

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 three meetings and adopted two 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](#))”. Two of the meetings took the form of briefings and one was convened for the adoption of a decision.⁵¹⁰ More information on the meetings is provided in table 1 below. Council members also held three open videoconferences in connection with this item. More information on the videoconferences is provided in table 2 below.⁵¹¹ In addition to the meetings and open videoconferences, in 2021, Council members held a closed videoconference in connection with this item.⁵¹²

In 2021, the Special Representative of the Secretary-General for Colombia and Head of the United Nations Verification Mission in Colombia briefed Council members further to the reports of the Secretary-General on a quarterly basis.⁵¹³ The Council was also briefed by three representatives of Colombian civil society.⁵¹⁴ At the meetings and videoconferences, Colombia was represented by its Vice-President and Minister for Foreign Affairs.

In his statements to the Council, the Special Representative of the Secretary-General for Colombia reported on the progress made on the five priorities of the Secretary-General for the implementation of the mandate of the United Nations Verification Mission in Colombia in support of the 2016 Final Agreement for Ending the Conflict and Building a Stable and Lasting Peace in 2021, namely (i) ensuring protection and security for former combatants, conflict-affected communities, and social leaders and human rights defenders; (ii) ensuring sustainability

⁵¹⁰ For more information on the format of meetings, see part II, sect. II.

⁵¹¹ For more information on the procedures and working methods developed during the COVID-19 pandemic, see part II. See also [A/76/2](#), part II, chap. 41.

⁵¹² See [S/2021/1014](#). A closed videoconference was held on 21 January 2021 (at the time, consultations of the Council were held in the form of closed videoconferences, for more details on the procedures developed during the COVID-19 pandemic, see part II of this Supplement as well as *Repertoire, Supplement 2020*, part II).

⁵¹³ See [S/2021/77](#), [S/2021/401](#), [S/PV.8818](#) and [S/PV.8879](#). See also reports of the Secretary-General on the United Nations Verification Mission in Colombia ([S/2020/1301](#), [S/2021/298](#), [S/2021/603](#) and [S/2021/824](#)).

⁵¹⁴ See [S/PV.8818](#) and [S/PV.8879](#).

of the reintegration process; (iii) consolidating the integrated presence of the State in conflict-affected areas; (iv) reinforcing constructive dialogue between the parties; and (v) strengthening conditions for reconciliation.⁵¹⁵ In his first briefing of the year at the open videoconference held on 21 January 2021, the Special Representative described the violence against former Revolutionary Armed Forces of Colombia-People's Army (FARC-EP) combatants, social leaders, human rights defenders and communities as the most serious threat to peacebuilding in the country.⁵¹⁶ He underlined the need to address budget shortfalls and vacancies in the National Protection Unit which provided collective and individual close protection schemes for former combatants and to ensure that women former combatants had equal access to close protection. He also stressed that it was essential to support the Special Investigations Unit to bring to justice those responsible for such crimes. On the reintegration process, the Special Representative noted the promising developments concerning the purchase of land for the former territorial area for training and reintegration in Dabeiba and the Government of Colombia's announcement of further purchases in five additional areas by mid-February 2021. He underscored the need to ensure the same level of institutional support and productive opportunities for former combatants outside of the territorial areas, including those remaining in areas that had been or would be relocated due to threats from illegal armed groups.

Regarding the consolidation of State presence in conflict-affected areas, the Special Representative stated that the national authorities had to remain firm in the implementation of development programmes with a territorial focus, the National Comprehensive Programme for the Substitution of Illicit Crops and the comprehensive security and protection programme for communities and organizations in the territories. He underlined that sustained dialogue between the parties was fundamental to the implementation of all aspects of the Final Agreement, including through the Commission for the Follow-up, Promotion and Verification of the Implementation of the Final Agreement, and called on all actors to lend their full support to the work of the Comprehensive System for Truth, Justice, Reparation and Non-Repetition.

⁵¹⁵ See report of the Secretary-General dated 29 December 2020 on the United Nations Verification Mission in Colombia outlining the five proposed priorities for 2021 ([S/2020/1301](#)).

⁵¹⁶ See [S/2021/77](#).

On 21 April 2021, at an open videoconference, the Special Representative welcomed the meeting held between President Iván Duque Márquez and the leader of the Comunes party, Rodrigo Londoño, on 10 March 2021, and encouraged the parties to continue to move forward in defining the road map for the implementation of the Final Agreement agreed at that meeting.⁵¹⁷ Regarding reintegration, he informed Council members that, as a result of the Government's efforts, seven of the 24 former territorial areas had land and that close to 50 per cent of former combatants were participating in collective and individual projects. It was necessary to complement these efforts with the implementation of other fundamental aspects of the agreement such as the national sector plan for comprehensive rural reform, the National Comprehensive Programme for Substitution of Illicit Crops and to accelerate the implementation of the gender measures in the agreement, and for all actors to enhance the role of women's organizations in peacebuilding.

At the meeting of the Council held on 13 July 2021, the Special Representative stated that the official acceptance of responsibility for crimes against humanity and war crimes in April 2021 by seven former FARC-EP combatants in "Case 01" before the Special Jurisdiction for Peace regarding hostage-taking and other serious deprivations of liberty was a milestone in the peace process and a benchmark for transitional justice in the world.⁵¹⁸ Furthermore, in July 2021, the Special Jurisdiction charged 11 persons, including some army officers and a third-party civilian, with war crimes and crimes against humanity in "Case 03" regarding killings and disappearances. Noting that fulfilling the rights of victims was a necessary condition for the success of the Final Agreement, the Special Representative opined that the task entrusted to the United Nations Verification Mission to verify compliance and implementation of the Special Jurisdiction's sanctions would decisively contribute to reconciliation efforts. He also signalled that the persistence of violence and insecurity highlighted the urgent need for enhanced prevention and protection measures, as well as for additional and more solid steps to dismantle illegal organizations, bring perpetrators to justice, and extend State institutions, public services and development opportunities as quickly as possible to conflict-affected communities.

⁵¹⁷ See [S/2021/401](#).

⁵¹⁸ See [S/PV.8818](#).

On 14 October 2021, at the last meeting of the year, the Special Representative noted the achievements made in the implementation of the Final Agreement since its signing in 2016, adding that progress on pending tasks and overcoming challenges to implementation depended, to a large extent, on the ability of the parties to implement all aspects of the agreement.⁵¹⁹ A total of 296 men and women who laid down their arms in good faith had lost their lives, primarily due to actions of illegal armed groups and criminal organizations, with Afro-Colombian and indigenous communities disproportionately affected. He called for the urgent and simultaneous implementation of all provisions pertaining to security guarantees and the better use by the Government and State entities of the mechanisms such as the National Commission on Security Guarantees to devise effective measures to curb violence.

The civil society briefers in 2021 focused their statements on the importance of inclusivity in Colombia's peacebuilding process, particularly from the standpoint of women, youth, indigenous and Afro-Colombian communities. In her statement at the meeting of the Council, on 13 July 2021, the Founder and Director of the Latin America Foundation "Viva la Vida," noted that women in Colombia had made great progress in the context of resolution [1325 \(2000\)](#) on women and peace and security and promoted the inclusion of a gender approach in the Final Agreement.⁵²⁰ As a representative of the young people of Colombia, she made several proposals to the Council, including adding specific indicators on the implementation of the youth, peace and security agenda in the Verification Mission's mandate, dedicating a section of Council meetings to youth issues with a gender perspective, and for the Council to visit the country and hold consultations with youth representation in all their diversity. She also called on the Government of Colombia to increase the participation of young people in decision-making at all levels and to protect their lives, advance investigations into cases of violence against women and young people and develop strategies to demobilize and reintegrate youth.

At the meeting held on 14 October 2021, the Coordinator of "Butterflies with New Wings," a Colombian non-profit organization from Buenaventura, expressed concern about the lack of safety for peace signatories and leaders and that no progress had been made on the "ethnic chapter" of the Final Agreement, particularly relating to the country's indigenous black

⁵¹⁹ See [S/PV.8879](#).

⁵²⁰ See [S/PV.8818](#).

peoples.⁵²¹ She underlined the need for armed groups to leave the territory of indigenous black peoples, for their rights and territorial autonomy to be recognized, and to define a specific path for reincorporating former combatants and peace signatories from these communities. The coordinator called on the Council to continue to support the communities, and above all, women, so that they could continue to make progress on the ethnic chapter and ensure its comprehensive implementation from an anti-racist gender perspective. At the same meeting, the Youth Leader of the Regional Indigenous Council of Cauca expressed concern that compliance with the agreement's points on rural reform, substitution of illicit crops, the ethnic chapter and gender had been minimal which increased inequality and violence in territories, particularly Cauca. She underlined the need for women peacebuilders to enjoy the necessary security guarantees, for support to indigenous and Afro-Colombian women leaders and for constructive ventures and projects to address economic inequality. The youth leader expressed hope that the Council would continue to urge full compliance with the Final Agreement, with particular focus on its ethnic dimensions and the integral gender approach.

In their discussions in 2021, Council members noted the important achievements made since the signing of the Final Agreement in 2016, with several members expressing support for the priority implementation areas outlined by the Secretary-General as a framework for future progress.⁵²² Council members noted their concern regarding the continued threats, attacks and killings of former FARC-EP combatants, human rights defenders and community and social leaders, women and indigenous and Afro-Colombian communities. As a means of curbing this trend, they discussed the need for increased State presence in rural areas and the implementation of the security and protection measures envisioned under the agreement, including the public policy for the dismantling of illegal armed groups, and for ensuring accountability for these crimes. Other outstanding aspects of the agreement discussed included the purchase of land for housing and productive projects, particularly for combatants residing outside of the former territorial areas, equal access to these programmes for women, rural reform, illicit crop substitution, and the gender and ethnic provisions of the agreement.

⁵²¹ See [S/PV.8879](#).

⁵²² See [S/2021/77](#), India, Ireland, Mexico and United Kingdom; [S/2021/401](#), India, Russian Federation and Saint Vincent and the Grenadines; [S/PV.8818](#), India; and [S/PV.8879](#), Mexico.

Council members paid particular attention to the progress made in the work of the Colombian Comprehensive System for Truth, Justice, Reparation and Non-Repitition. In this regard, they welcomed the acknowledgment of responsibility by former commanders of the FARC-EP for crimes against humanity and war crimes before the Special Jurisdiction for Peace,⁵²³ and widely expressed support for the expansion of the Verification Mission’s mandate to verify compliance with the Jurisdiction’s sanctions measures.⁵²⁴ The representative of the Russian Federation was of the view that, while some progress in the Government’s commitments under the Final Agreement had been made, a great deal more needed to be done. He added that sustainable peace and reconciliation could not be achieved without the inclusion of all actors in the process, including the National Liberation Army, and would be helped by establishing relations with the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela.⁵²⁵

More generally, Council members welcomed and encouraged further dialogue between the Government and the FARC political party and its successor the Comunes party through the Commission for the Follow-up, Promotion and Verification of the Implementation of the Final Agreement.⁵²⁶ Beyond the agreement, they noted the nationwide protests and social unrest which took place from April to July 2021, with some members expressing concern regarding reports of human rights violations and the excessive use of force by national police forces.⁵²⁷ Looking ahead, Council members welcomed the establishment of 16 special transitional electoral districts for peace by the Government in preparation for the 2022 congressional elections to ensure the participation of historically excluded populations in conflict-affected regions.⁵²⁸ In their statements to the Council in 2021, the representatives of Colombia provided an overview of the progress and the efforts of the Government in the implementation of the Final Agreement, particularly in the context of its “Peace with Legality” strategy launched in 2018.⁵²⁹ At the

⁵²³ See [S/PV.8818](#), United Kingdom, France, Saint Vincent and the Grenadines, Norway, United States and France.

⁵²⁴ See [S/2021/77](#), Estonia, Ireland, Mexico, United Kingdom and [S/2021/401](#), China, France, India, Ireland, Mexico, United Kingdom and Viet Nam.

⁵²⁵ See [S/PV.8818](#). See also [S/PV.8879](#).

⁵²⁶ See [S/2021/77](#), Norway; [S/2021/401](#), China, Ireland, Russian Federation and Saint Vincent and the Grenadines; [S/PV.8818](#), Saint Vincent and the Grenadines and Ireland; and [S/PV.8879](#), Saint Vincent and the Grenadines, Ireland and France.

⁵²⁷ See [S/PV.8818](#), United Kingdom, Norway, Russian Federation and United States.

⁵²⁸ See [S/PV.8818](#), Mexico, Estonia; and [S/PV.8879](#), United Kingdom, Mexico, India, Viet Nam, Russian Federation, Ireland, China and France.

⁵²⁹ See [S/PV/2021/77](#); [S/2021/401](#); [S/PV.8818](#); and [S/PV.8879](#).

meeting held on 21 October 2021, on the eve of the fifth anniversary of the agreement, the Vice-President and Minister for Foreign Affairs noted that, with one third of the 15-year implementation period having elapsed, it was important not to backslide with regard to what had already been achieved.⁵³⁰

By resolutions [2574 \(2021\)](#) of 11 May 2021 and [2603 \(2021\)](#) of 29 October 2021, the Council, extended the mandate of the Verification Mission for periods of, respectively, five months and one year, the latter until 31 October 2022.⁵³¹ By resolution [2574 \(2021\)](#), following the request of the Government of Colombia, the Council expanded the Mission's mandate to include the verification of compliance with and implementation of the sentences issued by the Special Jurisdiction for Peace.⁵³² By resolution [2603 \(2021\)](#), the Council urged the parties, with the support of relevant State institutions and security forces, as well as civil society, to work together to build upon the progress made and address the ongoing challenges, in particular the continued violence in conflict-affected areas, through comprehensive implementation of the agreement, including rural reform, inclusive political participation, its ethnic and gender provisions, and countering illicit drugs, including through crop substitution programs.⁵³³

⁵³⁰ See [S/PV.8879](#).

⁵³¹ Resolution [2574 \(2021\)](#), para. 4 and [2603 \(2021\)](#), para. 1. For further information on the mandate of the United Nations Verification Mission in Colombia, see part X, sect. II.

⁵³² Resolution [2574 \(2021\)](#), para. 1. See letter dated 15 January 2021 from the Permanent Representative of Colombia addressed to the Secretary-General and the President of the Council, transmitting the request of the Government of Colombia for the expansion of the mandate of the United Nations Verification Mission in Colombia ([S/2021/147](#)). See also letter dated 24 February 2021 from the Secretary-General addressed to the President of the Council providing recommendations on how the additional tasks would be carried out and any implications for the configuration of the Verification Mission ([S/2021/186](#)).

⁵³³ Resolution [2603 \(2021\)](#), third preambular paragraph.

Table 1
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](#))

<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>Decision and vote (for-against-abstaining)</i>
S/PV.8818 13 July 2021	Report of the Secretary-General on the United Nations Verification Mission in Colombia (S/2021/603)		Colombia	Special Representative of the Secretary-General and Head of the United Nations Verification Mission in Colombia, Founder and Director of the Latin American Foundation “Viva La Vida”	12 Council members ^a , all invitees ^b	
S/PV.8879 14 October 2021	Report of the Secretary-General on the United Nations Verification Mission in Colombia (S/2021/824)		Colombia	Special Representative of the Secretary-General and Head of the United Nations Verification Mission in Colombia, Coordinator of “Butterflies with New Wings” and representative of the Afro-Colombian women in the Special Forum on Gender, and Youth Leader, Regional Indigenous Council of Cauca	12 Council members ^a , all invitees ^c	
S/PV.8891 29 October 2021	Report of the Secretary-General on the United Nations Verification Mission in Colombia (S/2021/824)	Draft resolutions submitted by Mexico and the United Kingdom (S/2021/902)				Resolution 2603 (2021) 15-0-0

^a China, Estonia, France, India, Ireland, Mexico, Norway, Russian Federation, Saint Vincent and the Grenadines (also on behalf of Kenya, Niger and Tunisia), United Kingdom, United States and Viet Nam.

^b Colombia was represented by its Vice President and Minister for Foreign Affairs. The Founder and Director of the Latin American Foundation “Viva La Vida” participated in the meeting via videoconference.

^c Colombia was represented by its Vice President and Minister for Foreign Affairs. The Coordinator of “Butterflies with New Wings” and Youth Leader participated in the meeting via videoconference.

Table 2
Videoconferences: 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](#))

<i>Videoconference date</i>	<i>Videoconference record</i>	<i>Title</i>	<i>Decision and vote (for-against-abstaining) and record of written procedure</i>
21 January 2021	S/2021/77	Letter dated 25 January 2021 from the President of the Security Council addressed to the Secretary-General and the Permanent Representatives of the members of the Security Council	
21 April 2021	S/2021/401	Letter dated 23 April 2021 from the President of the Security Council addressed to the Secretary-General and the Permanent Representatives of the members of the Security Council	
11 May 2021	S/2021/449	Letter dated 11 May 2021 from the President of the Security Council addressed to the Secretary-General and the Permanent Representatives of the members of the Security Council	Resolution 2574 (2021) 15-0-0 S/2021/457 (record of written procedure)