

# The need for lasting peace in Colombia is even greater in these uncertain times

Thank you, Mr President, and thank you to the SRSB for his report and briefing today. And thank you to Mr Santiago for his inspiring and wide-ranging briefing on reintegration. And I very much look forward to the coffee that we've promised. And let me also welcome Foreign Minister Blum here to the Council today.

Mr President, let me start with the COVID-19 pandemic, which is on our minds as we look across the range of Security Council business. And let me start by saying to the Minister that we very much recognise the challenge this crisis poses to Colombia. And it was therefore heartening to hear your government's assurances from the President's "stay at home" message on 24th of March. And since then, the implementation of the peace agreement will continue and to see the measures implemented jointly by the parties to limit the spread of the virus and ensure continued service provision for former combatants. Let me also say that we welcomed the announcement of a unilateral ceasefire by the ELN. The group's fulfillment of this commitment would facilitate efforts to address the COVID-19 pandemic, in addition, potentially and hopefully, representing a step towards constructive engagement around a lasting peace. And in addition, let me also express appreciation to you, Carlos, and to your team and for all your efforts to continue and adapt your work in the face of the COVID-19 challenge.

Mr President, we've also seen progress on implementation of the peace agreement. The continued rollout of the development programs with a territorial focus demonstrates the Government's commitment to working with local authorities to ensure that implementation reaches conflict affected areas. Similarly, local authorities own incorporation of peace-related considerations into their development plans is encouraging. Furthermore, reintegration of former FARC-EP members continues, including efforts to ensure sustainability of reintegration processes both in and outside the former territorial areas for training and reintegration, and we hope to see further efforts on the outstanding issues of access to land and the needs of women former combatants. And it was heartening to hear from Mr Santiago his on a personal experience in some of these issues and how important and impressive to hear about the adaptability of one community to COVID in creating face masks to help with tackling of the crisis.

Finally, let me welcome the ongoing activity by the Special Jurisdiction for Peace, especially to increase in participation of victims in its proceedings. And we hope the pace of its important work can be maintained.

Mr President, however, I should also note some areas of concern which require urgent efforts to build on progress made.

First, as we have mentioned in previous meetings, we are seriously concerned about the continuously rising numbers of killings of human rights defenders and other activists, including women leaders. I think we all remember our visit last year to Colombia and the real concerns over safety that were expressed to us by the community leaders that we met. I think there was an overwhelming takeaway from our visit last year. Now, the launch of the Action Plan of the “Comprehensive Programme that Safeguards for Women Leaders and Human Rights Defenders” was a positive step toward addressing this issue. We recognise that COVID-19 may necessitate adjustments to the plan, but we urge the Government to be flexible and ensure that the plan soon becomes reality, especially as individuals who rightly stay at home to combat COVID-19 are potentially more easily targeted for attack. Similarly, protection measures for former FARC-EP combatants inside and outside former TATRs should be strengthened, as that population continues to face security issues. I think this is reputational for Colombia.

Second, while we recognise the many challenges involved in implementation, we also note that mechanisms to address many of these challenges already exist. The National Commission on Security Guarantees is one such mechanism, and we encourage its more frequent convening and engagement with civil society. Use of other mechanisms for dialogue between the parties would also ensure that disagreements are constructively addressed and overcome and would send a positive signal to all stakeholders about the parties’ credible commitment.

Finally, the Special Representative’s report emphasises the need to keep communities at the heart of implementation. This means ensuring community participation from process design through to implementation and follow-up – from rural reform and development plans to crop substitution and security. Local authorities, civil society – including women’s organisations – and other community stakeholders, have been most affected by conflict. They are also a source of local knowledge, capacity and commitment. It therefore makes sense for them to be at the centre of efforts secure and sustain peace.

Mr President, let me conclude by saying that in these uncertain times, the United Kingdom recognises the challenges Colombia faces are great. We need to retain this bright spot on our agenda. But this means that the need for lasting and inclusive peace is even greater. And the United Kingdom continues to support the Colombian government in its efforts to achieve this crucial goal.

Thank you very much, Mr President.

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## **Getting PPE to those who need it**

Organisations and individuals across the country are doing all they can to help health and care workers get the personal protective equipment (PPE) they need to do their jobs safely.

The Sellafield workforce is no different.

## **Union campaign**

The 3 unions representing Sellafield Ltd employees have joined together to raise funds for the NHS. Unite the Union, GMB Union and Prospect are fundraising for personal protective equipment for the West Cumberland Hospital and for community nursing teams in Copeland and Workington.

Since being launched earlier this week, they have already raised more than £21,000 from union members and the public.

They have already delivered personal protective equipment and hand sanitizer across West Cumbria.

You can donate [online](#) or search for Sellafield unions PPE.

Michael Ashbridge from Unite the Union, said:

We have been blown away by the response to our campaign, which has been just amazing.

We are working hard to procure as much equipment as possible, and will distribute this throughout West Cumbria.

Thank you to everyone who has helped to support the campaign.

Anyone who wants to get involved can contact Michael Ashbridge on [Michael.ashbridge@unitetheunion.org](mailto:Michael.ashbridge@unitetheunion.org).

## **Cumbria-wide approach**

Sellafield Ltd is part of the Cumbria-wide approach to coordinate requests for, and donations of, PPE.

This is being managed by the Cumbria Resilience Forum who work to ensure that PPE is delivered to where it is needed most in the country. The forum includes all organisations and agencies involved with emergency response in our communities – including the NHS.

Businesses and organisations who have a request for PPE should contact the Multi-Agency Support Team in the first instance. This group is coordinating requests. Email [mast@cumbria.gov.uk](mailto:mast@cumbria.gov.uk).

Companies who have spare PPE they would like to donate can also contact the MAST by email.

Mark Neate, Director of Environment, Safety and Security said:

As the largest employer in West Cumbria, we are doing all we can to

support the community response to the pandemic. It became clear that one of the simplest and most effective things we could do would be to share personal protective equipment. We are working with other key partners and businesses in Cumbria to ensure that our response is coordinated with everyone else's.

## **3D printing of PPE**

Sellafield employees and supply chain partners – both in Cumbria and Warrington are also working to produce bespoke 3D printer PPE like protective visors that can be distributed to health and care workers who need these.

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## **UK to receive nearly 3 million packets of paracetamol**

- Only go outside for food, health reasons or work (but only if you cannot work from home)
- If you go out, stay 2 metres (6ft) away from other people at all times
- Wash your hands as soon as you get home

Do not meet others, even friends or family.

You can spread the virus even if you don't have symptoms.

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## **Chancellor to provide extra £350m to tackle Coronavirus in Wales**

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# Former chair of ABI to lead flood insurance review

The independent review into flood insurance [announced](#) following the November 2019 flooding in the north of England will be led by the former chair of the Association of British Insurers, Amanda Blanc.

The review was announced by the former Environment Secretary in December and will seek to examine the level of insurance cover held by those affected in Doncaster, the barriers they may have faced in obtaining cover and whether there are any systemic issues in the provision of flood insurance.

Data will be collected through speaking to residents and businesses in the Doncaster area where over 760 properties were reported as having flooded. The River Don recorded its highest ever peak flows at Rotherham and Doncaster on 8 November 2019, with South Yorkshire experiencing its wettest November on record seeing over two and a half times its average rainfall.

The review will provide recommendations that will help enable homes and businesses to access sufficient insurance cover for flooding while also informing any future policy decisions in this area.

Environment Minister Rebecca Pow said:

I'm pleased that the independent review into flood insurance is now underway and I look forward to examining its outcomes in the coming months.

I saw first-hand the awful impact flooding can have on communities across many parts of the country this winter. We want at risk homes and businesses to be able to access sufficient insurance so they have the help they need to get back on their feet as soon as possible after a flood.

Review Chair Amanda Blanc said:

Flooding is a truly devastating event for any householder or business to suffer with consequences that can take many months or even years to overcome. Appropriate and adequate flood insurance can greatly assist with this recovery; helping to get families back into their homes and put businesses back on their feet.

However, for insurance to be effective, all communities, including those most at risk, should consider that flood cover is both available and affordable. I am keen to start work to ascertain if

this has been the case in Doncaster under the current system and to make recommendations to ensure the benefits of flood insurance are accessible to all.

The review is set to be completed by the end of September 2020 and the Terms of Reference can be accessed [here](#).

Over 20 million households in the UK have buildings insurance that covers flood risk and the launch of the government and industry initiative [Flood Re](#) in 2016 has seen four out of five households with a previous flood claim getting price reductions of more than 50% for their flood insurance.