



SECURITY COUNCIL INFORMAL EXPERTS GROUP ON WOMEN, PEACE AND SECURITY

COLOMBIA

July 29th, 2020

Security Council Resolution 2242 (2015):

*OP 5. Recognizes the ongoing need for greater integration of resolution 1325 (2000) in its own work in alignment with resolution 2122 (2013), including the need to address challenges linked to the **provision of specific** information and recommendations on the gender dimensions of situations on the Council's agenda, to inform and help strengthen the Council's decisions, and therefore in addition to elements set out in resolution 2122 (2013), and in accordance with established practice and procedure: (a) Expresses its intention to convene meetings of relevant Security Council experts as part of an Informal Experts Group on Women, Peace and Security to facilitate a more systematic approach to Women, Peace and Security within its own work and enable greater oversight and coordination of implementation efforts.*

Security Council Resolution 2467 (2019):

OP 4. Recognizes the work of the Informal Experts Group on Women, Peace and Security, as expressed in resolution 2242, and expresses its intention to consider its information, analysis, and recommendations, acknowledging UN Women's important role in this regard, and emphasizes that sexual violence in armed conflict and post-conflict situations and all other aspects of the Women, Peace and Security agenda should continue to be addressed in this forum.

Security Council Resolution 2493 (2019):

OP. 7. Takes note of the work of the Informal Experts Group on Women, Peace and Security as expressed in resolution 2242 (2015) to facilitate a more systematic approach to Women, Peace and Security within its own work and enable greater oversight and coordination of implementation efforts; and acknowledges UN Women's important role in this regard.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Considerations for upcoming decisions of the Security Council

The Security Council, in its messaging on Colombia, should continue to stress the importance of the WPS agenda within the peace process. In the context of the Verification Mission, the Council and its members can reinforce this emphasis by:

Commending the Mission's efforts to achieve gender parity and integrate gender as a crosscutting issue in the Mission's planning, operations, and reporting.

Encouraging the government and its international partners to strengthen efforts in enhancing the protection of women social leaders and human rights defenders,

Calling for women's continued participation in the implementation of the peace agreement, including the inclusion of a gender approach in the reintegration of ex-combatants.

Other recommendations for the IEG and the Security Council

During the IEG or Council meetings, Council Members could ask the UN about:

- Outstanding challenges and current priorities in ensuring the participation and representation of women in peace implementation mechanisms.
- How the monitoring of the implementation of the gender provisions of the Peace Agreement differs between the Government and civil society groups.
- The situation of female former combatants and their reintegration.
- The status of protection and security mechanisms for women leaders and human rights defenders and progress in the implementation of the comprehensive programme and related measures.
- Key funding gaps affecting the implementation of the gender provisions of the peace agreement, including urgent funding needs to ensure that women from all regions have the technology and the enabling conditions to participate virtually in decision-making and consultations.
- Patterns of sexual and gender-based violence and sexual exploitation, particularly in conflict and humanitarian settings, and including new patterns in the context of the response to the global pandemic.
- The situation of victims of sexual violence and the implementation of prevention and response measures, including access to justice and transitional justice systems.
- Plans to support high-level strategy meetings for women's meaningful participation in peace negotiations, as per resolution 2493, in the context of a potential resumption of peace talks with the ELN and taking into account especially vulnerable populations like Afro-Colombian women, indigenous women, and LGBT people.
- The impact of the global pandemic on gendered patterns of economic insecurity.

In addition, the IEG co-chairs and other Council Members should:

- Support the Government's intention to develop a national action plan on women, peace and security, and encourage that it be developed in a consultative and participatory manner, particularly with the engagement of civil society.
- Encourage the government to expedite the implementation of the gender-relevant provisions of the Peace Agreement, assign and report on indicative budgets for the 51 gender-relevant indicators in the government's monitoring framework, and maintain a sustained and open dialogue with civil society and their monitoring efforts, including by providing financial and operational support for the adequate functioning of the Special Forum on Gender.
- Encourage the government to further implement the gender policy of the Minister of Defense, including through the deployment of female personnel to field areas and increased trainings of on gender-related matters for public forces.
- Support the advocacy by women's civil society organizations to open a case on conflict-related sexual violence within the Special Jurisdiction for Peace.

Introduction

The peace agreement signed in 2016 between the government of Colombia and the FARC-EP remains a global best practice for women, peace and security advocates and these are some of the reasons:

- Women participated in relatively high numbers and played an influential role, including through the establishment of the Gender Sub-Commission in the Havana Peace Talks.
- More than 100 provisions and stipulations in the resulting agreement had a gender perspective or gender equality objectives.
- After the agreement was signed, a complex institutional architecture was designed to monitor and implement it, including a Special Forum on Gender integrated by civil society members and the Government's High Level Forum on Gender, which monitors the 51 gender indicators of the Implementation Framework Plan.
- Important women's participation in some of the bodies created, such as the Special Jurisdiction for Peace, the Truth Commission, and the National Council for Peace and Reconciliation.
- A significant proportion (25 percent) of former members of the FARC-EP that signed the Peace Agreement were women who actively took part in the Gender Sub-Commission and later formed a Gender Commission within the FARC.
- The resulting reintegration policy included 18 gender-specific actions. Former women FARC-EP combatants have also actively participated in political reintegration and two women former combatants are currently Congressmembers.
- The creation of a unique tripartite mechanism for the monitoring and verification of the cease fire and laying down of weapons between the Government, FARC-EP and the first UN Mission, which included a tripartite gender mechanism among the parties.
- The UN Verification mission has featured many good examples of integration of gender in its reporting to the Security Council, periodic consultations with civil society, and gender parity among its civilian staff, with an important percentage of 36% women among its international police and military observers.
- The UN Multi-Partner Trust Fund increased its earmarking percentage for gender-related objectives from 15 to 30 percent.
- To date, at least one-third of registered victims of conflict-related sexual violence have received reparations.

These efforts require ongoing support by the international community in general, and the Security Council in particular, must strengthen its support to the Colombian government and the Colombian women's movement to build on this progress and address the challenges and obstacles that threaten these hard-won gains. These range from continued impunity and insecurity, including the killings of social leaders, human rights defenders, and former combatants or the persistence of sexual violence, to the limited implementation of the gender provisions of the agreement and the pandemic's effects on women's rights and gender equality. Addressing these matters effectively is imperative not only for peace in Colombia, but for the example it sets for conflict resolution and sustaining peace efforts elsewhere in the world. As the Secretary-General has noted repeatedly, the consolidated and integrated presence of State institutions is the long-term solution to the violence plaguing Colombia's rural regions. This integrated presence requires a specific focus on addressing women's rights and development and the comprehensive implementation of the Peace Agreement must include the full implementation of the gender related actions and ethnic chapter of the Agreement.

Developments in the Security Council

The Security Council has not addressed gender issues in its resolutions on Colombia, which have all be short and procedural texts without much thematic content.¹ However, they have raised gender issues in

¹ See resolutions 2487 (2019), 2435 (2018), 2381 (2017), 2377 (2017), 2366 (2017), 2307 (2016), 2261 (2016). However, some of these resolutions approved the Secretary-General's stipulations for the mission as laid out in his reports to the Security Council, and these did include instructions and references to gender issues and gender equality.

presidential statements and press statements in the past. Two presidential statements in 2017 welcomed the mission's promotion of a gender-sensitive approach and noted that the full participation of women in the implementation of the peace agreement would be vital to securing a stable and lasting peace for all Colombians. In July 2020 the Council issued a press statement that reiterated their serious concern regarding the continued threats, attacks, and killings targeting community and social leaders, including women leaders, and to encourage further implementation of the action plan of the Comprehensive Programme for Safeguards for Women Leaders and Human Rights Defenders. Similar language was used in the press statement following the Council's visit to Colombia in July 2019.

The Council engaged with women's organizations in both its visits to Colombia in May 2017 and July 2019 as part of the meetings with civil society at the national and local levels. The Council raised women, peace and security issues in their meetings with the government, and experienced first-hand the risks and dangers incurred by women leaders and activists when one of their civil society guests could not attend their meeting in Cauca due to a threat by armed actors.

The Security Council has invited two Colombian women to brief during meetings on Colombia: Rosa Emilia Salamanca from *Corporación de Investigación y Acción Social y Económica* in April 2019, and Clemencia Carabalí Rodallega of the Municipal Association of Women in Cauca in July 2020. The latter reported the perspective from civil society relating peace implementation and the remaining challenges, especially regarding to security guarantees.. In late April, 26 prominent women's networks and organizations in Colombia wrote a letter to the co-chairs of the Informal Experts Group to ask that they convene a meeting on Colombia and a potential visit of the IEG members to Colombia.

The peace agreement and its implementation

Women's participation in the Colombian peace talks has been hailed as a model of gender-responsive peacemaking, and it directly contributed to a landmark peace agreement after 52 years of conflict. When formal peace talks between the government and the FARC-EP were announced in 2012, there were no women at the table and the Colombian women's movement mobilized to change this. By the end, up to one-third of delegates in Havana were women. Women were also 44 percent of the 12,000 Colombians that participated in regional consultations and national forums, ranging from the 32 percent in the first consultation to 52 percent in the last ones, and more than two-thirds of the victims that visited Havana. To accomplish this, there were two national summits gathering hundreds of women from all regions and street marches and mobilization, but also innovative practices, like the organization of dialogues between women victims and the women negotiators on both sides, or the establishment of a gender sub-commission to review and input into all the agreements and invite more than two-dozen experts from women's organizations to brief them in Havana. Women's organizing also opened the door for LGBT participation in the peace talks. Like the women's movement, LGBT people organized national and regional workshops to craft a movement-wide peace agenda and promote access to transitional justice for LGBT victims of the armed conflict. They also participated in the delegations of victims that traveled to Havana and addressed the gender sub-commission on multiple occasions.

In the end, the final peace agreement contained 130 provisions on gender, nearly a quarter of the total of 578 different stipulations, and explicitly mentioned UN Women and the Office of the SRSG on Sexual Violence in Conflict, who had conducted multiple high-level visits to both Colombia and Havana during the talks, to support and monitor the implementation of the gender provisions of the peace agreement, alongside Sweden and the Women's International Democratic Federation (FDIM). Through these provisions, many of which incorporate an intersectional perspective, this peace agreement became the first in the world to recognize LGBT not only as victims of the armed conflict but also as active peacebuilders.

The main implementation body is the Commission for the Follow-up Promotion and Verification of the Final Agreement (CSIVI) and the Government has laid out a Framework Implementation Plan, led by the Presidential Counsellor for Stabilization and Consolidation and comprised of 501 indicators. This includes 51 gender indicators that are monitored by the Government's High-Level Forum on Gender, with the support from the Presidential Office for Women's Affairs and Gender Equity. In addition, a Special Forum on Gender, with representatives of civil society, was established to monitor implementation of the gender provisions of the agreement. However, some of the bodies set up to implement the peace agreement -such as the National Reintegration Council or the National Commission on Security Guarantees- lack sufficient women's participation or gender expertise, and implementation of the gender provisions of the agreement relies significantly on international cooperation.

At the end of 2019, the Government reported significant progress on most of the 51 gender indicators in the Framework Implementation Plan. However, the Kroc Institute for International Peace Studies, from the University of Notre Dame, in a report in collaboration with the international component for monitoring gender, warns that these indicators do not encompass all the 130 gender-related provisions in the peace agreement, that only 9 percent of the 130 provisions on gender have been completed and 40 percent have not been initiated, and that this reflects a slower pace of progress than the average rate of implementation for other parts of the agreement. By comparison, when assessing the peace agreement as a whole, 25 percent of all provisions have been completed and only 26 percent have not been initiated. This is partly explained by the fact that more than half of the gender-related provisions can be considered as long-term objectives and social reforms -particularly with regards to rural reform, political participation, and illicit drugs- that may take a few more years but must nonetheless be initiated without delay. Similar analysis has been shared by the reports of the Special Forum on Gender. The recent reports of the Secretary-General on the work of the UNVMC has highlighted the efforts of both the Government and the FARC to implement the peace agreement, yet limited progress on the gender actions related to security guarantees and reintegration.

Implementation of the peace agreement is estimated to take up fifteen years since the signing of the accord in 2016, and it entails the coordination of 14 public institutions, two presidential councils, and the Office of the High Commissioner for Peace. Examples of the participation of women in these interventions include:

- 3,101 women have been accredited as former combatants, or 23 percent of 13,394 former combatants in the FARC.
- The individual and collective projects for former combatants approved by the National Reintegration Council benefit 4,247 beneficiaries out of which 1,113 are women.
- Prior to the peace agreement, there were no women serving as bodyguards in the National Protection Unit, which provides protection details for potentially high-risk individuals and former combatants. At the end of 2019, there were 164 women out of 1,193 bodyguards, most of them former combatants themselves. The percentage of women in the public force has also increased, reaching 9 percent of 17,415 personnel.
- Approximately a third of participants in educational and vocational training programmes for former combatants are women.
- Since August 2017, more than one-third of the 100,000 families that participate in coca eradication efforts are led by women.
- 200,000 people participated in the formulation of local development plans in the 170 municipalities most affected by the conflict. Nearly 65,000 of them were women, resulting in almost 33,000 initiatives, of which more than 4,400 have both the rural women and gender mark.
- The government launched a comprehensive plan for guarantees for women leaders and human rights defenders and agreed with the FARC on a gender strategy for the protection of former combatants.

- The first session of the Truth Commission was devoted to sexual violence in conflict, and hundreds of such cases and testimonies have been documented and submitted to either the Truth Commission or the Special Jurisdiction for Peace. Women are 54.9 percent of the members of the Special Jurisdiction for Peace and 45.5 percent of the members of the Truth Commission, and two women recognized for their careers and record on human rights lead both the Special Jurisdiction for Peace and the Search Unit for the Disappeared.
- 60 percent of the members of the National Council for Peace and Reconciliation are women, and the Council is led by an Afro-Colombian woman leader and includes at least two LGBT representatives.
- In last year's elections, and in spite of the specific challenges and risks facing women candidates, including access to information, resources, and close protection, 38 percent of the candidates for local and departmental elections presented by the FARC party were women. Two out of 10 FARC Congress seats are occupied by women.

Perhaps the greatest threats to the sustainability of the peace agreement, is the security challenges on the ground that include a high number of killings of former combatants -more than 200 according to the UN, as of July 2020, including four women, and 15 disappearances-, and the continued killings of social leaders and human rights defenders. In 2019, the Ombudsman's Office reported 480 threats against women leaders and human rights defenders, including misogynistic insults and threats of sexual violence. According to data from OHCHR, the killings of women human rights defenders increased by nearly 50 percent in 2019, compared to 2018, and this trend continues to worsen in 2020. In 2020, OHCHR documented 45 killings of human rights defenders, including six women. Out of the 45 victims, five were indigenous (two women) and two were Afro-Colombian. Forty-six other killings are being verified including two women. Earlier in 2020, UN Women launched a Norway-funded multi-year programme in the four provinces most affected by attacks on social leaders and human rights defenders, in partnership with the national Ombudsperson. In 2019, the CERF had already funded a project on this, resulting in the development of individual and community protection schemes and mechanisms and the establishment of safe spaces for women at risk.

In an effort to respond to the protection and security needs of women leaders and human rights defenders, the Government in coordination with women's organizations launched in 2018 the Comprehensive Programme for the Safeguards of Women Leaders and Human Rights Defenders and in early 2020 it launched its respective action plan with pilots implemented in the regions of Montes de Maria and Putumayo with the support of the Ombudsman's Office and the Office of the Attorney's General, OHCHR, IOM, UN Women and UNVMC. The National Commission on Security Guarantees has agreed to include the participation of women representatives as part of civil society representation, which is expected to be formalized soon.

The limited or fragile presence of the State in some of the areas most affected by the conflict, particularly with regards to the provision of basic services such as healthcare, education, and justice, has a profound impact on women's lives, who are often subjected to social control by different armed groups. The situation calls for a comprehensive security strategy that complements the presence of security forces with social and development programmes. In recent weeks, the country has been shaken by reports of sexual violence committed by members of the public security forces. These cases, which have been strongly condemned by the President and the Minister of Defense, and are under investigation, are an example of the continued occurrence of sexual violence and a reminder of the horrific acts of sexual and gender-based violence committed by all parties to the Colombian conflict.

As detailed in the Secretary-General's report on conflict-related sexual violence this year, 365 cases were recorded according to official data, reflecting an increase of around a hundred cases, when compared with last year's report. Colombians of African descent and indigenous communities accounted for almost half of the cases during 2019. Due to stigma and fear of reprisals, the real number is likely higher. Moreover,

the Ombudsman's Early-Warning System corroborates the correlation between a high concentration of sexual violence and conflict dynamics. The United Nations documented 10 cases of sexual violence in which the alleged perpetrators were members of the *Ejército de Liberación Nacional*, criminal groups and other violent groups. Members of the military were allegedly involved in three cases. In regions such as Antioquia, Chocó, Cauca and Nariño, numerous armed actors such as *Autodefensas Gaitanistas de Colombia*, criminal groups and dissidents from the FARC-EP, continue to compete for control of territory and local illegal economies. Border areas and transit routes for refugees and migrants are being exploited by illegal armed actors to recruit vulnerable persons, notably indigenous people, into illicit economic activities. In this context, women and girls face heightened risks of human trafficking, including for the purposes of sexual slavery and exploitation.² While the Special Jurisdiction for Peace has included sexual violence as part of open cases such as case 007 on the use of children in armed conflict, and it has included a gender approach throughout, it has yet to open a specific case on sexual violence in conflict, which has been requested formally by representatives of civil society.

While the reintegration policy has 18 gender actions, its implementation faces challenges due to limited financial and technical resources, particularly at the territorial level. Nevertheless, the gender technical working group of the National Reintegration Council has played an important role in these efforts, particularly related to productive projects. The main challenges relate to limited availability of childcare facilities, which hinders women's participation; limited inclusion in decision-making; and limited availability of gender-sensitive programmes that meet women's needs, interests and capacities in the reintegration to civilian life away from gender traditional roles. The FARC Gender Commission has played a key role in positioning the voice of women former combatants in different processes and sets an example of the leadership of women former combatants that must be supported and sustained.

In terms of political participation, in spite of the many provisions on women's participation in politics in the agreement, after last year's local and departmental elections -the first since the signing of the peace agreement-, 30 of 32 governors are men, and only 131 of more than 1100 new mayors are women. Nevertheless important milestones were reached, such as the first woman elected mayor for the capital of Bogotá. Another area that lags in implementation is rural development and the gender provisions in the agreement dedicated to women's access to the Land Fund, a designated subsidy for land purchase and assistance with formal ownership of property, and the Solidarity Economy Stimulus, which is obligated to promote gender equality, economic autonomy, and organizational capacity among rural women.

Since 2016, the Multi-Partner Trust Fund for Sustaining Peace Fund has implemented close to 150 million USD from 17 donors and funds, including the Women's Peace and Humanitarian Fund. Between 2016 and 2019, the Fund has invested over 20.5 million USD on its gender component, in 73 different initiatives. UN Women has been appointed to represent the UN Country Team in the technical and steering committees this year, and oversees that a minimum of 30 percent of its total budget is earmarked for gender-specific activities, a substantial increase over the 15 percent of the first phase. Currently, 38.3 percent of its funds are devoted to programmes that advance gender equality – even if not as its principal objective. Gender-focused bilateral official development assistance to Colombia reached its high point in the year following the 2016 peace agreement, where 56 percent of total aid commitments reported women's empowerment and gender equality as objectives, compared to 4 percent in 2005 or 25 percent in 2010. In 2018, this had declined to approximately 42 percent of total aid, and aid with gender equality as its principal objective dropped off considerably compared to 2017.

² See S/2020/487

The impact of the pandemic

Many of the challenges related to peace implementation have also been impacted by the coronavirus pandemic and the lockdown. The closure of schools and restricted mobility has had an especially negative effect on female-headed households and women working in the informal sector, which has only accelerated the feminization of poverty. In some regions, violence and confrontation between armed actors has persisted, including actions by illegal armed actors to control lockdown and preventive measures in the spread of Covid-19. This has impacted in the displacement of population, recruitment of children, killings of former combatants, human rights defenders and community leaders, and risks of sexual violence. With close to two million migrants and refugees from Venezuela, the border closures and lockdowns have led to family separation and an increase in vulnerability to trafficking and sexual exploitation for many women and girls.

With the establishment of compulsory quarantine, there was a drastic increase in gender-based violence, women's unpaid care burden, and food insecurity. During the preventive isolation period, there was an increase of 100 percent in reports of domestic violence to the national hotline. Almost a third of this year's femicides took place in the first two weeks of the national quarantine. By April, there had been 19 femicides already and more than three-thousands reports of domestic violence. The Ministry of Justice issued a decree guaranteeing that family police stations would continue to work, but these mechanisms are often out of reach for Afro-descendant, indigenous and rural women, who are the most affected, or have not responded adequately to victims. As soon as the lockdown went into effect, a women's rights activist was killed outside her home, and a gay rights activist survived an assassination attempt. Since 25 March 2020, the start of the Covid-19 lockdown in Colombia, OHCHR has documented 15 killings of human rights defenders, including two women (one indigenous). Thirty-four other killings are being verified, including one woman.

In some areas, the violence has continued. Reported conflict-related sexual violence had already increased between 2018 and 2019, and the Ombudsperson's Office had addressed 122 cases of conflict-related sexual violence in the first four months of 2020 alone, finding a high concentration of such violence along the Pacific Coast and among Afro-descendant and indigenous populations. On June 22nd, a 13-year old indigenous girl was gang-raped by seven members of the Colombian armed forces, who have been detained and await sentencing. A second case involving troops in the southern Guaviare region was shared by the media, informing that members of the army kidnapped, tortured and repeatedly raped a 15-year-old girl from the Nukak Makú tribe in September 2019. After these incidents, the Colombian armed forces revealed that 118 soldiers and military officials had been under investigation for sexually abusing children.

The COVID-19 crisis has impacted women former combatants due to the increase in care work, limiting their leadership and active participation in productive projects and initiatives associated with their social and political reincorporation process. According to a survey conducted by the National Reintegration Council, half of the productive initiatives for former combatants have been affected by the pandemic, and projects focused on services, especially small initiatives led by women in urban settings, were the most affected. Eleven initiatives led by former combatant initiatives -six of which are led by women- dedicated to producing textiles in former territorial areas for training and reintegration and in Cali and Medellín turned to making facemasks. The Gender Technical Working Group of the National Reintegration Council elaborated a document with recommendations on the impact of COVID-19 on women's reintegration to mitigate the impacts.

The current crisis poses a risk to the progress gained on the implementation of the gender related provisions of the peace agreement. The active and meaningful participation of women in the implementation of the Final Agreement has been undermined by the economic and social consequences of the pandemic, including loss of livelihoods and restrictions on connectivity and mobility. For example, the participation of women in the implementation of the local development plans has also suffered, since many women in rural areas

do not have access to virtual media and communication networks. These risks underscore why gender equality must be at the heart of recovery efforts.

The UN Verification Mission

The UN Verification Mission in Colombia since its establishment has remained committed to promote the gender, women, peace and security agenda across its mandated work. During the first Mission as part of the tripartite mechanism for monitoring and verifying the cease fire and laying down of weapons, it established a tripartite gender group with the FARC, Government Public Forces and the Mission which set the ground for building trust and rapport on gender issues with both parties. Despite limited resources, the UN Verification Mission in Colombia has made a sustained effort to achieve gender parity within its structures. Aside from is gender advisor (who is supported by a small team including one gender officer seconded by the Norwegian Refugee Council, one UN Volunteer and one Junior Professional Officer), there are 52 gender focal points throughout the mission, and the SRSG chairs a mission-wide gender taskforce that drives implementation of the mission's gender directive for all units and field offices. Every three months, the mission's verification priorities are set, and these always include either stand-alone or mainstreamed focus on women former combatants, peacebuilders, and human rights defenders, in addition to institutional response in these matters. Every two months, the SRSG and UN Women meet with women's organizations to update them on the mission's work and reports to the Security Council, but most importantly to hear from them, learn about their experiences in the changing context, and hear their asks on the Missions advocacy with the Government related to the implementation of the Peace Agreement, the dialogues also take regularly at field level. Similar dialogues take place at territorial level and with FARC Gender focal points and Gender Commission. All reports to the Security Council have a dedicated section on gender issues, which are also mainstreamed throughout all other sections of the report.

The mission has also used extrabudgetary funding to support productive initiatives led by women former combatants, in partnership with UNDP. Earlier this year, UN Women and the mission signed a cooperation agreement focused on gender-responsive reintegration of ex-combatants and security guarantees. This agreement formalizes what has been so far a very collaborative partnership from the start.

Perhaps most notably, 49 percent of all civilian personnel are women, as are 60 percent of UN Volunteers, 40 percent of consultants and individual contractors, and 36 percent of international observers – both police and military. These averages reflect a sustained commitment to gender parity from the initial planning and set up of the mission. There have only been four allegations of sexual exploitation and abuse by members of the mission since 2016.

Other relevant updates

- In 2019, the gender-responsiveness of humanitarian interventions in Colombia improved. In 2019, between 67 and 83 percent of agencies in the Humanitarian Country Team reported having carried out capacity-building activities on GBV referral pathways, gender mainstreaming in humanitarian action, and PSEA, and the total number of participants was much larger than in 2018. Additionally, of a total of 580 projects implemented in 2019 by the HCT members, 81 percent integrated a gender perspective in the design, activities, monitoring or reporting, compared to only 42 percent in 2018.
- Between April 27 and May 8, the UN Humanitarian Response Plan for COVID-19 benefited a total of 229,227 direct beneficiaries, from which 28 percent are women.
- In 2018, Colombia joined a small group of countries that have reached gender parity in their government cabinets, including its first woman Vice-President.

- The government has expressed its intention of developing a national action plan on women, peace and security and commemorating the 20th anniversary of resolution 1325. These plans have yet to be shared or consulted with civil society or the UN system.
- In 2019, the National Development Plan had a specific chapter on gender equity for the first time, including support for the implementation of the National Care system, gender statistics, and mandatory gender-responsive planning and budgeting.
- The Ministry of Defense developed its first policy on gender mainstreaming for the defense sector, including for military personnel deployed to territorial areas for training and reintegration of communities, yet its implementation has lagged behind. The National Police has implemented a project to reinforce prevention and response to gender based-violence in conflict-affected areas, including through the deployment of mobile teams.
- The CEDAW Committee's Concluding Observations on the Ninth Periodic Report on Colombia (2019) include these two recommendations that are especially relevant, and which the Government is due to report back on February 2021:
 - *Recalling its general recommendation No. 30 (2013) on women in conflict prevention, conflict and post-conflict situations, the Committee recommends that the State party: (a) Accelerate the implementation of the gender-related provisions of the peace agreement, including those related to security guarantees for women leaders and human rights defenders and the reintegration of women who are former combatants of the Revolutionary Armed Forces of Colombia – People's Army, and ensure that sufficient human and financial resources are allocated for its effective implementation; (b) Integrate indicators, disaggregated by sex, age, ethnicity, race, geographical location and disability, to monitor the impact of implementing the provisions concerning gender equality in the framework plan for implementation and assign an indicative budget; (c) Increase the presence of State institutions and access to basic services in previous conflict zones, taking into consideration the specific needs of Colombian women of African descent, indigenous women and women with disabilities, and ensure the protection of the affected population in former conflict zones and the prevention of the recruitment of children by armed groups.*
 - *The Committee welcomes the adoption of the comprehensive programme of guarantees for women leaders and human rights defenders, in resolution 845/2018. It is concerned, however, about the prevalence of homicides, threats and other violations perpetrated against women human rights defenders and at the high levels of impunity for such crimes. The Committee is particularly concerned that women who work to implement the peace agreement at the local level and who seek redress for victims who have suffered land rights violations are being targeted in particular. It is also concerned about information it has received indicating that women human rights defenders often experience revictimization when seeking protection and that law enforcement officers sometimes use discriminatory and revictimizing language.*