



For peace and social justice

JFC DELEGATION REPORT

November 2025

Background:

Justice for Colombia organised a delegation of senior trade unionists to Colombia between 6-11 November 2025 to observe the current human and labour rights situation in the country. The delegation met with representatives of many Colombian and international organisations, as well as figures from the human rights and social movement, and discussed issues related to the implementation of the 2016 peace agreement, the 2026 elections, and the human and labour rights situation. The delegation visited Cali, where it met with signatories and community representatives from Valle del Cauca and Cali, it then visited Popayan, where it met with signatories and community representatives from across the region near that town. Both areas are considered conflict zones. The delegation also visited a rural community of displaced signatories outside Cucuta, in Norte de Santander on the Venezuelan border, scene of conflict between new armed groups and the ELN.

The delegation was composed of 13 British and Irish trade unionists, including Steve Gillan (POA General Secretary and TUC President), Kevin Callinan (FORSA General Secretary), Mick Whelan (ASLEF General Secretary), Kate Bell (TUC Assistant General Secretary), Fran Heathcote (PCS General Secretary), Wayne Broom (NASUWT President), Mark Rowe (FBU National Executive), Nigel Gibson (ASLEF District Organiser), Phil Hannant (POA National Executive), Justin McCamphill (ICTU former president and NASUWT lead official in Northern Ireland), Deborah Yapicioz (Senior Activist UNISON Northern Ireland), Gerard Stilliard (Thompsons Solicitors), Ana Garmilla (FORSA).

During the visit we met with:

- The UN Verification Mission in Bogota
- The British Embassy
- The Irish Embassy
- Representatives of the Government from the Presidency's Implementation Unit, the Department of Planning, the Ministry of Interior, the High Commissioner for Peace, the Ministry of Agriculture, the Victims Unit, the Foreign Ministry and others.
- The Minister of Labour, Antonio Sanguino and the Deputy Minister of Labour and Inspection, Sandra Muñoz
- Former Senator Victoria Sandino (ex FARC commander and Senator for Comunes, National Coordinator for the 'Autonomous Reincorporation Table')
- President Juan Manuel Santos (Former president of Colombia)
- Dr Juan Fernando Cristo (Former Minister of Interior of Santos and Petro governments, presidential candidate for 2026)
- Diego Martinez (Leading human rights lawyer and former adviser to the 2016 peace process)
- Danilo Rueda (leading peace activist and former High Commissioner for Peace)
- The facilitators and negotiators for both government and one of the larger historic armed groups

- Fabio Arias, the President of the CUT workers' centre
- Representatives of trade unions from the public sector, judiciary, the oil sector, and health sector
- Signatories to the peace agreement in Cali, from around Popayan, and near Cucuta
- Peasant organisations including PUPSOC, CAN, CIMA and Asojuntas La Gabarra
- Afro Colombians from the Association of Reincorporated Afro Colombians for Peace
- The CRIC and ACIN indigenous organisations
- The Sintrac paz security detail trade union
- The Mujeres de Paz organisation of women signatories
- Dra Lopez, representative of the Catholic Church in Cauca
- Dr. Gutierrez, the MAPP OEA representative for Cauca
- Dr. Mulano, the People's Ombudsman in Cauca (Defensoria del Pueblo)
- Representatives of ECOMUN, and the 'La Trocha' and the 'de Mano en Mano' cooperatives
- Representatives of the 'Casa Pazcifico' in Cali, and representatives of the social protests of 2020-21 and their relatives
- Representatives of the 'Casa de la Paz' (House of Peace) in Bogota
- Displaced signatories from Catatumbo
- Representatives of the Permanent Committee for Human Rights, the CAJAR lawyers' collective, the MOVICE national victims' movement, the Somos Defensores human rights defenders
- Representatives of the Social Movement for Peace, including the Corporacion Claretiana

KEY POINTS

Political Situation:

1. Many people discussed the need for Colombia to modernise and reform in order to move away from the oligarchic model of the past towards a more democratic model. The main elements mentioned were electoral reform, land reform, and political reform, as well as economic measures to reduce Colombia's vast inequality. Many argued that the key to this modernisation lies in the full implementation of the 2016 peace agreement, which is in many ways a blueprint for modernisation.
2. The Petro government has undoubtedly put the implementation of the 2016 agreement higher on its agenda than any previous government. Some argued that the Santos government had stopped paying attention to its commitments to the FARC once they handed in their arms, others that he had been overly focused on building the institutional framework for implementation. Meanwhile Duque's government had no interest in implementation beyond that minimum required by the international community. As one dialogue partner stated, 'from the beginning there was no political will to fulfil the agreement' [from the governments]. Under Petro investment in peace has more than doubled, and more land has been given to peasants than under previous governments. However, much remains to be done.

3. The government initially focused on its reform package, and upon implementation of its 'Total Peace' policy. This sought to make peace with new armed actors that had arisen under the previous government of President Duque. It seems the government initially underestimated the challenges involved in this, and there are question marks over whether its 'Total Peace' policy has achieved its objectives given the lack of a legal framework to finalise the talks. Nevertheless, there was a clear need to engage with groups not covered by the 2016 agreement (the ELN), those groups that had morphed into new forms (the narcotraffickers and paramilitaries), or those 'dissident' groups that had emerged since 2016 (the EMC, the Segunda Marquetalia and so on).
4. The Petro government has pushed hard for a broad swathe of progressive reforms – including a labour reform, pensions reform, healthcare reform, agrarian reform and education reform, as well as efforts to make decision-making and execution of policy more transparent. Barriers to implementation include institutional resistance from the opposition in Congress, the judiciary and the media.
5. With elections upcoming in Spring 2026 attention is focused on building an electoral alliance capable of winning that election and continuing with the Petro government's reform agenda. The Historic Pact Party and other allied forces form the core of this effort, and it is widely expected that a 'Broad Front' will eventually come together behind whichever Presidential candidacy wins in the primaries next year. The left's main candidate is Senator Ivan Cepeda, who has a long history as a human rights defender, and who is himself a victim. It is expected he will ally with a centrist candidate closer to the elections. The opposition is largely made up of far-right actors linked to former President Alvaro Uribe, who are visceral opponents of peace, and are increasingly coordinating their actions with the Trump administration in the US.
6. It was repeatedly expressed to us that the threat to the implementation of the 2016 agreement posed by these far right actors required a robust defence of the implementation during and after the elections.
7. There was widespread concern at the potential for a destabilisation of Colombia and the region more broadly by a US intervention in Venezuela. This, senior politicians told us, would alienate Latin Americans from the US for generations. Dialogue partners highlighted the interconnectedness of the region and noted that intervention would have unpredictable negative consequences in Colombia and beyond. The fears of intervention included the impact of further refugees, and the potential for armed conflict to grow across Colombia.
8. Some concerns were expressed at the impact of US policy upon the implementation of the peace. In 2016 the first Trump administration had requested the extradition of FARC commanders which contributed to their rejection of the Agreement. Now the Trump administration had cut funding, removed the verification of the JEP sentences and the ethnic chapter from the mandate of the UN verification mission. Many fear this will

destabilise the implementation. At the same time increased coordination between the US far right and the Colombian far right threaten to destabilise Colombia during an important election.

9. Concerns were expressed about the political impacts of the removal of the JEP sentences and the ethnic chapter from the purview of the UN Verification Mission. The JEP is beginning to issue sentences, and it is expected to come under significant political pressure if it begins to investigate high-ranking military officers or political decision-makers from past governments. So far 80% of the JEP sentences have been against members of the FARC, and yet 80% of the crimes were carried out by state forces or paramilitaries, so there is an evident mismatch.

10. Dialogue partners welcomed the Petro government's decision to apologise to the Patriotic Union (UP) political party for the Colombian state's violent extermination campaign against it. In 2023 the Inter American Court of Human Rights recognised the Colombian state and its paramilitary partners as responsible for a 'systematic plan of elimination' of the UP over two decades. In his official apology to the Party during our visit, Petro called this an act of 'political genocide'. Our dialogue partners underlined that while this legal category does not exist internationally, it does in Colombian law - where it is defined as the attempt to fully or partially exterminate members of particular 'national, ethnic, racial, religious or political' group (Art. 332A of Law 589, 2000).

Labour rights:

1. The Petro government has passed a labour reform that has restored some workers' rights taken away by Alvaro Uribe's labour reform of 2002. These include permanent contracts as standard, a limitation to the working week (now 44 hours, down to 42 next year), overtime pay, pay for apprentices, rights for platform workers, labour rights for domestic workers, regulating some aspects of rural work, and enhanced protections from gender-based violence and harassment at work.

2. Unions are generally happy with the reform, but note that the government was forced to remove a chapter on collective rights and subcontracting which would have strengthened collective bargaining and eliminated 'cooperatives of associated work' (brought in by Uribe, which enabled any group of workers to create a cooperative that then contracted employment with the employer, so functioned as a labour agency). The labour reform has enabled the Labour inspectorate to be strengthened (it has hired 1000 new inspectors) and is using the reform to regulate areas of work such as OSH and gender issues. The overall impression is that, as the President of the CUT, Fabio Arias, told us, '...the government has fulfilled its promise to us as far as it has been able to, given the correlation of forces in politics.'

3. Unions noted that to get this reform through Congress the government had to threaten a national referendum, which the right-wing opposition wanted to avoid. The CUT supports recourse to the referendum (popular consultation) and is pushing for one to be called next year to pass enabling reforms for change.

4. Unions also noted the government's efforts to pass a pension reform, which would provide a pension to some 3 million older people. Pensions were previously provided to less than 3% of the population, the rest were covered by a private system based on savings, and a subsidy which provided around \$10 USD per person. Under the reform 30% of the population will be covered. The measure is expected to help lift some 5 million people out of extreme poverty, including the families of those caring for elderly relatives. The reform also reduces the fees the state pays to private pension administrators, and enables better auditing of the system as a whole. Unfortunately the reform is now mired in the Constitutional Court following cases brought by the opposition.
5. Unions also positively evaluated the government's healthcare and education reform bills, both of which are currently stuck in Congress.
6. Unions recognised that the government, various ministries and the unions are now working together on issues, a notable change from the attitude of previous governments. The government has recognised unions as 'subjects of collective reparation' which will enable them to counter past stigmatization, and which opens the door towards policies intended to help unions overcome the legacy of systematic violence and repression.
7. Union partners underlined the legacy of anti-trade union violence, with almost 4 thousand trade unionists killed between 1986-2016, a third of them teacher trade unionists, as well as many state and judiciary functionaries – including Jaime Pardo Leal, the founder of the FENALTRASE public sector workers' federation and presidential candidate of the Patriotic Union. This repression they told us, '...was the violence of the oligarchy which doesn't want us to democratise'.
8. Unions noted what they called a 'blockade' of pro-worker legislation by right-wing forces in Congress, and the use of 'lawfare' to mire reforms in the Constitutional Court. There is fear that a right-wing government next year would bring back the stigmatisation and hostility of the past towards trade unions.
9. Several trade union leaders will stand for the Historic Pact in the 2026 parliamentary elections.
10. Unions also noted that much remains to be done. Unions still face issues with outsourcing, just transition that takes workers into account, alongside many other issues that are familiar to workers in Britain and Ireland. Among the challenges noted by our union partners were the need to grow membership, something they have not been able to do as yet, strengthening the CUT, and also unifying the union movement and reducing the fragmentation in the movement. A major issue preventing growth is the high proportion of subcontracted workers even in public sector workplaces, where some 60% of workers are subcontracted.
11. To help achieve these goals we heard of two organising and training initiatives aimed at growing membership, as well as the increased use of digital tools to reach women workers, and communicate more effectively with members.
12. Unions also noted issues with clientelism in state institutions which are largely staffed by adherents of previous governments. They also underlined that they intend to keep

struggling because nothing is given for free, and even pro-worker governments sometimes get distracted by other priorities.

13. Unions highlighted the importance of government action to fully demobilise paramilitary structures, to complete the agrarian reform. They highlighted that labour rights went hand in hand with peace, and therefore they want the full implementation of the 2016 peace agreement. In general they underlined the importance of continuing the reforms initiated under the Petro government so as to improve Colombian democracy and increase participation.

Peace implementation and human rights:

1. Implementation of the 2016 agreement is behind schedule with the state having fulfilled only some 30-35% of its commitments under the agreement. Blame for this lies with all governments since the agreement was signed. Some dialogue partners highlighted the Santos government's treatment of FARC leaders, others the lack of implementation by the Duque government, which promised to 'tear apart' the agreement and in effect sabotaged it through non-fulfilment, which contributed heavily to the emergence of new armed groups, and the expansion of paramilitary groups into regions previously controlled by the FARC.
2. Some partners highlighted mistakes made by the Petro government, in particular demoting the status of the implementation apparatus from that of a 'High Council' (a Ministerial level advisory and coordination organ in the Presidency) to that of a unit within the presidency, a measure the Constitutional Court has now ordered be reversed. Some, including former President Santos, also criticised the government's 'Total Peace' policy as a distraction from implementation of the 2016 agreement. He accused it of being a naive policy when the government had neither institutional capacity to manage so many dialogues, nor a clear idea of who their opposites were, or what it was that they wanted. Santos was also critical of the government for opening talks with criminal groups like the 'Clan del Golfo', claiming that it merely provided them with the opportunity to expand the areas under their control.
3. Defenders of 'Total Peace' point out that the 2016 agreement could not be properly implemented because of conflict, and therefore some form of engagement was necessary if the country was to avoid a return to purely military solutions. Furthermore, they argue that the ceasefires held and reduced the number of victims from armed conflict, and that negotiations did lead to the destruction of weapons. They also argue that the paramilitaries and narcotraffickers have a lot of influence across broad areas of the country as well as policies and interests that cannot be ignored. It was therefore necessary to engage with them as well as other organised armed groups. They generally consider 'Total Peace' to be complementary to the implementation of 2016, while critics consider it to have been a distraction.
4. The security of FARC signatories is still a major concern, with almost 500 having been killed since 2016, and many being displaced from the rural areas they demobilised in. Many now live in cities, surviving on benefits that were intended to help them build productive alternatives. Most would prefer to live in the rural areas they came from. There was widespread acknowledgement that the commitments to them under the peace agreement have yet to be fulfilled, while their commitment to peace remains steadfast, despite a tiny minority having returned to arms. Signatories are routinely stigmatised and not enough has

been done to highlight their efforts to support peace, and to contribute to the rehabilitation of victims. Another issue highlighted was that in the 9 years since the Agreement was signed many signatories have had families, an issue that was not considered in the terms of the agreement. Many signatories feel they are victims of what was called a 'drop by drop' extermination.

5. The agrarian reform remains a major issue, and despite significant (and accelerating) progress under this government, much remains to be done. A major negative role in this is played by opposition forces in Congress. Currently legislation on the creation of a special rural judiciary to speed up rural reform is being held up by the opposition in Congress. Another factor is widespread ignorance of the content of the 2016 agreement, and of the rights that are laid out there, for example in the 'ethnic chapter'.
6. The structural driving forces of conflict remain. As well as rural inequality, extractivism, deprivation, and the cultivation of illicit crops; illegal mining has become a major income stream for the various armed groups due to the increase in global prices for precious metals, particularly gold. In the context of a failure to sufficiently develop and expand rural production (although rural GDP has grown under the Petro government), this means that rural youth often have little alternative to illegal activities to sustain themselves. The existence of conflict in some zones is preventing development initiatives and further retards the growth of economic alternatives, highlighting the interconnectedness of the drivers of conflict.
7. We encountered deep concern about the way in which extractivism is driving conflict in Cauca and other regions. Although the subsoil belongs to the nation according to the constitution (Art.332), Colombia lacks a state register of mineral deposits. Illegal mining therefore tends to act both as a source of finance for armed groups, but also as mineral exploration, and a precursor for the later entry of 'legal' mining activities. Both act as drivers of conflict as they displace local communities and destroy the environment upon which local peasants, AfroColombians and Indigenous peoples depend.
8. In the regions we visited local communities and institutions told of the increased complexity of the conflict. If previously the FARC were the only armed group in the regions, today there are many groups competing for territorial control, and few of them seek to apply international humanitarian law (IHL). We heard of increased child recruitment and kidnapping (some 350 so far in Cauca alone), of threats to community activists (one group in Cauca told us they had registered 465 violent acts so far in 2025, with 36 human rights defenders and social leaders killed in the province). Other issues include the forced confinement of communities, threats and being used as human shields.
9. We met with some relatives of victims of the 2020-21 protest movement who reported that although prisoners had been released, many still suffered from trauma. Furthermore, some had fled the country rather than face what they thought would be unfair trials with paid 'witnesses'.
10. ECOMUN leaders explained that although their cooperative movement was enshrined in the 2016 agreement, fulfilment had been poor. They had been promised land and support to build productive initiatives, as well as access to national and international markets for their products. So far little land has been allocated, security issues mean many have been displaced, and nothing has been done to facilitate access to markets. Moreover, there are established interests and intermediaries that do not want to open up to new producers.

Nevertheless, over 6 thousand signatories remain in ECOMUN producing coffee, chocolate, beer, clothing, shoes, bags, honey, among other products. But they are largely confined to local markets. In general signatories reported a lack of material support.

11. Afro-Colombians and indigenous groups continue to be seriously affected by the conflict. They are demanding that the armed groups respect their territories and respect the lives of their leaders and community members. Indigenous groups in Cauca reported that some 850 children had been recruited by armed groups in their territories. They also reported that transnational companies such as Smurfit Westrock were destroying the local environment by planting non-native pine trees for paper production, highlighting the role that transnational companies play in driving conflict.
12. In response to the conflict social movements and human rights defenders are attempting to form a broad 'social movement for peace', which has the intention of connecting communities in the conflict zones and articulating common demands which would initially reduce the intensity of conflict in these areas, and then contribute to the demobilisation of the armed groups. In several areas social movements had been able to negotiate for the release of child recruits by armed groups, and some noted that the various armed actors in Cauca for example, all state that they want the 'transformation of the territory', but that they fear the lack of legal guarantees for engagement with government. These communications indicate there is space for dialogue with armed groups, particularly between them and the local communities.
13. The vulnerability of workers such as teachers in conflict areas was highlighted. In their opposition to mining activities or child recruitment by armed groups they are often threatened, or forced out of their workplaces, but provided with little protection or security guarantees. There were criticisms of the judiciary in failing to act on 'constitutional injunctions' (acciones tutela), brought by teachers among other vulnerable groups.
14. While security was highlighted as an important issue in conflict areas, we found no support for purely military solutions. Some dialogue partners highlighted the issue of existing Colombian military doctrine which posits the existence of an 'internal enemy', being conducive to abuses and violations of IHL by the military. Others highlighted continuing links between the state military forces and paramilitary groups ('a tactic not an actor' as one dialogue partner described it) as barriers to true security. Many feared that military operations would create new victims without dealing with the systemic issues that cause people to take up arms in the first place.
15. Correspondingly, there were widespread calls for dialogue as a solution to violence across the regions we visited - for the armed groups and government to engage with proposals emerging from among peasant, indigenous, women's groups - to promote 'inter-sectoral' dialogue to create spaces where humanitarian issues can be central. In this sense 'security' tended to be understood as incorporating both dialogue and development, to enable 'social transformation'. Dialogue was also understood as important in overcoming stigmatisation and the culture of conflict. However, not all felt that the government was taking this as seriously as it could, and one group in Cauca noted that they have been unable to get a meeting with Otty Patiño (the High Commissioner for Peace), despite having requested one.
16. The focus on criminal-economic vs political groups was not seen as being of much importance, in contrast to the dominant narrative in national politics. As we were told in

Cauca, whatever their motives, the various groups ‘need to be understood’, and that if they claimed to be politically inspired insurgents, then this meant that they should ensure that International Humanitarian Law applied. Some argued that the distinctions were not clear cut, and that even within armed groups there were different motivations.

17. There is a clear need to deal with impunity for past crimes. With a majority of the abuses throughout the conflict carried out by state or paramilitary forces allied to them, there can be no restorative peace without an accounting by these state and parastate actors. One dialogue partner raised the killings of over 4500 former paramilitaries since their 2005 peace process, many of whom were witnesses of collusion with state actors and political figures, as an indication of the elite’s efforts to avoid justice. Another raised the fact that the JEP had focused its attention on crimes committed by the FARC, but had yet to investigate the state’s chain of command. Some expressed concern that the JEP is going beyond its mandate to investigate lower and middle-ranking FARC commanders (some 600 have been called to trial), when the agreement was that the JEP would focus on senior commanders from both FARC and government forces. Dialogue partners called for international oversight to help ensure that transitional justice applied as envisioned in the 2016 agreement.

The government response:

The delegation met with a panel of government representatives from Peace Implementation Unit, those responsible for the Rural Reform, the PDET targeted development programmes, Human Security, and crop substitution, as well as the National Planning Department, the Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Development, the Agency for Territorial Renovation, the Ministry of Interior, the Ministry of Justice and Rights, the Directorate for Substitution of Illicit Crops, the Agency for Reincorporation and Normalisation, the Victims Unit, the Vice Presidency, and the Ministry of Equality and Equity.

1. The various government entities we met with were keen to highlight the work they have done on implementation. Their efforts are aimed at a system-wide approach, bringing together all the different points of the Agreement and coordinating a simultaneous response across them. They underlined that the results were evident in macroeconomic indicators showing multidimensional poverty to have fallen to 11.5%, alongside a reduction in the Gini coefficient (to 0.55 from 0.56). In special development zones (PDET) multi-dimensional poverty has fallen from almost 40% to just below 25% last year.
2. On security, they noted a reduction in killings this year, of human rights defenders from 116 to 89, of signatories from 55 to 40, but they acknowledged there was still much work to be done in this area. They highlighted a big increase in resource allocation to peace (from \$14 bln pesos from 2018-2022 to \$34 bln pesos under Petro) with a 123% fulfilment of investment in peace projects since 2022. The government has also created new indicators to measure implementation.

3. On land, the Agriculture Ministry noted that almost 700 thousand hectares of land have been given to peasants and other communities, including almost 6 thousand hectares provided to signatories. Almost 2 million hectares of land have been formalised (only 1.2 million under Duque and 0.5 million under Santos). The government has created 16 Peasant Reserve Zones, and has recognised the peasantry as a special sector. They noted an increase in rural employment (almost 5 million workers now), and a higher-than-average increase in rural GDP as indicators of their work aimed at dealing with the root causes of conflict.

4. On drugs policy the government noted a move away from punitive actions towards substitution, an emphasis on protecting the most vulnerable (including women), and a focus on the financial system behind the trade. They highlighted that last year they had seized a record 889 tonnes of cocaine and on the reduction in the number of hectares under cultivation.

5. On security the government highlighted efforts to improve risk assessments to anticipate problems and facilitate the movement of people away from potential harm. They also discussed the increased number of uniformed officers in conflict regions, the increase in the number of protection teams deployed, the funding of refuges for displaced people, and the prioritisation of protection for signatories as an urgent issue. They also noted the existence of a specific unit to counter child recruitment

6. The government noted that the change to the UN mandate was a blow and a challenge to the implementation, as many aspects require verification. However, they also noted that international backing for the peace was still strong, with 17 countries involved in accompanying peace efforts.

7. The Implementation Unit also noted the Constitutional Court decision which had prompted the government to begin a restructure of the Unit with the aim of returning its previous status in the institutional hierarchy, which is expected to help improve implementation.

Recommendations to the British and Irish governments:

Based upon the discussions we had while in Colombia, we make the following points to the British and Irish governments:

- Colombian peace implementation is still a success when looked at in international context, but it is vulnerable in the context of delayed fulfilment by the state and international pressures
- It is important to maintain international oversight of JEP sentences to counter likely domestic political pressures and ensure the JEP applies justice as envisioned in the 2016 agreement
- JEP must retain focus on what was in the agreement – ensuring that decision-makers on both sides face transitional justice
- ‘Total Peace’ may not have been as successful as initially hoped, but purely military solutions are opposed by human rights organisations, social movements, and local communities who point to the history of the conflict to show that it will only produce more violence and more victims
- Security is not just a military issue, there is a linkage between dialogue, security and fulfilment of the 2016 agreement, the international community should support dialogue in conflict regions and ensure participation of local communities in the design of security solutions
- Accusations of Colombian government inaction on narcotics are baseless. Colombia continues to prioritise action against narco-trafficking, but its policy is based on UN-endorsed humanitarian principles that consider the internationally recognised failure of the ‘war on drugs’ approach
- The failure to provide security for signatories undermines faith in the state’s capacity to fulfil any agreement, which undermines peace efforts more broadly. The failure to provide signatories with sufficient land and infrastructure for political and economic integration has a similar effect. Our governments should encourage their Colombian counterparts to work to improve security for signatories and fulfil their other commitments
- It is important to the implementation of peace that the international community voice its support of political, social and economic reforms that help to mitigate the root causes of conflict in Colombia
- There is a dire risk to stability and peace implementation in Colombia from the US escalation of tensions with Venezuela, and other countries in the region. The two countries are deeply interconnected and action against one will rebound against the other. In the interests of peace in Colombia, and stability across the region we urge our governments to dissuade from the use of coercion in international relations in the region

Recommendations to the Colombian government:

In light of the discussions we had while visiting Colombia we would make the following recommendations to the Colombian government:

- We congratulate the current government on its efforts to implement the 2016 peace agreement, while pursuing much-needed reforms to reduce inequality and provide Colombians with decent healthcare, education, pensions and labour rights. These reforms are the bedrock of future prosperity and are key to the healthy development of Colombian democracy
- We support the current government in its efforts to find solutions to the issue of violent conflict, but we urge it to make renewed efforts to discuss new solutions to complex security issues with local communities in conflict zones and work with them to implement and publicise these
- We recognise that the change to the mandate of the UN verification mission in Colombia creates new vulnerabilities to the implementation of the 2016 agreement. The government ought to continue to work with partners in the international community to find new ways to help ensure the objective oversight of JEP decisions and maintain the focus on the rights in 'Ethnic chapter' of the implementation of the agreement. We urge the government ought to look at strengthening the role women in the dialogues around peace, and the development of solutions to conflict
- In the light of continuing conflict in some regions of the country, the government urgently needs to take robust measures to protect the physical safety of the signatories to the peace agreement in the regions where they live
- Given the challenges being faced by the signatories as a group, we think the government ought to consider signatories and their families as a distinct group within the implementation criteria that it is developing
- In light of the difficulties the signatories experience with security and access to resources, new ways of improving communication and coordination between signatories and the institutions of the state ought to be considered
- To overcome the legacy of decades of stigmatisation, the state must take action at all levels to reduce the stigmatisation faced by signatories and to highlight their efforts to fulfil their obligations under the 2016 agreement. Perhaps by introducing specific reporting by local, regional and national authorities upon these efforts in coordination with signatories
- We welcome the decision to restructure the infrastructure of implementation in line with the decision of the Constitutional Court, and call on the government to continue strengthening the institutionality of peace implementation and reform
- We would urge the government to investigate the situation of the student protestors arrested and imprisoned during the 2020-2021 protests to ensure that they are being provided with all that is needed for their full recovery, and to ensure rule of law is fully applied to those still facing legal action