



Security Council briefing on Colombia, 9 April 2024

Malta Statement delivered by Ms Francesca Gatt

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I will now make a statement in my national capacity.

Let me begin by thanking Special Representative Massieu for your comprehensive briefing. I welcome the participation of Colombia Foreign Minister Murillo, and thank the Colombian Government for their hospitality during the Security Council's visit in February.

I also am grateful to Marcela Sánchez for your strong testimony, and commend the vital work of your organisation in the defence of human rights and justice for gender diverse persons in Colombia.

Malta commends the people of Colombia for their determination on the path to sustainable peace, and recognises the important progress made by the Colombian Government in the implementation of the Final Peace Agreement.



We hope to see greater implementation, through swift and concrete actions on the ground, to ensure the Peace Agreement delivers transformative change and tangible results. This can only be achieved with the full, equal, and meaningful participation of women, Indigenous, Afro-Colombians, and LGBTQI+ persons.

Malta commends the Government's efforts to reduce violence through dialogues with armed groups. We welcome ongoing peace talks between the Government and the ELN and the new round of talks between the Government and the EMC.

It is crucial that the positive developments in peace talks are not eclipsed by violence. To this end, it is critically important that parties seek to strengthen commitments to civilian protection, including child protection, and take concrete measures for the immediate benefit of conflict-affected communities. This includes strengthening the integrated presence of the State across Colombia's territory.



Security guarantees must be in place to protect those who have committed to the peace process, or are vulnerable to violence, discrimination, or coercion. This particularly relates to former combatants, social leaders, human rights defenders, women, Indigenous people, and LGBTQI+ persons.

More than 1,200 Human Rights Defenders and social leaders have been killed in Colombia since 2016, with 150 killed in 2023. We commend the progress towards Colombia's first national action plan on Women, Peace, and Security and its intersectional approach related to LGBTIQ+ and ethnic matters. We urge the Government to accelerate implementation of the Comprehensive Programme for Safeguards for Women Leaders and Human Rights Defenders. Effective investigation and prosecution of crimes committed against these groups must be priority.

Malta is troubled by the considerable increase in grave violations against children detailed in the latest Secretary General's Report on Children and Armed Conflict.



We are concerned by the disproportionate impact on Indigenous and Afro-Colombian children, including the increase in rape and other forms of sexual violence, which disproportionately affected Indigenous and Afro-Colombian girls.

All parties must immediately cease the killing and maiming of children and take all necessary measures to ensure their protection, including ending the use of landmines.

Furthermore, we urge armed groups to end the abduction, recruitment and use of children and call for the immediate release of all children from their ranks. We call for the strengthening of prevention programmes to benefit these children, and for authorities to investigate and prosecute anyone found responsible for these violations.



Malta commends the meaningful progress by the Special Jurisdiction for Peace. I welcome the presence of Mr Roberto Vidal, President of the SJP, today. We hope to see the prompt issuance of restorative sentences to ensure the delivery of transitional justice for victims of the conflict. We urge parties to engage in constructive dialogue to overcome any obstacles encountered within the framework of the Agreement.

In conclusion, in light of the significant day Colombians remember victims of the conflict, Malta commends the progress made thus far and reaffirms our full support to the Colombian peace process. We look forward to seeing further implementation of the Peace Agreement to deliver lasting and sustainable peace for all Colombians.

I thank you.