



19 September 2013
Check against delivery

**UN Human Rights Council
Twenty-fourth session, 9 – 27 September 2013**

**Item 6:
Consideration of UPR reports**

COLOMBIA

Mr. President,

Many states encouraged the peace talks currently taking place in Colombia.¹ These talks with the Revolutionary Armed Forces of Colombia (FARC), and possibly soon with the National Liberation Army (ELN), have indeed raised expectations that the long-running armed conflict could be coming to an end.

We consider that an effective peace will necessitate a verifiable commitment from all parties to put an end to human rights abuses and violations of international humanitarian law, and an effective strategy to bring to justice all those responsible for such abuses.

Amnesty International is concerned about legislative measures designed to ensure that those responsible for human rights abuses evade justice. We welcome Colombia's support of recommendations to fight impunity, including by guaranteeing the independence of the judiciary;² however, we reiterate our concern that legislation to broaden the scope of military jurisdiction, and the legal framework for peace, will seriously undermine efforts to combat impunity in Colombia.

Mr President,

¹ A/HRC/24/6, recommendations 116.7 (Dominican Republic), 116.8 (Bolivia), 116.9 (Pakistan), 116.10 (Cuba), 116.11 (Russian Federation), 116.11 (Costa Rica), 116.12 (Dominican Republic), 116.13 (Guatemala), 116.14 (Malaysia), 116.16 (Russian Federation)

² Ibid, recommendations 116.68 (Gabon), 116.69 (United Kingdom and Northern Ireland), 116.70 (France), 116.71 (USA), 116.72 (Argentina)

We have long highlighted Colombia's continued failure to effectively protect civilians caught in the conflict from serious human rights abuses by the security forces, paramilitaries and guerrilla groups, alike. In particular, Amnesty International has been dismayed at the high number of reported threats against and killings of leaders representing displaced communities and of those campaigning for land restitution. These reports demand immediate action by Colombia on the 13 recommendations - which it notes are in the process of being implemented - to reinforce measures to protect human rights defenders, to investigate and prosecute all alleged human rights violations against them, and to enact legislation to recognize their legitimate work.³

Finally, Mr President,

We welcome the support for the Office of the OHCHR in Colombia expressed by states during the review.⁴ The role played by the Office has been pivotal: over the years, it has saved many lives and supported the invaluable work carried out by human rights defenders.

The Office will be equally critical, if and when a peace agreement is in place, by providing international scrutiny to ensure that human rights are respected, including the rights of victims to truth, justice, reparation and non-repetition. Its work will also be vital in the event that the parties to the conflict fail to reach an agreement.

Amnesty International is disappointed by the Colombian government's decision in July to renew the mandate of the Office for only one year, rather than the three years it had committed to during the review.

The organization hopes that next year the new government will demonstrate its openness to international accompaniment, during what could be challenging times by renewing the Office's integral mandate, including observation, advice, technical cooperation and promotion of human rights, for at least a three-year period to enable it to effectively carry out its work.

Thank you, Mr. President.

³ Ibid, 116.58 (Peru), 116.59 (State of Palestine), 116.60 (Trinidad and Tobago), 116.61 (Egypt), 116.62 (Cambodia), 116.63 (Honduras), 116.64 (Indonesia), 116.65 (Kyrgystan), 116.66 (Nigeria), 116.67 (Switzerland)

⁴ Ibid, paragraphs 116.35 (Slovakia), 116.41 (Sweden), 116.88 (Mexico), and 116.96 (Norway).