

13. 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](#))

During the period under review, the Security Council held six meetings and adopted three resolutions under the item entitled “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](#))”. Four of the meetings took the form of briefings and two were convened for the adoption of resolutions.⁴⁸⁶ More information on the meetings, including participants and outcomes, is provided in table 1 below. In addition to the meetings, Council members held informal consultations of the whole in connection with this item.⁴⁸⁷

In 2023, the Special Representative of the Secretary-General for Colombia and the Head of the United Nations Verification Mission in Colombia briefed the Council four times further to the periodic reports of the Secretary-General on the Mission.⁴⁸⁸ In addition, the Council heard briefings by the Chair of the Peacebuilding Commission, by a former combatant of the Fuerzas Armadas Revolucionarias de Colombia-Ejército de Pueblo (FARC-EP) and by three representatives of civil society.⁴⁸⁹ At the meetings, Colombia was represented by its Vice-President and by its Minister for Foreign Affairs.

On 11 January, the Council unanimously adopted resolution [2673 \(2023\)](#).⁴⁹⁰ By this resolution, taking note of the 17 October 2023 letter from the Foreign Minister of Colombia,⁴⁹¹ the Council decided that the Verification Mission should monitor the implementation of the rural reform and the ethnic chapter of the Final Agreement as set out in the Secretary-General’s letter⁴⁹² in addition to the provisions of the Verification Mission’s existing mandate as set out in

⁴⁸⁶ For more information on the format of meetings, see part II, sect. I.

⁴⁸⁷ See [A/78/2](#), part II, chap. 40.

⁴⁸⁸ See [S/PV.9240](#), [S/PV.9303](#), [S/PV.9374](#) and [S/PV.9434](#). See also [S/2022/1004](#), [S/2023/222](#), [S/2023/477](#) and [S/2023/701](#).

⁴⁸⁹ See [S/PV.9240](#), [S/PV.9303](#), [S/PV.9374](#) and [S/PV.9434](#).

⁴⁹⁰ See [S/PV.9240](#).

⁴⁹¹ See [S/2022/787](#).

⁴⁹² See [S/2022/940](#).

resolution [2655 \(2022\)](#).⁴⁹³ In addition, the Council expressed its willingness to continue working with the Government of Colombia on the mandate of the Verification Mission based on agreement between the parties.⁴⁹⁴

Following the adoption, the Council heard a briefing by the Special Representative of the Secretary-General about the implementation of the Final Agreement and other peacebuilding efforts.⁴⁹⁵ His updates notably focussed on the status of the rural reform, the ethnic chapter, the Special Jurisdiction for Peace (SJP), the women, peace and security national plan and the dialogue between the Government and armed groups. Welcoming the enactment of the Ministry of Equality, under the leadership of the Vice-President to address deep inequalities especially affecting women and indigenous and Afro-Colombian peoples, he reaffirmed the transformative potential of the rural reform. He also noted that the success of the reintegration process as an essential part of building a stable and lasting peace and that the issuance by the SJP of its first concluding resolutions was a decisive step towards the first restorative sentences. The Special Representative underlined the dialogue and ceasefire process under way between the Government and the group self-identified as Central High Command-FARC and urged all illegal armed actors to take the opportunity for the pursuit of peace through dialogue.

Addressing the Council on behalf of the Afro-descendant and indigenous peoples and communities of Colombia, the Secretary of the High-level Forum of Ethnic Peoples of Colombia welcomed the Council's decision to extend the mandate to the ethnic chapter to ensure that the inclusion of indigenous peoples in the peace agreement was implemented.⁴⁹⁶ He called for guaranteeing autonomy to the ethnic communities and strengthening the organization structures to allow for that autonomy. Specifically, he advocated for the collective protectional mechanisms for ethnic groups, in addition to the allocation of specific budget items, to have the material guarantees to strengthen them and achieve "total peace". In that context, he requested that the Verification Mission follow-up efforts be carried out based on an understanding of what the

⁴⁹³ Resolution [2673 \(2023\)](#), fourth preambular paragraph and para. 1. See also the letter dated 9 December 2022 ([S/2022/940](#)) in which the Secretary-General presented his recommendations regarding the additional tasks of the United Nations Verification Mission in Colombia.

⁴⁹⁴ Ibid., para. 2.

⁴⁹⁵ See [S/PV.9240](#).

⁴⁹⁶ Ibid.

ethnic approach meant. Speaking after Council members, the Vice-President of Colombia expressed gratitude for the solidarity manifested in relation to the violence that they were still facing in the country and reaffirmed her Government's commitment to reducing equality and equity gaps. Urging the United Nations to continue supporting the Government's dialogue efforts, she invited the Council to hold a meeting in Colombia to support peace from the territories and learn on the ground about the challenges.

On 13 April, the Special Representative of the Secretary-General, referring to the recent announcement by President Petro Urrego during his visit to Mesetas regarding measures to strengthen the reintegration process and security of former FARC-EP combatants, positively noted that an orderly relocation plan with greater security and access to productive land was agreed upon for them and their families.⁴⁹⁷ Underlining the importance of the full implementation of the Final Agreement, he explained that the Secretary-General's report included, for the first time, matters related to the comprehensive rural reform and the ethnic chapter, as part of the newest Council's mandate entrusted to the Mission. He also reported that the SJP continued to move forward in its essential task of investigating and sanctioning crimes committed by all parties during the conflict, including with the transitional justice process and engagements with civil society organizations. Further, a series of regional forums had begun for the development of the national action plan on resolution [1325 \(2000\)](#), with the participation of women leaders, including former combatants. Concluding, the Special Representative hoped that the next round of talks in Cuba would yield additional results for violence reduction and the participation of society in peacebuilding.

At the same meeting, the Chair of the Peacebuilding Commission encouraged the Council to, inter alia, support the Government with the socioeconomic reintegration, security and protection of former combatants, as well as the efforts of the SJP to uphold victims' rights. He emphasized the importance of supporting the Government's efforts to implement the development programmes with a territorial focus and the comprehensive rural reform of the Final Agreement and enable more equal access to land for rural and conflict-affected populations, including rural women. Further, the president of the Communes party and former

⁴⁹⁷ See [S/PV.9303](#).

combatant of FARC-EP spoke about the inadequate implementation of the national plans for comprehensive rural reform and development based on a territorial approach. Noting that the former FARC-EP had fully complied with the agreement by laying down their arms and becoming a political party, he stressed that the dialogue with the former guerrillas of the ELN was the first step in the direction of “total peace”. At the end of the meeting, the Minister for Foreign Affairs of Colombia, recalling his letter requesting the Council to give favourable consideration to the possible expansion of the role of the Verification Mission, noted that the Council had provided monitoring when it was previously asked. Further, he noted that given the growing obstacles imposed by external forces on the peace process, it would be necessary to establish an international commission of inquiry or an independent group of experts with the support of the Secretary-General. Additionally, the Government’s efforts for total peace beyond its border were reflected in the recent restoration of diplomatic relations with the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela.

On 12 July, the Special Representative of the Secretary-General reported that the advances registered in the latest report were an indication that implementation was gaining traction across several sections of the Agreement.⁴⁹⁸ Especially, he highlighted the improvements on the National Development Plan and the attention given to the rural reform and the progress by the Ministry of Equality with respect to the ethnic chapter. The SJP continued to move forward in its macro-cases to work decisively towards the issuance of its own sanctions. In that regard, the victims and civil society organizations continued to await a final decision by the SJP with respect to the opening of Case 11, on crimes related to sexual violence. Concerning the reintegration process, he praised the Government’s new approach focusing on reconciliation, access to land and gender. Nonetheless, he regretted the persistent violence against peasant leaders, land claimers, former combatants, as well as against members of the Catholic Church in Caldon, Cauca.

Following the briefing, the Spokesperson for the Special Women’s Instance for the follow-up of the implementation of the peace agreement in Colombia, while acknowledging the commitment of the Government in formulating its national action plan pursuant to resolution [1325](#)

⁴⁹⁸ See [S/PV.9374](#).

(2000), pointed out that it should achieve more tangible and urgent results and progress from the 12 per cent of the gender provisions in the Final Agreement. She highlighted the challenge of ensuring the role of women and lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, intersex and queer persons in decision-making and political leadership roles, mainly with respect to the rural reform and the reintegration processes. Speaking after Council members, the Minister for Foreign Affairs of Colombia attested that the report's findings signalled opportunities for improvement and reaffirmed the importance of the SJP, the creation of institutional and legislative initiatives, such as the National Development Plan and ethnic and gender issues. Security guarantees for former combatants remained a top priority for both parties to the agreement as well as the Council.

On 2 August, the Council unanimously adopted resolution [2694 \(2023\)](#),⁴⁹⁹ which took note of the 2 June 2023 letter from the Secretary-General,⁵⁰⁰ conveying the request from the Government of Colombia for the Council to consider tasking the Verification Mission to participate in the monitoring and verification of ceasefire arrangements between the Government and ELN.⁵⁰¹ By the resolution, the Council noted the dialogue towards the construction of peace and the re-establishment of a ceasefire agreement initiated between the Government of Colombia and the armed group self-identified as EMC.⁵⁰² In that regard, having considered the recommendations and proposals of the Secretary-General set out in his letter of 13 June 2023,⁵⁰³ the Council decided to expand the mandate of the Verification Mission by including the monitoring and verification of the ceasefire agreed between the Government of Colombia and the ELN and authorized up to 68 additional international observers to the Mission's existing complement, as well as a civilian component.⁵⁰⁴ The Council also expressed its willingness to consider mandating the Mission to monitor and verify the implementation of a ceasefire agreement between the Government of Colombia and the armed group self-identified as EMC once confirmed by the Secretary-General.⁵⁰⁵

⁴⁹⁹ See [S/PV.9391](#).

⁵⁰⁰ See [S/2023/438](#).

⁵⁰¹ See resolution [2694 \(2023\)](#), fifth preambular paragraph.

⁵⁰² Ibid., seventh preambular paragraph.

⁵⁰³ [S/2023/438](#).

⁵⁰⁴ See resolution [2694 \(2023\)](#), eighth preambular paragraph and para. 1.

⁵⁰⁵ Ibid., para. 2.

On 11 October, at his last briefing to the Council for the year, the Special Representative of the Secretary-General recalled that milestones in the peace process are approaching, with the seventh anniversary of the signing of the 2016 Final Agreement for Ending the Conflict and Building a Stable and Lasting Peace coming up and nearing the halfway point in the 15-year timetable for its implementation. He remarked that 2023 was marked by substantial budget allocations for rural reform and its prioritization in the National Development Plan, as highlighted by the Secretary-General's report.⁵⁰⁶ He reported that, thanks to the contributing countries, 31 of the 68 international observers authorized by the Council specifically deployed to monitor and verify the ceasefire had arrived recently. Further, a clear institutional architecture to oversee the agreement implementation should be clearly defined without further delay. Concluding, the Special Representative called for an inclusive and secure participation in the Colombian second local elections since the Final Agreement scheduled for in October 2023.

The Chair of the Peacebuilding Commission encouraged the Council to support the Government in ensuring that “peace dividends” reached all Colombians, including through comprehensive rural reform and underscored the importance of holding upcoming regional and local elections on 29 October in a safe and secure manner. Noting that Colombia continued to be a “model for comprehensive peace consolidation”, the Chair reiterated the Commission's commitment to supporting the Government in their efforts to build and sustain peace. Further, the General Director of the Foundation for Conservation and Sustainable Development stated that the lack of adequate implementation of the Final Agreement had led to recent occupation of several territories with natural resources by armed groups. Since the signing of the Agreement, nearly one million hectares had been deforested in one of the world's most biodiverse regions. He emphasized Colombia's high rates of threats and fatalities among environmental and territorial defenders globally. Therefore, the Government should prioritize a peace policy to place the environment at the heart of the peace dialogues' agenda. At the end of the meeting, the Minister for Foreign Affairs of Colombia underscored the inviolability of the 2016 Final Agreement and an imperative mandate for the Special Jurisdiction for Peace and for all State institutions, which could not fail. He also emphasized that continuing the dialogues with various

⁵⁰⁶ See [S/PV.9434](#).

armed groups and other actors was fundamental tools to achieve “total peace” and to alleviate the humanitarian impact of violence.

On 30 October, the Council unanimously adopted resolution [2704 \(2023\)](#), extending the mandate of the Verification Mission for a period of one year until 31 October 2024 and recalled resolutions [2673 \(2023\)](#) and [2694 \(2023\)](#), which expanded its mandates.⁵⁰⁷ The Council also expressed its willingness to work with the Government on the further extension of the mandate on the basis of agreement between the parties.⁵⁰⁸

During the discussions in 2023, specifically in terms of challenges, Council members maintained their serious concern regarding threats, attacks and killings of civil society activists, Colombian security forces and community and social leaders, including women and members of indigenous and Afro-Colombian communities. In that regard, they expressed concern about the slow implementation of the ethnic and gender provisions of the agreement. Given the persistent violence against ex-combatants which hampered their reintegration into society and the economy, multiple speakers supported the Government’s efforts to increase the State presence and the deployment of security forces in conflict zones, notably rural areas, and to strengthen security protection for ex-combatants, women, children and ethnic minorities. Council members also recalled the duty of the Colombian authorities to act to combat illicit drug production, as well as to strengthen judicial mechanisms and ensure illegal armed groups were held accountable. Further, they shared their concern over the increased recruitment of children by illegal armed groups, forced displacement and missing and disappeared persons in Colombia. Finally, Council members underscored the importance to strengthen prevention and security measures to ensure the holding of free, peaceful and non-violent regional and local elections scheduled for October.

Meetings: 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](#)), 2023

⁵⁰⁷ See [S/PV.9461](#). See resolution [2704 \(2023\)](#), ninth and tenth preambular paragraphs and para. 1.

⁵⁰⁸ See resolution [2704 \(2023\)](#), para. 2.

<i>Meeting record and date</i>	<i>Sub-item</i>	<i>Other documents</i>	<i>Rule 37 invitations</i>	<i>Rule 39 and other invitations</i>	<i>Speakers</i>	<i>Decisions and vote (for-against-abstaining)</i>
S/PV.9240 11 January	Report of the Secretary-General on the United Nations Verification Mission in Colombia (S/2022/1004)	Draft resolution submitted by the United Kingdom (S/2023/30)	Colombia	Special Representative of the Secretary-General and Head of the United Nations Verification Mission in Colombia, Secretary of the High-level Forum of Ethnic Peoples of Colombia	13 Council members, ^a all invitees ^b	Resolution 2673 (2023) 15-0-0
S/PV.9303 13 April	Report of the Secretary-General on the United Nations Verification Mission in Colombia (S/2023/222)		Colombia	Special Representative of the Secretary-General and Head of the United Nations Verification Mission in Colombia, Permanent Representative of Croatia (Chair of the Peacebuilding Commission), President of the Comunes party	13 Council members, ^a all invitees ^c	
S/PV.9374 12 July	Report of the Secretary-General on the United Nations Verification Mission in Colombia (S/2023/477)		Colombia	Special Representative of the Secretary-General and Head of the United Nations Verification Mission in Colombia, Spokesperson for the Special Women's Instance for the follow-up of the implementation of the peace agreement in Colombia and Director of the International	13 Council members, ^d all invitees ^c	

S/PV.9391 2 August		Draft resolution submitted by the United Kingdom (S/2023/571)	League of Women for Peace and Freedom	Four Council members (China, Brazil, Russian Federation, United Kingdom)	Resolution 2694 (2023) 15-0-0
S/PV.9434 11 October	Report of the Secretary-General on the United Nations Verification Mission in Colombia (S/2023/701)	Colombia	Special Representative of the Secretary-General and Head of the United Nations Verification Mission in Colombia, Deputy Permanent Representative of Croatia (Chair of the Peacebuilding Commission), General Director of the Foundation for Conservation and Sustainable Development	13 Council members, ^d all invitees ^c	
S/PV.9461 30 October	Report of the Secretary-General on the United Nations Verification Mission in Colombia (S/2023/701)	Draft resolution submitted by the United Kingdom (S/2023/808)		Four Council members (United Kingdom, Ghana, ^e Japan, Brazil)	Resolution 2704 (2023) 15-0-0

^a Albania, Brazil, China, Ecuador, France, Gabon, (also on behalf of Ghana and Mozambique), Japan, Malta, Russian Federation, Switzerland, United Arab Emirates, United Kingdom and United States.

^b Colombia was represented by its Vice-President. United Kingdom was represented by its Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State, Foreign, Commonwealth & Development Office.

^c Colombia was represented by its Minister for Foreign Affairs.

^d Albania, Brazil, China, Ecuador, France, Japan, Malta, Mozambique (also on behalf of Gabon and Ghana), Russian Federation, Switzerland, United Arab Emirates, United Kingdom and United States.

^e Albania, Brazil, China, Ecuador, France, Ghana, (also spoke on behalf of Gabon and Mozambique), Japan, Malta, Russian Federation, Switzerland, United Arab Emirates, United Kingdom and United States.