



## Briefing on Colombia, 13 April 2023

Malta Statement delivered by Ms Francesca Gatt,  
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Thank you, I thank also SRSG Massieu for his briefing today and the crucial work of the UN Verification Mission in Colombia. I thank Ambassador Šimonović, Chair of the Peacebuilding Commission, and Mr. Londoño for their briefings. I would like to also welcome the Minister of Foreign Affairs of Colombia to this meeting.

Since our last meeting in January, Colombia continues to demonstrate steadfast determination on its journey to sustainable peace.

The Secretary-General's Report highlights the Colombian Government's continued commitment to the implementation of their 'Total Peace Policy.' Malta commends the steps taken by the Government in this regard and underscores that a focused implementation of the 2016 Peace Agreement across all its sections must remain at the core of its efforts for peace.

We welcome the Colombian Government's commitment to dialogue and ensuring women's full, equal, and meaningful participation. We were pleased to see progress on key topics at the recent peace talks in Mexico, and hope that this momentum can continue at the next round of negotiations.

Despite the positive steps, it is regrettable that Colombia continues to suffer from high levels of violence.



Malta strongly condemns the attacks which killed ten government soldiers and left several injured in the state of Norte de Santander on 29 March.

Violent attacks, killings, and abductions of social leaders and human rights defenders also remains a major concern. The increase in violence against women leaders is unacceptable, and more must be done to prioritise civilian protection.

Any violence towards former combatants who remain committed to transitioning to civil life is also unacceptable. Resources must be made available to provide for the security and support they need.

Malta is seriously concerned for increased protection risks faced by Afro-Colombians and indigenous people, who continue to be disproportionately affected by humanitarian emergencies of mass displacement and confinement. Over 25,000 people from these communities have been newly displaced or forcibly confined due to violence in the first three months of 2023 alone.

The several reports of child recruitment by illegal armed groups, especially among Indigenous and Afro-Colombian children, is utterly reprehensible. Malta encourages the government to continue strengthening efforts on the protection of children in the implementation of their 'Total Peace' policy.



Malta is also deeply concerned for all those forcibly missing and disappeared in Colombia, the number of which is estimated at over 100,000. Their families deserve answers on the fate of their loved ones.

Attention must continue to be paid to this crucial topic, and resources made available to strengthen the Special Unit for the Search of Missing Persons, including guaranteeing access to information essential for its work.

Malta commends the Government's actions to implement comprehensive rural reform and the steps to advance the implementation of the ethnic chapter across the Peace Agreement.

We strongly support Colombia's transitional justice system and welcome the progress being made to provide truth, justice, and reparations to victims on all sides of the armed conflict, with a view to guaranteeing non-repetition. All actors must meaningfully contribute to this effort to address the needs of victims.

Malta is also pleased to note the progress made in the work of the Special Jurisdiction for Peace, with issuance of restorative sentences expected in the coming months. We support women's and LGBTI organisations call to open Case 11 on sexual and gender-based violence.

Malta believes that 2023 has the potential to be a defining year for Colombia's journey for sustainable peace. We are confident that with the continued commitment of the Colombian people and Government, the



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international community, and this Council, we can be optimistic for Colombia's bright future.

I thank you.