

The Rt Hon Baroness Anelay of St Johns DBE
Minister of State of the Foreign and Commonwealth Office
Prime Minister's Special Representative on Preventing Sexual Violence in Conflict
House of Lords, London, SW1A 0PW

London, 28th October 2016

Dear Baroness Anelay,

We are writing ahead of Colombia's President Juan Manuel Santos' state visit to the UK to urge you to continue supporting the Colombian Government's negotiation efforts.

As you are aware, the 'no' vote won by a razor-thin margin (0,43%) on the referendum about the peace agreement signed on 26 September. Their victory has triggered a political crisis that could lead to the collapse of the peace process and a return to war.

A vast number of Colombians do not want this outcome, which is why hundreds of thousands of them have joined demonstrations, vigils and other public events in Colombia, UK, US, Australia, France, Spain, Brazil and elsewhere (the attached brochure collects a sample of these activities in the UK). People are urging the Colombian government, FARC and the 'no' vote opposition to maintain the peace talks and to reach a consensus as soon as possible.

Citizens fear that if the negotiations suffer unnecessary delays, the ceasefire – which has markedly reduced armed conflict-related violence – may become unstable or that FARC could disintegrate into smaller structures that would be nearly impossible to demobilise. Importantly, Colombian women are also concerned about the attempts to remove a set of gender provisions from the accord, in particular those related to conflict-related gender-based violence.

We are grateful for your active work towards a peaceful and prosperous Colombia with closer links to the United Kingdom, and call on you to keep on building on the notable contributions that various MPs and the British Government have made to the Colombian peace process during the past four years by:

- Asking the Prime Minister and Parliament to send clear signs that they continue to support President Santos' negotiation efforts, uphold their commitment to financial support during the implementation of the agreement and stress that a consensus must be reached promptly.

- Voicing the importance of maintaining:

- a. the agreement's goal of guaranteeing truth, justice and reparation for the thousands of victims the conflict has left;

- b. the accord's gender provisions as a right step to guarantee that victims of conflict-related sexual violence will have access to justice. This is in line with the British Government's stated goal of reducing and preventing sexual violence in Colombia; and

- c. the agreement's provisions on a land reform that will see the displaced victims return to their rightful land and the consolidation of a strengthened rural economy that will lift people out of poverty.

- Urging the British UN Ambassador to take a leading role at the UN Security Council during the discussions about the new mandate of the UN Mission in Colombia tasked with the verification of the ceasefire and laying down of arms. The UK must call on countries that contribute to the Mission with unarmed observers to continue deploying their personnel.

We know you share with us the hope of a peaceful Colombia; your support at this moment will be crucial to our hopes becoming a reality.

Yours sincerely,

ABColumbia

Agenda Internacional de Iniciativas por la Paz – Londres

Colombian Caravana UK Lawyers' Group

Congreso de los Pueblos - Londres

Equipo Creer es el Primer Paso (Collective To Believe is the First Step)

Fundación Plan Perdón - Forgiveness Plan Foundation

Group of Colombian PhD Students in the UK funded by Colciencias and the Newton-Caldas Fund

Group of Colombian PhD Students in the UK funded by Colciencias

Group of Colombian Students in the University of Bristol

Imperial College Latin American Society

International Alert

Latin-American Society, Imperial College London

LSE SU Colombian Society

Movimiento Jaguar Despierto

Paz A La Calle UK

Peace Brigades International

Rodeemos el Diálogo

Truth, Memory and Reconciliation Commission of Colombian Women in Diaspora

UCL Colombian Society

United Migrant Workers Education Project

War on Want

WILPF UK - Women's International League for Peace and Freedom

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This letter has been addressed to:

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Rt Hon Baroness Anelay of St Johns DBE

Baroness Hooper CMG, co-Chair APPG for Latin America

Rt Hon Hilary Benn MP

Rt Hon Kenneth Clarke QC MP

Rt Hon Nick Clegg MP

Rt Hon Ann Clwyd MP, chair APPG for Human Rights

Rt Hon Jeremy Corbyn MP

Rt Hon Sir Alan Duncan MP

Rt Hon Sir Jeffrey M. Donaldson MP

Rt Hon Sir Hugo Swire MP

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Copy sent to His Excellency Ambassador Mr. Néstor Osorio Londoño