



# Security Council

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## Report of the Security Council mission to Colombia, 7–11 February 2024

### I. Introduction

1. Members of the Security Council carried out a mission to Colombia from 7 to 11 February 2024, co-led by Guyana, Switzerland and the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland. The terms of reference for the mission are outlined in a letter dated 7 February 2024 from the President of the Council addressed to the Secretary-General (S/2024/165).

2. The mission was the Security Council's third visit to Colombia since the signing of the Final Agreement for Ending the Conflict and Building a Stable and Lasting Peace between the Government of Colombia and the former Fuerzas Armadas Revolucionarias de Colombia-Ejército del Pueblo (FARC-EP) in 2016. The previous missions were conducted in May 2017 and in July 2019. The programme of the visit, annexed to the present report, included meetings in Bogotá (with the President, Gustavo Petro, Government representatives responsible for peace implementation, peace signatories, heads of Government delegations to peace dialogues, magistrates of the Special Jurisdiction for Peace, members of Congress, civil society leaders, representatives of women organizations, the Special Representative of the Secretary-General for Colombia and Head of the United Nations Verification Mission in Colombia, Carlos Ruiz Massieu, and United Nations country team) and two field visits to conflict-affected areas: to a former territorial area for training and reintegration, in Caquetá Department; and to the city of Buenaventura, in Valle de Cauca Department.

3. Following the return of the mission, the Security Council held a briefing on 22 February 2024, at which the co-leads presented their observations and assessments.

### II. Meetings in Bogotá (8 and 9 February)

#### Meeting with the Special Representative of the Secretary-General and United Nations country team

4. The Security Council delegation was briefed at the outset of its visit on 8 February by the Special Representative of the Secretary-General and Head of the Verification Mission; the Resident Coordinator, Mireia Villar Forner, and members of the United Nations country team representing human rights, humanitarian and development perspectives. The Special Representative informed the delegation of the latest national developments and discussions surrounding the peace process,



underscoring that, notwithstanding challenges, there was a strong political will and commitment to further consolidate peace. The Special Representative of the Secretary-General noted that, while violence remained the main obstacle to the implementation of the Final Agreement, the ongoing ceasefires were yielding some positive results. The Council heard a common assessment by the Mission and United Nations partners that Colombia had made historic progress in the context of its peace process, that the Final Agreement should remain at the core of peacebuilding efforts in the country, that its full implementation was key to addressing current challenges, and that additional dialogue initiatives with armed groups under the current Government's policy of total peace were a complementary strategy for expanding the scope of peace.

5. The delegation was informed that the Verification Mission and the country team, while not structurally integrated, provide coordinated support for the different chapters of the Final Agreement. They have helped to build trust and dialogue between various parties and branches of state which have remained fragmented and polarized. In addition to the mandate of the Verification Mission, the Resident Coordinator stated that the United Nations system comprised of 26 entities was delivering around \$200 million a year in programmatic investments for peace. Support for peace was central to the current Government's national development plan and would be an important element in a new United Nations Sustainable Development Cooperation Framework, expected to be concluded early in 2024. The approach to peace of the current Government and its openness to receive support from the United Nations was widely appreciated, and briefers stressed the importance of translating strong political will and visionary plans into impactful activities on the ground. They emphasized that it was especially important to increase protection for vulnerable communities and individuals, including former combatants and social leaders, and to address the root causes of the conflict in Colombia through key structural reforms of the Final Agreement intended to extend the presence of a centralized State to marginalized rural areas. Among the indicators of the concerning realities to be addressed: the United Nations Development Programme referred to the fact that nearly 70 per cent of the population living below the poverty line (36.6 per cent) or in a situation of economic vulnerability (30.7 per cent); the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights reported having verified the killings of 105 human rights defenders in 2023; and the Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs reported 250,000 internally displaced persons over the same period (1.5 million since the signing of the Final Agreement) in the context of the continuing competition by illegal armed groups for territorial control and illicit economies. Responding to questions and observations of Council members, the Special Representative of the Secretary-General underscored the importance of State presence to prevent the recycling of violence in rural areas, and the potential for ceasefires currently underway with armed groups, while aimed initially at building trust at the peace table, to lead progressively to increased relief for the civilian population. Delegation members expressed their appreciation for the broad contributions by the United Nations system to peace in Colombia and encouraged this commitment to continue.

#### **High-level meeting of Government entities responsible for peace implementation**

6. The Vice-Minister for Foreign Affairs of Colombia, Elizabeth Taylor Jay, chaired a meeting with high-level officials responsible for peace implementation and affirmed that, for the Government of Colombia the Final Agreement was the basis for a full and sustainable peace, and acknowledged the role of the Security Council in supporting its implementation through the Verification Mission. The delegation welcomed this commitment and inquired about issues of interest and concern for the Council, such as the security of former combatants, the implementation of the ethnic

chapter and gender provisions of the Final Agreement, the impact of violence by armed groups on communities, and the potential synergies between the Final Agreement and the current dialogue processes.

7. Gloria Cuartas, Director of the Unit for Implementation of the Final Agreement in the Office of the High Commissioner for Peace, stated that the two pillars of the Government's total peace policy are being implemented simultaneously and complementarily, and that the Government, which had emphasized the rural reform chapter, was developing indicators to measure the impact of rural reform actions at the community level. She acknowledged the concerning levels of violence against former FARC-EP combatants and social leaders and referred to the National Commission on Security Guarantees, and the precautionary measures ordered by the Special Jurisdiction for Peace, as instruments that could help the authorities respond to the violence. The Minister of Agriculture explained that land issues had been at the heart of the armed conflict and referred to the efforts by the Government to distribute land per the terms of the Final Agreement as an "unprecedented" agrarian reform. The head of the agency responsible for the reintegration of former combatants, said that after inheriting a situation of lagging implementation, the Government was working to ensure a more comprehensive, collective approach, that prioritized access to land and housing, the sustainability of productive projects of ex-combatants, empowerment of women former combatants and the political rights of those who laid down their arms. A representative of the Ministry of Defence expressed the commitment of the armed forces to the peace process, noting the protective presence of security forces around former territorial areas for training and reintegration, the deployment of the specialized police force created under the Final Agreement, and new policy instruments such as the national defence policy and the public policy to dismantle illegal armed groups and criminal organizations completed under the current Government. A representative of the Ministry of Justice noted the role of its Special Investigative Unit, set up under the Final Agreement, and said its role was to investigate crimes against ex-combatants and human rights defenders, citing results in terms of arrest warrants, indictments and sentences. The representative of the Office of the Vice-President underscored the commitment by the Government to the ethnic chapter, noting the recent pact for its implementation had set a goal of 60 per cent compliance by 2026. The High Commissioner for Peace, Otty Patiño, stressed that the Government increasingly sought to "territorialize" peace efforts, bringing more impactful actions on the ground in regions affected by conflict.

### **Meeting with the President of Colombia, Gustavo Petro**

8. In a meeting with the President, Gustavo Petro, the delegation expressed its gratitude for the invitation to visit Colombia, acknowledged the country's progress in the implementation of the Final Agreement and its efforts to broaden peace through dialogue, and noted that while there was more to be done, Colombia's commitment to sustainable peace was a positive example for the world. The delegation expressed its hope and its encouragement for the success of the Colombian Government and people in consolidating peace. The President expressed his appreciation for the Council's visit and for its support for Colombia's peace efforts.

9. President Gustavo Petro noted that the conflict in Colombia, which has plagued the country for decades and marked the lives of at least three generations, had become increasingly complex. To consolidate the gains and achieve a lasting peace, he said that the Government's total peace policy was vital, it aimed at ending conflict in a comprehensive and inclusive manner through the implementation of the Final Agreement, combined with peace dialogues and agreements of submission to justice with remaining illegal armed groups. In that regard, he announced his intention of launching a new dialogue process with the armed group Segunda Marquetalia, a

dissident faction of the former FARC-EP whose leaders had subscribed to the Final Agreement and later left the process.

10. The President outlined ways in which the Final Agreement sought to address the root causes of the conflict in Colombia, through rural reform, transformations of the territories, truth and security. The President pointed out that land issues were at the heart of the conflict, there was no shortage of fertile land in Colombia, but it was concentrated in the hands of landowners who did not cultivate the land. This hampered revenue generation for rural communities. Ports along the Pacific coast, for example, were impoverished compared to other countries. Well-developed modern cities in Colombia coexisted with rural peripheries affected by extreme poverty. Colombia was among the most inequitable countries in the world, which in turn fuelled illicit economies. Some 3 million hectares of land were to be distributed through the rural reform effort, and 7 million land titles needed to be registered in the land cadaster. Thousands of peasants which had land for generations had never received land titles. However, only 13 thousand hectares of land had been distributed thus far. The President underscored the need to anchor the peace processes into the territories so that local communities, especially those most affected by violence such as Indigenous and Afro-Colombian communities, could be part of Colombia's transformation. Turning to transitional justice, the President noted that over the years, approximately 700,000 people were killed in Colombia through its conflict. He said various actors had committed crimes against humanity. For Colombia to move forward, it was essential, he remarked, to cast light on these crimes, and to avoid a fragmentation of truth-seeking efforts between different jurisdictions – the Special Jurisdiction for Peace, established under the Final Agreement, the ordinary justice system and the justice and peace system previously created for former paramilitaries. President Petro also noted that security was key, he deplored the killing of 418 former combatants since the signing of the Final Agreement and expressed concern at the number of former FARC-EP who remained in prison or had not been granted amnesties; this was sending a message that was not conducive to consolidating peace.

11. President Petro observed that on balance, in the seven years since its adoption, the objectives of the Final Agreement had not yet been fulfilled in accordance with the timeframe for its implementation. His Government was working to implement what should have been done in previous years. He observed that public investments and Government spending following the signing of the Final Agreement had largely favoured already prosperous territories and the wealthiest classes, and that traditional ministries received a far greater share of the budget than the new institutions derived from the Final Agreement. He said bringing peace dividends and transforming the conflict-affected regions was essential, including by addressing the plight of those who often had no alternatives to cultivating coca. In addition, aspects such as illicit gold mining, shifts in the international drug trade and migration had added other layers of complexity to the situation. The President said he would commit the remainder of his presidency to accelerate implementation of the Final Agreement and to further the Government's efforts to engage in dialogue with armed actors. The hope was that these latter efforts would lead to a reduction of violence and some indicators already showed progress, albeit unevenly. Regarding the possible appointment of a High Counsellor for Peace, as had been previously announced, President Petro referred to the roles of Gloria Cuartas to coordinate the implementation of the Final Agreement and of Otty Patiño to coordinate negotiations and dialogue efforts, noting that the overall coordination of peace efforts should remain with the President.

#### **Meeting with signatories of the Final Agreement**

12. During a meeting with signatories of the Final Agreement – leaders and members of Congress from the Comunes Party and other representatives of the former

FARC-EP – the Council delegation acknowledged the continuing commitment of the former guerrilla to the peace process and their optimism despite uncertainties and risks including the violence that had claimed the lives of 418 former combatants since the signing of the Final Agreement. Comunes President, Rodrigo Londoño, thanked the Security Council for its firm support for the Final Agreement and its acknowledgement of the bilateral character of the peace process. He stated that the Final Agreement would not have made it to a seventh anniversary without the United Nations.

13. Londoño and other senior leaders of the former FARC-EP shared a series of concerns about the state of implementation of the Agreement, several of which were reflected in a letter to President Petro published by Comunes the day of the arrival of the Security Council delegation. Whereas the Final Agreement should be at the core of peacebuilding efforts, the party observed a lack of coordination among the Government entities responsible to implement it, and too many measures remained in the planning stage. Legal security was another key concern, Londoño argued that the Special Jurisdiction for Peace was straying from the terms of the Final Agreement, and that Comunes shared the views expressed in this regard in a letter sent by President Petro to the Security Council. Among the key concerns for Comunes were the prospect of sentences being applied not only to those with the most responsibility (as had been envisioned by the parties who negotiated the accord), but also to middle and lower ranking members of the former guerrilla; delays in the granting of amnesties for some 7,000 former guerrilla members; and concerns that the sentences imposed would impede economic and political reintegration. He urged stronger efforts to protect former combatants and to end “impunity” for killings. Irrespective of these concerns, Londoño assured that “no matter what happens, we will not return to arms”. Responding to questions about the degree of polarization around peace issues, Comunes leaders said that the transition from the previous administration to the current left-leaning Government that was seeking structural transformations, had created a better environment for the implementation of the Final Agreement, and that polarization had decreased from previous levels. Security Council members were also informed about challenges faced by the more than 3,000 women signatories of the Final Agreement, and of the efforts by the Government to support the approximately 7,000 children of former members of FARC-EP born since the adoption of the Final Agreement. The Security Council delegation attended a performance by *Hijas e hijos de la paz*, a choir of children of the former FARC-EP members.

#### **Meeting with the Special Jurisdiction for Peace**

14. The Security Council delegation visited the offices of the Special Jurisdiction for Peace, a transitional justice tribunal established under the agreement as part of a Comprehensive System for Truth, Justice, Reparations and Non-Repetition. The delegation was received by the President, Vice-President and magistrates of the Special Jurisdiction for Peace. The delegation confirmed its keen interest in the advancement of Colombia’s transitional justice process, including the expected issuance in 2024 of its first restorative sentences, and recalled its invitation for dialogue among key stakeholders in preparation for this phase. Members of the Council acknowledged the important work of the Special Jurisdiction for Peace and the pioneering nature of the transitional justice system. They stressed the importance of accountability and a victim-centred approach and welcomed in this context the decision to open Case 11 on conflict-related sexual violence as the last of its macro cases.

15. The President of the Special Jurisdiction for Peace, Roberto Vidal, explained the origins and mandate of the Special Jurisdiction for Peace as an independent judicial body derived from the Final Agreement, enshrined in the constitution of

Colombia, and mandated to ensure accountability for war crimes and crimes against humanity committed during the conflict with an emphasis on maximizing truth and reparation to victims through restorative justice. Victims have been active participants in the procedures of the Special Jurisdiction for Peace, as evidenced by the roughly 9,000 victims registered individually and 300,000 registered collectively. Mr. Vidal stated that by focusing investigations and prosecutions on 11 macro cases covering the most serious crimes, and some 400 individuals who would be deemed the most responsible, the intention of the Special Jurisdiction for Peace has always been to maximize the granting of amnesty for former combatants. Mr. Vidal stated that about 70 per cent of the former FARC-EP members (some 9,000 people) had been granted amnesties for political crimes, and that the tribunal was working to resolve outstanding cases. While several cases had entered the trial stage (e.g. on kidnappings by FARC-EP and the extrajudicial executions of civilians by the armed forces of persons falsely presented a combat fatalities), he noted that the time allotted for the Special Jurisdiction for Peace to carry out its work was finite. The tribunal had only two more years left in its eight-year investigations phase, and then seven additional years to conclude trials and sentences. Mr. Vidal highlighted the progress made towards restorative sentences and said that the contributions to the truth have already been immense. He also spoke of the restorative projects involving both former combatants and members of the public security forces, one of which entails environmental restoration in Bogotá.

16. Magistrates from various chambers of the Special Jurisdiction for Peace addressed the Security Council delegation, noting that the vast majority of those indicated for crimes had fully accepted their responsibility, qualifying them for restorative sentences rather than adversarial proceedings. The complexity of granting amnesties was explained, although magistrates reported that 9,000 former FARC-EP members had thus far received amnesties by governmental decree, through the ordinary justice system or the Special Jurisdiction for Peace since its creation. They added that amnesties that were pending were related to complex cases that needed to be carefully reviewed due to the nature of the crimes associated to them. They further noted that that the Special Jurisdiction for Peace had taken steps to ensure the protection of persons under its jurisdiction through cautionary measures ordering State institutions to prevent and respond to killings of former FARC-EP combatants. Noting also that the Special Jurisdiction for Peace had faced political and institutional obstacles, magistrates invited the Council to maintain its support for the Special Jurisdiction for Peace, so that it could maintain its judicial independence. They highlighted the Council-mandated role of the Verification Mission in verifying compliance with and implementation of the sentences as a key factor that could contribute to success. They pointed to Colombia's transitional justice system as a potential model for peace processes elsewhere in the world.

#### **Meeting with members Congress**

17. In a meeting with members of Congress from across the spectrum of Colombia's political parties, the Security Council delegation was informed about pending legislative initiatives linked to the peace process and heard diverse perspectives on past and current peacebuilding strategies. Members of the Council recognized the important role of the legislature in the implementation of peace, noted a common desire for peace despite political differences, and expressed hope for increasing national consensus around the path forward to consolidate peace. Several lawmakers cited the involvement of the Security Council as being critical in helping to keep the peace process afloat through the first seven years of implementation of the Final Agreement.

18. Regarding the role of Congress, participants pointed to advances during the current Administration such as increased budgeting for peace implementation, including rural reforms. Several also referred to legislation still pending, including a submission to justice law, key to facilitating judicial dialogue processes with criminal organizations, and reforms to a 2011 law establishing reparations to victims. While the current composition of Congress is more representative of the Colombia's diversity, members from parties within and outside of the governing coalition regretted the failure to enact the political reform envisaged in the Final Agreement to expand inclusion and transparency within Colombia's democracy.

19. Regarding peacemaking strategies, the discussion reflected divergent views regarding the terms and impact of the Final Agreement and on the dialogue initiatives with armed groups pursued by the current administration. An independent senator who was a negotiator of the Final Agreement with the FARC-EP urged a stronger focus on the Final Agreement within the overall strategy of total peace, and expressed concern that peacebuilding efforts could fail without accelerating the implementation of the Final Agreement. He urged tripartite dialogue to foster agreements between the Government, Comunes Party and the Special Jurisdiction for Peace. Several other lawmakers, while recognizing the dialogue with armed groups as a necessary complement to the Final Agreement, raised concerns about violence and territorial expansion by those groups, and urged that talks be coupled with more assertive security policies. Members of the party of the previous Administration expressed opposition to current dialogues and said that the Final Agreement had fostered impunity. Countering that view were various interventions that questioned the efficacy of hardline approaches in the past, and highlighted that Colombia, despite the ongoing presence of armed groups, had advanced considerably in reducing conflict-related violence since the height of the conflict with the FARC-EP, which was historically the largest insurgency. A lawmaker who was previously a leading conflict analyst cited, as an example, that whereas some 950 of the country's roughly 1,100 municipalities were severely affected by armed conflict prior to the Final Agreement, that number was currently about 240. Internal displacement and military casualties were also down sharply from the height of the conflict, to 10 per cent and 15 per cent, respectively, of the former levels.

#### **Meeting with the High Commissioner for Peace and Heads of Government delegations to peace dialogues**

20. A meeting with the High Commissioner for Peace, and the heads of the Government's delegations to the dialogue processes with the Ejército de Liberación Nacional (ELN) and the group calling itself Estado Mayor Central (EMC) provided the Security Council delegation with an opportunity to gain deeper insight in Government's overall peace strategies and its dialogue initiatives toward these illegal armed groups. The High Commissioner said the Government knew it needed to accelerate the pace of implementation of the Final Agreement. He noted that communities were still awaiting the dividends of peace, and that active armed groups have cited implementation failures to justify their activity. The Government would focus increasingly on "territorializing" its efforts – by increasing the implementation of the Final Agreement at the local level (for example, deepening the rural development plans with territorial focus and providing peasants with alternatives to illicit crops) and bringing other peace dividends to the regions via the immediate implementation of partial accords reached in negotiations with armed groups (e.g. establishing peace territories in several departments). Local peace dialogues would also be supported. The High Commissioner informed the Council of a new dialogue process with the armed group Segunda Marquetalia – a dissident faction of the former FARC-EP whose leaders had signed the Final Agreement and later left the process. The Government also sought to harmonize peace dialogues with security, human

rights and justice measures. Given the multiplicity of armed groups, it also envisioned possible multilateral dialogues and ceasefire arrangements.

21. The Government's chief negotiator for the ELN talks, Vera Grabe, the first woman to hold such a position in Colombia, cited the negotiations with that group as the most advanced of the dialogue processes. Although progress was more gradual than hoped for, the latest round of talks held in Cuba had produced a six-month renewal of the bilateral ceasefire, and ELN commitments to cease ransom kidnappings and the recruitment of children aged 15 and under. The next phase of societal participation in the process would begin in May 2024. Actions would also be rolled out to bring social investments and alleviate the effects of the conflict on communities in eight areas defined by the parties as critical zones. In addition, a multi-donor fund would be created to facilitate the transition to peace. Delegation member Iván Cepeda praised the participation of the Special Representative of the Secretary-General at the peace table and of the Verification Mission in the ceasefire monitoring and verification mechanism. He cited positive results to date in terms of prevention of clashes with the armed forces and fatalities owing to ELN actions, while acknowledging that violence continued apace between armed groups.

22. The Government's chief negotiator for the EMC talks, Camilo González Posso, cited notable progress achieved in the first 14 weeks of negotiations including the adoption of five framework agreements and seven ceasefire protocols. The agreements included commitments to act within the framework of international humanitarian law, in particular enhancing provisions for the protection of civilians, and a specific pledge by EMC to cease ransom kidnappings and the recruitment of children under the age of 15. The Government and EMC had agreed in January 2024 to extend their bilateral ceasefire for an additional six months through 16 July 2024, and could build on some positive results during its initial three months including a reduction in EMC actions and its liberation of kidnapped persons. Discussions on a formal negotiating agenda and the participation of civil society in the talks will resume in the next round, to be held in March 2024. Mr. González stated that achieving considerable reductions in violence would be the main challenge this year. The Government appreciated the support of guarantor countries and the good offices of the Secretary-General and hoped that the Security Council would authorize the participation of the Verification Mission in the monitoring and verification of the ceasefire. Responding to questions about the cohesion of the armed groups and the implications for the success of talks, the Government negotiators expressed confidence that progress could be made. They stressed that, notwithstanding continued conflict owing to the presence and actions of those groups, the country had become significantly more peaceful and democratic in the context of the peace process and Final Agreement.

#### **Meeting with civil society leaders**

23. The Security Council delegation met with a group of civil society representatives from think tanks and academia, peace platforms, churches, victims, human rights and peasant organizations, youth, ethnic groups and the private sector. Participants voiced many common observations about the state of implementation of the Final Agreement and on the importance and challenges to the Government's dialogue efforts towards remaining illegal armed groups. Council members acknowledged the importance of civil society in peacebuilding.

24. Participants agreed broadly on the historic importance of the Final Agreement. The end of the conflict with FARC-EP and its conversion into a political party had been a major success for Colombia. The transitional justice system through the final report of the Truth Commission, was important for bringing the truth to light. And to varying degrees, an institutional commitment to implementation had continued



through three administrations since the signing of the Agreement. The role of the Security Council had been important in helping to sustain advances. Nevertheless, various participants expressed concern about backlogs in implementation of key chapters, especially the comprehensive rural reform, illicit crop substitution programs, ethnic chapter and gender provisions. Whereas most credited the current administration for a stronger focus than its predecessors on these structural aspects, several argued that the Final Agreement was not sufficiently prioritized in comparison to the investment in the new dialogue processes. Much more needed to be done to meet the core challenge of extending the State's presence to the former conflict regions where armed groups and illegal economies persist in its absence. Church leaders spoke of the need for reconciliation and a deeper involvement of civil society through national and departmental peace councils.

25. Representatives of human rights and justice organizations voiced deep concern about the killings of local defenders and social leaders. They called for more efficient investigations by the office of the Attorney General and more effective application of new instrument such as the public policy to dismantle illegal armed groups and criminal organizations developed under the Final Agreement in consultation with civil society. A leader for the victims raised concerns that restorative sentences to be imposed by the Special Jurisdiction for Peace may not sufficiently consider the proposals of victims, thereby limiting their potential reparative effect.

26. Regarding the challenge of simultaneous dialogues with several armed groups, the Security Council delegation heard calls for increased incorporation of humanitarian provisions within the ceasefire agreements; increased linkages between the different peace tables; clear differentiation between the treatment of groups of political and criminal nature; and the adoption of a complementary security strategy that could strengthen the Government's position.

#### **Meeting with women's organizations**

27. The Security Council delegation held a dedicated meeting with women's organizations that covered three main aspects of the women and peace and security agenda, namely the status of implementation of the gender provisions of the Final Agreement, the upcoming launch of Colombia's first national action plan on Security Council resolution [1325 \(2000\)](#), and the inclusion of women and gender considerations in the ongoing peace talks with armed groups. The delegation expressed its interest in women's involvement in peace advocacy, acknowledging progress but emphasizing the need for continued efforts. The importance of a substantive gender approach in peace negotiations, the specific challenges facing women ex-combatants, and the adoption of an intersectional approach to peace implementation were highlighted.

28. Women leaders acknowledged the commitment by the Government to implement the 122 gender measures of the Final Agreement, while noting concerns about delays in the implementation in key areas such as the integral rural reform, which includes 30 per cent of the gender measures of the Agreement. The women leaders called for women's participation to extend beyond consultations, to decision-making roles. On the basis of Security Council resolution [2704 \(2023\)](#), where the Council emphasized the efforts of the Verification Mission to integrate a gender perspective as a cross-cutting issue into its planning, verification and reporting, women leaders called upon the Council to monitor and encourage the implementation of gender measures in rural reform, political participation and the ethnic chapter, underscoring the diversity of women in Colombia and called for additional funding for these efforts. They stressed the importance of the sustained support of the Security Council to keep the concerns of women on the agenda. The representative of the United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women

(UN-Women) further underscored the need for accelerated implementation of gender measures, clear impact indicators, and increased funding for women's organizations and protection for women's leaders.

29. Regarding the peace dialogues, participants affirmed that Colombian women continue to watch hopefully as the total peace process progresses and emphasized women's desire to play a greater role. While welcoming that a woman is leading the Government's negotiating delegation with ELN and a national participation committee, they urged going beyond gender parity in delegations and for the women and peace and security agenda to be substantively considered in the negotiations. Some called for the verification mechanism to establish secure channels for women to report ceasefire violations.

30. Women leaders also described the ongoing process of adoption of the national action plan, recalling that women had advocated for the design of a national action plan for many years. They expressed hope that this important tool would ensure gender mainstreaming into the implementation of the Final Agreement and the ongoing negotiations to expand peace through dialogue. They further called on the United Nations system and international community to monitor and support its implementation both politically and financially.

### **III. Field visits ( 9 and 10 February)**

#### **9 February: Field visit to the Agua Bonita former territorial area for training and reintegration, Caquetá Department**

31. On 9 February, the delegation visited the Agua Bonita former territorial area for training and reintegration in the southern Department of Caquetá, a former stronghold of the FARC-EP during the armed conflict. They held meetings there with former combatants, local and regional authorities; toured the former territorial area for training and reintegration and were briefed about productive projects, security dynamics and the participation of former combatants in humanitarian demining. They were accompanied on the visit by Government officials leading support to reintegration efforts and representatives from the Departmental authorities. According to the Verification Mission, Agua Bonita currently houses 191 peace signatories (136 men and 55 women) and a total population of 520 people. It is one of the 24 former territorial areas for training and reintegration that today house about a fifth of the roughly 13,000 former FARC-EP members accredited within the peace process, owing to former combatants dispersing since the laying down of arms. Given the strength of its cooperative organizations and the breadth of its productive and community outreach initiatives, the former territorial area for training and reintegration has been recognized as a positive example of how former combatants are striving to build new lives in peace and reconciliation with communities, notwithstanding challenges common to the reintegration process across Colombia.

32. A senior Comunes Party leader who accompanied the visit praised residents for their resilience and steadfast commitment to remain within the peace process. Leaders of the former territorial area for training and reintegration, including women's representatives, said the ex-combatants took pride in their accomplishments, but faced obstacles including security risks, stigmatization, concerns about legal security stemming from ongoing investigations of the Special Jurisdiction for Peace, and the lack of implementation of the comprehensive rural reforms and illicit crop substitution programs that are key to the success of reintegration. It was noted that in Caquetá Department, as in other conflict-affected regions, criticism of the implementation of the Final Agreement had become a rallying point of illegal armed groups, including EMC and Segunda Marquetalia, complicating the situation for

ex-combatants such as those in Agua Bonita who remain committed to the peace process. The leaders welcomed the continued accompaniment of the Verification Mission and support from the international community. The mayor of La Montañita and Governor of Caquetá affirmed the support of their administrations to the peace process and the success of the former territorial area for training and reintegration.

33. Council members touring the former territorial area for training and reintegration were able to observe a library, a memorial, cultural and educational centres, and a fair of products produced by the residents of Agua Bonita, including natural essences, crafts, and fruit from its pineapple plantation. They witnessed mural art covering the communal buildings and housing; the former territorial area for training and reintegration hosts an annual festival that attracts graffiti artists to celebrate reconciliation in Caquetá. The visit concluded with a demonstration of the work of Humanicemos, a pioneering humanitarian demining non-governmental organization comprised of former combatants working in Caquetá and Antioquia departments. The representatives of Humanicemos set out that their productive work promotes peaceful coexistence and reconciliation within the community. They expressed hope that these activities could contribute to reparations as part of transitional justice. The organization was created with the support of donors and the Mine Action Service. Humanicemos reported that it was nearing a significant milestone in declaring an entire municipality in Caquetá to be mine-free.

#### **10 February: Visit to Buenaventura, Valle de Cauca Department**

34. On 10 February, during a visit to the city of Buenaventura, the Security Council delegation focused its attention on the implementation of the ethnic chapter of the Final Agreement and the challenges of peacebuilding in communities on the Pacific coast. Buenaventura is Colombia's main port for international trade, the city of 450,000 people (85 per cent of Afro-Colombian origin) and its surrounding areas have been plagued by armed conflict, poverty, gang violence linked to illicit economies and youth unemployment, and violence against women. The delegation was received by the Vice-President, Francia Marquez, acting Foreign Minister Luis Gilberto Murillo, and local and Departmental authorities. The delegation held meetings with Afro-Colombian and Indigenous civil society representatives, youth leaders and victims of the armed conflict. The Special Representative of the Secretary-General remarked on the significance of Ms. Marquez receiving the Security Council delegation as Vice-President of Colombia, the first Afro-Colombian woman to hold the position, as a sign of how the country is changing. He recalled that only a few years earlier, during the Council's last visit to Colombia in 2019, the Vice-President at the time, a social leader, had been unable to attend a meeting of the Security Council with social leaders in the Department Cauca, where she was from, owing to threats against her life.

35. The Vice-President underlined the historic importance of the Council's visit to Buenaventura as an opportunity to listen to the voices of those who had always resisted violence, in a region representing Colombia's social and ecological diversity. She noted that the territory had been prioritized by President Petro within his peace policy. She highlighted that, although ethnic and territorial rights were recognized in laws and the Constitution and mineral and environmental resources had been regulated, Governments had historically been unable to deliver the benefits to communities and ethnic groups. She pointed to the need for a comprehensive strategy that encompassed opportunities for youth, progress on the ethnic chapter, and titling of land. While recognizing that a truce between gangs, facilitated by the Government and the Catholic Church, had reduced the number of homicides, the underlying causes of violence needed to be addressed. Children, she said, must be given a pen and notebook instead of a gun. The Vice-President welcomed the Security Council's

expansion of the mandate of the Verification Mission to the rural reform and ethnic chapters of the Final Agreement, while observing that one of the barriers to the implementation of the latter was the lack of clear indicators and benchmarks, which should be reformulated. The Government also faced political and institutional resistance to its agenda for change but would keep pressing for peace. In view of the linkage between armed conflict and transnational crime, the Vice-President echoed the call that President Gustavo Petro has made for a reformulation of international drug polices within the framework of the United Nations.

36. Local officials including the Secretary for Security of Valle del Cauca Department, and the mayor of Buenaventura, the first Afro-Colombian woman to lead the city, echoed the calls for peace rooted in social and economic development in the region, with opportunities directed especially at youth, Afro-Colombian and indigenous people. Civil society representatives decried the continuing violence and disruption suffered by vulnerable communities, and appealed for humanitarian agreements, the accelerated implementation of the ethnic chapter and greater attention to the security and participation of women in the peace process. The Security Council delegation held separate dialogues in a community centre with youth leaders and representatives of victims of the armed conflict. The youth leaders, drawn from different parts of the Pacific coast region, affirmed their support to the implementation of the Final Agreement and for rural and urban dialogues with armed groups. Most young people in cities such as Buenaventura and Quibdó, in the Department of Chocó, had been affected by violence. They lived in fear of crossing invisible barriers, risking retribution on themselves and their families. They stressed that young people were lured into violence due to poverty, hunger and the absence of educational and job opportunities. Victims' leaders represented organizations focused on forced disappearances, crimes committed against ethnic people and territories, and sexual and gender-based violence in the context of the armed conflict. They called for a greater commitment by the Colombian State and society to the victims. They stressed the importance of the respective macro-cases pursued by the Special Jurisdiction for Peace and the participation of victims in the processes. The delegation heard a specific call for actions to safeguard a search process for victims of disappearances believed to have been left in an estuary in Buenaventura where dredging is planned. Council members expressed admiration and solidarity for the youth and victim's leaders who shared their experiences and perspectives. Before departing Buenaventura, they attended a memorial ceremony led by mothers of persons disappeared during the conflict.

#### **IV. Media**

37. The Security Council visit was covered by national and international media. The delegation held a joint press encounter with President Gustavo Petro on 8 February, and the mission co-leads issued video statements to the media on 10 February from Cartagena de Indias, where they attended a farewell dinner hosted by the Foreign Ministry and the Special Representative of the Secretary-General. The visit was publicized and documented in photographs and video posted to the digital platforms of the Verification Mission.

## Annex

### Programme of work

#### Thursday, 8 February 2024 – meetings in Bogotá

- Breakfast with the Special Representative of the Secretary-General and head of the United Nations Verification Mission in Colombia, Carlos Ruiz Massieu and United Nations country team
- High-level meeting with Government entities in charge of the implementation of the Final Agreement for Ending the Conflict and Building a Stable and Lasting Peace between the Government of Colombia and the former Fuerzas Armadas Revolucionarias de Colombia-Ejército del Pueblo (FARC-EP)
  - Elizabeth Taylor Jay, Vice-Minister for Foreign Affairs; Leonor Zalabata, Permanent Representative of Colombia to the United Nations; Jhenifer Mojica, Minister of Agriculture and Rural Development; Otty Patiño, High Commissioner for Peace; Gloria Cuartas, Director of the Unit for the Implementation of the Final Agreement; Alejandra Miller, Director of the Agency for Reintegration and Normalization; Alexandra González Zapata, Ministry of Defence; Camilo Umaña, Vice-Minister of Justice; Ana Margarita Gonzalez, Office of the Vice-President; Hernando Toro Parra, Office of the Attorney General;
- Meeting with signatories of the Final Agreement
  - Rodrigo Londoño, President of Comunes party; Julián Gallo Cubillos, Senator for the Comunes party; Rodrigo Granda, Member of the National Political Council of the Comunes party and a representative of that party in the Committee for the Follow-Up, Promotion and Verification of the Implementation of the Final Agreement; Griselda Lobo Silva, Senator for the Comunes party; Pastor Lisandro Alape, Member of the National Political Council of the Comunes Party; Abelardo Caicedo Colorado, Delegate of the National Council of Reintegration; Olga Marcela Rico Sosa, Representative of that party in the Committee for the Follow-Up, Promotion and Verification of the Implementation of the Final Agreement (CSIVI); Tanja Anne-Marie Nijmeijer; Milton de Jesús Toncel.
- Meeting with President Gustavo Petro Urrego
  - President Gustavo Petro Urrego; Iván Velásquez, Minister of Defence; Elizabeth Taylor Jay, Vice-Minister for Foreign Affairs; Leonor Zalabata, Permanent Representative of Colombia to the United Nations; Otty Patiño, High Commissioner for Peace; Carlos Ramón González, Director of the Administrative Department of the Presidency; Gloria Cuartas, Director of the Unit for the Implementation of the Final Agreement; Alejandra Miller Restrepo, Director of the Agency for Reintegration and Normalization.
- Press encounter
  - President Gustavo Petro Urrego; Carolyn Rodrigues-Birkett, Permanent Representative of Guyana to the United Nations; Barbara Woodward, Permanent Representative of the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland to the United Nations; Pascale Christine Baeriswyl, Permanent Representative of Switzerland to the United Nations.

- Meeting with the Special Jurisdiction for Peace
  - **Special Jurisdiction for Peace:** Roberto Vidal, President; Belkis Florentina Izquierdo Torres, Vice-President; Harvey Danilo Suárez, Executive Secretary; Giovanni Álvarez Santoyo, Director of the Investigation and Accusation Unit.
  - **Appeals section:** Rodolfo Arango Rivadeneira, President; Patricia Linares Prieto, Vice-President; Eduardo Cifuentes Muñoz; Sandra Rocío Gamboa Rubiano; Danilo Rojas Betancourth.
  - **Section for the revision of sentences:** Adolfo Murillo Granados, President; Jesús Ángel Bobadilla Moreno, Vice-President; Ana Caterina Heyck Puyana; Claudia López Díaz; Gloria Amparo Rodríguez.
  - **First instance section for cases of acknowledgement of truth and responsibility:** Camilo Andrés Suárez Aldana, President; Ana Manuela Ochoa Arias, Vice-President; Zoraida Anyul Chalela Romano; Juan Ramón Martínez Vargas; Roberto Carlos Vidal López.
  - **Section for cases of absence of acknowledgement of truth and responsibility:** Gustavo Adolfo Salazar Arbeláez, President; Raúl Eduardo Sánchez Sánchez, Vice-President; Reinere de los Ángeles Jaramillo Chaverra; Alejandro Ramelli Arteaga; María del Pilar Valencia García.
  - **Chamber for the definition of legal status:** Sandra Jannette Castro Ospina, President; Pedro Elías Díaz Romero, Vice-President; Heydi Patricia Baldosea Perea; Mauricio García Cadena; José Miller Hormiga Sánchez; Claudia Rocío Saldaña Montoya.
  - **Chamber for the acknowledgement of truth and responsibility:** Julieta Lemaitre Ripoll, President; Óscar Javier Parra Vera, Vice-President; Catalina Díaz Gómez; Nadiezhda Natazha Henríquez Chacín; Belkis Florentina Izquierdo Torres; Lily Andrea Rueda Guzmán.
  - **Amnesty and pardon chamber:** Alexandra Sandoval Mantilla, President; Xiomara Cecilia Balanta Moreno, Vice-President; Diana María Vega Laguna; Juan José Cantillo Pushaina; Marcela Giraldo Muñoz; Pedro Julio Mahecha Ávila.
- Meeting with members of Congress
  - **Senate:** Ariel Ávila, Alianza Verde; Jahel Quiroga, Pacto Histórico; Miguel Uribe, Centro Democrático; Paloma Valencia, Centro Democrático; Humberto de la Calle, independent; Carlos Fernando Mota, Cambio Radical.
  - **House of Representatives:** Andrés Calle, President of the House of Representatives, Partido Liberal; David Racero, Pacto Histórico; María del Mar Pizarro, Pacto Histórico; Diógenes Quintero, Representative of the special transitional electoral districts for peace, Catatumbo.
- Meeting with the High Commissioner for Peace and the Heads of the Government delegations to the peace dialogues
  - Otty Patiño, High Commissioner for Peace; Vera Grabe, Chief Negotiator for the Government in dialogues with the Ejército de Liberación Nacional (ELN); Iván Cepeda, Senator and Government negotiator in the dialogues with the Ejército de Liberación Nacional (ELN); Camilo González Posso, Chief Negotiator for the Government in dialogues with the Estado Mayor Central (EMC); Gloria Quiceno, Negotiator for the Government in dialogues with the Estado Mayor Central (EMC).
- Children's choir, *Hijas e hijos de la paz*.

### Friday, 9 February 2024 – visit to Agua Bonita and meetings in Bogotá

- Visit to the Agua Bonita former territorial area for training and reintegration. Meeting with local leaders, tour of the area and projects
  - Elizabeth Taylor Jay, Vice-Minister for Foreign Affairs; Alejandra Miller, Director of the Agency for Reintegration and Normalization; Gloria Cuartas, Director of the Unit for the Implementation of the Final Agreement; Luis Francisco Ruiz Aguilar, Governor of Caquetá; Federico Alviz Trujillo, Mayor of La Montañita; Diego Ferney Tovar Henao (Federico Montes), Cooperativa Multiactiva para el Buen Vivir y la Paz del Caquetá; Esperanza Torres Alvarado (Ximena), Junta de acción comunal Agua Bonita; Sandra Gonzalez (Betsy), Cooperativa Multiactiva para el Buen Vivir y la Paz del Caquetá; Pastor Lisandro Alape, Comunes party; Concepción Mariany Monroy Torres, Office of the High Commissioner for Peace; Angela Orrego, Humanicemos Desminado Humanitario.
- Meeting with civil society leaders in Bogotá
  - Universidad de los Andes, Catholic Church, Planeta Paz, National Victims Table, Colombian Commission of Jurists, Colombian Association of Petroleum; National Association of Rural, Afro-Colombian and Indigenous Women of Colombia.
- Meeting with representatives of women’s organizations and platforms
  - Red Nacional de Mujeres, Asociación de Madres del Catatumbo por la Paz, Cumbre Nacional de Mujeres y Paz, Red Departamental de Mujeres Chocoanas, La Alianza Mujeres 1325, Comisión Nacional de Mujeres Indígenas de Colombia, Instancia Especial de Mujeres para el Enfoque de Género en la Paz, Consejo Regional Indígena del Cauca, Grupo Género en la Paz, Red Mariposas de Alas Nuevas.

### Saturday, 10 February 2024 – visit to Buenaventura and Cartagena de Indias

- Meetings with Government representatives, Afro-Colombian and Indigenous and community leaders, victims and youth representatives in Buenaventura
  - **National Government:** Francia Márquez Mina, Vice-President; Luis Gilberto Murillo, Minister for Foreign Affairs (a.i.); Elizabeth Taylor Jay, Vice-Minister for Foreign Affairs; Gloria Cuartas, Director of the Unit for the Implementation of the Final Agreement; Alejandra Miller Restrepo, Director of the Agency for Reintegration and Normalization.
  - **Departmental and local Government:** Ana María Sanclemente, Secretary for Security, Valle del Cauca; Ligia del Carmen Córdoba, Mayor of Buenaventura.
  - Afro-Colombian and Indigenous leaders
  - Youth leaders
  - Victims’ representatives
- Dinner hosted by the Foreign Ministry and the Special Representative of the Secretary-General in Cartagena de Indias.
- Statements to the media by mission co-leaders.