



# Security Council

Seventy-sixth year

**8818**<sup>th</sup> meeting  
 Tuesday, 13 July 2021, 10 a.m.  
 New York

*Provisional*

---

<i>President:</i>	Mr. De Rivière . . . . .	(France)
<i>Members:</i>	China . . . . .	Mr. Geng Shuang
	Estonia . . . . .	Mr. Jürgenson
	India . . . . .	Mr. Tirumurti
	Ireland . . . . .	Mr. Flynn
	Kenya . . . . .	Mr. Kiboino
	Mexico . . . . .	Mr. De la Fuente Ramírez
	Niger . . . . .	Mr. Abarry
	Norway . . . . .	Ms. Juul
	Russian Federation . . . . .	Mr. Polyanskiy
	Saint Vincent and the Grenadines . . . . .	Ms. King
	Tunisia . . . . .	Mr. Ben Lagha
	United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland . . . . .	Mr. Roscoe
	United States of America . . . . .	Mr. DeLaurentis
	Viet Nam . . . . .	Mr. Phan

## Agenda

Identical letters dated 19 January 2016 from the Permanent Representative of Colombia to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General and the President of the Security Council (S/2016/53)

Report of the Secretary-General on the United Nations Verification Mission in Colombia (S/2021/603)

---

This record contains the text of speeches delivered in English and of the translation of speeches delivered in other languages. The final text will be printed in the *Official Records of the Security Council*. Corrections should be submitted to the original languages only. They should be incorporated in a copy of the record and sent under the signature of a member of the delegation concerned to the Chief of the Verbatim Reporting Service, room U-0506 (verbatimrecords@un.org). Corrected records will be reissued electronically on the Official Document System of the United Nations (<http://documents.un.org>).



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

### **Adoption of the agenda**

*The agenda was adopted.*

### **Identical letters dated 19 January 2016 from the Permanent Representative of Colombia to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General and the President of the Security Council (S/2016/53)**

#### **Report of the Secretary-General the United Nations Verification Mission in Colombia (S/2021/603)**

**The President** (*spoke in French*): In accordance with rule 37 of the Council's provisional rules of procedure, I invite the representative of Colombia to participate in this meeting.

On behalf of the Council, I welcome Her Excellency Ms. Marta Lucía Ramírez, Vice-President and Minister for Foreign Affairs of Colombia, and I request the Protocol Officer to escort her to her seat at the Council table.

In accordance with rule 39 of the Council's provisional rules of procedure, I invite the following briefers to participate in the meeting: Mr. Carlos Ruiz Massieu, Special Representative of the Secretary-General and Head of the United Nations Verification Mission in Colombia, and Ms. Melissa Herrera, Founder and Director of the Latin American Foundation Viva la Vida.

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

I wish to draw the attention of Council members to document S/2021/603, which contains the report of the Secretary-General on the United Nations Verification Mission in Colombia.

I now give the floor to Mr. Ruiz Massieu.

**Mr. Ruiz Massieu** (*spoke in French*): I thank you, Sir, for the opportunity to present the latest report of the Secretary-General on the United Nations Verification Mission in Colombia (S/2021/603) and to inform the Security Council of important recent developments.

*(spoke in Spanish)*

It is an honour to be at this meeting with Vice-President and Minister for Foreign Affairs Marta

Lucía Ramírez. I want to take this opportunity to thank her for her support and that of the national Government for the work of the United Nations Verification Mission in Colombia and to recognize her leadership in advancing gender issues, which are central to the Final Agreement for Ending the Conflict and Building a Stable and Lasting Peace. I also welcome the participation of Melissa Herrera, a young and dynamic leader from the department of Nariño. It is a privilege to share this forum with her and to be able to listen to her important views, together with Security Council members.

Almost five years after the signing of the peace agreement, the peace process in Colombia is entering a critical stage. It is increasingly evident that the determination and work of all the actors involved in this complex and noble task have been worthwhile, despite the multiple and persistent challenges. Proof of this is the simultaneous progress made by the entities of the transitional justice system created by the agreement, to which the participation of all persons, including the victims of the conflict, has been crucial.

The Secretary-General underscores in his report what is undoubtedly a milestone in the Colombian peace process and a benchmark for transitional justice in the world. In April, seven former commanders of the highest leadership of the former Fuerzas Armadas Revolucionarias de Colombia-Ejército del Pueblo (FARC-EP) officially accepted their responsibility for crimes against humanity and war crimes with respect to Case 01 of the Special Jurisdiction for Peace, on hostage-taking and other serious deprivations of liberty. Similarly, last week, the Special Jurisdiction for Peace charged 11 persons, including some army officers and a third-party civilian, with war crimes and crimes against humanity in Case 03 on killings and disappearances presented as combat casualties caused by State agents. In parallel, the work of the Special Unit for the Search for Persons Deemed as Missing has led to the discovery of hundreds of bodies of disappeared persons, including through information provided by former guerrillas, former paramilitary fighters and State agents. This work contributes to bringing peace to the families of the victims after years of painful uncertainty. At the same time, the Truth Commission continues to provide spaces for recognition where victims of different actors in the conflict have been able to come face to face and engage in dialogue with those who years previously caused them irreparable harm.

All these aspects — unthinkable in Colombia until recently — are now possible thanks to the Peace Agreement. I would particularly like to highlight the recent dialogue sponsored by the Truth Commission between kidnapping victims and former FARC-EP combatants. Voices from different regions, with different positions and experiences during the conflict, and even divergent perspectives on the peace process, agreed on the impossibility of justifying the pain caused by the war and on the imperative need to insist and persevere so that it never happens again.

These first fruits of the institutions created to guarantee justice, truth, reparation and non-repetition now demand that the tenacity and generosity of the victims of the conflict be matched and that victims' rights be fulfilled. In essence, this is a necessary condition for the success of the Peace Agreement, and it is a task that requires constant effort, humility and empathy. It will take time to disarm the discourse, structures and identities inherited from the conflict, and thereby contribute to enabling the Colombian people, especially those who experienced the worst of the war first hand, to close the chapter of the conflict once and for all and move forward on their path towards reconciliation. Accordingly, the task entrusted to the Mission by the Security Council to verify compliance with and implementation of the sanctions imposed by the SJP, will decisively contribute to these reconciliation efforts.

*(spoke in English)*

I recently had the chance to visit Montes de María, a region historically affected by recurrent waves of violence. There, I met with several victims and women social leaders. These courageous women recounted their communities' peacebuilding efforts and spoke of their hope of the delivery of the Agreement's promise of non-repetition. I was particularly moved by their testimony of how illegal armed groups try to silence their voices — the voices of the communities — by using not just physical violence but also resorting to emotional violence, threats and personal attacks, which prevent these social leaders and their families from fully exercising their rights and living a normal, peaceful life. This underscores the importance of joint initiatives between civil society and State entities to protect social leaders and human rights defenders, such as the pilot of the Comprehensive Programme for Safeguards for Women Leaders and Human Rights Defenders, currently being implemented in Montes de María.

Violence against former FARC-EP members, social leaders and communities at large persists in municipalities of this and other regions, including along the Pacific coast, and in parts of the south and the north-east of the country. This is mainly related to the actions of illegal armed groups and criminal organizations that thrive in areas characterized by a limited State presence, poverty and illegal economies. The persistent violence and stigmatization against former combatants and members of the Comunes party is particularly concerning, especially ahead of the 2022 elections, when they expect to engage actively in political work across the country.

I also regret to inform the Council that authorities recently confirmed the killing of the four people reported missing by the Land Restitution Unit in May, in Meta department. Their disappearance was reported in the latest report of the Secretary-General. I strongly condemn this vile act, which affects victims and public institutions, and trust that those responsible will be held accountable.

The persistence of violence and insecurity highlight the urgent need for enhanced prevention and protection measures, as well as for additional and more solid steps to dismantle illegal organizations, bring perpetrators to justice, and extend State institutions, public services and development opportunities as quickly as possible to conflict-affected communities.

Despite a challenging reintegration landscape, former combatants continue to demonstrate their commitment to building a new life and participating actively in peacebuilding and development efforts alongside their communities. This is the case, for example, of a group of former combatants in Uribe, Meta department, where, despite the killing of their leader last October, they continue to move forward with their reintegration process, working closely with local communities, to improve, inter alia, schools, community centres and internet connectivity in the area.

Previous reintegration experiences across the globe have proven the importance of linking this process to broader and complementary transformations. Drawing from this knowledge, the Peace Agreement links reintegration provisions to other areas across its different sectors, including comprehensive rural reform, whose implementation is essential to the overall success of the process.

Building on the progress made thus far, it is crucial for the parties to continue working together to provide greater certainty to former FARC-EP members and their families, especially through expanding access to housing and land. In so doing, the Government should ensure equal access to those living outside former territorial areas for training and reintegration. It is also fundamental that the Government and former combatants' representatives at the National Reintegration Council continue approving productive projects and adequately support and guarantee their sustainability. I also encourage the parties to reach an agreement regarding the National Reintegration System to provide for a coordinated approach to accomplish these goals.

Let me recall, once again, the possibilities that the comprehensive implementation of the Agreement offers to progressively tackling the root causes of conflict and invite the parties and State entities to persevere in the coordinated implementation of all provisions of the Agreement. Recent meetings between Government and former combatants' representatives to jointly assess the status of implementation, as agreed by President Iván Duque and Comunes party president Rodrigo Londoño last March, are a step in the right direction. I trust that they will follow up on this endeavour, which will be particularly useful as we approach the fifth anniversary of the signing of the Peace Agreement.

With a still-ongoing third wave of the coronavirus disease pandemic, this remains a time of deep and prolonged hardship for many Colombians, as reflected by recent protests throughout the country. We continue to reject violence from any quarter and urge peaceful dialogue. As I have stated previously, Colombian society and institutions should view the implementation of the Final Peace Agreement as an opportunity to help address many of the long-standing issues facing the country. Given the urgency to resolve these and other pending challenges, bold steps are needed to accelerate implementation in the coming months.

With a new electoral cycle quickly approaching, I invite the parties and all relevant actors to remain committed to the Agreement and to continue prioritizing dialogue to resolve their differences. It is precisely with that goal that the peace process enabled widened democratic spaces and guarantees for participation. I am confident that the Colombian people will take advantage of a more robust democracy, and it will be incumbent upon institutions to protect those gains and

for political leaders from across the spectrum to commit to an environment of respect and non-stigmatization in order to ensure that the upcoming elections will be peaceful as well as inclusive.

The recent approval of the 16 seats intended to promote the participation in Congress of historically excluded populations in conflict-affected regions is an encouraging development. I am also certain that the drive displayed by young Colombian men and women as protagonists of recent mobilizations will translate into their active engagement in the democratic process in order to realize their hopes for a brighter future.

In conclusion, I would once again like to thank the Security Council for its unyielding support to the peacebuilding efforts in Colombia and for the trust placed in the United Nations Verification Mission in the country.

**The President** (*spoke in French*): I thank Mr. Ruiz Massieu for his briefing.

I now give the floor to Ms. Herrera.

**Ms. Herrera** (*spoke in Spanish*): I warmly greet all those present at this meeting. I thank everyone for listening to my voice in this venue. My name is Melissa Herrera. I am a young peacebuilder from the Nariño region of Colombia.

I would like to start by telling a story that is near to my heart. In 1966, a 14-year-old teenage girl from the Valle del Cauca living in poverty exchanged her daughter for a few coins. The baby grew up in Nariño in a foster home, where she was not allowed to study and was subjected to cruel and inhumane treatment.

Lucía, her name, became a mother at the age of 15. She found a purpose in her life in a child whom she raised surrounded steeped in traditional culture. Lucy was the girl's name. Unlike Lucia, she managed to attend university. In her life, she excelled as a teacher of dance and the visual arts and a cultural leader of Nariño.

One Christmas, four days after receiving her vocational degree, she was executed by an armed group in a zone for peace, where she arrived to launch an art exhibition highlighting the work of women peacebuilders in the region.

Lucy's work with the community reminds us of the vital importance of artistic and cultural work to building the social fabric and that cultural rights are also human rights, and we must protect them. It also

highlights the real situation of girls and women who have suffered the impact of the armed conflict. I want to say that the teenager who exchanged her daughter for a few coins is my grandmother. Lucia is my mother. And the young girl killed at Christmas was my sister.

In Colombia, women have made great progress in the context of resolution 1325 (2000), on women and peace and security, and they promoted the inclusion of the gender approach in the Final Agreement for Ending the Conflict and Building a Stable and Lasting Peace. Despite those achievements, challenges persist, particularly for adolescent girls, young women and girls. That is illustrated in the case of Lucy.

The peace Agreement represents hope for young people in my country, who seek an end to the conflict and guarantees of participation in peacebuilding. The voices of young people and the challenges that we face have been amplified during the protests, where we have been at the forefront, voicing our demands and showing our readiness for dialogue and social transformation.

I have come here today convinced that the Security Council's support for peace in my country has yielded results. As a young peacebuilder, I have worked for young people to be heard and to participate in the building of peace for Nariño, in line with resolution 2250 (2015), on youth and peace and security. I therefore participated, at the local level, in the updating of the public policy on adolescents and youth.

On this occasion, representing the young people of my country, I hope that my proposals will be heard. I propose the following to the Security Council.

First, in the context of the mandate of the United Nations Verification Mission in Colombia, specific indicators for the implementation of resolutions 2250 (2015), 2419 (2018) and 2535 (2020), on youth and peace and security, should be included and be reported on periodically.

Secondly, the Council should include in its meetings a section to work on youth issues from a gender perspective.

Thirdly, the Security Council should undertake a field visit to hold consultations with youth representation in all its diversity.

I request the following of the Colombian State.

First, it should assume the following commitments as part of the implementation of the resolutions on

youth and peace and security: increase the inclusive participation of young people in decision-making at all levels; and protect the lives of young people, in particular from any form of sexual or gender-based violence, in post-conflict contexts and provide security guarantees for their leadership and political participation.

Secondly, it should advance investigations into cases of violence against women and young people in the context of the implementation of the peace Agreement.

Thirdly, it should develop strategies and programmes to demobilize and reintegrate young people involved in the armed conflict, prioritizing those in the reintegration process. It should also enhance the collective care of young people in communities and the mental health of those affected by the conflict and the ongoing protests.

Young people are the missing element in peacebuilding. It is our duty to protect them. I thank Security Council members for their attention. I will resume my daily life in the hope of returning to the Council in the future to brief it on the progress that we have made. I conclude by reiterating the commitment of young people to peace, security and humanitarian work.

**The President** (*spoke in French*): I thank Ms. Herrera for her briefing.

I shall now give the floor to those members of the Council who wish to make statements.

**Mr. Roscoe** (United Kingdom): My thanks go first to the Special Representative of the Secretary-General both for his briefing today and for the huge amount of work that he and his team are doing, including in what have recently been challenging circumstances. Whenever Mr. Ruiz Massieu comes to the Security Council, he clearly sets out a pragmatic way forward for us and for all partners in the peace process. We are grateful to him for that work. I also want to thank the civil society briefer, Ms. Herrera, both for sharing her brave and powerful testimony with us today and also for reminding us that culture is what makes us human and that it is one of the cornerstones of peace anywhere in the world. Finally, it is very good to see Vice-President Lucía Ramírez in the Chamber today. I welcome her and her team. The Security Council's relationship with Colombia is one of partnership, and we look forward to working together with her as Colombia continues its journey towards a lasting peace.

As we have just heard, this past reporting period was marked by protests and, unfortunately, acts of violence and destruction. We echo the Secretary-General's call in his most recent report (S/2021/603) for all political and social actors in Colombia to commit to non-violence and to choose dialogue to find solutions to the challenges facing Colombia. We share concerns about human rights violations, particularly in relation to the protests, and we welcome the Colombian Government's commitment to conduct transparent investigations into all allegations of excessive use of force. President Duque Márquez's promise of police reform is also an important step forward.

The challenging recent context should not cause us to overlook the achievements in peace implementation during the reporting period. As we heard from the Special Representative of the Secretary-General, they were particularly significant in regard to the transitional justice system, which is at the heart of the peace agreement. The contributions to the transitional justice process witnessed in recent months were historic. While they may have surfaced painful truths, they have vindicated the purpose of the Comprehensive System for Truth, Justice, Reparation and Non-Repetition.

The United Kingdom welcomed the response of former leaders of the Fuerzas Armadas Revolucionarias de Colombia-Ejército del Pueblo to their indictment of kidnapping by the Special Jurisdiction for Peace. We encourage all involved to acknowledge their role in crimes and injustices, fulfil their responsibility to the victims of conflict and pave the way towards reconciliation. As the Special Representative of the Secretary-General said, closure for those left behind is critical.

Reconciliation will be impossible to realize fully while conflict-affected communities face ongoing insecurity. The United Kingdom continues to be deeply concerned about the persistent threats and deadly violence by illegal armed groups targeted at former combatants, human rights defenders and social leaders, including women and those from indigenous Afro-Colombian and lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender and intersex communities. In that regard, we look forward to the implementation of the recently adopted Strategic Plan for Security and Protection for former combatants.

We also welcome the progress made by the National Protection Unit in assessing pending requests and filling its vacancies, as well as the further convictions

by the Special Investigation Unit. We urge the Colombian Government to build on that, taking further steps, including — as we have called for before in the Council — to implement the public policy to dismantle illegal armed groups and increase the security and civilian presence of the State in conflict-affected areas.

Finally, I would like to touch briefly on reintegration. We welcome recent developments, including the purchase of land for two more former territorial areas for training and reintegration and encourage the Government to consolidate and accelerate that process.

As we have noted before, this is a critical year not only for Colombia's transitional justice process but for the peace process more widely. When the Council holds its next quarterly meeting, the fifth anniversary of the peace agreement will almost be upon us. That will be a moment for the international community to celebrate with Colombia the significant progress achieved to date, while reflecting on the remaining challenges to overcome to ensure a sustainable peace. The United Kingdom remains committed to supporting Colombia as it continues on that path.

**Mr. De la Fuente Ramírez** (Mexico) (*spoke in Spanish*): I am grateful for the briefing by the Special Representative of the Secretary-General, Mr. Carlos Ruiz Massieu, and take this opportunity to acknowledge the work of the personnel of the United Nations Verification Mission in Colombia. I also appreciate the briefing by Ms. Melissa Herrera, whose experience and work as a human rights defender and Founder and Director of Viva la Vida highlights the youth, peace and security agenda almost a year after the adoption of resolution 2535 (2020). I also warmly welcome the Vice-President and Minister for Foreign Affairs of Colombia, Ms. Marta Lucía Ramírez, whose presence attests to the commitment of her country and Government to the peace process, supported by the Security Council.

As we approach the fifth anniversary of the Final Agreement for Ending the Conflict and Building a Stable and Lasting Peace, important milestones have marked a process that, owing to its very nature, is complex and at times painful. One significant step has involved the acknowledgement by former commanders of the Fuerzas Armadas Revolucionarias de Colombia-Ejército del Pueblo of a policy of kidnapping and their responsibility for crimes against humanity and war crimes.

We note the fact that they have asked for forgiveness and their commitment to locate the remains of kidnapping victims who were murdered or died while they were deprived of their freedom. We agree that the decision by the Special Jurisdiction for Peace is an important step towards achieving truth, justice and reconciliation, in line with the rights of the victims. That process can indeed serve as a model for what can be achieved in future peace and justice processes at the international level.

The large number of displaced persons that has resulted from, among other causes, the actions of illegal armed groups is a cause for concern. In that regard, we acknowledge the steps taken by the Government of Colombia and call for the implementation of appropriate public policies to protect the population, including former combatants, human rights defenders and, above all, indigenous and Afro-Colombian peoples.

We acknowledge the efforts of the Government of Colombia and the Comunes party to continue following the road map agreed between President Duque Márquez and the president of the party, and we endorse the proposal to conduct an assessment of the implementation of the peace agreement on the eve of its fifth anniversary.

As co-Chair of the Informal Expert Group on Women and Peace and Security, Mexico welcomes the work done in recent months by the Working Group on Gender of the National Reintegration Council, particularly with regard to the development of local action plans to implement the gender-specific actions of the national reintegration policy. It is wise to work from the local level up to advance that agenda.

As the work of the Special Jurisdiction for Peace moves forward, the impact of conflict-related sexual violence must be studied in greater depth, and the gender approach in investigations must be strengthened. Melissa Herrera's experience is once again an example of the strength and courage of young Colombian women, without whom any peace or reconciliation process would be incomplete.

It is also important to acknowledge steps taken towards holding the first elections of municipal youth councils, as well as the adoption of a bill creating 16 special transitional electoral districts for peace and the ruling that the 16 additional seats in the House of Representatives would be open for the upcoming congressional periods.

It is clear that challenges remain with regard to the substitution of illicit crops, but the fact that almost 100,000 families are participating in the National Comprehensive Programme for the Substitution of Illicit Crops is undeniable. Additional efforts to secure funding is required to support those families. Finding viable solutions, based on voluntary substitution, as established in the Final Agreement, means redoubling work with the communities.

As the Secretary General's report (S/2021/603) aptly describes, the reporting period was marked by social unrest and polarization as a result of protests in Colombia and regrettable cases of violence that led to loss of life, which is always reprehensible. As we reiterate our call for dialogue and full respect for human rights, we welcome the good offices of the Verification Mission and the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights.

In conclusion, it should be assumed that the socioeconomic impact of the coronavirus disease pandemic and the consequences of decades of conflict do not yet allow for wholly satisfactory results, which leads to understandable disgruntlement on the part of the parties. Nevertheless, there are obvious reasons to remain hopeful that Colombia will be an excellent example of peace and reconciliation. Mexico stands with this sister nation on its path and reiterates its support and solidarity.

**Ms. King** (Saint Vincent and the Grenadines): It is a privilege to deliver this statement on behalf of the three African countries on the Security Council — Kenya, the Niger and Tunisia — as well as Saint Vincent and the Grenadines (A3+1).

I begin by thanking Special Representative of the Secretary-General Ruiz Massieu and Ms. Melissa Herrera, Founder and Director of the Latin American Foundation Viva la Vida, for their briefings. We have taken note of Ms. Herrera's recommendations.

The A3+1 reiterates its full support for the efforts of the United Nations Verification Mission and welcomes the participation of Her Excellency Ms. Marta Lucía Ramírez, Vice-President and Minister for Foreign Affairs of Colombia.

The unprecedented social unrest experienced in Colombia and its concomitant violence in recent months are extremely worrisome. We deplore the senseless killings and disappearance of a number of people, as

underscored in the recent report of the Inter-American Commission on Human Rights. Those difficulties demonstrate the utmost importance of frontally tackling the underlying causes of conflict, including inequality.

The A3+1 notes the advances and setbacks to the implementation of the Final Agreement for Ending the Conflict and Building a Stable and Lasting Peace, enunciated in the Secretary-General's most recent report (S/2021/603). We welcome the advances and encourage greater effort to address outstanding challenges.

The killing of 277 former combatants of the Fuerzas Armadas Revolucionarias de Colombia (FARC) since the signing of the peace agreement and the decision by former combatant lawyers to pursue legal actions in search of protection guarantees underline the gravity of the security situation, which remains deeply troubling. Clearly, there must be greater impetus in strengthening the State's security machinery to curb the relentless violence, especially against the groups made most vulnerable, including former FARC combatants, Afro- and Indigenous Colombians, and social, human rights and women leaders.

We reiterate our appreciation for the adoption of the public policy guidelines for the dismantling of illegal armed groups and urge its full implementation. We note, however, diverging views on the Strategic Plan for Security and Protection for former combatants, following its adoption, and encourage all parties to settle those differences through dialogue. We also urge the Colombian authorities to contribute more resources for the implementation of the comprehensive security and protection programmes and renew our call for regular meetings of the National Commission on Security Guarantees.

The central pillars of the Security Council — peace and security — are interlinked with the fight against human rights violations. Accordingly, we urge the authorities to advance with investigations and address impunity in instances of human rights violations so that perpetrators are held accountable.

Transitional justice remains a cornerstone of peace processes. The A3+1 is pleased with the continued progress in the Comprehensive System for Truth, Justice, Reparation and Non-Repetition. We express satisfaction with the work within the Truth Commission and the Special Jurisdiction for Peace, including efforts on Case 01 and ongoing work on Case 03. Accepting wrongdoings for transgressions committed over the

years is pivotal in ensuring justice, reconciliation and sustainable peace for the victims.

In terms of reintegration, the A3+1 renews its call for enhanced measures to facilitate the proper reintegration of former combatants into Colombian society, including adequate access to basic services. We are encouraged by the positive developments reported by the Secretary-General on the development programmes with a territorial focus, but note the lack of progress on access to land outside of territorial areas for training and reintegration.

We call on the authorities to resolve the controversies surrounding the full implementation of the comprehensive rural reform chapter, as well as those differences on the National Reintegration System. These, together with enhanced efforts towards the sustainable reintegration of all former combatants, will ultimately determine the long-term sustainability of peace in Colombia. We also repeat our call for the parties to capitalize on the Commission for the Follow-up, Promotion and Verification of the Implementation of the Final Agreement to resolve their differences.

The A3+1 attaches great importance to the ethnic chapter of the Final Peace Agreement. It is disheartening that we have not witnessed any action on that important chapter, in spite of recommendations provided through the High-Level Forum of Ethnic Peoples to address issues facing former combatants of indigenous and Afro-Colombian descent. We appeal to the authorities to forge forward with the implementation of that chapter. We further reiterate the need for regular updates on the progress of that implementation.

Finally, we recognize the efforts of various stakeholders encouraging the Government and the Ejército de Liberación Nacional to engage in dialogue. We hope that those parties will heed the calls. We reiterate our support for all constructive efforts aimed at consolidating the peace process. As the peace process approaches its fifth anniversary, we call on the parties to advance with its full implementation in order to reap peace dividends and ensure stability and prosperity for the Colombian nation.

Kenya, the Niger, Tunisia and Saint Vincent and the Grenadines reaffirm our full support for the Colombian peace process and emphasize the paramount importance of the comprehensive implementation of the Final Peace Agreement. Colombians, the people of Latin America

and the Caribbean and the international community can ill afford for the peace process to relapse.

**Mr. Phan** (Viet Nam): First of all, we would like to warmly welcome Her Excellency Ms. Ramírez, Vice-President and Minister for Foreign Affairs of Colombia, to today's meeting.

We thank Special Representative of the Secretary-General Ruiz Massieu and Ms. Herrera for their informative briefings.

It is encouraging to witness positive and remarkable progress in Colombia since the conclusion in 2016 of the Final Agreement for Ending the Conflict and Building a Stable and Lasting Peace. The Government has made great efforts in promoting socioeconomic developments, including a comprehensive rural reform. The reintegration process has also been expanded at all levels. However, we remain concerned about the fact that the terms of the Agreement have not been fully implemented. As a result, like other processes, reintegration still faces multiple challenges. Against that background, we would like to stress the following points.

First, the political will and determination of all the parties concerned in conducting the next steps of the Final Peace Agreement are extremely important for Colombia on the way forward. In that regard, we commend the decision by the Government of Colombia and the Comunes party to conduct a joint assessment of the road map to support the participation of former combatants in the reintegration process. We also acknowledge other commitments of the Government to advance the reintegration process, including the provision of protection and security for former combatants. We hope to see the National Reintegration Council, together with the United Nations and regional and international organizations, play a more active role in supporting the financial mechanisms and recommending appropriate initiatives to assist former combatants in stabilizing their lives.

We call on all the relevant parties to continue engaging in constructive dialogue at political and technical levels, especially through the mechanisms provided by the agreement, with a view to bringing about reconciliation, solidarity and progress for all. While efforts aimed at reintegration are highly appreciated, it is also important to note that this process will be a long-term one requiring patience as well as practical steps.

Secondly, we share the concerns expressed in the latest report of the Secretary-General (S/2021/603) on the implementation of the Final Agreement for Ending the Conflict and Building a Stable and Lasting Peace and the peace-related programmes in Colombia, especially the nationwide demonstrations and associated violence.

We look forward to continued efforts by the Government, national political parties and other relevant stakeholders in implementing all the measures needed to address the root causes of instability, including the challenges of the coronavirus disease pandemic and inequality, security and economic issues. We also support the commitments made by the Government and its partners in addressing the special needs and roles of women, children and youth in that process.

Thirdly, we are once again concerned about violence and the continued killings of social leaders and former combatants. At the same time, we also condemn the unacceptable recent attack on 25 June against a helicopter with the President of Colombia on board. We condemn all those forms of violence and attacks and urge all the groups concerned to stop those appalling acts immediately. The perpetrators must be brought to justice.

We call on the relevant parties to implement necessary measures and make full use of the security guarantee mechanisms elaborated in the peace agreement to protect civilians in the conflict-affected areas, especially women and children. In that regard, it is also important to redouble efforts in ensuring security and bringing development to conflict-affected communities through practical measures. It is through the well-being of those communities that the value of peace and reintegration is proved and maintained.

In conclusion, we would like to reiterate our strong support for the process of peace, security, national reconciliation, unity and development in Colombia, as well as the role of the United Nations Verification Mission in Colombia to that end.

**Ms. Juul** (Norway): We thank Special Representative of the Secretary-General Ruiz Massieu for his very useful briefing and, of course, for the impressive work he and his team are doing in Colombia. Allow me also to extend a warm welcome to Melissa Herrera for sharing her experience at this meeting today and for her valuable recommendations.

Women and peace and security is a high priority for Norway and an area where we enjoy close cooperation with the Colombian Government, headed personally by Vice-President and Minister for Foreign Affairs Marta Lucía Ramírez. I warmly welcome her and thank her for taking time to be with the Security Council today.

Let me start by recognizing the strong commitment of the parties to the continued implementation of the Final Agreement for Ending the Conflict and Building a Stable and Lasting Peace, even in the midst of challenging circumstances with social unrest. Yet the reports of the deaths of 56 persons and of more than 90 still missing are deeply disturbing. In response the international community has insisted on respect for human rights and peaceful protests, condemned any disproportionate use of force and called on all actors to resolve differences through dialogue. We echo those calls at this meeting today.

To put an end to the cycle of violence, it is crucial that all human rights violations and abuses be investigated and that those responsible be held accountable. That includes, of course, those responsible for the attack against the President's helicopter on 25 June.

Since the Security Council last met (see S/2021/401) to discuss the implementation of the Colombian peace agreement, we are concerned to hear reports that an additional 15 ex-combatants have been murdered, that there has been an increase in the recruitment and use of children by armed groups, and that the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights has received reports of 49 additional killings of social leaders and human rights defenders.

We are also worried about the high level of stigmatization experienced by female ex-combatants and human rights defenders engaging in political work. That includes reports of sexual and gender-based violence. Recent events should serve as strong encouragement to the parties to reverse those worrisome developments and implement the full range of provisions in the peace agreement, in particular those related to security guarantees, enhanced political participation and all gender provisions; ensuring the full, equal, meaningful and safe participation of women in the peace process, as well as the active and meaningful participation of ethnic minorities and youth. The protection of human rights defenders must also be strengthened. Indeed, the very purpose of the peace agreement is to ensure that violence is replaced by political participation. Chapter

2 provides a range of tools to strengthen Colombian democracy and to ensure participation in the exercise of politics.

On a more positive note, Norway welcomes the progress made by the integrated system for transitional justice. The Truth Commission provides an invaluable space for truth-telling and encounters between victims and perpetrators. We urge all actors to make full use of the Commission.

It is important to highlight the significance of the assumption of responsibility by former leaders of the Fuerzas Armadas Revolucionarias de Colombia-Ejército del Pueblo (FARC-EP) in Case 01 of the Special Jurisdiction for Peace, concerning hostage-taking and severe deprivations of liberty. That is historic — it is unprecedented that leaders of a former guerrilla group assume responsibility for crimes against humanity and war crimes. It should serve as an example for future cases as a step towards accountability and justice — by the parties, by the Special Jurisdiction itself and for the victims.

At the same time, we must also take seriously the reports that victims and alleged perpetrators, including former members of the FARC-EP and the public security forces, do not feel that they can contribute to the transitional justice system without risking their lives. To ensure due process and meet the demands of victims, it is essential that the authorities protect those appearing before the court.

Let me end by repeating that recent events in Colombia have demonstrated the fragility of peace and the importance of sustained dialogue to resolve political differences. We encourage the parties and all stakeholders to keep working together in order to achieve lasting peace. Rest assured that Norway remains committed to supporting Colombia in those efforts.

**Mr. Tirumurti (India):** I would like to begin by thanking Special Representative of the Secretary-General Carlos Ruiz Massieu for updating us on the developments of the past three months on the peace process and activities of the United Nations Verification Mission in Colombia (UNVMC) towards the implementation of its mandate. I particularly welcome the presence of Her Excellency Ms. Marta Lucía Ramírez, Vice-President and Minister for Foreign Affairs, at today's meeting. I also thank Ms. Melissa Herrera for her briefing.

The UNVMC embodies the capacity of the United Nations to bring about positive change in both security and development aspects of post-conflict settings. It has helped and strengthened the efforts of national authorities to bring together communities and institutions to advance peace, development and the rule of law, especially in areas historically affected by the conflict. We reiterate our support for the Mission and for the Special Representative of the Secretary-General.

We join others in strongly condemning the attack that targeted the Colombian president's helicopter in the north-east of the country on 25 June.

Colombia is witnessing considerable progress in the implementation of the Final Agreement for ending the conflict and building a stable and lasting peace. Today, democracy in Colombia is deepening through increased political participation. The transitional justice system to ensure truth, justice and reparations to victims is making headway, especial under the Special Jurisdiction for Peace and the Truth Commission. We therefore applaud the efforts of the people and the Government of Colombia aimed at realizing the achievements of the last more than four years.

The progress in the last three months towards the implementation of the Final Agreement has been positive despite complex challenges, including the coronavirus disease pandemic. The nationwide strikes during the reporting period have again underscored the need for broader engagement among all stakeholders to address long-standing inequalities, security issues and crop substitution.

In view of the upcoming electoral cycle, the focused implementation of the five priorities proposed by the Secretary-General to reinforce the implementation of the Agreement in 2021 will be important. The authorities also need to take measures to provide safeguards to ensure an inclusive political atmosphere. In this context, I have the following observations to make.

First, the national policy to dismantle illegal armed groups approved in March earlier this year is a positive step to augment the presence of State institutions, including the deployment of security forces. We hope that a road map to implement the national policy will be formulated soon. The integrated and enhanced presence of State authorities throughout the country is fundamental to lasting and durable peace.

Secondly, the ongoing rural reforms, reintegration of former combatants, including those outside the Territorial Area for Training and Reintegration across the country, providing land and effective implementation of illicit crop substitution programmes, need to maintain momentum. It is important to ensure that the great majority of former combatants are involved in income-generating activities. Recently, progress made with regard to the allotment of land to former combatants for carrying out agricultural activities and rooting out use of illicit crops are welcome developments.

Thirdly, the strengthening of protection and security for former combatants is an important element of the peace process. Regular dialogue between former combatants and public security forces, including in the context of the Tripartite Security and Protection Mechanism, could help provide timely and more effective responses to the problem. Sustained measures should be taken to ensure the security of social leaders and human rights defenders, particularly women leaders and indigenous and Afro-Colombian leaders.

Fourthly, strengthening judicial capacity, particularly in the regions most affected by violence, is also significant. The Special Investigations Unit of the Attorney General's Office should be provided with resources to strengthen the campaign against impunity. The work of the National Commission on Security Guarantees must be encouraged in order to make effective progress on the issue of dismantling illegal armed groups.

Fifthly, the voluntary testimony before the Truth Commission acknowledging past crimes and seeking forgiveness is a welcome development and positively contributes to national reconciliation.

Lastly, I would like to highlight the special relationship that India shares with Colombia. In 2019, India and Colombia celebrated the sixtieth anniversary of the establishment of diplomatic relations between our two countries. We have now entered a new decade with the vision to further diversify and strengthen our relations. Over the years, the relationship has expanded in various areas of mutual interest, which is evidenced by growing trade and investments from India and the increasing presence of Indian companies in Colombia.

There is growing interest with respect to India among Colombians, including its culture and heritage. This came to light recently on 21 June, when thousands of Colombians participated in the International Yoga

Day celebrations. As Colombia marches ahead in its journey towards peace, progress and prosperity, India, as Colombia's long-standing friend and partner, will continue to stand in solidarity with the people and the Government of Colombia.

**Mr. Polyanskiy** (Russian Federation) (*spoke in Russian*): We thank the Head of the United Nations Verification Mission in Colombia, Mr. Carlos Ruiz Massieu for presenting the report of the Secretary-General on the situation in the country (S/2021/603). We welcome the Vice-President and Minister for Foreign Affairs of Colombia, Ms. Marta Lucía Ramírez.

Unfortunately, in the current report we see once again a worsening situation in the country. This is due to a deteriorating security situation and a lack of progress in implementing the key commitments set forth in the Final Peace Agreement.

A stark example of this were the large-scale protests in the country, which involved not only opposition forces but also an unprecedented number of young people, as well as indigenous people and women's human rights organizations. The reason for these protests, as we see from the report, was the security policy, as well as the policies dealing with the reintegration of peace process participants, education and agrarian reforms — in other words, areas that are directly linked to the comprehensive implementation of the Final Agreement. We are concerned that 54 civilians and two police officers were casualties of the clashes. We would urge the Colombian authorities to be more professional and to ensure that there is no disproportionate use of force.

We support the five areas earmarked in the latest report of the Secretary-General as priorities for the Colombian Government, specifically the security of the population, the reintegration of the participants in the peace process, the State presence in rural areas, intra-Colombian dialogue and lasting reconciliation. Unfortunately, the report notes no serious progress on any of these points. Furthermore, right at the beginning of the electoral period leading up to the 2022 elections, there is not much ground to hope that there will be significant progress in the near future.

Of course, the safety and security of civilians remain a serious problem. Fighting between groups for territorial influence over the past three months has led to a further 7,500 internally displaced persons and the deaths of an additional 15 participants in the peace

process and 49 human rights defenders. Furthermore, over recent months, there has been a significant deterioration in the situation in the areas bordering Venezuela. Given this, the short-sighted policy of rejecting contacts with Caracas even on such important issues as border control only serves to worsen the security challenges.

There are not many grounds for optimism in the report's data about ongoing problems with agrarian reform, land restitution and crop substitution. Local communities have confirmed they have only gotten 3.5 per cent of the overall amount of land promised for agricultural needs. No more than 7 per cent of families that have upheld in good faith commitments to destroy drug crops have received the compensation provided for them in the final agreement.

Despite the cuts in the acreage of drug plantation, cocaine production is increasing annually nonetheless. This has been confirmed by observations by relevant United Nations entities. We all know that growth in drug production unavoidably leads to an increase in violence and corruption.

With regard to the work of transitional justice, it is regrettable that while the former leaders of the Revolutionary Armed Forces are giving evidence in the Special Jurisdiction for Peace, there have not yet been any reports of similar evidence being given by representatives of the Government. This cannot fail to raise questions as to whether a balance can be struck in establishing truth and justice, especially because we are talking about responsibility for the killing of civilians and other extrajudicial killings.

We have frequently drawn attention to the fact that a comprehensive peace is only possible with the involvement of all parties and with due account being given to a whole range of viewpoints. In this context, it is heartening to hear of the establishment of the first contacts in a long time between the Government, the United Nations Mission and the representatives of the National Liberation Army. We hope that the Colombian parties will manage to return to comprehensive reconciliation negotiations.

Very soon Colombians, along with the whole world, will mark the fifth anniversary of the signing of the historic Final Peace Agreement, which not only embodied the desire of Colombians for reconciliation and their own national responsibility for the future of their own country, but also insured that the peace

process enjoyed the support of the Security Council, the Secretary-General and the guarantor States. Support for the Agreement by the international community shows a kind of vote of confidence in the people of Colombia, with the understanding that the provisions of the document would be unswervingly upheld.

We sincerely wish all Colombians peace. However, it is important to remember that peace is not a voluntary declaration by one side, but a painstaking task in progress — an ongoing process based on ongoing dialogue to take into account the entire spectrum of views.

We commend the role of the United Nations Verification Mission in the country and the personal efforts of the Special Representative of the Secretary-General in promoting peacebuilding in Colombia. We trust that the implementation of the recommendations in the Secretary-General's reports will continue to be a top priority, along with the commitments under the Final Agreement.

As a permanent member of the Security Council, Russia stands ready to continue to support the Colombian peace process in order to ensure that it is sustainable and irreversible.

**Mr. Flynn** (Ireland): I thank the Special Representative of the Secretary-General for a very comprehensive briefing once again. I also thank Ms. Herrera for her important words. I also want to warmly welcome Vice-President Lucía Ramírez to the Council Chamber, and congratulate her on her appointment as Foreign Minister. Her presence is a clear indication of the importance that the Colombian Government places on engagement with the Council.

It is important to acknowledge, and indeed celebrate, the very real progress that has been made in Colombia. Nonetheless, as we have heard, the country currently faces multiple and interwoven challenges.

The months since our most recent meeting (S/2021/401) have seen a truly transformative period for peace and reconciliation in Colombia. Through the vital work of the Special Jurisdiction for Peace, we have seen genuine engagement by former members of the Fuerzas Armadas Revolucionarias de Colombia (FARC) with victims and survivors of the conflict, with apologies given and forgiveness sought.

We must also acknowledge and welcome the information provided by the indicted former FARC

members to the Special Unit for the Search for Persons Deemed as Missing, while calling for further information to be provided by all. We hope that that process will bring closure and peace to hundreds of families in Colombia.

We also reflect on the historical acknowledgement to the Truth Commission of Government responsibility for the extrajudicial killings known as false positives, which took the lives of thousands of Colombian civilians. We hope that that can continue over the remaining period of the Commission's work.

The recent indictments of former military leaders in Case 03 by the Special Jurisdiction for Peace may be the beginning of another watershed moment, as the Special Representative of the Secretary-General outlined. We join the people of Colombia in hoping that the response by any persons found guilty will focus on victims and be based on acknowledgement, apology and justice.

We note with deep concern the threats faced by persons engaging with the transitional justice system. In addition, the risks of violence against members of political parties ahead of an electoral period are of concern and need to be addressed. We also condemn in the strongest terms the recent car bomb in Cúcuta, as well as the cowardly attack on President Duque Márquez's helicopter.

Ireland deeply regrets the recent killings of the attorney Ms. Esperanza Navas and social leader Ms. Derly Pastrana Yara. Their senseless deaths are emblematic of too many human rights defenders, social leaders, ex-combatants, children and indigenous and Afro-Colombian leaders lost in Colombia. We encourage the Government to redouble its efforts to protect all defenders of human rights, activists and, acknowledging the particular threats that they face, women in social leadership and children at risk of recruitment. Ms. Herrera spoke eloquently of the particular threats faced by women and girls. Perpetrators must also be brought to justice; the people of Colombia deserve an end to impunity.

The recent social unrest and widespread protests have demonstrated the significant structural challenges still facing society. Now more than ever genuine and inclusive dialogue is vital. Years of peace have created a path for democratic expression. We support the right to peaceful political protest for all citizens in Colombia.

We call for the perpetrators of all violence associated with the protests to be brought to justice.

We note the leadership and engagement of the Colombian youth, as also highlighted by Ms. Herrera. Growing up alongside the peace accord, they are a generation heavily invested in Colombia's future. Every opportunity should be seized to involve young people in decision-making, and we welcome the recent commitment by President Duque Márquez to facilitate the first elections to municipal youth councils this autumn.

The full and complete implementation of the Final Agreement for Ending the Conflict and Building a Stable and Lasting Peace also relies on dialogue. We welcome the engagement of the parties with the Commission for the Follow-up, Promotion and Verification of the Implementation of the Final Agreement, and encourage continued constructive dialogue at the local, municipal and national levels, particularly on gender and ethnic provisions. Dialogue offers a path to mutually agreed solutions to shared problems. Peacebuilding requires the active engagement of all members of society, engagement built on trust, which can come only from dialogue in good faith.

**Mr. Geng Shuang** (China) (*spoke in Chinese*): China welcomes the presence of Vice-President and Foreign Minister of Colombia Ms. Marta Lucía Ramírez at today's meeting and thanks Special Representative of the Secretary-General Ruiz Massieu for his briefing. We also listened carefully to the briefing by the civil society representative.

This year marks the fifth anniversary of the signing of the Final Agreement for Ending the Conflict and Building a Stable and Lasting Peace. Thanks to the concerted efforts of the Colombian Government and the relevant parties and with the strong support of the United Nations and the international community, the peace agreement has been advancing in various areas, with positive progress made in its implementation. That is of great significance to Colombia and to regional peace and stability, about which China is of course heartily pleased.

At the same time, the full implementation of the peace agreement is a long-term process. It is inevitable that there will be some twists and turns. The nationwide strikes and protests that have been taking place since April show that the situation in Colombia remains unstable and that the implementation of the final

agreement still faces uncertainties. China supports the Colombian Government in continuing to effectively implement the peace agreement, strengthening national governance, maintaining security and stability, vigorously developing the economy, improving people's well-being, resolving differences through dialogue, promoting social reconciliation and creating favourable conditions for the smooth holding of next year's general elections.

China supports the Colombian Government in striving to overcome the pandemic-related difficulties and, in accordance with the requirements of the peace agreement, implementing programmes such as former combatants' participation in productive projects and illicit crop-substitution and expediting their reintegration process. China supports the Colombian Government in accelerating land reform, addressing poverty, social injustices and underdevelopment in rural areas, improving public services, promoting balanced and sustainable development and strengthening the foundations of lasting peace and stability.

China supports the Colombian Government in strengthening security measures, comprehensively cracking down on armed groups and organized crime and providing security guarantees for the implementation of the peace agreement. We support the Government of Colombia in strengthening security deployments in high-risk areas and increasing security for former armed personnel. China supports the discussion between the Colombian Government and the Fuerza Alternativa Revolucionaria del Común on the implementation of the peace agreement during the past five years and hopes that they will build on it to enhance the confidence in and support of the peacebuilding process.

Lastly, China appreciates the work of the United Nations Verification Mission in Colombia and Special Representative of the Secretary-General Ruiz Massieu and hopes that the Mission will work in close coordination with the United Nations country team to provide increased assistance and play a greater role in coordinating the Colombian Government's response to the pandemic, promoting the implementation of the final agreement, maintaining social stability and expediting the improvement of the people's livelihoods

**Mr. DeLaurentis** (United States of America): I thank the Special Representative of the Secretary-General, Mr. Carlos Ruiz Massieu, for his briefing

and presentation of the report of the Secretary-General (S/2021/603). We appreciate the vital role that the United Nations Verification Mission in Colombia continues to play in supporting peace in Colombia. We thank Ms. Herrera for contributing her voice and perspective to the Security Council today. We also warmly welcome Vice-President and Minister for Foreign Affairs of Colombia, Ms. Lucía Ramírez, to this meeting. We thank the Government of Colombia for its continuing commitment to the Final Agreement for Ending the Conflict and Building a Stable and Lasting Peace.

As all know, and as President Biden conveyed in his call to President Duque shortly thereafter, we were alarmed to hear of the 25 June attack on President Duque's helicopter, and we were relieved that everyone involved was unharmed. We would also like to acknowledge the hard work that the Colombian Government is undertaking to fight the coronavirus disease (COVID-19) pandemic. The United States recently donated 2.5 million vaccine doses to Colombia, as the country's people recover from the devastating pandemic and as part of our effort to expand access to vaccinations worldwide. That will allow the Government of Colombia to provide vaccines to some of the most vulnerable and remote communities in the country.

We also welcome the national dialogue promoted by President Duque to address the recent protests throughout Colombia. We reiterate our support for the rights of peaceful protesters, underscore that law enforcement must be held to the highest standards of accountability and condemn wanton acts of violence, vandalism and roadblocks, which have impeded the delivery of food and medicine.

Over the past few months, the transitional justice system in Colombia has taken enormous strides, particularly with the acknowledgement in April by former commanders of the Fuerzas Armadas Revolucionarias de Colombia-Ejército del Pueblo (FARC-EP) of a policy within the group of kidnapping and their acknowledgment of responsibility for crimes against humanity and war crimes.

That is a vital step for truth, justice and reconciliation, as well as for the satisfaction of victims' rights. It is also an important demonstration of the commitment of former FARC-EP members to the final agreement. We also recognize the transitional justice system's progress on identifying and holding accountable members of

State security forces who ordered or participated in human rights abuses, including extrajudicial killings.

Despite the progress, we are closely monitoring the increase in violence in former FARC-EP-controlled areas, particularly against former FARC-EP combatants and social leaders, which has been an ongoing problem since the signing of the final agreement. We acknowledge the announcement by the Presidential Counsellor for Stabilization and Consolidation of the adoption of the Strategic Plan for Security and Protection for former combatants, but we are deeply concerned about reports that 71 human rights leaders and social leaders have been killed in Colombia since the beginning of this year. Guaranteeing measures for the security of leaders of social and political movements, human rights defenders, communities affected by conflict and former combatants remains a critical component of the final agreement.

We are also concerned by growth in coca cultivation and production in Colombia, as reported in a recent study by the White House Office of National Drug Control Policy. We continue to believe that the best way to sustainably address the problem is to combine law-enforcement efforts with a robust rural development programme and programmes that are designed to stimulate legal economic activity. We acknowledge that Colombia's efforts last year were hampered considerably by the spread of COVID-19 and are hopeful that the Government's work to assist rural farmers will intensify in 2021.

Despite those ongoing challenges, we believe that Colombia continues to be on the road towards a great success story and a model to countries seeking a way out of entrenched conflict. The work that both the Colombian Government and the Verification Mission have done over the past four years is admirable, and Colombians from all walks of life have benefited greatly from it.

**Mr. Jürgenson** (Estonia): I thank the Special Representative of the Secretary-General, Mr. Carlos Ruiz Massieu, and Ms. Melissa Herrera, Founder and Director of the Latin American Foundation Viva la Vida, for their briefings today. I would like to express Estonia's strong support for the work of the United Nations Verification Mission in Colombia. We warmly welcome Her Excellency Ms. Marta Lucía Ramírez, Vice-President and Minister for Foreign Affairs of Colombia.

The situation in Colombia is worrying. The social unrest in Colombia and the polarization of the society need to be dealt with. The recent developments have shown the urgent need to overcome the crisis. It is important to avoid any further escalation of violence. We encourage all parties to put aside their differences and continue to seek a resolution through peaceful dialogue. It is important to enhance security guarantees and structural reforms.

This year marks the fifth anniversary of the Final Agreement for Ending the Conflict and Building a Stable and Lasting Peace. We recognize all the positive developments and efforts made so far towards a sustainable peace. We welcome the developments regarding the decision to create 16 special transitional electoral districts for peace. Another important element of reconciliation of the society is transitional justice. We value the work of all transitional justice mechanisms, especially the Special Jurisdiction for Peace, which plays an important role in guaranteeing the victims' rights to truth, justice and reparations.

The security situation remains the main challenge. We are concerned about the continuous killings of former combatants, social and indigenous leaders and human rights defenders. Fighting against impunity is the key to stopping violence. It is essential to bring perpetrators to justice and ensure the security of all regions of the country and vulnerable social groups. Limited State presence, poverty and illegal armed groups are the main causes for violence and need to be addressed. In addition, the National Commission on Security Guarantees needs to be convened to develop a clear road map for implementing the public policy guidelines.

Furthermore, the third wave of the coronavirus disease pandemic has already reached Colombia, causing the deterioration of the health situation. We encourage the Government to continue moving forward with the vaccination strategy.

Lastly, we remain hopeful that meaningful progress can be made despite of the current dramatic challenges. Estonia strongly supports the continued commitment to implement the Final Agreement.

**The President** (*spoke in French*): I shall now make a statement in my capacity as the representative of France.

I once again welcome Ms. Marta Lucía Ramírez, Vice-President and Minister for Foreign Affairs of Colombia. I also thank the Special Representative of the Secretary-General, Mr. Carlos Ruiz Massieu, and Ms. Melissa Herrera for their briefings.

This fall, we will celebrate the fifth anniversary of the Final Agreement for Ending the Conflict and Building a Stable and Lasting Peace. I would like to commend the efforts that have been made by the Government and the people of Colombia since 2016 to implement that historic agreement. Over the past several weeks, Colombia has experienced an unprecedented social movement. We will continue to call for dialogue. The peace agreement provides the framework for a negotiated settlement, and I commend the conscientious follow-up by the Head of United Nations Verification Mission in Colombia.

Colombia has been hard hit by the most recent wave of the coronavirus disease pandemic. In several areas of the country, the security situation is becoming increasingly worse, with numerous crimes being committed against human rights defenders, social leaders and former combatants. We know that the solution is to strengthen State presence in those remote areas. The National Commission on Security Guarantees must be able to propose concrete measures for those fragile areas.

In recent months, decisive steps have been taken in the area of transitional justice. France welcomes the fact that the leaders of the Fuerza Alternativa Revolucionaria del Común have accepted their responsibilities. Their cooperation demonstrates that the system works. The indictment issued by the Special Jurisdiction for Peace in the so-called false positives case is another step forward. We hope that the individuals indicted will also acknowledge their responsibility. Lastly, it is important that all parties to the conflict engage with the Truth Commission, as Ingrid Betancourt and her kidnappers have recently done. We would like to highlight the work conducted by the Commission, which will publish its report in November, thereby marking another historic step in the process of uncovering the truth.

The peace agreement must be understood in its entirety. It can bear lasting fruit only if it is fully implemented. For example, further progress must be achieved in the areas of rural reform, access to land, illicit crop substitution and political participation. To achieve peace, the divide among territories must

be narrowed and viable and just socioeconomic opportunities must be provided for everyone.

Building peace is an arduous path. The peace agreement has withstood many challenges. Its concrete implementation must be irreversible. Rest assured that France, as well as the European Union, will continue to support all those in Colombia who work daily to achieve peace.

I now resume my functions as president of the Security Council.

I now call on the Vice-President and Minister for Foreign Affairs of Colombia.

**Ms. Lucía Ramírez** (Colombia) (*spoke in French*): It is an honour for me to convey greetings to the members of the Security Council on behalf of President Iván Duque Márquez and of the Republic of Colombia.

I thank you, Mr. President, for convening today's meeting and for your leadership.

(*spoke in Spanish*)

I would also like to thank all of the members of the Security Council for their continued interest in the situation in Colombia and for their statements. I will respond to them once I have read out the text I brought with me today.

First, I would like to thank France for convening today's meeting and for the opportunity to participate in my dual capacity as Vice-President and Minister for Foreign Affairs of Colombia. I also thank the Secretary-General for his report (S/2021/603) and commitment to our country, and Special Representative Carlos Ruiz Massieu for his briefing.

The Government of Colombia, led by President Iván Duque, wants genuine and lasting peace. We have focused our efforts on that goal for the past three years. Not only have we implemented the policy of peace with legality; we are returning to pre-pandemic gross domestic product growth of more than 4 per cent, precisely with the aim of creating jobs in rural and urban areas for all Colombians. We believe that that is the best way to close social gaps and help foster genuine and lasting peace in our country.

Our Government has faced challenges that are familiar to all members. Overcoming those challenges requires structural changes. Regrettably, despite the efforts of the Government and Colombian society,

drug trafficking, of which there has been little mention in today's meeting, remains a challenge. We hope that former members of the Fuerza Alternativa Revolucionaria del Común (FARC) will advance with greater speed and depth on making clear and genuine commitments to ending drug trafficking in our country, including, inter alia, by identifying drug trafficking routes, international allies in the business and the methods used by those known as FARC dissidents to move drugs. That is the primary cause of the killing of so many leaders — human rights defenders, leaders in the areas of land restitution and, in particular, illicit crop substitution.

Colombia reiterates the call for shared responsibility in the fight against drug trafficking and greater efficiency in pursuing drug processing. Regrettably, drugs leave our country every day and are processed in laboratories in various countries, including in developed economies. Shared responsibility is also important in condemning and clamping down on deforestation and human trafficking, which are linked to drug trafficking.

We face monumental challenges but we will not fail to honour our commitment to an extremely complex process. Our initial estimate of what it would cost to implement the Final Agreement for Ending the Conflict and Building a Stable and Lasting Peace, signed with the Fuerzas Armadas Revolucionarias de Colombia-Ejército del Pueblo (FARC-EP), was approximately the equivalent of two entire years of the Colombia's gross domestic product — as if the country had no external debt, pension obligations or several other challenges to face. The implementation of the Agreement would cost us the equivalent of two entire years of Colombia's gross domestic product. That is why I request members to bear in mind that the time frame for implementing the agreement is 15 years. I am surprised to state here at today's meeting that no progress has been made. I heard no mention of that in Mr. Carlos Ruiz Massieu's briefing. He acknowledged some progress. We would have preferred 100 per cent progress. However, only five years have passed since the signing of the agreement. Implementing the agreement over 15 years will incur costs, which, without a doubt, will exceed Colombia's budget; it would exceed the budget of any of the countries represented here today.

We will not fail to implement the 2016 Agreement because, inter alia, we know that the criminal groups that attack leaders in various regions of Colombia today

had already existed. Then came the so-called FARC dissidents. It is not true that recent violence in Colombia is due to an alleged breach of the Agreement. There was no breach. On the contrary, several implementation indicators exceed what we should have been achieved in just under five years. Our country continues its responsible implementation of the Agreement, sparing no effort in the ongoing fight against organized armed groups and any group focused on profiting from criminal activities. Such profits jeopardize the country's stability, the safety of our citizens and a precious good for our country — the continuity of our democracy.

As mentioned in the report, comprehensive State presence, including the deployment of public security forces and civil institutions throughout the country, is our Government's main priority. That has been complemented, *inter alia*, with the construction over the past three years of 13,848 kilometres of infrastructure in rural areas to provide farmers with development options to keep them away from coca production and illegal mining, which benefit transnational mafias. Regrettably, at times, such groups operate in neighbouring countries and subject the most vulnerable to conditions that are tantamount to slavery.

I would like to mention the following points on the two issues that are part of the mandate. Progress made in the areas of political, economic and social reintegration is indisputable. By April this year, 13,998 people were registered as having left the FARC, 99 per cent of whom have a health plan and 87 per cent have a pension plan. Those statistics are higher than those for the average Colombian.

Some 85 per cent of those reintegrated from the FARC-EP have received monthly financial support from our Government for their sustenance, and 90 per cent have received job training through the National Training Service. Some 53.9 per cent of this population also participate in 3,063 individual or collective productive projects, including 283 that had been suspended during the pandemic. As of the date of the report, as Mr. Ruiz Massieu informed us, 509 additional productive projects had been initiated because the requirements for disbursement had been met.

As part of the road map for reintegration that has been referred to today, we have included a housing guarantee and enacted regulatory measures for access to land, providing the corresponding agencies with greater legal and economic resources. To date, a total of 1,373

hectares have been made available for this purpose and properties have been given to ex-combatants for their use. Additionally, \$4.2 million have been earmarked for the acquisition of properties for the development of productive and housing projects in the former territorial areas for training and reintegration, which has enabled us to purchase properties amounting to 565 hectares. In March, the legal status of some of those areas was established.

The Government cooperates with people in the reintegration process, offering them socioeconomic benefits regardless of their location. Today, 95 per cent of ex-combatants have bank accounts, 99 per cent are affiliated with the health system and more than 13,000 have received financial guarantees.

Secondly, with regard to security guarantees for ex-combatants, the Interinstitutional Coordination Bureau evaluates on an ongoing basis progress made in the implementation of a strategy focused on strengthening interinstitutional coordination to provide security for community leaders and, of course, all former combatants. It is worth recalling that the security measures ensured that not a single candidate of the FARC — now the Comunes party — was assassinated or kidnapped in the 2019 elections, and a similar arrangement is being developed to ensure the same protection for the next elections, to be held in 2022.

I should point out that recently, on 1 July, the Presidential Counsellor for Stabilization and Consolidation, Mr. Emilio Archila, who is with us today, led a new process to review security conditions for ex-combatants who maintain their commitment to legality, as well as for the leaders of crop substitution. Colombia today allocates more than 24 police squadrons, 54 army platoons and 316 individual protection units with armoured cars for former FARC combatants. Moreover, significant resources have been allocated to the National Protection Unit in order to hire 628 additional protection personnel for former FARC-EP combatants. We will not cease in our efforts to protect all those who laid down their arms and bet on peace.

Our objective is to achieve zero attacks on ex-combatants, but it is well worth noting that in the first half of 2021, the number of murders of ex-combatants fell significantly. We wish there had been none, but this year's statistics show a drop of more than 20 per cent from those of last year. Additionally, great progress has been reported in judicial matters, both in the investigations

and in the arrests of perpetrators and masterminds of murders of ex-combatants. Unfortunately, in most cases the perpetrators of those homicides are linked to drug trafficking and FARC dissidents. It is also important to note that the Office of the Attorney General reported that, in April 2021, it was investigating 254 homicides, 16 disappearances and 42 attempts, on which it has registered investigative progress in 52 per cent of cases, including the issuance of 282 arrest warrants and more than 40 convictions, in which the responsibility for deaths has been ascribed to drug trafficking groups and FARC dissidents.

For Colombians and those who have supported the country since the signing of the Final Agreement for Ending the Conflict and Building a Stable and Lasting Peace, it is essential that all transitional justice mechanisms provide optimal results, which will undoubtedly contribute to solid progress in the reconciliation process. Although progress has been made along some lines, such as kidnapping, as has been affirmed by three speakers at today's meeting, it is also true that while the Special Jurisdiction for Peace has defined kidnapping as a war crime and a crime against humanity, Colombian society expects to see greater efforts and speed on the part of the FARC in uncovering the truth and bringing perpetrators to justice in the many cases of sexual violence and child recruitment committed in the course of the conflict.

There can be no doubt about our respect for the independence of the transitional justice system, which is palpable in the constructive and respectful dialogue between President Duque and the President of the Special Jurisdiction for Peace, Mr. Eduardo Cifuentes, as well as in our efforts to establish a budget to strengthen its jurisdiction and ensure its proper functioning. In that context, I want to thank the Security Council for its unanimous adoption of resolution 2574 (2021) in May, and especially the United Kingdom for its support as penholder. That resolution, which was submitted at our request and extended the Mission's mandate, should inspire the transitional justice mechanisms, whose progress is recognized in the report, to strengthen their efforts to work more effectively and quickly. It is important that all the investigations of the Special Jurisdiction for Peace prosper, and there must be greater contributions in terms of truth, non-repetition and compliance with the sentences that the jurisdiction will impose.

The report includes a cross-cutting issue that is at the heart of the Government's agenda — the gender approach. That is one of our priorities to promote equality, and I would like to thank Melissa Herrera for her statement. I want to address one of her appeals, because what she had to say was moving. That was indeed the objective of all our policies on gender equality. I think that Colombia can share with many countries represented at this table the progress it has achieved, from an institutional perspective, in achieving genuine gender equality.

According to our analysis, about 57 per cent of the gender indicators of the framework plan have been completed or have a high degree of compliance, and 51 gender indicators that have registered significant progress. The Kroc Institute for International Peace Studies has highlighted the monitoring methodology and the support of the 18 governmental entities.

Rural women are protagonists in peacebuilding. That is why I would like to underscore the formal allocation of land and financial support for multiple women who are part of the peacebuilding process. However, I do think that it is important for other women former combatants to be heard — the women of the Rosa Blanca organization — who have continuously condemned all the atrocities and violations committed against those who suffered at the hands of their own commanders as former combatants against the Colombian State.

In June, the policy document Conpes 4031 was adopted, focusing attention on reparation for victims. It includes a gender approach and establishes additional actions to be taken. I want to thank the Special Representative of the Secretary-General for his work in response to the request for support for the various aspects of the dialogues among the Government, the National Strike Committee and other participants in the social protests that Colombia has witnessed over the past two months. However, as I have already said, those protests are not related to a lack of compliance on the part of the Government with regard to the agreement, but rather are linked to the suffering that many countries have experienced as a result of the pain being felt by all humankind owing to the pandemic, which has killed millions of people and impoverished millions more around the world. That is the main reason for the significant unrest in Colombia. Of course poverty and extreme poverty have worsened, which is why we have given priority to addressing the request by young

people: a programme has been set up to guarantee free education to all young people in grades 1, 2 and 3. Further, President Duque recently established a subsidy for employers to generate new jobs for young people. This subsidy, equivalent to 25 percent of wages, will allow employers to hire many more young people and thereby contribute to the social stability of our country.

Of course, during the protests there were deaths, deaths that cause us pain; no matter the number, the important thing is that there should not have been a single death during the protests. But these deaths occurred because, against a backdrop of valid, legitimate protests, which our Government supports and protects, small groups, armed and committed acts of vandalism and destruction, unfortunately infiltrated the protests, killing many citizens who were there.

I want the Council to know that we have had 15,000 protests since 28 April, and only for 1,400-odd did security forces intervene. That represents that 11 per cent or slightly less required the intervention of the security forces. Why? Because security forces are obliged, on the one hand, to protect peaceful — peaceful — demonstrations, as has been mentioned today, and, on the other hand, to protect the public, the safety of citizens, public order and public property. What we saw there was a process of systematic, organized, planned and financed destruction intended to deteriorate the social, political and economic conditions of our country. This is what we experienced with horror in Colombia.

And unfortunately, as some Council members have said, we also see that there is a strange or, once again, unfortunate coincidence between the protests and the upcoming electoral process. We believe in a true peace that is built on institutions, on democracy, on the division of powers, on economic investment to create jobs. But sadly, there are people who want to come to power by destroying the current system that we have in Colombia, which is why the Security Council's understanding is so important.

The topic that brings us to this Chamber today is the issue of the implementation of the Agreement and its two mandates. We fully agree with the five priorities mentioned by the Secretary-General in his report. But I would really like to have the opportunity to clarify or set straight many statements that were made today in the light of the fact that much of Council members' information has come to them through the media. I am

going to speak directly to the various ambassadors in Bogotá to make it clear that much of this information really does not correspond to reality. We have functional institutions — a Public Prosecutor's Office, an Attorney General's Office — that are carrying out their activities with complete independence and which are specifically responsible for identifying any person responsible for any violation of human rights or for any abuse of authority and with the ability to impose the most drastic sanctions, because we are totally convinced that this is what is in keeping with our commitment to democracy in Colombia.

I would like to say to Ms. Herrera that it seems to me that all the requests she has addressed to the Colombian State are totally viable. In fact, significant progress has already been made with regard to many of her requests. We are maintaining a dialogue with young people throughout the country, specifically to draw up a pact for youth that will last for the long term, committing the Colombian State beyond the term of the current Administration and strengthening, for the long term, education, conditions for youth access to employment, but above all the participation of young people. That is why the president has insisted so much on the election of youth councils, which was to be held last year. The Bureau of Elections had everything ready, but the pandemic came, so members of these youth councils will have to be elected by young people, including Ms. Herrera, this year. Colombian First Lady María Juliana Ruiz, is also working hard to ensure that young people have access to all opportunities, including to the political leadership about which Ms. Herrera spoke.

We must also ensure that justice makes progress in all investigations of crimes against young people that have taken place in any context, be it the protests or any other context. I mentioned that the statistics cited in today's are not precise. Our work with the Attorney General's Office and with the Inter-American Commission on Human Rights itself has involved different figures, but, I repeat, all deaths must be investigated, and those responsible must be identified and punished. I also believe in what Ms. Herrera said, namely, that the commitment has to be for the long term, so that when we address these points with Carlos Ruiz in Bogotá, they will give rise to a much more formal commitment.

I am particularly grateful for the kind remarks made here by several speakers — the representative of Viet Nam, the representative of Mexico, the

representative of the United States, the representative of the United Kingdom, the representative of Norway, the representative of India — and for their expressions of solidarity, especially that of representative of France for our president on the totally unacceptable attack he suffered in a helicopter. An attack on a president is an attack on democracy and on the stability of a nation, and it is very clear to us that, unfortunately, the perpetrators of this attack have had a great deal of support, although we cannot share the elements of that certainty with the Council at this time.

I think it is really necessary to underline what the representative of Saint Vincent and the Grenadines said; for us it is also extremely worrying what is happening, but I do believe that the different cases involving former combatants and others are statistics worth specifying. There have been so many points made by members of the Council today that perhaps I should send them a note, if that is customary, so that these assertions can be cleared up. There are many statements to acknowledge, but there are also many others that were made because we might not have provided enough information.

We wish to keep the Council updated on a quarterly basis, and our reports should show progress. I am sure that Council members will see greater progress with each passing quarter. In any case, I would like to remind the Council that in November 2021 we will be commemorating the fifth anniversary of the signing of the Agreement.

We hope that all members of the Council will be able to visit Colombia. I am extending the invitation on behalf of President Iván Duque — yesterday he extended a similar invitation to the Secretary-General — so that they can also see for themselves what our country is like, how the work of the Security Council has so greatly contributed to Colombia's progress and how Colombia is a country where the commitment to dialogue, to the construction of democracy, to the construction of a truly prosperous, developed and inclusive country, is a daily commitment — of the President, of his Cabinet, of the members of the Administration in general — but it is also a commitment present throughout Colombian society.

At the same time, there is a lot of pain in Colombian society because of so many years of humiliation and suffering, but today we know what we all have to build, and we are all looking forward to the future of our country.

I would like to conclude with a very important point that Presidential Counsellor for Stabilization and Consolidation, Mr. Emilio Archila, asked me not to overlook: ethnic groups. For us, it is fundamental that peace in Colombia includes all the people of our country, all people — men and women of all ethnicities and races — and we cannot make any kind of differentiation among them. But we also have a specific body for gender issues, which is in the national budget, and which has received resources in the amount of \$500,000 from the multi-donor roundtable. It has made 97 commitments, each of which has its own planning, and many of which have already been fully achieved. Further, in our territorial development plans, we also have special mechanisms, with consultations both for ethnic and indigenous communities, as well as the gender roundtable I mentioned earlier. Let there be no doubt, therefore, that Council members' recommendations are valid, but out of our own conviction, our own ethics and our own dedication to Colombia, we know that there can be no differentiation between races or ethnicities.

I would also like to remind the Council that we have shown great commitment in our country with regard to the pain of migration. In Colombia today we have 2 million Venezuelans, for whom we are working every day to vaccinate them and provide them with the best living condition, as well as ensuring that they have jobs and are truly able to integrate into our society. To that end, President Duque Márquez has launched a 10-year temporary protection programme, for which we hope to continue to have the support of Member States. I would very much like to thank all those countries that participated in the donor event organized by Canada on 17 June.

I apologize to you, Mr. President, for having exceeded the time limit by a few minutes, but there were very many issues raised in the statements that I did want to overlook.

*The meeting rose at noon.*