



# Security Council

Seventy-ninth year

*Provisional*

**9555<sup>th</sup>** meeting

Thursday, 22 February 2024, 10 a.m.

New York

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<i>President:</i>	Mrs. Rodrigues-Birkett . . . . .	(Guyana)
<i>Members:</i>	Algeria . . . . .	Mr. Gaouaoui
	China . . . . .	Mr. Zhang Jun
	Ecuador . . . . .	Mrs. Sánchez Izquierdo
	France . . . . .	Mr. Olmedo
	Japan . . . . .	Mr. Yamazaki
	Malta . . . . .	Ms. Gatt
	Mozambique . . . . .	Mr. Kumanga
	Republic of Korea . . . . .	Mr. Sangjin Kim
	Russian Federation . . . . .	Mr. Nebenzia
	Sierra Leone . . . . .	Ms. Baimarro
	Slovenia . . . . .	Mr. Žbogar
	Switzerland . . . . .	Mrs. Baeriswyl
	United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland . .	Dame Barbara Woodward
	United States of America . . . . .	Mr. Wood

## Agenda

Security Council mission

Briefing by Security Council mission to Colombia (7 to 11 February 2024)

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*The meeting was called to order at 10.05 a.m.*

### **Adoption of the agenda**

*The agenda was adopted.*

### **Security Council mission**

#### **Briefing by Security Council mission to Colombia (7 to 11 February 2024)**

**The President:** The Security Council will now begin its consideration of the item on its agenda.

At this meeting, the Security Council will hear briefings by the co-leads of the Security Council mission to Colombia, namely, the representatives of Guyana, Switzerland and the United Kingdom.

I shall now make a statement in my capacity as the representative of Guyana.

Before proceeding, I would like to express our profound gratitude to the Government and the people of Colombia for their warm hospitality, and to the staff of the Security Council Affairs Division, the Department of Political and Peacebuilding Affairs, the Department of Safety and Security, the United Nations Verification Mission and the country team in Colombia for the excellent arrangements made for the visit. I would also like to thank the interpreters who accompanied the mission.

The Security Council undertook the mission to Colombia at the invitation of the Colombian Government. The objective of the visit was to demonstrate the Council's full commitment to peace in Colombia, particularly its support for the implementation of the 2016 Final Agreement for Ending the Conflict and Building a Stable and Lasting Peace and the temporary ceasefire agreement signed between the Government and the Ejército de Liberación Nacional (ELN) and to assess the progress, challenges and opportunities associated with the implementation of the agreements.

Members of the Council had the opportunity to meet with national interlocutors and other stakeholders, including His Excellency President Gustavo Petro Urrego and the Vice-President, Her Excellency Ms. Francia Márquez Mina, other key Government and State institutions for peace implementation, peace signatories, civil society, women's organizations, youth and the United Nations country team. Two field visits were also made.

The United Nations country team provided a contextual overview of their efforts in supporting the Government. In the meeting with President Petro Urrego, Council members were informed of the challenges experienced in the implementation of the peace agreement, despite the strong political will and commitment. In that regard, the President expressed concerns about the large number of former combatants who have been killed, those still in prison and the pending amnesty requests still to be addressed. He said non-compliance with the 2016 agreement, including the absence of the State, could see those territories return to conflict. The historical inequalities and the centre-periphery divide and his commitment to the equitable distribution of resources were underscored.

The meeting with several members of the Senate and the Congress offered a diversity of views. The progress made since the signing of the 2016 peace agreement was praised, but concerns were also expressed about the pace of implementation. Other issues raised included the need for electoral reform, the decentralization of the State, the need for greater progress in delivering justice and reparations for victims, the need for the "total peace" policy to be linked to the implementation of the 2016 peace agreement and the centrality of land reform in advancing the peace process.

In the interactive exchanges with representatives of civil society organizations, they highlighted the need for a robust State presence in the territories, the need to accelerate the implementation of the rural and ethnic chapters of the peace agreement, the importance of dialogue with victims and the many challenges associated with insecurity, the drug trade and a lack of economic and educational opportunities for young people. A multilateral ceasefire agreement to include armed groups was also suggested.

One of the field visits was to Buenaventura, a predominantly Afro-Colombian port city and home to a local monitoring and verification mechanism of the ceasefire between the Government and the ELN. In the presence of the Vice-President, we met with Afro-Colombian and indigenous leaders, who called for stronger coordination between national and local entities. They decried the limited implementation of the ethnic chapter and called upon the Security Council to provide oversight to ensure that it is fully implemented, citing issues of historical racism, displacement and natural resource destruction in their territories. They demanded to have a greater voice, including of women,

in decision-making processes, even as they expressed confidence in the Vice-President, the first Afro-Colombian woman to hold the position. On the illegal drug trade, they called for that to be addressed at the international level, since it is an international problem that cannot be addressed by Colombia alone.

In summary, I would like to highlight six main messages that were heard throughout.

First, there is broad commitment and support for the implementation of the 2016 final peace agreement.

Secondly, there is need for the rapid implementation of the agreement, particularly with respect to rural reform and the ethnic chapter. Implementation must be context-specific, with efficient coordination between the national and local entities.

Thirdly, addressing the issue of access to, and ownership of, land is at the centre of resolving the conflict.

Fourthly, the lack of State presence in rural areas must be urgently addressed.

Fifthly, the continued support of the Security Council is critical, and the United Nations Verification Mission is central in that regard.

Sixthly, the impact of the drug trade on Colombia is a problem that Colombia cannot solve on its own and must be tackled internationally.

Finally, in my assessment, the visit to Colombia was an invaluable experience. It helped to contextualize the reports we receive at the Security Council from the United Nations Verification Mission and to understand how the Council's support is viewed by Colombian stakeholders. Moreover, it allowed us to experience the implementation efforts at first-hand and to interact directly with the people and the communities concerned, as they outlined their challenges but also their hopes, dreams and aspirations for a better and brighter Colombia.

I resume my functions as President of the Council.

I now call on the representative of the United Kingdom.

**Dame Barbara Woodward** (United Kingdom): Let me echo your appreciation, Madam President, to the Government of Colombia, the Secretariat, the United Nations Verification Mission in Colombia, led by Special Representative of the Secretary-General

Ruiz Massieu, and to all the interlocutors with whom we engaged in Colombia. I would also like to thank my co-leads, Guyana's presidency and Switzerland, for their close cooperation throughout the visit. I will reflect upon the sessions led by the United Kingdom.

In Bogotá, the Security Council heard firm commitment, as you said, Madam President, to the 2016 Final Agreement for Ending the Conflict and Building a Stable and Lasting Peace and the importance of security guarantees for former combatants from Government entities in charge of peace implementation.

The Council also met with the High Commissioner for Peace, Otty Patiño, to discuss the Government's vision of broadening peace through dialogue. It was an opportune moment to discuss the Ejército de Liberación Nacional process, given the recent ceasefire extension, which we mandated the Mission to monitor. The Council discussed the dialogue with the Estado Mayor Central, which we have indicated a willingness to consider mandating the United Nations to support. The High Commissioner shared his vision of territorial transformation, extending the State's presence in rural areas, which you, Madam President, referred to, and the importance of peace delivering benefits such as schools, health care and infrastructure. The Council welcomed efforts to strengthen the humanitarian provisions of the ceasefires and encouraged further steps to alleviate the suffering of the civilian population.

In our meeting with the signatories to the Peace Agreement in Agua Bonita, we welcomed their unwavering commitment to peace. We also met them in Bogotá. The signatories called on the Government to accelerate the implementation of the Agreement, including by appointing an entity at the highest level to coordinate efforts. The Council shared concern about former combatants' insecurity and the 418 former combatants killed since the signing of the Agreement. We encouraged the Government to accelerate efforts to develop rapid protection plans.

As you mentioned, Madam President, we also went to Buenaventura, and just to add to what you said, Madam, I think it is worth saying that five years ago the Council was unable to meet a female community leader because of fears for her security. And this time that very same leader, who is now the Vice-President, accompanied us to her region. I think that shows the extent of the transformation under way in Colombia. That was an opportunity, as you said, Madam President,

for Council members to focus on the ethnic chapter and hear first-hand from those whose daily work focuses on building peace at local levels. The Council also heard from youth representatives to understand their daily reality and their calls for educational and economic opportunities.

As you said, Madam President, everywhere we saw the United Nations Verification Mission in Colombia, United Nations agencies, the Colombian Government, communities and individuals working together to build sustainable peace. Peace is not an abstract concept. It is a real social cause, which is a whole-of-society effort.

**The President:** I now call on the representative of Switzerland.

**Mrs. Baeriswyl** (Switzerland) (*spoke in French*): In 2016, as we have heard, Colombia put an end to decades of conflict by signing one of the world's most innovative peace agreements, the Final Agreement for Ending the Conflict and Building a Stable and Lasting Peace. The fact that it is now in its eighth year of implementation is the result of the support of the international community and the Security Council, the excellent work of the United Nations actors, and especially the United Nations Verification Mission in Colombia, but also and above all, the strong desire for a lasting peace and the impressive resilience of the Colombian people.

At the same time, we were able to see that the country, despite the Government's political will for total peace, is facing enormous challenges. Time and again, we heard the same demands, which — and it is a lesson for the Council — are representative of most conflict solutions: better land distribution, greater social justice and, above all, greater protection against violence.

To complement the observations and conclusions of my co-leads, whom I can only support, allow me to briefly describe the elements of the Mission for which I had the honour to be responsible.

On 9 February, the Council visited Agua Bonita in Caquetá, one of the most emblematic areas of the conflict between the Colombian Government and the Fuerzas Armadas Revolucionarias de Colombia-Ejército del Pueblo. It held talks with representatives of the former territorial training and reintegration area and recognized the importance of the reconciliation process for the transition to civilian life. Although community leaders asked for more security guarantees and expressed concern about the scope and pace of the

investigations of the Special Jurisdiction for Peace, their unwavering commitment to peace was impressive. The Council also visited community projects and took an interest in demining carried out by Humanicemos DH, the world's first humanitarian demining organization run by ex-combatants. The visit not only enabled a better understanding of the situation in a local community, but above all of the importance of transitional justice in dealing with the past and the need to link the laying down of weapons with socioeconomic prospects.

On its return, the Council met with women's organizations to discuss the women and peace and security agenda of resolution 1325 (2000) and Colombia's first national action plan on women and peace and security. The representatives described the risks to which they and their children are exposed and the challenges of protecting human rights on a daily basis. They stressed that there should be no amnesty for sexual violence and that the prohibition of sexual violence and child recruitment should be minimum requirements in the current peace talks. Women's participation in decision-making processes does not appear to be sufficiently guaranteed, despite their undeniable contribution to peacebuilding. As they have stressed, there can be no lasting peace without their effective participation at the negotiating table.

On 10 February, the Council also met with victims' organizations in Buenaventura, a region particularly affected by poverty and violence. Those discussions, held, as we heard, in the presence of Vice-President Francia Elena Márquez Mina, also highlighted the importance of accelerating the implementation of the agreement's gender and ethnicity provisions and their inclusion in dialogues with the Ejército de Liberación Nacional (ELN) and the Estado Mayor Central Fuerzas Armadas Revolucionarias de Colombia-Ejército del Pueblo (EMC FARC-EP), as well as the urgent need to increase protection against violence. All those organizations also stressed the important role of the Security Council and the United Nations Verification Mission in Colombia in monitoring and reviewing the implementation of the forthcoming national action plan.

As representative of Switzerland and with regard to the ongoing peace talks with the ELN and the EMC FARC-EP, in which my country is involved as a supporter and guarantor, I would like to stress that dialogue is the only way to achieve peace. We have noted progress in the functioning of ceasefires and welcome the strengthening of civilian protection, as well as the

monitoring and verification mechanisms. Switzerland therefore encourages the Council to extend the mandate of the United Nations Verification Mission in Colombia to include monitoring and verification of the recently renewed ceasefire between the Government and the FARC-EP EMC.

*(spoke in Spanish)*

I think I can speak for all of us when I say that it was important to understand the complexity of the peace, but also that it is possible. Peace must be achieved on the ground, but we also have a great responsibility, as Council members, to support all efforts in that direction. And we can do that only if we continue to speak with one voice.

In conclusion, I would like to thank once again my co-leads, the Council members, the United Nations

Verification Mission in Colombia, the Security Council Affairs Division, the peace signatories, the victims' representatives, the women's organizations and everyone involved for their contribution to the mission and to the Colombian peace process. And, of course, I would like to express special appreciation to the people and Government of Colombia for their warm hospitality.

**The President:** On behalf of the Council, I would also like to express appreciation to all the members of the Security Council and the Secretariat who participated in the mission.

There are no more names inscribed on the list of speakers.

*The meeting rose at 10.20 a.m.*