



Briefing on Colombia, 11 January 2023

Malta Statement delivered by Her Excellency Ambassador Vanessa Frazier
Permanent Representative of Malta to the United Nations, New York

Thank you, President

I thank SRSG Ruiz Massieu for his briefing and the important work of the Verification Mission in Colombia. I would also like to thank Mr Valbuena for his insightful briefing. I further want to recognise the participation of Vice President Francia Márquez for the first time at the Security Council, and recognize the UK's Parliamentary Under Secretary of State, His Excellency Mr. Rutley.

President

The past three months contained in the Secretary-General's latest report has seen significant movements in paving the path towards sustainable peace.

The Colombian Government has made clear that a comprehensive implementation of the 2016 Peace Agreement is at the core of its ambition.

Malta was pleased to see the resumption of peace negotiations between the Government of Colombia and the ELN in Caracas last month. Reports from these talks are encouraging, and we are looking forward to following the next round of negotiations in Mexico this month.



I also congratulate the Colombian Government for their progress, and commend the SRSG in his role of political accompaniment to these negotiations.

We support the work of the Colombian Government for a comprehensive and prolonged ceasefire with combatants, and call on all armed groups to lay down arms and engage in dialogue.

President

Violence continues to be the existential threat to Colombia's peace process. Though a year of great progress, 2022 also saw hundreds killed in large-scale killings, clashes between dissident groups, and victims of explosive ordnance, including children. Threats against former combatants also remain acute, highlighted by the increase of emergency relocations.

Violence towards civilians, journalists, and social leaders also remains a great concern, with at least 89 Human Rights Defenders being killed in last year. According to OHCHR, Indigenous and Afro-Colombians are among the most targeted leaders.

Reports detailing a plotted attempt on the life of Vice-President Márquez are concerning and reflect the need to remain cautious and to recognize that situations can easily deteriorate.

Conflict-related sexual violence also continues to be used to displace communities and as a tactic of territorial control. We call for the



implementation of the Comprehensive Programme for Safeguards for Women Leaders and Human Rights Defenders and the action plan for the security of women former combatants under the reintegration policy.

There must be full accountability for these crimes if there is to be sustainable and long-term peace. We also encourage the Colombian Government to strengthen mechanisms to protect victims of and witnesses to conflict related violence.

President

Malta is encouraged by the determination of the Colombian Government in their endeavours towards comprehensive rural reform. This commitment can be clearly seen by the increase of resources for the agrarian sector in the 2023 budget, and the unprecedented agreement to purchase 3 million hectares of land to be distributed through the Land Fund.

We also wish to highlight the recent issuance of concluding resolutions by the Special Jurisdiction for Peace as a clear example of the victim-centred process that is at the core of Colombia's cutting-edge transitional justice system. We also welcome the recent reactivation of the National Reintegration Council, and the designation by the Government of a new head of the Agency for Reintegration and Normalization. These are clear steps towards furthering the reintegration process across the country.

President



The Security Council must equip the Colombian government with the resources it needs to continue its progress towards peace. That is why Malta fully supports the request of the Colombian Foreign Minister to expand the UN Verification Mission's mandate to include the Peace Agreement's comprehensive rural reform and the ethnic chapters and voted in favour of this resolution.

To echo the Secretary-General, these sections of the 2016 Final Agreement are critical to consolidating peace by addressing deep-rooted patterns of inequality, including gender inequality, and exclusion of rural regions and ethnic peoples. I am encouraged that the Council today showed a united front in supporting this resolution.

President

Progress on Colombia's peace process is growing in leaps and bounds, and support by the Security Council and the international community is as important as ever. Malta stands with the Colombian people, committed to their peaceful and prosperous future. A new year brings new opportunities. I am confident the Security Council can remain united on supporting Colombia's future.

Thank you, President.