



## Statement to the Security Council

**Jean Arnault**

*Special representative of the Secretary General  
and head of the United Nations Mission in Colombia  
June 30, 2017.*

### **STATEMENT TO THE SECURITY COUNCIL BY JEAN ARNAULT SPECIAL REPRESENTATIVE OF THE SECRETARY GENERAL AND HEAD OF THE UNITED NATIONS MISSION IN COLOMBIA**

Mr. President.

Distinguished members of the Council,

I am pleased to supplement the Secretary-General's report to you of 23 June, and inform the Council that 3 days ago – on 27 June - the FARC-EP met its obligations under the 29 May Road Map agreement by handing over to the UN Mission the remaining 40% of the individual weapons registered by the Mission last March. A number of weapons will remain at the disposal of FARC-EP to provide security for the camps – and the UN weapons laydown teamsites in them – until 1 August, date at which the containers will be removed from the camps; and the current zones where the FARC-EP are assembled will be turned into «Training and Reintegration Areas» secured by the Colombian police and armed forces.

At a «Farewell to Arms, Farewell to War» ceremony held on 27 June in a FARC-EP camp in a region that has been at the epicenter of the war, President Santos and the Head of the FARC-EP Secretariat Timoleon Jimenez sent strong and moving messages to a Colombian society often doubtful of the promises of the peace process. Mr. Jimenez announced that with the laying down of its weapons, FARC-EP celebrated the formal end of the 53-year old armed insurgency, and the beginning of an unarmed, peaceful and democratic movement. I cannot but quote President Santos when he said that «reaching that day, living that day had made it worthwhile to be President of Colombia».

The President acknowledged the historical significance of the FARC-EP meeting its commitment to the laydown of weapons, and affirmed his own commitment to the implementation «to the last comma» of the Peace Agreement. At the ceremony, religious leaders, including the President of the Bishops' Conference, acted as witnesses of honour of the final stage of the laying down of weapons.

The conviction expressed by both leaders that half a century of war was now over is borne out by the Mission's review of the ceasefire in place since the end of August 2016. Indeed while there has been, in the past 9 months, a number of failures to observe the rules of the ceasefire and cessation of hostilities, none of them showed a pattern of deliberate violation or the involvement of high-level decision-makers on either side.



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We believe therefore that as the FARC-EP lay down their weapons, the ceasefire has been consolidated. Nevertheless, it will be important that the Tripartite Mechanism continue to operate for some time after the current Zones and Points disappear on 1st August. It has been an effective tool to maintain and strengthen confidence between the parties to the conflict. And its presence at local level will help ensure that incidents that may occur in the coming weeks and months can continue to be dealt with cooperatively.

Incidentally, after eight months of operation of the MVM, we think that the merits of this tripartite approach whereby the two parties participate directly in verifying one another's compliance, with UN support and coordination, are well established; and while its success owes much to the confidence that was generated between belligerents at the negotiating table, you may wish to consider whether it could usefully apply to other peace processes.

With the storing of individual weapons in UN containers, the Mission and the FARC-EP, with the support of the armed forces and the police, can now devote their full attention to the disposal of hundreds of arms caches, the collection of weapons in them, and the destruction of explosives and unstable armament. So far 81 arms caches were visited and a large amount of explosives was destroyed. Planning is currently ongoing with FARC and the Government to extract another 380 in the coming weeks, with more to follow.

The disposal of arms caches is undoubtedly a difficult process, but we are encouraged by the willingness of FARC-EP and the armed forces to move forward, and we are confident that if not all, at least a high percentage of the caches can be dealt with by 1 September, the date at which the Mission's verification of the caches will end, and responsibility will switch to the Government.

Mr. President,

Members of the Council,

The last few days have brought to Colombia and the world good, encouraging news. It is perfectly valid to celebrate these advances, even if, at the same time, there is clearly no motive to pause, no room for complacency. The completion of the laying down of individual weapons has created new opportunities. It has also brought into relief the urgency of moving forward quickly with the implementation of the peace agenda.



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The first and most urgent challenge is the reintegration of the 10,000 FARC-EP combatants and militias, among whom a deep sense of uncertainty prevails as to their physical security following disarmament and their socioeconomic future. As stressed in the reports of the Secretary-General, reintegration is a particularly daunting endeavor against a background of entrenched illegal economies, the spread of armed groups – including organized crime and FARC dissidents – into areas formerly controlled by FARC-EP, and a pattern of violence against social leaders. One of the merits of the 29 May roadmap is to lay out clearly a number of priorities relating to the legal, physical and socioeconomic security of members of FARC-EP. No effort can be spared in the prompt implementation of that agenda.

Beyond the reintegration of combatants, the peace process must also respond to the needs and expectations of the more vulnerable sectors of Colombian society. We fully agree with the three priority areas identified by the Government: the deployment of security forces to protect communities and establish the rule of law in the areas most affected by the war; the mobilization of national and local institutions to bring goods and services to rural areas long outside their reach; and the prompt operation of the new peace jurisdiction to deliver on the promise of justice for the victims of the conflict.

We welcome the fact that together with reintegration these were precisely the priorities indicated by the Government to the Peace Building Fund, and we call upon the international community to support the achievement of these goals.

Mr. President,

Distinguished members of the Council,

We are honoured by the request from the Government of Colombia and the FARC-EP to establish a second verification mission focused on reintegration and wider security guarantees, and to begin as soon as possible. As indicated above, there lie some of the most immediate and pressing challenges for the consolidation of peace. We believe that the terms of reference indicated in President Santos' letter to the Security Council and the Secretary General are a good basis for a credible and effective verification mandate.

Like the first mission, the second one will be as much about fostering cooperation and building confidence as it will be about verification as such. And in this respect we believe that the trust that has been established between the Mission, the two parties, state institutions and civil society can be brought to bear on the success of the second mandate.



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Mr. President,

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Your decision in January 2016 to back the implementation of the Agreement on the Ceasefire and Laying down of Arms through the establishment of the UN Mission in Colombia was widely regarded across Colombian society as a guarantee that the commitments made in Havana would be duly implemented in Colombia. Across political divides, and the current polarization notwithstanding, the Security Council remains a highly significant factor of confidence in the midst of the misgivings and uncertainties that are the inevitable sequels of such a protracted and painful conflict.

As the peace process in Colombia enters a new phase, beyond the laydown of weapons, your commitment to the peace process, the determination to support the implementation of the Final Peace Agreement you expressed in your Presidential Statement following your visit to Colombia in early May will remain an invaluable contribution to the long-term success of this unique endeavour.

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