensity asymmetric war between Colombian governments, paramilitary groups, crime syndicates, and left-wing guerrillas such as **the Revolutionary Armed Forces of Colombia (FARC),** and the National Liberation Army (ELN), fighting each other to increase their influence in Colombian territory.

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- The war has two phases, part of cold war and war on drugs (which is still ongoing).
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- Two of the most important forces that have contributed to the Colombian conflict are **multinational companies and the United States.**
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- The Colombian government claims to be fighting for order and stability and seeking to protect the rights and interests of its citizens.
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- The paramilitary groups claim to be reacting to perceived threats by guerrilla movements.
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- Both guerrilla and paramilitary groups have been accused of engaging in drug trafficking and terrorism.
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- All of the parties engaged in the conflict have been criticized for numerous human rights violations.
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What is FARC?

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- The Revolutionary Armed Forces of Colombia—People's Army was a guerrilla movement involved in the continuing Colombian armed conflict since 1964.
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- It was known to employ a variety of military tactics in addition to more unconventional methods, including terrorism.
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- United States-backed strong anti-communist repression in rural Colombia in the 1960s that led liberal and communist militants to re-organize into FARC.
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- The FARC and other guerrilla movements claim to be fighting for the rights of the poor in Colombia to protect them from government violence and to provide social justice through communism.
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What are the issues with the deal?

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- **Ending a civil war-like conflict is never easy.**
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- In some ways it is more difficult to end than a conventional war, as it leaves many festering wounds that prevent a re-integration of warring groups.
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- The peace accord with FARC promised the government to demobilize and disarm the rebels and turn them into political party.
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- For the first time by May 10th, **a group of 12 rebels formally became civilians** as United Nations monitors certified their integration.
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- This is a milestone in the ending of a five-decade-long civil war, but as expected, every step taken towards peace is fraught with new challenges.
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- Some protestors have refused to give up arms, fearing retribution from right-wing paramilitary groups following their integration.
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- Activists claim 40 murders have been committed by paramilitary forces this year, much higher than the average in violence-prone Colombia.
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- This could well roil the peace process and lead to a new phase of paramilitary violence.
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What is the way forward?

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- The civil war in Colombia has been ongoing for about 52 years; there were lot of humanitarian crisis going on.
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- The deal by the president of Colombia with FARC is significant which earned him a noble peace prize in the year 2016.
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- However there are lot of challenge to the president of Colombia is awaiting, besides taking on former President Alvaro Uribe’s continued opposition to the peace process, will determine the future of the milestone accord and its implementation.
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Source: The Hindu

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