



## DEBATE PACK

CDP-0150 (2019) | 13 June 2019

# Colombia peace process

Westminster Hall

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Debate led by Jo Stevens MP

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The proceedings of this debate can be viewed on [Parliamentlive.tv](https://parliamentlive.tv)

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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 they 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 2,000s all failed to end the violence.

## **FARC peace accord**

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 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 would 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 would adjudicate war crimes and other atrocities committed by the rebels as well as paramilitary groups and government security forces.

If combatants fully admit to their crimes, they would 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 did not tell the truth, they would be vulnerable to criminal prosecution and sentences of up to 20 years in prison.

- **Rural development:** the government promised to invest heavily in infrastructure projects and state-building in FARC- controlled areas which had previously seen very little investment.
- **Seats in Congress:** FARC would 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 would 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.

### **Criticisms produce new deal**

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 it 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.

### **President Duque elected**

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 right to seats.

In the 2018 Congressional 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.

### **Implementation of the peace accord**

The [Kroc Institute](#), which monitors the progress of the peace accord, produced its third report in April 2019, finding that two years into the process "implementation continues to progress". However, they stress that "continued work is needed to improve the quality of life for Colombians living in the territories and those most at risk of continued violence". A [press release](#) announced:

- One third (35%) of these commitments have reached advanced levels of implementation, meaning they have been fully implemented (23%) or are expected to be fully implemented (12%) within the timeframe stipulated by the Agreement.
- Thirty-four percent of the commitments are in a state of minimal implementation.

- Thirty-one percent of the total commitments have yet to begin implementation.

The press release also observed:

- One of the main challenges in the implementation process is security guarantees for and protection of social leaders, human rights defenders, and FARC-EP ex-combatants and their families. The peace agreement provides instruments that can help respond to these security and protection risks, and it is important to deploy these methods, especially in rural territories.
- It is essential to implement structural reforms included in the Accord that will improve conditions in rural Colombia.

### **Duque's attempts to change the Accord**

President Duque since his election has focused his criticisms of the FARC peace accord on the Special Jurisdiction for Peace (JEP), a parallel court system designed to try war crimes committed during the conflict.

In March 2019 Duque [asked](#) the Colombian Congress to review six parts of the 159-point law that regulates the JEP. Duque called for sexual crimes and drug trafficking offences to be excluded from the tribunal's remit, and he criticised the terms of extradition and rules over sentencing for war crimes.

As the peace accord now forms part of the country's constitution, a two-thirds majority would be required to re-write these parts of the accord.

Colombia's House of Representatives, the lower house of Congress, rejected Duque's objections in April. The upper house, the Senate, did the same in May. The Senate [asked](#) the Constitutional Court to confirm that this ended the matter, and the Court ruled at the end of the May that it would be for Congress to change the peace accord, and they had rejected the changes. The Court [called](#) on the President to sanction the law that implements the accord.

As President Duque does not have a ruling majority in the House of Representatives and only a slim majority in the Senate, some analysts have [claimed](#) his objections to the accord are a political signal to his base, rather than a concerted attempt to disrupt the peace process.

However, supporters of the accord have [argued](#) that Duque's attempts to change the terms endanger its implementation and set a bad precedent for future negotiations with other illegal armed groups, like the National Liberation Army (ELN).

### **ELN peace talks**

Former President Santos had hoped to sign a ceasefire deal with the ELN, the second largest guerrilla group, before he left office in August 2018. However, the two sides were unable to reach a full agreement.

President Duque, while promising a tougher negotiating stance towards the ELN during his election campaign, did undertake talks with the guerrilla group. However, Duque suspended talks with the ELN after

they were linked to a [car bomb](#) that exploded at a police academy, killing 21 people in January 2019.

## 2. Press articles

The following is a selection of press and media articles relevant to this debate.

Please note: the Library is not responsible for either the views or accuracy of external content.

### [Former Colombian Rebel Leader Takes His Seat in Congress](#)

Wall Street Journal

Kejal Vyas

11 June 2019

### [International organisations launch “emergency call” for a Colombia in peace](#)

ReliefWeb

6 June 2019

### [Colombia's push for land titles brings hope for farmers amid fragile peace](#)

Reuters

Anastasia Moloney

4 June 2019

### [Colombia: Rights experts condemn killing of reintegrated former rebel fighter, call for respect of peace process](#)

UN News

4 June 2019

### [Former Farc guerrilla released from Colombian jail — again](#)

Financial Times

Gideon Long

31 May 2019

### [Colombia court order to free ex-Farc guerrilla causes alarm](#)

Financial Times

Gideon Long

26 May 2019

### [Colombia's Peace Is Too Precious to Abandon](#)

New York Times

23 May 2019

**[The killing of Colombian community leaders must stop if the peace process is to succeed, says aid agency](#)**

ReliefWeb  
20 May 2019

**[Colombia Army's New Kill Orders Send Chills Down Ranks](#)**

New York Times  
Nicholas Casey  
18 May 2019

**['A moment of enormous uncertainty': Colombia's fragile peace process at risk after Duque undermines special court](#)**

The Globe and Mail (Canada)  
Stephanie Nolen  
17 May 2019

**[Arrest of Farc commander Seuxis Hernández threatens peace](#)**

The Times  
Stephen Gibbs  
11 April 2019

**[Colombia's peace deal comes under strain](#)**

Financial Times  
Gideon Long  
20 March 2019

**[Colombian Duque's bid to change peace deal rattles sabers, but war unlikely](#)**

Reuters  
Helen Murphy and Carlos Vargas  
17 March 2019

**[Colombia Farc: 85 ex-rebels killed since peace deal](#)**

BBC News Online  
1 January 2019

**[Colombia's new leader and the peace process](#)**

Financial Times  
8 August 2018

### 3. Press releases

#### [Progress towards peace in Colombia](#)

**Foreign and Commonwealth Office**

**12 April 2019**

*Statement by Ambassador Karen Pierce, UK Permanent Representative to the UN, at the Security Council Briefings on Colombia:*

Thank you, Mr President, and thank you to our briefers. And in respect of the briefing, I think it's a very good thing that we've gotten Ms Salamanca here because it's an important reminder of the role that women's organisations have played in the peace process.

I think what we've heard today from the Special Representative shows that the peace accords continue to set a positive example to the rest of the world. The commitment of the government is very welcome, as are the steps taken towards reintegration of former fighters, rural development, crop substitution. And the government is clearly trying very hard to find a national consensus on issues that are deeply polarizing.

Of the three areas we would like to highlight that we believe deserve the government's urgent attention, the first one is a transitional justice system. We agree with the Secretary-General that the special jurisdiction for peace discussion has become more polarized. We hope now that the SJP will get legal and political support to build on the progress it's made. And we also hope there might be a stronger legal footing for it in order to boost public confidence in the peace process and bring about the national consensus that President Duque is rightly committed to.

Secondly, I'd like to echo concerns about human rights defenders and social leaders. The fact that they continue to face killings and threats at the hands of armed criminal groups competing for territory - and this is something the Council has been interested in before - the recent regional sessions of the National Commission on Security guarantees are a positive step forward. But I think we need to see more concrete actions to improve security on the ground. And this might include - and I might be interested in the SRSG's views - on a stronger state presence in rural areas.

Thirdly, we welcome the initial successes of the territorially focused development plans and crop substitution initiative. But I think our overall point is that the pace of implementation of the peace process, we'd like to see that increase across the country. There have been some delays, as set out in the SG report. And I think where everyone is very well aware that the sustainability of peace depends on transforming the Colombian countryside and meeting citizens needs for viable and legal livelihoods. But it's also important that the international community support Colombian efforts.

And finally, I'd like to take the opportunity to commend the SRSG because the areas of progress identified in the Colombian peace process is a very important part of how we view these regular sessions.

For the British government's part, we recognise the progress the government has made and we're fully committed to working alongside the government as they build the sustainable peace. We will continue to support them. The Foreign Minister was here a few weeks ago and we talked about the recent objections that the President had put down. And I know that there have been developments on that that I am sure His Excellency will update the Council on.

Thank you.

### **[FCO Minister for the Americas Sir Alan Duncan announces £5 million of UK support for Colombia's peace process](#)**

**Foreign and Commonwealth Office  
4 December 2018**

As part of the UK's long-standing support of Colombia's peace process, an additional £5 million will be provided through the Government's Conflict, Stability and Security Fund (CSSF). This will increase the UK's contribution to peace in Colombia to over £36 million since 2015.

This extra support will include a new £4 million contribution to the United Nations Trust Fund supporting implementation of the peace agreement with the FARC. This makes the UK the trust fund's largest international donor. £1 million will also be provided to the Organisation of American States' Mission to Support the Peace Process (MAPP OAS), which plays a vital role in peace monitoring and coordination on the ground.

Sir Alan Duncan, Minister for Europe and the Americas, said:

The UK continues to support implementation of the historic peace agreement in Colombia. This latest announcement that the UK will provide an extra £5 million in funding over 2018 to 2019 is an important demonstration of our commitment to facilitating long-term stability in the country.

This additional funding along with other UK support will help the new Colombian Government deliver its commitment to implement the peace agreement by helping to stabilise vulnerable areas, support victims, assist transitional justice and accelerate the reintegration of ex-combatants.

Significant progress has been made in the short time since the signing of the peace agreement in 2016. The FARC has become a political party and this year's elections were the safest in a generation.

However there is considerable work still to be done. Insecurity and the presence of illegal armed groups remain persistent challenges, along with attacks against human rights defenders and increasing deforestation in areas recovering from conflict.

The UK remains steadfast in helping Colombia build a peaceful, more prosperous future for all its citizens.

### **Security Council Press Statement on Colombia**

**United Nations**

**SC/13538**

**11 October 2018**

The following Security Council press statement was issued today by Council President Sacha Sergio Llorentty Solíz (Bolivia):

The members of the Security Council reiterated their full and unanimous support for the peace process in Colombia and shared the assessment of the Secretary-General set out in his 28 September 2018 report on the work of the United Nations Verification Mission.

The members of the Security Council noted that the leading responsibility for implementation of the peace agreement has now passed to a new Administration. They welcomed the initial promising steps taken by President [Iván] Duque's Government, including the appointment of key officials, the resumption of the work of the Commission for the Follow-up, Promotion and Verification of the Final Agreement (CSIV) and the National Reintegration Council (NRC) as well as President Duque's commitment to social dialogue.

The members of the Security Council reiterated their serious concern about continued insecurity, drug trafficking and violence in some conflict-affected areas, including the persistent pattern of assassinations of community and social leaders. They welcomed the determination of the new Administration to address these issues, as evidenced by the adoption on 23 August of the "Pact for Life and for the Protection of Social Leaders and Human Rights Defenders", and looked forward to the implementation of actions in this regard.

The members of the Security Council reiterated the importance of the full political, legal and socioeconomic reincorporation of the former Revolutionary Armed Forces of Colombia – People's Army (FARC-EP) members and underlined the need for both parties to abide by their commitments. They expressed concern at the current pace of the reincorporation process as well as killings of former FARC-EP members, and underlined the need for rapid action to provide socioeconomic opportunities and deliver agreed legal and security guarantees for former FARC-EP members in order to reinforce their confidence in the peace process. In this regard, the members of the Security Council underlined the importance of the work of the Special Jurisdiction for Peace, a central institution in the peace process that provides guarantees for victims as well as participants in the conflict, and other

transitional justice processes. They stressed that the independence and autonomy of the Special Jurisdiction for Peace must be fully respected. They also welcomed President Duque's commitments to a more effective reintegration process and looked forward to accelerated progress over the coming weeks.

The members of the Security Council welcomed the commitment by Vice-President Marta Lucía Ramírez to maintain dialogue with women's groups and noted the importance of greater prioritization and resources to ensure effective implementation of gender provisions in the peace agreement with regard to security guarantees and reintegration. They also welcomed the Verification Mission's adoption of a strategy on the implementation of resolutions 2250 (2015) and 2419 (2018) with a focus on young people's role in reintegration and security guarantees.

The members of the Security Council reaffirmed their commitment to working with Colombia, under the new Administration, to renew momentum behind implementation of the peace agreement in order to secure a lasting peace. In this regard, they echoed the Secretary-General's hope that the new Administration will continue to pursue those issues at the core of the peace agenda: security, development and the rule of law in those areas affected by conflict; an effective system of truth, justice and reparation for victims; and the essential commitments to those who laid down arms. They also noted the Secretary-General's call on the Government to make available the necessary resources for this critical investment as well as the need for the FARC to meet its commitments, and stressed the importance of the international community remaining closely engaged to support and encourage implementation.

The Members of the Security Council stressed the continued importance of Colombia's peace process as a source of inspiration for efforts in many parts of the world to end conflicts and build peace.

The members of the Security Council reiterated their support and appreciation for the work of the Special Representative of the Secretary-General, Mr. Jean Arnault, and the United Nations Verification Mission in Colombia.

### **Cooperation and lasting peace in Colombia**

#### **Foreign and Commonwealth Office**

**10 October 2018**

*Statement by Ambassador Jonathan Allen, UK Deputy Permanent Representative to the UN, at the Security Council briefing on Colombia:*

Thank you Mr President, and may I also thank the SRSG Arnault for his briefing, which chimes very closely with our own assessment and analysis of developments over the past three months. Thank you. Let me also warmly welcome Foreign Minister Holmes Trujillo to the Security Council for the first time.

The UK welcomes Colombia's continued commitment – clearly set out by President Duque – to implement the Peace Agreement. As we have all said many times in this chamber, that agreement represents an opportunity for lasting peace in Colombia as well as being a positive example to the rest of the world.

And like SRSR Arnault, we also welcome the steps taken by the new government so far, including the commitment to push ahead with effective reintegration of former members of the FARC, as well as the appointment of key positions in important institutions for the peace process. In particular, the CSIVI and the National Reintegration Council. We share the Secretary-General's hope that that Colombian institutions will continue to pursue the peace process, including security, development and rule of law in conflict zones; an effective justice system and reparations for victims; and the essential commitment to those who have laid down their arms. Recent progress in the investigation of initial cases by the Special Jurisdiction for Peace has been a key step in achieving these goals, and we encourage all parties to support the extremely important work of these institutions.

But as the Secretary-General has said, the challenges ahead remain formidable, we are particularly concerned by two important and concerning trends.

First, the departure of several former FARC commanders from some of the territorial areas for training and reintegration has highlighted weaknesses in the reintegration process. We agree with the Secretary-General that economic reintegration activities need to resume on a larger scale and faster than has been the case to date and that the security of FARC members must be assured.

Secondly, we share the Secretary-General's concern about the expansion of illegal economies, competition of criminal groups for territorial control, and the persistence of violence, which is continuing to claim the lives of human rights defenders and social leaders. We welcome President Duque's commitment to tackling these issues and look forward to the signatories to the "Pact for Life and the Protection of Social Leaders and Human Rights Defenders" on 23 August implementing their commitments.

Mr President, with this in mind, we welcome the renewal of the mandate of the United Nations Verification Mission in Colombia. We hope and believe the Verification Mission will continue to play an important role in maintaining confidence and cooperation between the parties, and encouraging them to work together on peace implementation.

For our part, the UK is fully committed to working with the new Colombian government, just as we did with the last, as Colombia works towards securing a lasting and sustained peace.

**Sir Alan Duncan statement on adoption of United National Security Council Resolution on Colombia**

**Foreign and Commonwealth Office**

**13 September 2018**

The Rt Hon Sir Alan Duncan MP, Minister of State for the Foreign and Commonwealth Office said:

Colombia has come a long way in the last year towards consolidating the peace process. This is clearly evident in the transition of the FARC to political party and the passing of the safest elections in decades. The approval of UN Security Council resolution 2435 demonstrates that Colombia has global support for its work to a safer, more stable and prosperous future for all citizens.

The UN Political Mission in Colombia has played a vital role in maintaining cooperation by all parties, encouraging them to work together to first end the violence and to go on building the peace. I welcome the UN Security Council's response to this request, made on behalf of both the Colombian Government and the FARC, to extend the UN Political Missions presence.

The UK is privileged to have worked closely with Colombia and with partners in the UN Security Council to ensure continued international support to Colombia's peace process, which continues to inspire others globally.

## 4. PQs

### [Colombia: Politics and Government](#)

15 May 2019 | 251329

**Asked by: Jim Shannon**

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs, what assessment his Department has made of the refusal of the Colombian President Ivan Duque to sign the Statutory Law on the Special Jurisdiction for Peace on the political situation in that country; and if he will make a statement.

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

The Colombian people elected President Duque in 2018 with a mandate to implement the 2016 peace agreement and make certain changes to it. President Duque's recent objections to six articles of the law governing the Special Jurisdiction for Peace are consistent with his election campaign and with the powers of the presidency. However, the UK believes that the delay risks undermining the system's authority and reducing cooperation with the the Revolutionary Armed Forces of Colombia . We believe that the Transitional justice law must be approved swiftly to ensure continued confidence in the peace process. On 11 March, our Ambassador for Colombia informed President Duque of the UK position. On 9 May, the Minister for the Commonwealth and the UN, Lord Ahmad of Wimbledon reiterated this point when he met with Colombian High Counsellor for Stabilisation, Emilio Archila.

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

25 Apr 2019 | 245694

**Asked by: Helen Goodman**

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs, if he will make representations to his Colombian counterpart on the need to pursue a negotiated settlement with the National Liberation Army of Colombia.

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

The UK has reaffirmed its unwavering support to the Colombian authorities as they seek to ensure sustainable peace in Colombia and has reiterated the importance of pressing ahead with work to implement the peace agreement in order to consolidate peace and build stability. At the same time, the UK, alongside international partners, has continued to urge a negotiated end to the conflict.

**Colombia: Human Rights****04 Apr 2019 | 239266****Asked by: Patrick Grady**

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs, if he will publish a response to EDM 2232 on Peace and Protection of Defenders in Colombia.

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

I share the Hon Member's concern regarding the implementation of the Peace Accords between the Colombian Government and the Revolutionary Armed Forces of Colombia (FARC). The UK continues to support the peace process, contributing over £40 million through the Conflict, Stability and Security Fund since 2015 to projects that are bringing sustainable peace to the country. We have expressed concern to the Colombian Government over delays to the transitional justice system, which is a critical part of the peace process.

I share also the Hon Member's concern about the ongoing killings and threats by armed criminal groups in Colombia, a subject we raised in January at the UN Security Council in New York and in March at the UN Human Rights Council in Geneva. At the Universal Periodic Review of Human Rights in May 2018, Colombia accepted the UK's recommendations to improve protection of human rights defenders. The UN Verification Mission's mandate acknowledges the importance of human rights, and the mission cooperates closely with the Office of the High Commissioner of Human Rights.

The Human Rights programmes led and funded by the British Embassy in Bogotá make a real difference to the lives of many human rights defenders, social leaders and, in particular, victims of sexual violence in conflict. We continue to work with civil society groups in the UK and Colombia to bring individual cases to the attention of the Colombian authorities, including the two specific cases cited in Early Day Motion 2232.

We condemned the bombing of a police academy in Bogotá on 17 January by the National Liberation Army (ELN), which claimed 20 innocent lives and caused the breakdown of peace talks. We urge an end to violence to allow productive negotiations to resume.

**Colombia Peace Process****02 Apr 2019 | 910166****Asked by: Christian Matheson**

What assessment he has made of the progress on the Colombia peace process.

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

Since 2016, Colombia has made significant progress in its peace process; the FARC is now a political party and the last elections were the safest in decades. I reaffirmed our full support for the peace process

with the Colombian Foreign Minister on 4 February in Ottawa. The UK has expressed concern to the Colombian Government over delays in the transitional justice system, which is a critical part of the peace process. We continue to support the process through the conflict stability and security fund.

**Colombia: Administration of Justice**

**22 Mar 2019 | 233437**

**Asked by: Clive Efford**

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs, if we will make representations to the Government of Colombia on ensuring that the Special Jurisdiction for Peace is consolidated in law in that country in accordance with the terms of the 2016 peace agreement between the Government of Colombia and the revolutionary armed forces of Colombia - people's army; and if he will make a statement.

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

The Special Jurisdiction for Peace continues to function under currently existing legal provisions despite the recent objections of President Duque to certain articles of the law. However, we remain concerned that a delay in finalising the legal underpinning of the transitional justice system risks undermining its authority and reducing cooperation of the Revolutionary Armed Forces of Colombia (FARC).

Our Ambassador in Bogota informed President Duque of Colombia of the UK position on the Special Jurisdiction for Peace on 11 March during a briefing for the international community. He emphasised the importance of finalising the legal underpinning for the transitional justice system as quickly as possible to mitigate the risk of undermining its authority and reducing cooperation with the FARC. The UK permanent representative to the UN met Colombian Foreign Minister Holmes Trujillo on 15 March to reiterate the importance of a speedy process and the positive signal that accelerating the implementation of the Peace Agreement would send.

**Colombia: Peace Negotiations**

**30 Jan 2019 | 212595**

**Asked by: Helen Goodman**

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs, what recent steps he is taking to support the peace process in Colombia since the recent attacks by ELN militants in Bogota.

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

The UK swiftly condemned the recent car bomb attack in Bogotá and offered condolences to the families of the victims, including via a UK-drafted statement by the United Nations Security Council. We continue to offer our unwavering support to the Colombian authorities as they seek to ensure sustainable peace in Colombia. In the week following the attack, the UK used its position as pen-holder at the UN on the

Colombian peace process to reiterate our support for the implementation of the Peace Agreement. We also called for the protection of Human Rights Defenders and greater coordination between Colombia's state institutions in former conflict areas. Karen Pierce, the UK's Permanent Representative to the UN, met Colombian Foreign Minister Holmes Trujillo to pledge our continued support for the FARC Peace Agreement and to discuss the way forward regarding the ELN in the wake of the 17 January attack.

I was in New York last weekend for a Security Council meeting on the ongoing crisis in Venezuela - I also used this opportunity to discuss Colombia's peace process with Mr Holmes Trujillo.

The UK continues to provide extensive support to Colombia's peace process: this was reaffirmed by my December 2018 announcement of an additional £5m in funding provided through the Conflict, Stability and Security Fund (CSSF). This brought our contribution to Colombia's peace process to over £39m since 2015. The CSSF funds numerous programmes in Colombia to reintegrate former combatants and stabilise former conflict areas.

### **Colombia: Peace Negotiations**

**22 Jan 2019 | 908715**

#### **Asked by: Christian Matheson**

What assessment he has made of progress on the peace process in Colombia.

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

I strongly condemn the ELN's terrorist attack in Bogota last week. Colombia has been steadfast in its rejection of violence for political ends. The 2016 historic peace deal has shown the way, the FARC is now a political party and last year's elections were the safest in decades. The UK continues to support the Colombian authorities as they seek to ensure sustainable peace for all Colombians. Last month I announced an extra £5 million from the Conflict Stability and Security Fund to support Colombia's efforts to secure lasting peace for all its citizens.

### **Colombia: Politics and Government**

**19 Nov 2018 | 191258**

#### **Asked by: Clive Efford**

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs, whether he has received reports alleging that police in Colombia have passed information to the FARC party warning of plans they have uncovered to kill members of their party leadership; if he will make representations to the Government in Colombia on the protection of those people; and if he will make a statement.

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

I discussed the killings of former members of the FARC, human rights defenders and social activists in Colombia with President Duque's advisor for international affairs and human rights on 17 October. I also condemn the attempted murder of FARC leader Erika Montero in Medellin on 4 November which seeks to undermine confidence in the peace process.

The Colombian Government has taken welcome steps to train protection teams for FARC leaders, with recruits including former FARC combatants. The UK has raised the importance of providing security guarantees set out in the peace deal during discussions at the UN Security Council where the UK holds the pen for the peace process, and through CSSF funding we have strengthened the Colombian Government's capacity to do this. The UK has also called for improved protection measures for human rights defenders, including through recommendations that Colombia accepted during its Universal Periodic Review of Human Rights at the UN (Geneva) in May.

The UK fully supports implementation of the 2016 historic peace agreement and continues to work closely with the new Colombian Government and international partners to ensure a safer more prosperous future for all Colombians.

**[Colombia: Human Rights](#)**

**24 Jul 2018 | 166212**

**Asked by: Patrick Grady**

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs, if he will respond to Early Day Motion 1492, on human rights in Colombia.

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

Human rights defenders and social leaders play a vital role in promoting the rights of local communities and minority groups in Colombia, and in helping to realise the benefits of the historic peace agreement. I am concerned by reports of increasing violence and killings of human rights defenders and social leaders, something I have discussed with Colombian Ministers and the Colombian Ambassador. The FCO supports the important work of human rights defenders globally, including through our advocacy and project work.

**[Columbia: 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 Colombian Government on progress on the peace process in that country.

**Answering member: Sir Alan Duncan | Department: 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 | Department: 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: Peace Negotiations](#)****10 Jan 2018 | 121308****Asked by: Patrick Grady**

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs, what technical support the UK Government is providing to the Colombian Government to ensure the establishment of the proposed Truth Commission in that country.

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

The UK is the biggest contributor to the UN Trust Fund, which provides support to the Truth Commission. Through the UN Office for Human Rights in Colombia, we also provide financial support for projects to enable victims to participate in the Peace Agreement's truth, justice and reparation process, which includes the Truth Commission.

## 5. Other Parliamentary material

### 5.1 Debates

#### [Colombia Peace Process](#)

**12 Sep 2018 | House of Commons | 646 cc337-359WH**

Motion that this House has considered the peace process in Columbia.  
Agreed to on question.

### 5.2 Early Day Motions

#### [Inclusive peace and protection of defenders in Colombia](#)

**EDM 2232 (session 2017-19)**

**26 March 2019**

**Patrick Grady**

That this House encourages further steps to be taken to ensure the full and effective implementation of the Peace Accord between the Colombian Government and the FARC signed in November 2016, including its gender-based agreements and prioritisation of victims' rights; recognises the vital role of civil society organisations and human rights defenders in the effective implementation of that Accord; is very concerned that 172 human rights defenders were killed in Colombia in 2018 according to the Colombian Ombudsman; notes also with concern the death threats against Zenú Indigenous leader Irrael Aguilar Solano and Human Rights Defender Danilo Rueda from the Comision Intereclesial de Justicia y Paz; regrets that the breakdown of peace talks with the ELN guerrilla has increased violence against, and suffering in Indigenous, Afro-Colombian and peasant rural communities and humanitarian zones, including in medio-Atrato Chocó, Curvaradó and Jiguamiandó, which are caught between neo-paramilitary groups and ELN guerrilla, and subject to threats and intimidation; urge both the Colombian State and the ELN to work towards a peaceful and negotiated solution to the armed conflict; and calls on the Government to ensure that the recommendations in the UN Special Rapporteur on Human Rights Defenders' 2019 report on the Situation of Human Rights Defenders are incorporated into, and monitored by, the UN Security Council's Verification Mission to Colombia.

#### [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.

### **Colombian peace agreement**

**EDM 579 (session 2016-17)**

**19 October 2016**

**Robert Flello**

That this House welcomes the official signing of the peace agreement between the government of Colombia and the FARC-EP and congratulates both sides on reaching this agreement after 52 years of conflict; recognises the ground breaking gender focus of the agreement and the transitional justice element which places the rights of victims at its centre; views with disappointment the result of the plebiscite; welcomes, however, the commitment of both parties to a lasting peace; wishes to show solidarity with the Colombian people who have been publicly demonstrating in such huge numbers in support of the peace agreement and their right to live in peace; further congratulates President Santos in winning the Nobel Peace prize; and highlights that this is awarded in international recognition of the efforts and commitment of the Colombian people and both the government of Colombia and the FARC-EP in achieving this agreement.

## 6. Human Rights and Democracy Report: Colombia

[Human Rights and Democracy: the 2018 Foreign and Commonwealth Office report](#)  
**Foreign and Commonwealth Office**  
**5 June 2019**

Extract of the report – section on Colombia:

### **Colombia**

In 2018, the second year after the signing of the peace agreement with the Revolutionary Armed Forces of Colombia (FARC) in November 2016, the Colombian government's efforts to ensure universal enjoyment of human rights and fundamental freedoms were hampered by limited state capacity in rural areas, slow implementation of legislative measures, and the exploitation of vulnerable Venezuelans escaping the situation in their home country.

The situation for human rights defenders did not improve: according to the UN High Commissioner for Human Rights, 110 human rights defenders were murdered. The Colombian Attorney General's Office reported significant advances in investigations of around half the cases reported by the UN between 2016 and July 2018, but impunity – especially for those responsible for ordering these attacks – remains extremely high.

The Colombian government demonstrated a genuine interest in building a more comprehensive protection system for human rights defenders, but the process remained bureaucratic and lacked capacity. Nonetheless, the issue attracted real attention and political will. For the first time in almost a decade, the Colombian government agreed to a formal visit of a UN Special Rapporteur. During his visit to Colombia in December, Michel Forst, the Special Rapporteur on the Situation of Human Rights Defenders, highlighted the magnitude of the problem and issued initial recommendations, observing that there was evidence of systematic targeting in the attacks on human rights defenders.

In 2018, the challenges faced by human rights defenders remained one of the UK's top priorities. We supported over 200 at-risk human rights defenders, through training on how to protect themselves individually and collectively. We provided legal support in 14 emblematic court cases relating to attacks on human rights defenders, following up on every step of the procedure.

The UK continued work to tackle impunity in historic cases of sexual violence which had occurred during Colombia's long internal conflict. We facilitated the documentation of around 2,000 cases presented before Colombia's transitional justice system, introduced after the signing of the peace deal with the FARC.

Colombia's Constitutional Court intervened in a long-running political dispute by ruling that sexual violence crimes would be tried by the transitional justice system (rather than the ordinary justice system), meaning that perpetrators could benefit from the transitional system's alternative punishments, and avoid imprisonment even if convicted. Civil society organisations had argued this was a vital step to foster truth on the scale of the issue and fight impunity.

While the formal conflict has ended, sexual violence remains widespread in Colombia. In the first ten months of 2018, the Colombian government acknowledged almost 20,000 cases, while the Attorney General's office issued over 34,000 protection orders for those deemed at risk of intra-family violence.

The UK provided training for over 150 local authorities and health providers to improve the quality of service for victims of sexual violence. In addition, we provided training on gender issues and gender-based violence to over 1,600 students, women, and community leaders, from nine regions, as part of the global campaign to end the stigmatisation of victims of sexual violence.

Modern slavery became a visible issue on Colombia's human rights agenda. The migration of Venezuelans to Colombia – around 1.3 million are thought to be living in Colombia, many of whom are vulnerable – led to a massive rise in reported cases of sexual exploitation across the country. Between January and October, there were nearly 300 reports of sexual exploitation in the city of Cartagena alone, where a police operation freed nearly 100 Venezuelan victims. According to the Colombian authorities, there are 870,000 children between the ages of 5 and 17 working as child labourers in Colombia.

The UK supported prevention campaigns for 150 girls from vulnerable communities and started a multi-year regional programme – working across eight countries – to identify gaps in routes for modern slavery victims, and develop recommendations for public policy to tackle modern slavery.

In May, Colombia underwent the Universal Periodic Review process at the UN Human Rights Council. The UK statement specifically highlighted continuing violence against human rights defenders, impunity in conflict-related sexual violence, and concerns related to modern slavery, while recognising the efforts of the Colombian government to tackle these challenges.

The UK has sought to address human rights risks in the Colombian mining industry by encouraging compliance with the OECD's Due Diligence Guidance and by fostering partnerships between the private sector and international organisations, local government, and civil society to support responsible mining practices.

The UK provided £71,000 to fund a project to support the engagement of the private sector with Colombia's Truth Commission in its work as part of Colombia's transitional justice process. Concluding in early 2018, the project developed methodologies, tools, and recommendations

aimed at addressing and promoting the role of the private sector in the transitional justice process.

In 2019, we will continue promoting the creation of better collective and self-protection mechanisms for human rights defenders and will continue strengthening our work preventing sexual violence, with a special focus on justice access and health services improvement. In addition, we will start the implementation of recommendations to tackle modern slavery in the region.

On the policy side, we will be paying special attention to the recommendations made by Michel Forst on Human Rights Defenders and the advances made by the government one year after Colombia's UPR.

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