

Colombia

While high levels of spray activity continue in the Guaviare coca growing area, efforts to expand the program and achieve overall coca reductions face a number of challenges, including geography and the changing dynamics of the coca trade in the region.

- [redacted] Colombian coca eradication spray activity for the first five months of the year has nearly surpassed last year's total efforts. From January through mid-May of this year, an estimated 15,655 hectares of coca has been sprayed with the herbicide glyphosate—last year, total spray efforts amounted to only about 16,000 hectares.
- *Despite spray efforts in 1995 and 1996—when an estimated 40,000 hectares of coca in the Guaviare growing area was sprayed—Colombian coca cultivation increased.* From 1995 to 1996 overall cultivation jumped some 32 percent¹, while cultivation within the Guaviare growing area—outside of the zones routinely sprayed—increased by 34 percent. [redacted]

After nearly eight months of planning, spray operations began in mid-May out of the new forward operating base at Larandia, Caqueta, only to be halted a day later due to developments in the ongoing hostage negotiations between the Colombian Government and the Revolutionary Armed Forces of Colombia (FARC). [redacted]

- The initial standdown of operations will last until mid-June, coinciding with the suspension of military operations and the demilitarization of large portions of Caqueta Department; however, *the standdown could be longer if negotiations with the FARC become protracted.* [redacted]

[redacted]
[redacted] Intensive spray activity at the end of the year—an estimated 9,320 hectares of coca was sprayed between October and December 1996—may result in the gradual death of some of this cultivation which will be reflected in the 1997 estimate. [redacted]