



## DEBATE PACK

CDP 2018 - 0201 | 10 September 2018

# Peace process in Colombia

Westminster Hall

Wednesday 12 September 2018

2.30pm to 4.00pm

Debate initiated by Chris Bryant MP

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Compiled by:  
Tim Robinson

Subject specialist:  
John Curtis

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# 1. Background

In the period 1964-71 left-wing guerrilla groups emerged in Colombia, including the Revolutionary Armed Forces of Colombia (FARC), National Liberation Army (ELN), the Maoist People's Liberation Army (EPL), and M-19. The roots of their armed campaign lie in the "*La Violencia*", a ten-year civil war (1948-57) between the Liberal and Conservative parties. Communist guerrilla groups were excluded from the power-sharing agreement which ended the violence and took up arms against the new unified government.

These guerrilla groups were largely concentrated in rural areas, and controlled significant proportions of territory; many of them raised revenue by cultivating and trading in cocaine.

Peace initiatives by various Colombian governments in the 80s, 90s and 00s all failed to end the violence.

Former President Juan Santos, first elected in 2010, began a new peace initiative in 2012. After four years of negotiations, his government signed a peace agreement with Colombia's main paramilitary force -the Revolutionary Armed Forces of Colombia (FARC) in November 2016.

The conflict was, according to the *Economist*: "the longest-running domestic conflict in the western hemisphere, [it] killed over 200,000 people and displaced around 7m."<sup>1</sup>

The main elements of the peace deal were:

- **The end of violence:** FARC agreed to end their armed campaign and move their fighters into U.N.-monitored camps where they will disarm in phases over a period of 180 days.
- **Justice for victims of the conflict:** Colombia would establish a transitional justice system (JEP). Special tribunals will adjudicate war crimes and other atrocities committed by the rebels as well as paramilitary groups and government security forces.

If combatants fully attest to their crimes, they will be eligible for alternative sentences (with a maximum of 8 years of restricted liberty) and "restorative" justice aimed at making amends to victims. If they don't tell the truth, they will be vulnerable to criminal prosecution and up to 20 years behind bars.

- **Rural development:** The government promised to invest heavily in infrastructure projects and state-building in FARC-controlled areas which have previously seen very little investment.

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<sup>1</sup> ['Why Colombians distrust the FARC peace deal'](#), The Economist, 24 May 2018.

- **Seats in Congress:** FARC will be assured a minimum of five seats in Colombia's Senate and five seats in its House of Representatives for two legislative terms, starting in 2018. After that they will have to win seats competitively.
- **Ending the drug trade:** FARC agreed to stop drug trafficking and work with the government to wean Colombia's rural farmers off coca.

The peace deal was narrowly rejected by the Colombian people in a referendum in October 2016. President Santos made changes to the agreement to satisfy some of the less-strident opponents of the deal. Rather than putting the new agreement to the people, Mr Santos ratified the deal through Congress, where the President had a governing majority.

The new deal still contained the most unpopular elements of the previous accord: firstly, seats in Congress for FARC – opponents of the deal wanted FARC leaders found guilty of the worst crimes barred for running from office until they had served their sentences; and secondly, the transitional justice system which many Colombians saw as too lenient.

One of the most outspoken critics of the FARC peace deal was former President Alvaro Uribe (2002-10). Mr Uribe co-founded a new political party the Democratic Centre (*Centro Democrático*), in 2013, largely to oppose the peace process in the 2014 elections.

The 2018 Presidential elections were won by Iván Duque, a protégé of Uribe, who ran on a platform of overhauling the FARC peace deal and taking a tougher line against guerrilla groups. He promised to impose tougher punishments on crimes committed by the rebels and remove their guaranteed rights to seats.

In the 2018 Parliamentary elections, the new FARC political party didn't gain enough votes to win any competitive seats, achieving less than 1 per cent of votes for both the House of Representatives and Senate. Duque's Democratic Centre party gained the second largest share of seats.

The [Kroc Institute](#), which monitors the progress of the peace accord, produced its second report last month, finding the two sides have after 18 months made "steady progress". A [press release](#) announced:

Implementation activity has been observed for 61 percent of the 578 stipulations in the accord, with no activity observed yet for 39 percent of the stipulations, as of May 31, 2018.

[...] The report identifies three key areas of concern: inadequate guarantees of security and protection for human rights advocates and social leaders; the slow processes of long-term political, social and economic reincorporation for ex-combatants; and pending legislative and regulatory adjustments needed in order to promote broad participation in democratic processes.

Former President Santos had hoped to sign a ceasefire deal with the ELN – the second largest guerrilla group, before he left office in August. However, the two sides were unable to reach a full agreement, issuing a joint statement saying that "although we haven't reached full agreement [...] in this cycle, significant progress has been made".<sup>2</sup>

President Duque, however, has promised a tougher negotiating stance towards the ELN.

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<sup>2</sup> France 24, [‘Colombia's Santos admits defeat in ELN rebels ceasefire talks’](#), 2 August 2018.

## 2. Press Articles

### [Iván Duque: Colombia's new president sworn into office](#)

BBC News  
8 August 2018

### [Colombia's president-elect Duque wants to 'unite country'](#)

BBC News  
18 June 2018

### [Colombia's polarised election raises fears for fragile peace](#)

Guardian  
Joe Parkin Daniels  
16 June 2018

### [Will Colombia's next president be a former left-wing guerrilla?](#)

Washington Post  
Danielle Gilbert  
15 June 2018

### [Colombia's delicate peace process: an overview](#)

Deutsche Welle  
Emilia Rojas Sasse  
26 May 2018

### [Colombia's ex-fighters taught skills for peace](#)

BBC News  
Lucy Sherriff  
16 May 2018

### [Blow to Colombian peace deal as former Farc rebel chief arrested on drug charges](#)

Guardian  
Joe Parkin Daniels  
10 April 2018

### [Colombia's FARC says two ex-fighters killed after campaigning](#)

Reuters  
18 January 2018

### [Colombia's FARC transforms into a political party](#)

Al Jazeera  
2 September 2017

## 3. Gov.uk

### [PM call with Colombian President: 9 August 2018](#)

**Prime Minister's Office, 10 Downing Street  
9 August 2018**

A Downing Street spokesperson said:

“The Prime Minister and the President of Colombia, Iván Duque, spoke this afternoon following his inauguration this week.

“The Prime Minister congratulated President Duque on his election victory.

“They agreed the UK and Colombia were old friends who have grown even closer over the last two decades. They agreed that they had much to look forward to continuing to work together on, including security, trade, economic development and tackling climate change.

They agreed that there were many opportunities to develop future trade and in particular to strengthen ties in areas such as infrastructure, culture and the creative industries.

“They agreed co-operation on security issues such as countering drug trafficking. The Prime Minister said she was pleased to see development on a sustainable peace process in Colombia and that she hoped to see that continue. She also thanked President Duque for Colombia’s support in strengthening the ability of the Organisation for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons to attribute responsibility for chemical weapons attacks.

“They ended the call by looking forward to meeting in person and to developing their working relationship further.”

### [A joint declaration between the British Government and the Government of the Republic of Colombia](#)

**Foreign and Commonwealth office Prime Minister's Office, 10  
Downing Street  
2 November 2016**

The first State Visit by a Colombian President to the United Kingdom confirms the strength of bilateral relations based on shared values of democracy, prosperity, and respect for human rights.

The statement discusses UK-Colombia collaboration in peace building, prosperity, trade and investment, security and justice, education, science and sustainable development.

## [UK pledges new support for Colombian peace process](#)

**Foreign and Commonwealth Office**

**2 November 2016**

The UK will increase its contribution to prosperity programmes in Colombia by up to £25 million, supporting economic development and opening up investment and export opportunities worth in the region of £6 billion to the UK economy.

In addition, a further £7.5 million from the government's Conflict, Security and Stability Fund (CSSF) will be allocated to support the Colombian peace process, with £2.5 million dedicated specifically to support demining through the United Nations Trust Fund. Demining is crucial for releasing land into productive use and to clear up the remains of conflict.

The Prime Minister announced the increased funding following her meeting with Colombian President Juan Manuel Santos at 10 Downing Street. President Santos, winner of the 2016 Nobel Peace Prize, is in London on the second day of an official State Visit to the UK, the first ever by a Colombian President.

The prosperity funding will contribute to economic growth in Colombia, and benefit the UK with around £6 billion of opportunities for British businesses to support infrastructure projects in Colombia's cities, improve the regulation and rehabilitation of Colombia's railways, and increase agricultural exports and insurance.

The Foreign Secretary hosted the Colombian Foreign Minister Maria Angela Holguin at the Foreign and Commonwealth Office to discuss the new commitment as well as the UK's enduring relationship with Colombia.

Foreign Secretary Boris Johnson said:

The UK has long been a supporter of Colombia and President Santos's efforts to bring peace to his country. These additional funds will unlock economic opportunities in the parts of Colombia that have been most affected by poverty and conflict, which in turn will benefit the UK through increased business opportunities.

A sustainable peace process is the basis of Colombia's future prosperity and stability. A strong, stable and prosperous Colombia will benefit the UK and the world.

The Foreign Secretary also joined President Santos for a private tour of the Churchill War Rooms on King Charles Street, which included visiting the Cabinet Room and the Map Room.

## 4. PQs

### [Colombia: Peace Negotiations](#)

04 Sep 2018 | 906724

**Asked by: Clive Efford**

What recent discussions he has had with his Colombian counterpart on the peace process in that country.

**Answering member: Sir Alan Duncan | Foreign and Commonwealth Office**

The Prime Minister confirmed the UK's full support to the peace process during her phone call with the new Colombian President on 9 August. The Foreign Secretary and Foreign Minister Holmes also discussed UN Security Council support to peace in Colombia when they met in New York on 24 August.

### [Colombia: Peace Negotiations](#)

12 Jul 2018 | 160747

**Asked by: Jim Shannon**

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs, what discussions has the Minister had with the Columbian Government on progress on the peace process in that country.

**Answering member: Sir Alan Duncan | Foreign and Commonwealth Office**

The UK has assisted the peace process since 2012, contributing over £28m in Conflict Stability and Security Funding since 2015 and holding the pen in the UN Security Council. I have had numerous discussions with the Colombian Government during that time on progress, most recently with the Vice Minister for Foreign Affairs on 21 June.

### [Colombia: UN Security Council](#)

02 Jul 2018 | 157693

**Asked by: Helen Goodman**

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs, what steps the Government has been taking to fulfil the UK's role as a penholder on Colombia in the UN Security Council.

**Answering member: Sir Alan Duncan | Foreign and Commonwealth Office**

The UK has led work to deliver strong UN support to the peace process with the FARC over the past two years. This included drafting and leading negotiations on two resolutions (2261 & 2307 in 2016) to establish a UN Political Mission which played a key role in monitoring and verifying the ceasefire and overseeing the process of FARC demilitarisation. The UK also drafted and led negotiations on resolution 2366 (2017) which established a subsequent Political Mission to verify the FARC's reincorporation into civilian life; it was extended in October to monitor the three month ceasefire with the ELN. The UK will work

closely with the new Colombian Government to ensure best possible UN support for the peace process.

### [Colombia: UN High Commissioner for Human Rights](#)

**26 Mar 2018 | 133624**

#### **Asked by: Patrick Grady**

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs, what representations he has made to his Colombian counterpart on not accrediting the new representative of the UN High Commissioner for Human Rights in the UN Office in that country.

#### **Answering member: Sir Alan Duncan | Foreign and Commonwealth Office**

We welcome the appointment of Mr Alberto Brunori, who was announced as the new representative of the UN High Commissioner for Human Rights in Colombia on 21 March. We also thank the departing representative, Mr Todd Howland, for his leadership of the UN Office for Human Rights in Colombia since 2012. The office has played a vital role in supporting those working to improve human rights in Colombia. In December 2017, I was pleased to announce a package of support for Colombia's peace process that included £400k in financial support for the UN Office for Human Rights.

### [Colombia: Peace Negotiations](#)

**29 Jan 2018 | 124742**

#### **Asked by: Jo Stevens**

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs, whether his Department has made an assessment of the effect of the recent murders of former FARC combatants, Vilmar Asprilla and Ansel de Jesus Montoya Ibarra, and the UN condemnation of those murders on the peace process in Colombia; and if he will make a statement.

#### **Answering member: Sir Alan Duncan | Foreign and Commonwealth Office**

The UK condemns attacks against former members of the FARC and their families. This includes the killing of Vilmar Asprilla and Ansel de Jesús Montoya Ibarra who were election campaigning in Antioquia on 16 January.

We are concerned about increasing number of attacks against human rights defenders and local community leaders in Colombia. The UN Office for Human Rights has reported that at least 78 human rights defenders were killed in 2017. Tragic incidents such as these undermine the peace process. Through our advocacy and project work we support efforts by the Government of Colombia to strengthen the protection of vulnerable groups and individuals.

**Colombia: Peace Negotiations**

**29 Jan 2018 | 123809**

**Asked by: Jo Stevens**

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs, what assessment he has made of the effect of the murder of 34 demobilised FARC members and 13 relatives of former combatants on the peace process in Colombia; and if he will make a statement.

**Answering member: Sir Alan Duncan | Foreign and Commonwealth Office**

The UK condemns attacks against former members of the FARC and their families. This includes the killing of Vilmar Asprilla and Ansel de Jesús Montoya Ibarra who were election campaigning in Antioquia on 16 January.

We are concerned about increasing number of attacks against human rights defenders and local community leaders in Colombia. The UN Office for Human Rights has reported that at least 78 human rights defenders were killed in 2017. Tragic incidents such as these undermine the peace process. Through our advocacy and project work we support efforts by the Government of Colombia to strengthen the protection of vulnerable groups and individuals.

**Colombia: Human Rights**

**12 Jan 2018 | 121310**

**Asked by: Patrick Grady**

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs, if he will make representations to his Colombian counterpart on (a) offering a date-specific official invitation to the UN Special Rapporteur on Human Rights Defenders to visit Colombia and (b) ensuring that the mandate of the UN mission to Colombia with regards to the monitoring the human rights situation is maintained.

**Answering member: Sir Alan Duncan | Foreign and Commonwealth Office**

We encourage the Colombian Government to invite the UN Special Rapporteur for Human Rights to visit Colombia.

At the request of the Colombian Government, the UK led negotiations which resulted in UNSC resolution 2377. The resolution establishes the mandate of the UN Verification Mission in Colombia to monitor and verify the implementation of the Peace Agreement with the FARC. I support the work of the UN Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR) in Colombia, which monitors the human rights situation and works closely with the UN Mission. On 20 December 2017, I announced that the OHCHR would be included in a package of additional UK support to the Peace Process in Colombia.

[Colombian peace process](#)

21 Nov 2017 | 631 cc839-840

**Asked by: Ellie Reeves**

What assessment he has made of the obstacles to the implementation of the Colombian peace process.

**Answered by: Sir Alan Duncan | Foreign and Commonwealth Office**

Significant progress has been made since the signing of Colombia's historic peace agreement last November—the FARC has disarmed and is now a political party; and a temporary ceasefire has been negotiated with the National Liberation Army—but difficult challenges remain and it is vital that momentum continues, especially as the country prepares for elections next year.

**Asked by: Ellie Reeves**

In the light of the current crisis in the implementation of the Colombian peace agreement, including the killings of former FARC combatants and social leaders, the changes to the special jurisdiction for peace and the lack of re-integration opportunities, will the Minister make urgent representations to the Colombian Government about their international obligations to implement the agreement as it was signed?

**Answered by: Sir Alan Duncan | Foreign and Commonwealth Office**

We fully support the Colombian Government in doing their utmost to implement the agreement as was signed. We are concerned by increasing attacks on human rights defenders, which are interrupting the passage towards a lasting peace, but we are in no doubt that responsibility for the majority of such attacks lies with illegal armed groups.

**Asked by: Crispin Blunt**

Does my right hon. Friend agree with the current and former Presidents of Colombia, Juan Manuel Santos and César Gaviria, that the continuing failed global policy of prohibition of drugs and the creation and sustaining of vast criminal enterprises serves to undermine the peace, stability and institutions of Colombia and its neighbours? Will the Government work to move towards an evidence-based policy response?

**Answered by: Sir Alan Duncan | Foreign and Commonwealth Office**

My hon. Friend is absolutely right to point to the fact that drug smuggling and trading is becoming a main threat to the implementation of the peace agreement. I am reassured that the Colombian Government are investigating the deaths of several individuals who protested against coca eradication in Tumaco on 5 October.

**Asked by: Tony Lloyd**

Will the Minister see what he can do to drive concerted European action to bring supportive pressure to bear on President Santos? The President's legacy could be an implemented peace deal, but at the moment the legislative process to underpin the peace process simply is not there. We must have action in the last six months of his term.

**Answered by: Sir Alan Duncan | Foreign and Commonwealth Office**

We are actively supporting the Colombian Government. We have provided almost £20 million from the conflict, stability and security fund. I am also proud that UK-led work has led to the UN Security Council resolutions to assist the peace-building process that we all want to see succeed.

[Colombia: Peace Negotiations](#)

**6 Nov 2017 | 110938**

**Asked by: Helen Goodman**

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs, what assessment he has made of the significance of Simon Trinidad to the peace and reconciliation process in Colombia.

**Answering member: Sir Alan Duncan | Foreign and Commonwealth Office**

Ricardo Palmera, also known as Simón Trinidad, is a Colombian citizen extradited to, and sentenced in, the United States of America. His status as a US prisoner is a bilateral issue between Colombia and the United States. There are currently no plans to meet his legal representatives.

We welcome the significant progress made in the peace process, including the FARC's laying down of arms.

[Simon Trinidad](#)

**06 Nov 2017 | 110937**

**Asked by: Helen Goodman**

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs, if he will meet the American legal representative of Simon Trinidad.

**Answering member: Sir Alan Duncan | Foreign and Commonwealth Office**

Ricardo Palmera, also known as Simón Trinidad, is a Colombian citizen extradited to, and sentenced in, the United States of America. His status as a US prisoner is a bilateral issue between Colombia and the United States. There are currently no plans to meet his legal representatives.

We welcome the significant progress made in the peace process, including the FARC's laying down of arms.

[Colombia: Peace Negotiations](#)

**02 Nov 2017 | 109599**

**Asked by: Jo Stevens**

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs, what recent meetings and discussions he has had with the Colombian Ambassador to the UK on how the UK can effectively support the peace process in Colombia.

**Answering member: Sir Alan Duncan | Foreign and Commonwealth Office**

I last spoke to the Colombian Ambassador about the peace process on 17 October and underlined the UK's support for the peace process. To date, the Conflict Stability and Security Fund has provided almost £20 million in funding to projects supporting peace in Colombia. We have also contributed a larger amount on programmes that support peace indirectly, for example through environmental sustainability. The UK has also led UN Security Council action to monitor disarmament, demobilisation and reintegration of the FARC, and now the ELN (National Liberation Army) ceasefire.

## 5. Early Day Motions

### HUMAN RIGHTS IN COLOMBIA

**EDM 1492 (session 2017-19)**

**6 July 2018**

**Lloyd Russell-Moyle**

That this House recognises the invaluable contribution Colombian human rights lawyers make to advocate for victims' rights, justice, truth, and accountability within the context of the armed conflict; supports the Peace Agreement between the Colombian Government and the FARC, as signed in Havana, Cuba in November 2016; welcomes and encourages further steps to be taken by both State and non-state actors that honour the spirit of Peace Agreement and that support a legal, political, and social transition towards a sustainable peace; raises concern about reports of increased violence against human rights defenders and their families and calls for swift, thorough and impartial investigations into crimes committed against human rights defenders; is further concerned regarding the lack of progress in the investigation into the 2016 assassination of Eduardo Andres Martfnez Castellanos, brother of threatened human rights lawyer Rommel Duran Castellanos and the serious threats that Rommel Duran Castellanos continues to receive due to his human rights legal practice.

### JUDICIAL PROCESS AND COLOMBIA PEACE AGREEMENT

**EDM 1213 (session 2017-19)**

**27 April 2018**

**Jo Stevens**

That this House notes with concern that Congressman-Elect Jesus Santrich of the Peoples' Alternative Revolutionary Force has been on hunger strike since his arrest on 9 April 2018 on allegations of conspiring to traffic drugs; welcomes the statement by the UN Verification Mission in Colombia outlining that the Special Jurisdiction for Peace has the competence to review the case of Congressman-Elect Santrich; further notes the Colombian Supreme Court reiterated this view; urges the Government to encourage the Colombian Government to follow due process and to support the institutions created under the Peace Agreement; and calls on this to happen as quickly as possible given Congressman-Elect Santrich's continuing hunger strike.

### HUMAN RIGHTS DEFENDERS IN COLOMBIA AND THE FIRST ANNIVERSARY OF THE COLOMBIAN PEACE AGREEMENT

**EDM 718 (session 2017-19)**

**20 December 2017**

**Ann Clwyd**

That this House notes with concern the increased risks faced by human rights defenders and community leaders in Colombia since the signing of the peace agreement with the FARC, and in particular the recent killings of land restitution leaders, Mario Castaño Bravo and Hernán

Bedoya; is deeply disturbed that according to the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees 78 defenders have been killed in the first 11 months of this year; further notes the vital importance of the work of human rights defenders in Colombia, and elsewhere; and calls on the Government to strengthen its efforts, bilaterally and through the EU, to protect human rights defenders and civil society leaders in Colombia, and to support and monitor the implementation of the peace agreement between the Colombian Government and the FARC.

### **HUNGER STRIKE BY POLITICAL PRISONERS IN COLOMBIA**

**EDM 192 (session 2017-19)**

**17 July 2017**

**Jo Stevens**

That this House welcomes the amnesty framework laid out in the Peace Agreement between the Government of Colombia and the FARC-EP of August 2016; notes that all political prisoners should have been freed in January 2017; regrets that only 1,081 of 3,400 FARC prisoners have so far been released from Colombian gaols; is concerned that more than 1,400 prisoners began a hunger strike on 26 June 2017 in protest about the lack of implementation of the amnesty law; is further concerned that many have sewn up their mouths in this hunger strike in what is a painful and dangerous personal gesture; and calls on the UK Government to join the 455 human rights defenders and leading campaigners from all over the world, including Nobel Peace Prize winner Adolfo Perez Esquivel, in asking the Colombian Government to fulfil its obligations under the Peace Agreement and release the remaining political prisoners.

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