

The Peacebuilding Commission remarks to the Security Council on Colombia

11 October 2023

[Mister President, distinguished members of the Council, on behalf of the Peacebuilding Commission, I thank you for inviting me to brief the Security Council.]

Building on the Peacebuilding Commission's engagement with Colombia since 2020, and in particular on transitional justice and on Indigenous Peoples, peace and reconciliation this year, the Commission encourages the Security Council to consider the following:

1. The Commission acknowledges the concrete steps taken by the Government of Colombia during its first year in office to consolidate peace and encourages redoubling of efforts by all concerned parties to accelerate the full implementation of the 2016 Final Peace Agreement.
2. The Commission welcomes the progress achieved to date while acknowledging that challenges remain as Colombia nears the seventh anniversary of the Agreement.
3. The Commission encourages the Council to support the Government in ensuring that peace dividends reach all Colombians, including through the Comprehensive Rural Reform, key to reinforcing State presence and providing development opportunities and public services in conflict-affected areas and historically marginalized regions, thus addressing underlying causes of conflict in a sustainable way, recognizing that development, peace and security, and human rights are interlinked and mutually reinforcing
4. The Commission calls for continued international support for the comprehensive implementation of the Final Peace Agreement and other peace initiatives taken forward by the Government. In that regard, the Commission welcomes the support of the UN Verification Mission and the UN Country Team, the close coordination among the two, and the Secretary-General's recent decision to extend Colombia's eligibility to the Peacebuilding Fund for a further five-year period. It also encourages the Government to progress on its plans to re-establish the presidential office for the implementation of the Final Peace Agreement.
5. The Commission welcomes advances in the Government's efforts to seek broader peace through dialogue in the framework of the Total Peace policy, in particular the peace negotiations with the ELN, and in that regard, expresses appreciation for the Security Council's decision to mandate the Mission to verify the ceasefire between the Government and the ELN.
6. The Commission also underscored the need for all armed groups to cease violence against civilians, engage in good faith in peace initiatives, and seek to deescalate violence against one another as demonstrations of the will to work for peace, and in this context, welcomes the announcement by the government and EMC FARC-EP to include respect for civilian populations in their bilateral, national ceasefire.
7. The Commission encourages further progress in reintegration to ensure the security and livelihoods of those former combatants who have laid down their arms and seek to rebuild their lives in peace.

8. The Commission expresses its strong concern about continued violence faced by former combatants and social leaders as well as Indigenous and Afro-Colombian populations, and other vulnerable populations in Colombia, and encourages the further implementation of the action plan of the Comprehensive Programme for Safeguards for Women Leaders and Human Rights Defenders. The Commission encourages the Government to undertake concerted efforts to provide security and protection.
9. The Commission also underscores the importance of holding upcoming regional and local elections on 29 October in conditions of safety and security, and underscores the need to ensure the safe participation of former combatants in these elections, in accordance with the national legislation.
10. The Commission recalls with appreciation Colombia's commitments to the inclusion of Indigenous Peoples in peace efforts and encourages further international support, as demonstrated in the Commission's meeting on Indigenous Peoples, Peace and Reconciliation of 19 June 2023.
11. The Commission encourages the Council to follow closely measures taken to provide protection of young community members and leaders to ensure their full and effective participation in peacebuilding efforts.
12. The Commission appreciates the strong focus on gender provisions in the Final Peace Agreement and the Total Peace policy including in the dialogues with other armed actors, and welcomes the ongoing work towards the development of Colombia's first action plan for the implementation of SCR1325, which could contribute to the full and timely implementation of the gender provisions of the Final Peace Agreement and of the ceasefire agreements, including the one between the Government and the ELN.
13. The Commission commends continued progress in the pioneering work of the transitional justice system in contributing to truth, justice, reparations and non-repetition for crimes committed in the armed conflict and acknowledges the efforts of the Special Jurisdiction for Peace and looks forward to the issuance of its first restorative sentences.

The Peacebuilding Commission notes that Colombia continues to be a model for comprehensive peace consolidation and reiterates its commitment to supporting the Government of Colombia and its people in their efforts to build and sustain peace and share their experiences on peacebuilding before the Commission.

I thank you.