

### **13. Identical letters dated 19 January 2016 from the Permanent Representative of Colombia to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General and the President of the Security Council ([S/2016/53](#))**

During the period under review, the Security Council held five meetings and adopted one resolution under the item entitled “Identical letters dated 19 January 2016 from the Permanent Representative of Colombia to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General and the President of the Security Council ([S/2016/53](#))”. Four of the meetings took the form of briefings and one was convened for the adoption of a resolution.<sup>518</sup> More information on the meetings, including participants and outcomes, is provided in the table below. In addition to the meetings, Council members held informal consultations of the whole in connection with this item.<sup>519</sup>

In 2022, the Special Representative of the Secretary-General for Colombia and the Head of the United Nations Verification Mission in Colombia briefed the Council four times further to the periodic reports of the Secretary-General on the Mission.<sup>520</sup> In addition, the Council was briefed by a former combatant of the Fuerzas Armadas Revolucionarias de Colombia-Ejército de Pueblo (FARC-EP), the President of the Truth Commission of Colombia, the Chair of the Peacebuilding Commission and two representatives of civil society.<sup>521</sup> At the meetings, Colombia was represented by its President, Presidential Adviser for Stabilization and Consolidation, Vice-President and Minister for Foreign Affairs, and its Minister for Foreign Affairs.

In his briefings, the Special Representative of the Secretary-General updated Council members on the progress made in the implementation of the Final Agreement and remaining challenges, the conduct of legislative and presidential elections and the priorities related to the peace process of the newly inaugurated administration of President Gustavo Petro. In his first briefing of the year on 20 January, the Special Representative stated that the fifth anniversary of the Final Agreement provided an opportunity to celebrate its achievements, acknowledge the

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<sup>518</sup> For more information on the format of meetings, see part II.

<sup>519</sup> See [A/77/2](#), part II, chap. 40.

<sup>520</sup> See [S/PV.8951](#), [S/PV.9015](#), [S/PV.9094](#) and [S/PV.9151](#). See also [S/2021/1090](#), [S/2022/267](#), [S/2022/513](#) and [S/2022/715](#).

<sup>521</sup> See [S/PV.8951](#), [S/PV.9094](#) and [S/PV.9151](#).

persistent challenges and recommit to its comprehensive implementation.<sup>522</sup> According to him, the visit of the Secretary-General to Colombia in November 2021 served to reaffirm the commitment of the United Nations to the success of the peace process, for which the support of the Council had been instrumental. He noted that, in preparation for the congressional elections in March, the Colombian authorities were taking steps to ensure that the overall conditions for the process were peaceful and that all candidates were secure and protected. He added that an enhanced implementation of the security guarantees provisions of the Final Agreement was critical for the elections, especially in regions prioritized for implementation which continued to be hit by violence. Furthermore, while noting that political reintegration was at the core of the peace process, he called on the Colombian authorities to ensure that the political rights and protection of people who had laid down their arms was ensured, especially in the light of persistent insecurity and stigmatization.

More generally, on security, the Special Representative acknowledged the reduction in the number of killings of ex-combatants in 2021 but underscored the need to secure conflict-affected areas where illegal armed actors continued to take advantage of the limited presence of the State. Beyond security, the Special Representative opined that 2022 would also be a critical year for the transitional justice system, particularly highlighting the work of the Unit for the Search for Persons Deemed as Missing to find thousands of persons disappeared during the conflict, the Truth Commission's preparation of its final report and the issuing of its first sentences. The Special Representative concluded by noting that, with the peace agreement setting down ever deeper roots, the period ahead would be crucial for the parties and Colombian society.

Ms. Luz Marina Giraldo, a former combatant of FARC-EP, shared with Council members some of the views and concerns of the signatories to the Final Agreement and their families regarding the political process in Colombia. Noting the grievances and stigmatization of the families and children of killed former combatants, she stressed the need to ensure that they received differentiated, yet equal, treatment to ensure access to higher education, effective healthcare systems, the job market, the financial system and comprehensive social security

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<sup>522</sup> See [S/PV.8951](#).

systems and rights. She further underscored that the widows and orphaned children of former combatants were a special population who needed a robust plan with a differentiated and gender focus to prevent them from falling into poverty, being objectified or victims of stereotypes, gender violence or discrimination. She further stressed that the notion of family, which was mentioned 92 times in the Final Agreement, should not remain a dead letter and that, together with women, girls, boys and social leaders, it had to be a comprehensive part of the concept of security.

On 12 April, the Special Representative of the Secretary-General reported that the congressional elections held in March had been mostly free of violence.<sup>523</sup> He noted that the elections had seen an increase in the number of women elected to Congress and the opportunity to elect, for the first time, representatives of 16 new electoral districts established under the peace agreement in conflict-affected regions. Regarding the social and economic reintegration of former combatants, the Special Representative noted that the vast majority of the more than 13,000 who were accredited remained engaged with the peace process and that almost two thirds of former FARC-EP members were taking part in collective and individual income-generating activities. Nevertheless, he emphasized that the sustainability of the peace process remained contingent on halting the violence that still jeopardized the plans of former combatants to build a new life. He stated that, if implemented in a coordinated manner, the security guarantees provisions of the Final Agreement had the potential to boost key areas such as reintegration, political participation and transitional justice. The Special Representative also highlighted the importance of further progress in rural reform and combatting illegal drugs through crop-substitution programmes and the effective use of the institutions devised by the Government and the FARC-EP. Finally, he welcomed all the efforts made by the Government of President Iván Duque Marquez in the implementation of the Final Agreement and noted that this responsibility would soon pass to a new administration following the presidential elections in May 2022.

In his statement after the Special Representative, President Duque Marquez stated that the peace process launched in 2016 presented Colombia with both challenges and opportunities. He noted that his Government's policy of "Peace with Legality" was comprehensive in nature

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<sup>523</sup> See [S/PV.9015](#).

and aimed at ensuring progress in all areas, while maintaining a critical view in order to improve areas in which improvement was needed. In terms of successes, he cited the process of reintegration, restitution, reparation and political inclusion of victims, development programmes with a territorial focus and comprehensive rural reform, as well as truth, reconciliation, non-repetition and justice. The President underlined that the position of his Government was to establish institutional stability so that Colombia could fulfill the duty and secure the right to peace as enshrined in its Constitution.

In his briefing on 14 July, echoing the Secretary-General, the Special Representative expressed his encouragement with the mostly peaceful presidential elections in May and June 2022, which resulted in the election of President Gustavo Petro and Vice-President Francia Márquez.<sup>524</sup> He noted the significant contribution that the Final Agreement made to widening and deepening Colombian democracy and that the electoral outcomes increasingly reflected the diversity of the country's vibrant society. The Special Representative expressed hope that the Congress would make considerable progress in adopting the more than 30 pending peace-related norms, including on key matters such as comprehensive rural reform and guarantees for political participation. Despite the reasons for optimism stemming from the elections, the Special Representative noted that the Verification Mission had recorded the killing of 331 former combatants since the signing of the Final Agreement. He stated that indigenous and Afro-Colombian communities were among the most seriously affected by the violence and insecurity and expressed disappointment that the implementation of the ethnic provisions of the Final Agreement remained comparatively weak. As a milestone in the implementation of the Agreement, he welcomed the publication of the final report of the Truth Commission on 28 June which, in addition to shedding light on the causes and effects of the conflict, provided a wealth of recommendations for advancing peacebuilding and reconciliation as a national project. Furthermore, he noted that the Special Jurisdiction for Peace had held its first hearings of truth and acknowledgment of responsibility and was also moving towards the imposition of its first sanctions.

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<sup>524</sup> See [S/PV.9094](#).

Following the Special Representative, the President of the Truth Commission reported that, in the four years since its establishment, the Commission had heard more than 30,000 individual and collective testimonies from all sides in a conflict that affected more than 10 million people in various ways, including 450,000 killed between 1985 and 2018, 80 per cent of whom were unarmed civilians. The Commission had also heard multiple testimonies of the 50,000 kidnapped and of the many thousands of children brought into the war, primarily by the guerrillas. It had also visited the sites of more than 4,000 massacres where entire communities had been destroyed. The President of the Commission added that the work of the Commission included the search for answers as to the reason for the damage done to life, democracy and culture and to understand why the conflict persisted. In doing so, the Commission had established that it was necessary to change the security system and called for an end to the war against drug trafficking and armed prohibitionism. At the end of the meeting, the Vice-President and Minister for Foreign Affairs of Colombia provided an overview of the efforts of the outgoing administration with respect to the peace process. She stressed that the incoming administration had to continue along the same path, strengthening institutions and the economy, providing legal guarantees and effective and efficient policies for all Colombians, supporting victims, continuing with reincorporation and the voluntary substitution of illicit groups, comprehensive rural development, humanitarian demining and the implementation of cross-cutting perspectives of gender and ethnicity.

On 12 October, the Special Representative of the Secretary-General stated that Colombia was experiencing a moment of renewed expectations as a result of the “total peace” approach advanced by President Gustavo Petro, a policy anchored in the comprehensive implementation of the Final Agreement.<sup>525</sup> In addition, he noted that the Government was seeking to deepen peace through the resumption of dialogue with the Ejército de Liberación Nacional (ELN) and rapprochement with other armed actors. The Special Representative added that the search for “total peace” was also an opportunity to continue building on the foundations of resolution [1325 \(2000\)](#), while ensuring the broad and effective participation of women. He also noted the concerns of community representatives about the threat posed by illegal armed actors and the

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<sup>525</sup> See [S/PV.9151](#).

frustration at unmet expectations regarding the slow delivery of basic services and development opportunities by the State. He therefore expressed confidence that some of the new measures taken by the Government, notably the development of an emergency plan for the protection of social leaders, human rights defenders and ex-combatants, would result in improvements in terms of security and quality of life.

In his remarks further to the Special Representative, the Chair of the Peacebuilding Commission noted that, at the request of the Government of Colombia, the Commission was mobilizing support for the peacebuilding efforts since the ratification of the Final Agreement in 2016 and described Colombia as a successful example of inclusive peacemaking. He commended President Petro and his Government for their commitment to peace and the full implementation of the Final Agreement, as well as to reducing inequality, governing with and for women, ensuring zero tolerance for corruption and holding regional dialogues, as critical steps towards building lasting peace. The Chair further commended the President for appointing a gender parity Cabinet and creating a Ministry of Equality to address issues related to gender, ethnic communities, youth and children, among others. He encouraged the full and effective use of mechanisms that drew on the inputs of civil society actors, victims and former combatants to build consensus towards the success of peace efforts. He welcomed the support that the Verification Mission and the United Nations country team provided to peacebuilding in Colombia, as well as the catalytic contribution of the Peacebuilding Fund through the multi-partner trust fund for sustaining peace and reiterated the Commission's commitment, within its mandate, to continue to accompany the country in its peacebuilding efforts.

At the same meeting, the legal representative of the Community General Council of San Juan spoke about what she termed as the process of “physical and cultural extinction” of the Black, indigenous and peasant communities throughout the Colombian Pacific as a result of the violation of their economic, social, cultural and environmental rights, and the armed conflict. She stated that these communities nevertheless had hope, particularly with the election of Vice-President Márquez – a Black woman born poor and a victim of the armed conflict – and expressed trust that the Government would guarantee human dignity and allow the ethnic peoples to decide how to live their lives, individually and collectively. She asked the international community to strengthen the direct presence of United Nations agencies and other

humanitarian organizations in the territories most affected by war and violence. In addition, she asked for more resources to be allocated to strengthen grassroots organizations and human right defenders, especially for initiatives that allowed communities to build economic self-sufficiency in balance with the environment and to combat climate change.

On 27 October, the Council unanimously adopted resolution [2655 \(2022\)](#) extending the mandate of the Verification Mission for a period of one year until 31 October 2023, without any modification.<sup>526</sup> In the resolution, the Council acknowledged the request from the Foreign Minister of Colombia for the extension of the Mission and for the Council to consider tasking it to verify the implementation of Section 1 on comprehensive rural reform and Section 6.2 on the Ethnic Chapter of the Final Agreement.<sup>527</sup> In that regard, the Council requested the Secretary-General to provide detailed recommendations on how these additional tasks would be carried out and to confirm any implications for the configuration of the Mission and expressed its intent to consider these recommendations swiftly.<sup>528</sup>

In terms of challenges, Council members maintained their serious concern regarding threats, attacks and killings of former FARC-EP members, community and social leaders, including women and members of indigenous and Afro-Colombian communities. They called on the Government to increase security and State presence in conflict-affected areas, swiftly adopt the public policy on the dismantling of illegal armed groups, strengthen judicial institutions to ensure accountability for the crimes committed and implement the action plan of the Comprehensive Programme for Safeguards for Women Leaders and Human Rights Defenders. Moreover, while reiterating the need for further accelerated progress, Council members welcomed the advancements made by the Government in the socioeconomic reintegration of the over 13,000 demobilized former combatants, including through rural reform, crop replacement and development projects. With regard to inclusivity, multiple speakers highlighted the election of representatives from the 16 special districts and the highest number of women to Congress.<sup>529</sup>

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<sup>526</sup> Resolution [2655 \(2022\)](#), para. 1. See [S/PV.9169](#).

<sup>527</sup> Resolution [2655 \(2022\)](#), ninth preambular paragraph. See also [S/2022/787](#).

<sup>528</sup> Resolution [2655 \(2022\)](#), para. 2. See also the letter dated 9 December 2022 ([S/2022/940](#)) in which the Secretary-General presented his recommendations regarding the additional tasks of the United Nations Verification Mission in Colombia.

<sup>529</sup> See [S/PV.9015](#), Kenya (also on behalf of Gabon and Ghana), Albania, United Arab Emirates, United States, Brazil, Mexico, Ireland, India and Norway.

Nevertheless, they also widely expressed concern with the slow implementation of the ethnic and gender provisions of the agreement, which they described as essential for lasting peace.<sup>530</sup>

**Meetings: Identical letters dated 19 January 2016 from the Permanent Representative of Colombia to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General and the President of the Security Council (S/2016/53)**

<i>Meeting and date</i>	<i>Sub-item</i>	<i>Other documents</i>	<i>Rule 37 invitations</i>	<i>Rule 39 and other invitations</i>	<i>Speakers</i>	<i>Decisions and vote (for-against-abstaining)</i>
<a href="#">S/PV.8951</a> 20 January 2022	Report of the Secretary-General on the United Nations Verification Mission in Colombia ( <a href="#">S/2021/1090</a> )		Colombia	Special Representative of the Secretary-General and Head of the United Nations Verification Mission in Colombia, Former combatant of the Fuerzas Armadas Revolucionarias de Colombia-Ejército del Pueblo	All Council members, all invitees <sup>a</sup>	
<a href="#">S/PV.9015</a> 12 April 2022	Report of the Secretary-General on the United Nations Verification Mission in Colombia ( <a href="#">S/2022/267</a> )		Colombia	Special Representative of the Secretary-General	13 Council members <sup>b</sup> , all invitees <sup>c</sup>	
<a href="#">S/PV.9094</a> 14 July 2022	Report of the Secretary-General on the United Nations Verification Mission in Colombia ( <a href="#">S/2022/513</a> )		Colombia	Special Representative of the Secretary-General, President of the Truth Commission, Nasa indigenous woman, community leader and human rights defender	13 Council members <sup>d</sup> , all invitees <sup>e</sup>	
<a href="#">S/PV.9151</a> 12 October 2022	Report of the Secretary-General on the United Nations Verification Mission in Colombia ( <a href="#">S/2022/715</a> )		Colombia	Special Representative of the Secretary-General, Chair of the Peacebuilding Commission, Legal Representative of the Community General Council of San Juan	13 Council members <sup>f</sup> , all invitees <sup>g</sup>	

<sup>530</sup> See [S/PV.8951](#), Kenya and United States, [S/PV.9015](#), Albania, United States and Norway; [S/PV.9094](#), Norway, United States, Albania and Kenya (also on behalf of Gabon and Ghana); and [S/PV.9151](#), Gabon (also on behalf of Ghana and Kenya), Norway, United Kingdom, Ireland and Albania.

<a href="#">S/PV.9169</a>	Report of the Secretary-General on the United Nations Verification Mission in Colombia ( <a href="#">S/2022/715</a> )	Draft resolution submitted by Mexico and the United Kingdom ( <a href="#">S/2022/804</a> )	Five Council Resolution <a href="#">2655</a> members <sup>h</sup> ( <a href="#">2022</a> ) 15-0-0
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<sup>a</sup> Colombia was represented by its Presidential Adviser for Stabilization and Consolidation.

<sup>b</sup> The representative of Kenya also spoke on behalf of Gabon and Ghana. The United Kingdom was represented by its Minister of State for South and Central Asia, North Africa, the United Nations and the Commonwealth and the Prime Minister's Special Representative on Preventing Sexual Violence in Conflict.

<sup>c</sup> Colombia was represented by its President.

<sup>d</sup> The representative of Kenya also spoke on behalf of Gabon and Ghana.

<sup>e</sup> Colombia was represented by its Vice-President and Minister for Foreign Affairs. The Nasa indigenous woman and community leader and human rights defender participated in the meeting via videoconference.

<sup>f</sup> The representative of Gabon also spoke on behalf of Ghana and Kenya. Gabon and Norway were represented by their Ministers for Foreign Affairs.

<sup>g</sup> Colombia was represented by its Minister for Foreign Affairs. The legal representative of the Community General Council of San Juan participated in the meeting via videoconference.

<sup>h</sup> Brazil, Kenya, Mexico, United Kingdom and United States.