



# CNU-PEACE | A STRATEGY FOR TERRITORIAL REPARATION

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Territorial planning is crucial in the implementation of urban territorial peace. Self-built neighbourhoods and their residents have been the most affected by the armed conflict and have suffered collective, community, and territorial damage more intensely. Therefore, it is imperative to generate restorative measures aimed at comprehensive reparations for surviving victims and communities affected by multiple forms of violence. The Comprehensive Neighbourhood Upgrading (CNU) is a multidimensional territorial intervention strategy that involves a long-term, multi-actor and multi-scalar political commitment to improve housing conditions. A CNU with a territorial peace focus (CNU-PEACE) requires a gender, generational, differential, and intersectional perspective that articulates policies, instruments, and physical and social interventions to repair the damage caused by the conflict, enabling the exercise of the right to the city and contributing to the de-escalation of violence. This policy brief presents the articulation between CNU and the construction of territorial peace to advance territorial reparation in Medellín.

Building on the lessons learned from the implementation of the Popular Neighbourhoods Laboratory, PopuLab, in 2022, this new series of Policy Briefs aims to continue advancing the discussion on central issues for our society. In addition to the initial PopuLab themes of urban territorial peace, habitat upgrading, sustainable mobility and accessibility, and comprehensive solid waste management through Zero Waste initiatives, new contexts such as Medellín are included. Furthermore, recommendations on key issues such as restorative justice, climate change adaptation, and environmental restoration through nature-based solutions are also addressed.

# COMPREHENSIVE NEIGHBOURHOOD UPGRADING FOR PEACE

From a legal-political framework<sup>1</sup>, the CNU-PEACE proposal is framed on the need to implement the following:

**LAW 387 (1997)**, that adopts measures for the **prevention and response to forced displacement**.

**CONPES DOCUMENT 3604 (2009)** which outlines the articulation of **policies and management** for implementing Comprehensive Neighbourhood Upgrading (CNU).

**LAW 1448 (2011)**, that provides **measures for the response, assistance, and comprehensive reparation** for victims of the internal armed conflict.



**ARTICLE 296 OF THE NATIONAL DEVELOPMENT PLAN (2022-2026)**, which proposes the execution of the **“Neighbourhoods of Peace” program** for investment in CNU.

**LAW 2272 ON TOTAL PEACE (2022)**, which establishes the **policy of peace as a priority state policy**, transversal to all matters and territorial entities.

**CIRCULAR 0024-4 FROM THE NATIONAL PLANNING DEPARTMENT (2024)**, that requires territorial entities to **incorporate a peace strategy** into the goals and programs of the territorial development plans (2024-2027).

The CNU-PEACE proposal is framed within the nexus of political transitions, the spatial and reparative justice to articulate urban territorial peace, the right to the city, and territorial reparation<sup>2</sup> through the design of co-produced neighbourhood upgrading strategies. CNU-PEACE proposes:

**1. RECOGNISE THE NEIGHBOURHOOD AS THE BASIC UNIT** for **implementing agreements and materialising territorial peace** that fosters coexistence, reconciliation, and a culture of peace.

**2. FOCUS TERRITORIAL PLANNING TOOLS** on generating **restorative measures and comprehensive reparation** for victims and communities affected by the urbanisation of conflict.



**3. INTEGRATE RESTORATIVE TOOLS AND ACTIONS IN STRATEGIC AREAS** of the city to prevent the reproduction of violence in territories; overcome the deficit of economic, social, cultural, environmental, and territorial rights; and **ensure the implementation of policies of truth, justice, memory, and guarantees of non-repetition**.

**4. ARTICULATE VARIOUS TERRITORIAL SCALES AND INSTITUTIONAL ACTORS** with the **active participation of communities** to dignify life in cities.

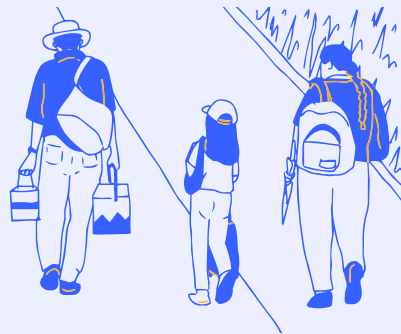
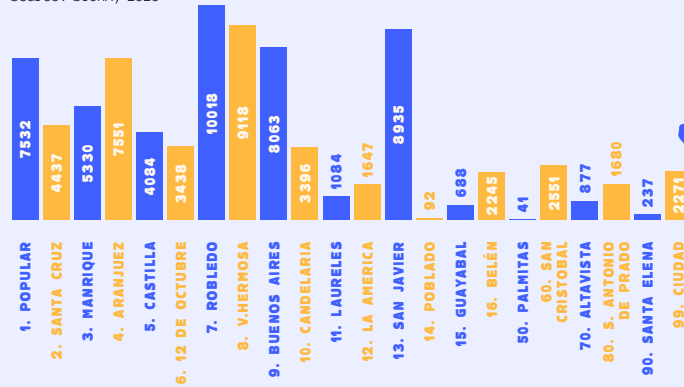
# TERRITORIAL CONSIDERATIONS FOR MEDELLÍN

## 1. A CITY THAT ATTRACTS VICTIMS OF ARMED CONFLICT

As of April 2024, the Victims Unit recorded a total of **9,702,896 victims of the armed conflict** in Colombia, of which **7,633,569 are eligible for attention and/or reparations**.

### LOCATION OF VICTIM POPULATION BY COMUNA IN THE MUNICIPALITY OF MEDELLÍN. ASSISTED 2020-2023.

Source: SIGMA, 2023



The Personería Distrital de Medellín (2023) reported a **280% increase in victims of intra-urban displacement** in the city between 2022 and 2023.

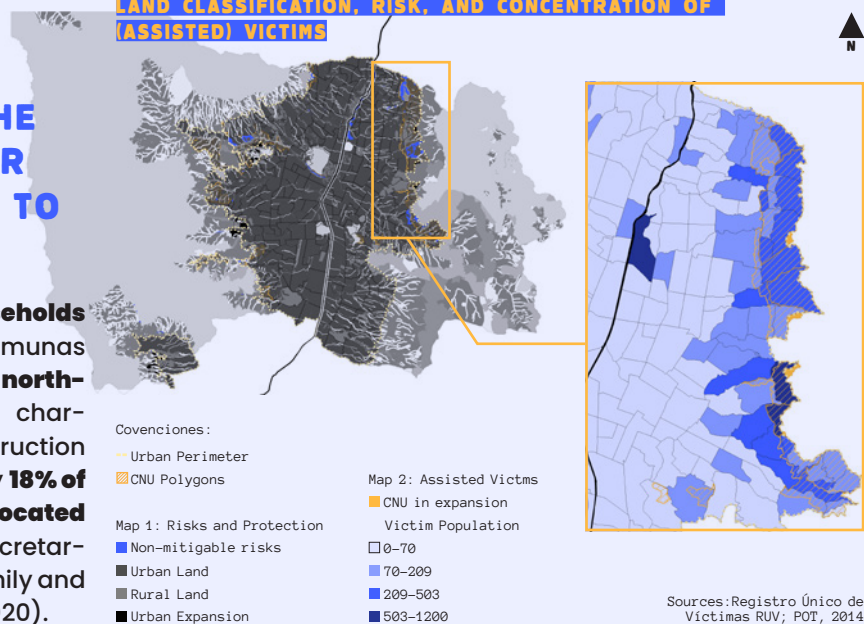
In April 2024, the Secretariat of Social Inclusion, Family and Human Rights and the RUV of Medellín reported a total of **237,467 victims by occurrence and 751,934 by declaration**.

Between 2020 and 2023, the Information, Management, Monitoring, and Attention System for the Displaced Population (SIGMA) reported a total of **85,315 victims effectively attended** to in the municipality of Medellín.

## 2. THE URBAN BORDERS CONCENTRATE THE LARGEST NUMBER OF POPULATION TO BE REPAIRED

**38% of displaced households** are concentrated in Comunas 1, 3, and 8 **located in the north-eastern urban border**, characterised by self-construction processes. Approximately **18% of the territory (372 ha) is located in disaster risk areas** (Secretariat of Social Inclusion, Family and Human Rights and RUV, 2020).

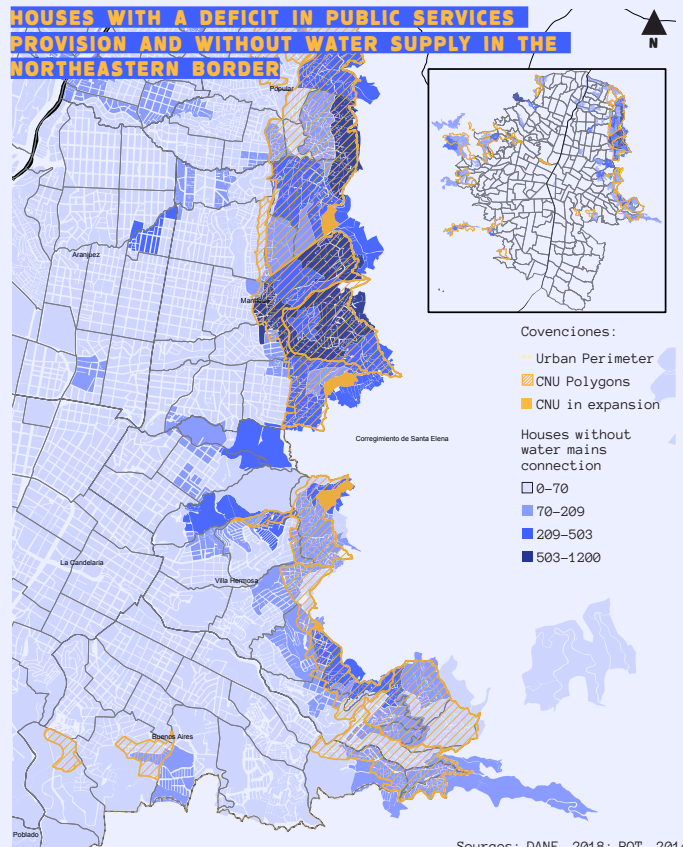
### LAND CLASSIFICATION, RISK, AND CONCENTRATION OF (ASSISTED) VICTIMS



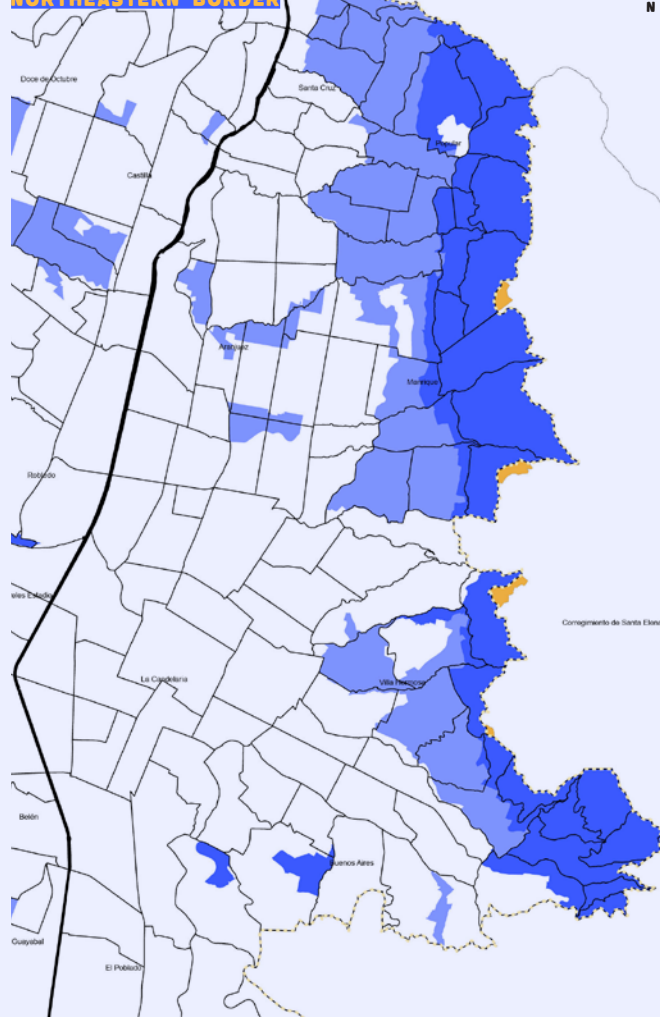
Sources: Registro Único de Víctimas RUV; POT, 2014

### 3. URBAN BORDER AREAS EXHIBIT A CRITICAL QUALITATIVE HOUSING DEFICIT

In 2018, according to DANE, 160 hectares in the north-eastern urban-rural border were inhabited; with **3,082 homes in Comunas 1, 3, and 8, and approximately 8,937 inhabitants located outside the urban perimeter.** Additionally, it was identified that **1.15% (10,055 units) of the homes in urban areas lacked connection to the water supply.** A greater deficit was observed in the northeastern border sectors, with between 74 and 459 units without connection.



### POLITICAL-ADMINISTRATIVE DIVISION AND COMPREHENSIVE UPGRADING AREAS IN THE NORTHEASTERN BORDER



Source: POT, 2014; CartoBase Medellín DIVIPOLA

### 4. THE NEIGHBOURHOOD SCALE IS KEY FOR THE IMPLEMENTATION OF THE CNU-PEACE

The neighbourhood scale is fundamental for social organisation, citizen participation, and community planning.



**80% OF THE NEIGHBOURHOODS HAVE BEEN FRAGMENTED BY THE URBAN REGULATORY AREAS.**

**OUT OF 71 NEIGHBOURHOODS WITHIN AREAS CLASSIFIED UNDER CU REGULATIONS (903 HA), 57% HAVE MORE THAN 20% OF THEIR AREA ASSIGNED TO CU, LEAVING ABOUT 278.4 HA OUTSIDE OF THIS REGULATORY PLANNING GUIDELINES.**

Covenciones:

- Urban Perimeter
- Consolidation 3
- Limite barrial
- CNU within Urban Land
- CNU in expansion

## 5. COMMUNITY-LED PRACTICES THAT IDENTIFY REPARATIVE ACTIONS AND INTERVENTIONS ARE THE FOUNDATION FOR CNU-PEACE

In the urban-rural fringes and transversal areas macroprojects (9,611 ha), community and autonomous territorial planning practices converge, providing essential inputs for CNU-PEACE.

**55% OF URBAN LAND HAS AUTONOMOUS PLANNING PROCESSES.**

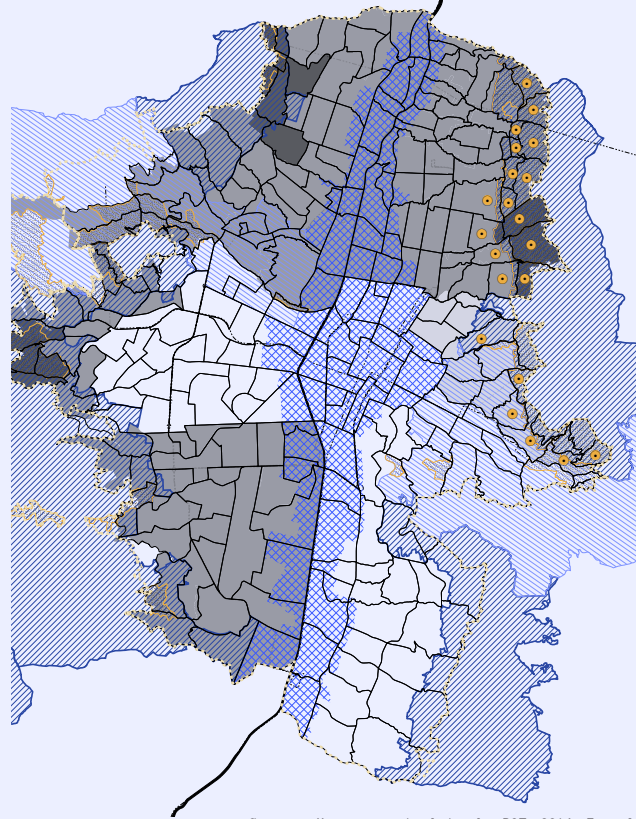
**APPROXIMATELY 23% (2,270 HA) COINCIDE WITH THE JURISDICTION OF THE MACRO-PROJECTS.**

**39% OF THE NORTHEASTERN URBAN-RURAL FRINGE MACROPROJECT AREA INCLUDES COMMUNITY PLANNING EXERCISES WHERE ACTIONS FOR COMPREHENSIVE RECOVERY AND SELF-REPARATION WERE IDENTIFIED.**

Covenciones:

- Urban Perimeter
- Polígonos Tratamiento MIB
- Reparative Actions Proposals
- AIE MED Urban-Rural Fringe
- AIE MED River
- AIE Transversalities

### COMMUNITY-LED TERRITORIAL PLANNING FOR REPARATION IN THE NORTHEAST BORDER

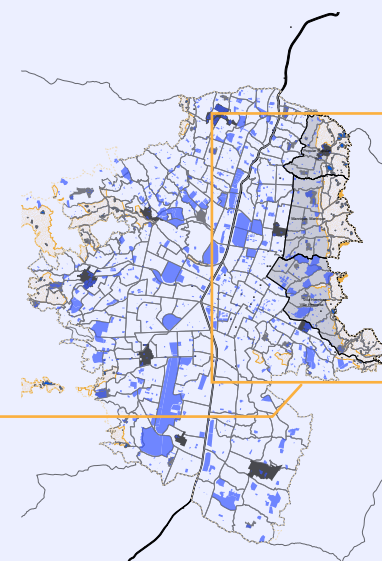
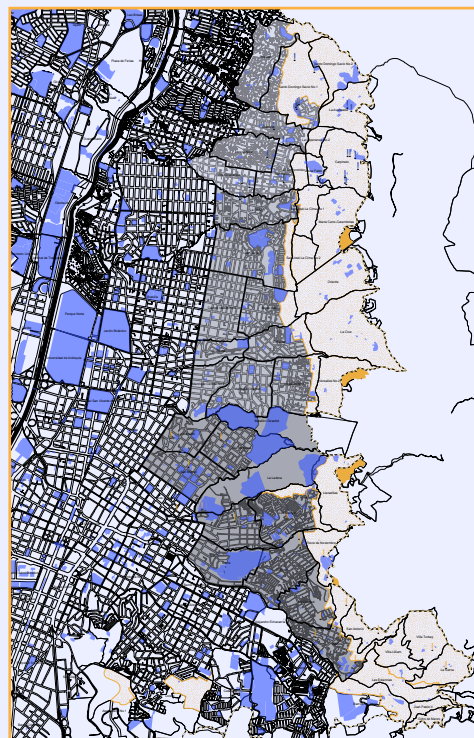


Source: Macroproyecto de borde, POT, 2014; Escuela de Memoria y Paz Territorial, 2021 & 2022

## 6. COMMUNITY MEMORY SPACES ARE ESSENTIAL PARTS OF NEIGHBOURHOOD CENTRALITIES

Community memory spaces are **nodal territories for the reparation of victims of conflict**, they are representative places where communities have managed to transition from the wounds of multiple forms of violence to the **collective construction of resistance and territorial reparation**.

### FACILITIES, CENTRALITIES, AND COMMUNITY MEMORY SPACES ON THE NORTHEASTERN BORDER



Covenciones:

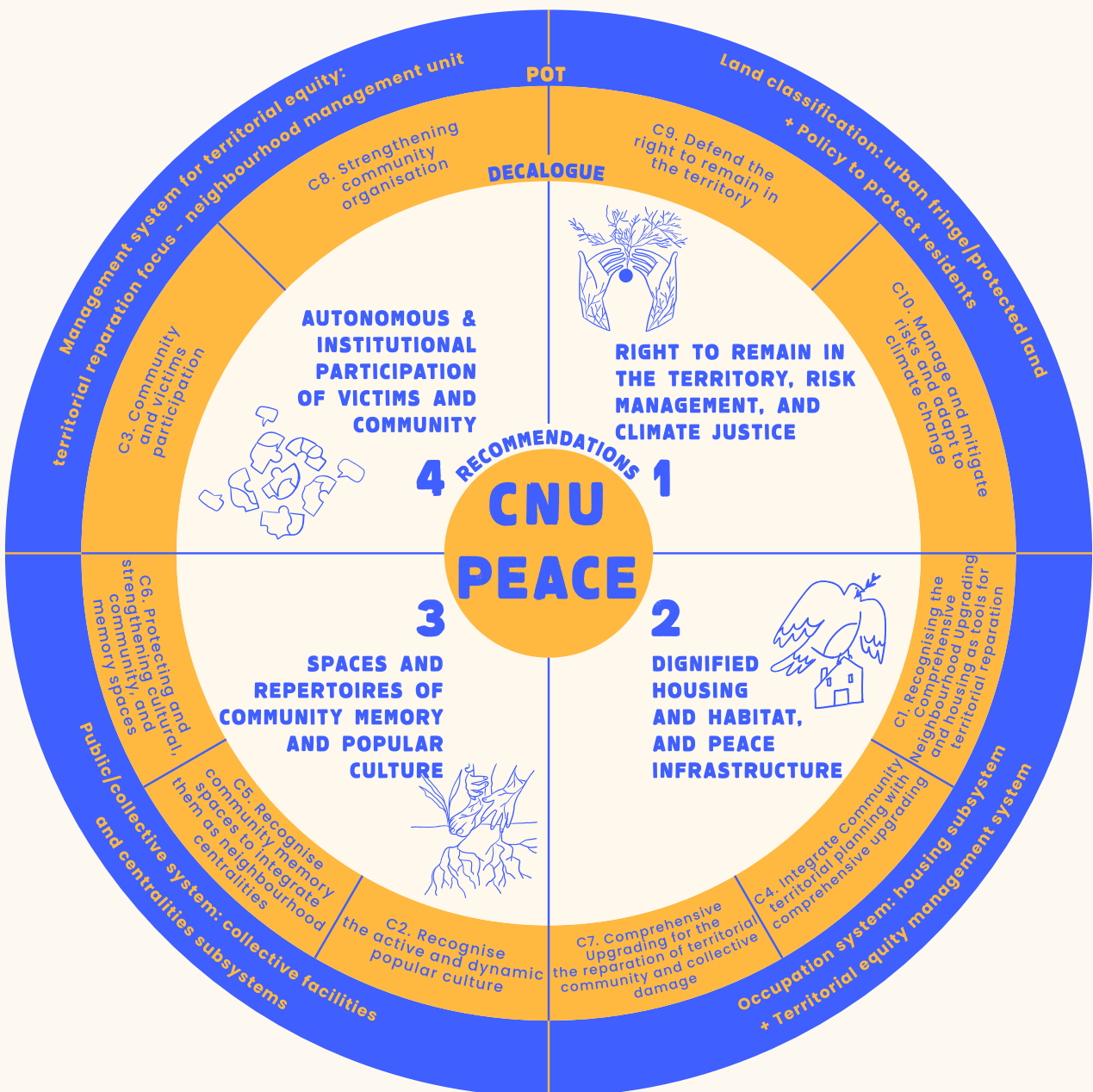
- Urban Perimeter
- CNU Treatment Polygons
- CNU in expansion
- Facilities System
- Zone Centrality
- Neighbourhood Centrality Memory Spaces
- Comuna 3
- Comuna 8
- Comuna 1

Source: POT 2014; Escuela de Memoria y Paz Territorial, 2021 & 2022

**14% OF MEMORY SPACES IN COMUNAS 1, 2, 3, AND 8 HAVE NOT BEEN INTEGRATED INTO THE FACILITIES SYSTEM OF THE MEDELLIN'S STRATEGIC SPATIAL PLAN AND ARE OUTSIDE THE NEIGHBOURHOOD CENTRALITIES.**

# POLICY RECOMMENDATIONS

This policy brief articulates the nexus between spatial and reparative justice and urges the integration of its recommendations into the revision of Medellín's Strategic Spatial Plan (POT). These recommendations are organised into four themes that encompass the ten criteria contained in the CNU-PEACE Decalogue (PRT, 2024) and align them with the structure of the city's municipal territorial planning system. These recommendations are based on four premises: 1) **CNU-PEACE is a tool for territorial reparations in self-built neighbourhoods** with a high concentration of conflict victims; 2) the **neighbourhood scale is crucial for community organisation** and planning and therefore must be integrated with multiple planning instruments and scales; 3) **community experiences and knowledges constitute a mechanism for territorial reparations and social justice** and thus should be reflected in public policies and their instruments; 4) **urban territorial peace, the right to the city, and territorial reparations require the articulation of territorial and development planning** within a multi-scale governance framework that promotes well-being in cities.





## 01

The NCU-PEACE is a tool for the **right to remain in the territory, risk management, and climate justice** through the recognition of collective actions that **defend the right to remain in the territory [C9] and manage and mitigate risks and adapt to climate change [C10]**. This dimension is articulated with key Territorial Planning topics such as land classification, ecological structure, and endangered and risk areas.

From this perspective, the following proposals are put forward: 1) to integrate **NCU-PEACE with policies for resident protection**, grounding territorial intervention in the recognition of housing as a family asset, acknowledging the diversity in forms of tenure and living conditions, the public systems at the neighbourhood scale, and economic and productive units as livelihood modes and means, alongside networks and socio-economic fabrics of trust and solidarity; 2) to **align NCU-PEACE with the Infrastructure Risk Mitigation Plan (PMRI) and the Early Warning System of the Aburrá Valley (SIATA)**, crucial instruments for mitigating risk conditions in vulnerable areas and advancing the strengthening of infrastructure and community resilience against adverse events in the city; and 3) to **prioritise the perimeter for conducting and updating property studies, risk mitigation programmes, legalisation and land titling in hillside areas**, and develop community early warning strategies with state support. For the implementation of these proposals, NCU-PEACE acknowledges the pivotal role of **convites para la paz** as mechanisms to develop community and organisational capacities, define restorative projects, works, and tasks, and manage and implement environmental protection strategies and community risk management. Advancing these actions requires ongoing dialogue between institutions and communities in key spaces such as the District Committee for Disaster Risk Knowledge and Reduction and the *mesa de desconectados*, involving the active participation of institutions such as EPM, ISVIMED, and the academic sector, among others.



## 02

A fundamental objective of NCU-PEACE is to ensure access to **dignified housing and habitat, and peace infrastructure**. This involves recognising **comprehensive neighbourhood upgrading and housing as tools for territorial reparation [C1]; adequately integrating community territorial planning with comprehensive upgrading [C4]; ensuring comprehensive upgrading for the reparation of territorial, community, and collective damage [C7]**. This objective is articulated with the housing subsystem of the occupancy system, which is one of the central components of the territorial planning system.

From this perspective, the following proposals are put forward: 1) to **develop Urban Legalisation and Regularisation Plans (PLRU)** in sectors that have not yet been formalised; 2) to create mechanisms for the recognition of **rural water supply systems**, including conducting censuses of existing water supply systems and a capacity analysis that identifies differential actions for areas with greater technical limitations for service provision and due to risk; and 3) to **implement specific interventions for comprehensive upgrading of the urban fringe**, including actions such as on-site relocation, housing improvements, new housing (VIP) in block urbanisation, provision of new and used housing for victims, and rental subsidies for victims. Progress in these actions requires establishing a dialogue with strategies and stakeholders included in the Medellín Housing Strategic Plan PEHMED 2030. It is recognised that advancing these actions requires the active participation of diverse actors in a multi-actor and multi-scalar governance framework that integrates the community sector with local government and promotes involvement from the national government, the academic sector, and the private sector.



## 03

To implement the NCU-PEACE, **spaces and repertoires of community memory and popular culture must be made visible**. This involves **recognising the active and dynamic popular culture [C2] and community memory spaces to integrate them as neighbourhood centralities [C5], and protecting and strengthening cultural, community, and memory spaces [C6]**. Within the territorial planning system, these issues are part of the subsystems of collective facilities and centralities that are part of the public and collective systems.

The actions associated with this dimension aim to include self-managed collective spaces as part of neighbourhood centralities and therefore strategic areas for CNU-PEACE. These actions encompass proposals such as: 1) **upgrading and investment in spaces like community centres and libraries on the hillside**, serving as places of memory, education, culture, and community gathering, supporting the activation of memory through collective action and resistance expressions like life days, memory actions, exchanges and colony meetings, water festivals, among others; and 2) **strengthening community memory spaces within the logic of neighbourhood centrality**, involving commitments to their ongoing identification, protection, legalisation, upgrading, and inclusion in urban legalisation and regularisation plans, and property title clarification where they are located. For this, the participation of diverse actors with a perspective on gender, generational, differential, and intersectional aspects is essential, including social organisations and memory managers, the Municipal Victims' Board, the Victims Unit, the National Center for Historical Memory, and the House of Memory Museum. By integrating community planning with multiple planning instruments and scales, CNU-PEACE constitutes a mechanism for territorial reparations and social justice.



## 04

To achieve the objectives of urban territorial peace, CNU-PEACE must ensure **autonomous and institutional participation of victims and community** to promote trust-building among stakeholders for the collective construction of present and future scenarios through dialogue, co-production of knowledge and recognition of multiple forms of knowledge, **community and victims participation [C3], and strengthening community organisation [C8]**. These autonomous and institutional participation processes should be articulated with territorial equity from the perspective of a territorial reparation management system that recognises the neighbourhood as a management unit but integrates with planning instruments at various scales.

In this sense, this dimension proposes 1) that the **design and implementation of large-scale projects with a focus on territorial reparation** integrate community commitment to mitigate growth alongside the state's responsibility to regulate growth and that it incorporates community-based neighbourhood territorial planning into the comprehensive neighbourhood upgrading design; 2) a commitment to **coordination between the Strategic Spatial Plan and Local Development Plans to incorporate a focus on Territorial Peace and local integration**, prioritising participation processes of victim organisations over Neighbourhood Action Boards (JAL) and Community Action Boards (JAC), and promoting the strengthening of neighbourhood, sectoral, block, and inter-neighbourhood scales; and 3) **the harmonisation between CU planning and neighbourhoods within the macroprojectos** to emphasise the importance of the neighbourhood scale in the design and management of CNU-PEACE. To further advance these processes, it is fundamental to recognise the role of network communities such as the Northeastern Zone Alliance and Red Árbol, and to involve groups such as women leaders, community assemblies, the Indigenous Council in La Honda sector 3, religious and non-governmental organisations, and international support in general.



# ENDNOTES

1. In 2016, the Colombian government and the Revolutionary Armed Forces of Colombia (FARC) signed a peace agreement aimed at implementing joint strategies for “territorial peace”. Achieving systematic territorial peace in major cities remains a challenge for victims, ex-combatants, and state institutions. In 2021, the Colombian national government, through the Special Jurisdiction for Peace (JEP), and the Medellín City Hall signed an Interadministrative Agreement to implement ‘Comprehensive Restorative Processes with a Territorial Focus’ (PRIET). This policy initiative, piloted in the Northeast Zone of the city (Comuna 3: Manrique), opened the possibility of advancing restorative measures in Medellín.
2. This conceptual framework results from collective work that has developed since territorial reparation incorporates physical-spatial, political, symbolic and cultural, psychosocial, and social and environmental reparations for territorial damage.

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The PopuLab is the Popular Neighbourhoods Laboratory established in 2022 in the city of Cali, Colombia, with the support of the Global Challenges Research Fund (UK-GCRF) and the Economic and Social Research Council (ESRC) of the United Kingdom. It is conceived as a place to think about and build the city through community participation and the convergence of urban knowledge. Its main objective is to make specific contributions to global discussions on urban territorial peace, comprehensive habitat upgrading and inhabitant protection, sustainable mobility and accessibility, Zero Waste programmes, climate change adaptation, and city-nature integration in popular neighbourhoods.

This new series of Policy Briefs includes documents with the following objectives, scopes, and audiences:

1. **Thematic framing:** to generate inputs on topics that are not yet on public policy agendas and provide relevant conceptual foundations for their formulation. They are aimed at policy makers, consultants, and researchers. **PB-11. CNU-PEACE|A territorial reparation tool.**
2. **Place-based priority setting:** based on empirical evidence, they present territorial situations and their implications in order to guide the (re)definition of public policy priorities through the use of novel methodologies. They are primarily aimed at policy makers and researchers. **PB-12. Nature-based solutions to protect ecological structures in popular neighbourhoods.**
3. **Action-oriented:** to synthesise findings from various experiences that provide concrete guidelines for territorial intervention by different actors. They are aimed at policy makers, community actors, the private sector, and third sector organisations. **PB-13. Use of construction waste in public spaces of popular neighbourhoods.**

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