



## Security Council briefing on Colombia, 11 July 2024

Malta Statement delivered by Andrea De Bono Sant Cassia

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Thank you, President

Firstly, let me warmly welcome President Petro to the Council. I also thank Special Representative Massieu and Diego Tovar for your insightful briefings.

The 2016 Final Peace Agreement is a roadmap to achieve sustainable and lasting peace in Colombia, and we welcome the Government's commitment to its full implementation.

It is crucial that swift and concrete actions are taken to ensure that the Peace Agreement delivers transformative change and tangible results.

We encourage greater coordination across state institutions and the building of broad political consensus to help accelerate the implementation of the Peace Agreement across Colombia.



We welcome the Government's decree formally adopting the public policy to dismantle illegal armed group and criminal organisations, as well as a related action plan, to address structural drivers of persisting violence.

Malta commends the Government's efforts to reduce violence through dialogues with armed groups, as part of the Government's Total Peace policy.

We welcome the bilateral ceasefire between the Government and the ELN and hope to see its extension in the coming weeks. We are also pleased that the ceasefire between the Government and the EMC has continued to hold, despite complex circumstances, and we encourage its further expansion to all relevant departments.

The commencement of formal peace dialogues between the Government and the *Segunda Marquetalia* in June is also encouraging.

It is critically important that parties seek to strengthen commitments to civilian protection, including child protection.



Many communities are forced to suffer the consequences of violence as armed groups and gangs compete for territorial control. The rise in violent clashes have been particularly alarming in departments on the Pacific Coast, such as Cauca. The civilian population is bearing the brunt of this violence, particularly women, girls, and Indigenous and Afro-Colombian communities.

We encourage the Government to do all in its power to promptly strengthen an integrated state presence across Colombia's territory.

Security guarantees must be in place to protect those vulnerable to violence, discrimination, or coercion – these include human rights defenders, social leaders, indigenous people, children, and LGBTQI+ persons.

It is also imperative that former combatants who have committed to the peace process are ensured security and stability. The forced displacement of former combatants from the territorial area for training and reintegration of “Miravalle” due to security threats is very concerning and we hope more can be done to support this community and ensure the protection of all former combatants.



President

Malta remains very concerned by the increase in grave violations against children in Colombia, disproportionately impacting Indigenous children, children of African descent, and girls.

Child recruitment by armed groups is unacceptable and we call for their immediate and unconditional release. Accounts of children being killed, maimed, and victims of sexual violence are alarming and must be strongly condemned.

We call on the Government to take immediate action to protect vulnerable children, and reiterate that child protection is prioritised in the agendas for peace dialogues with armed groups.

Justice for victims of crimes committed during the armed conflict is essential for enduring and sustainable peace in Colombia. We commend the meaningful progress by the Special Jurisdiction for Peace, and we welcome the approaching issuance of its first restorative sentences.



It is important for victims, as well as all those under the Court's authority, that these sentences are issued without delay. We call on all the parties involved to overcome obstacles and create the best possible conditions for this long-awaited and critical moment in Colombia's peace process.

In conclusion, Malta reaffirms our support and solidarity to the people of Colombia in their path to sustainable peace. We look forward to seeing further progress in the implementation of the Peace Agreement in the coming months.

I thank you.