

# **We call for greater efforts to protect women and girls, and Indigenous and Afro-Colombian communities in Colombia: UK statement at the UN Security Council**

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## **Statement by Ambassador James Kariuki, UK Chargé d'Affaires to the UN, at the UN Security Council meeting on Colombia.**

I would like to begin by welcoming Foreign Minister Villavicencio to the Council for today's session.

I thank the Special Representative for his briefing, and I also thank Ms Quintero for sharing her experiences.

The UK reaffirms its strong support for the full implementation of Colombia's 2016 Peace Agreement.

We congratulate Colombia's election authorities, security forces, political actors and above all the Colombian people on holding free, fair, and peaceful congressional elections on 8 March, and we look forward to similarly successful presidential elections.

We welcome the Defensoría del Pueblo's Electoral Pact on Free and Peaceful Elections and urge all actors to uphold its principles.

As the Secretary-General's report makes clear, security challenges and violence remain widespread. Killings, threats against civilians and social leaders, child recruitment and oppression by armed actors persist.

An unacceptable 491 peace signatories have been killed, including four in this period. As we heard today, people in Catatumbo and other conflict-affected areas across Colombia require urgent protection.

We call for greater efforts to protect women and girls, and Indigenous and Afro-Colombian communities who are disproportionately affected by violence.

We welcome the Government's efforts to progress rural reform. We are encouraged that women, including Ms Quintero, have become beneficiaries of land, in this case an all-women farm in Catatumbo.

Meeting immediate protection needs must go hand in hand with creating pathways for sustainable development. Rural reform is fundamental to tackling the inequalities that drive conflict.

An effective state presence, combined with development opportunities, constrains the operating space for armed groups and illicit economies.

We also welcome the reactivation of the Commission for Follow-up, Promotion, and Verification of the Final Peace Agreement (CSIVI), and the positive steps taken to implement a new international verification mechanism for sentences and the Ethnic Chapter.

Looking ahead to Colombia's democratic transition and beyond, the Peace Agreement requires sustained investment, with strong leadership from the government, and adequate funding, as part of a comprehensive approach to delivering peace, security and stability in Colombia.

The UK is committed to supporting Colombia on that path, working together with international partners and the UN Verification Mission as it carries out its vital work.

Thank you.

<https://www.gov.uk/government/speeches/we-call-for-greater-efforts-to-protect-women-and-girls-and-indigenous-and-afro-colombian-communities-in-colombia-uk-statement-at-the-un-security-council>