

The Colombian NAP 1325 reflects the voices of the 1,500 women in all their diversities, who participated in the macro, regional and national consultations. According to UN Women it is recognised as one of the most participatory processes in the history of developing a NAP1325.

Consultations were held by a coalition of civil society organisations called the **Alliance 1325**, working together with UN Women and the Colombian Government to identify what women in all their diversities thought were the priorities in order to live in security and contribute to peacebuilding. Women across Colombia contributed their knowledge of what works to build peace at the territorial level.

What emerged was a plan that incorporated four aspects:

- information from the consultations,
- the gender provisions in the peace accord,
- public policies and legislative advances that already existed that related to women and girls.
- monitoring and evaluation committee

These were mapped into one 10-year national action plan, and then developed with clearly defined concrete measures, goals, indicators, responsible ministries their implementation and an assigned budget. The plan was approved in November, and the monitoring and evaluation committee was established in May of this year (2026).

The development of Colombia's NAP1325 brought women back into decision-making and peacebuilding spaces at a critical moment. After the signing of the Peace Accord, many Colombian women's organisations and leaders found themselves increasingly sidelined from the spaces where implementation priorities were being set. The NAP process helped to reopen those spaces, enabling women in all their diversity to shape national policy on women peace, and security. Evidence shows that peace agreements are more sustainable when women are meaningfully involved in their negotiation and implementation. Colombia's experience suggests that this principle should extend beyond the signing of an accord: the development of a NAP1325 after a peace agreement can itself be a mechanism for sustaining women's participation in decision-making and keeping their voices at the centre of peacebuilding. Had such a process been prioritised earlier, it could have helped to maintain Colombian women's influence over the direction and implementation of the Peace Accord.

This points to a wider lesson for peace processes: where women have played a role in negotiating peace, the prompt development of a NAP1325 after an accord can help institutionalise their participation and prevent their exclusion during implementation.

A central priority was to embed the NAP1325, and by extension the Peace Accord's gender provisions, within government ministries and State institutions, with clear responsibilities and agreed budgets for implementation. This was essential because women's organisations understood that long-term progress depends on institutional ownership, dedicated resources and mechanisms for accountability.

By locating the NAP within the structures of the State, the plan creates an opportunity to move gender commitments from policy language into practical implementation, while helping to sustain women's participation in decisions about peace, security and justice.

I want to look now at what impact the election of a new President is likely to have in relation to women peace and security in Colombia.

The presidential election on 21 June produced an exceptionally close second-round contest between Iván Cepeda of the left-wing *Pacto Histórico*, - a continuity candidate for Gustavo Petro's political project, and de la Espriella, a far-right populist outsider with no previous political experience. Supported by President Trump de la Espriella won by the narrowest of margin less than 1% - 251,000 votes. In terms of democracy the turnout was among the highest in the country's recent electoral history. But the vote underscores the depth of Colombia's political polarisation.

The geographic pattern of voting reflected the same divides seen in the Peace Accord referendum and in recent elections. Iván Cepeda performed strongly in municipalities along the Caribbean and Pacific coasts, in the south of the country and in Bogotá, while Abelardo de la Espriella drew much of his support from the central Andean region. This regional split underlines the depth of Colombia's political polarisation and the continuing divide between territories most affected by conflict and those more aligned with a hard-line security agenda.

The campaign was highly aggressive, and of particular concern from a women, peace and security perspective was the use of misogynistic and sexist rhetoric. In early June 2026, a judge ruled that statements made by de la Espriella about women voters, together with his harassment of a female journalist, constituted political violence based on gender and ordered him to issue a public apology. This raises serious concerns about the tone and direction of political leadership on women's rights, civic participation and the protection of women in public life.

Equally concerning is de la Espriella's position on the Peace Accord and the Special Jurisdiction for Peace (JEP), which he has said he wants to bring to an end. While dismantling the JEP would be constitutionally difficult, a future government could weaken its work by reducing financial support and institutional backing. This would have direct consequences for the JEP's capacity to advance key cases, including Macro-case 11 on women, sexual and gender-based violence. As the last macro-case to be opened, and one of the furthest behind, Macro-case 11 is particularly vulnerable to any reduction in resources or political support.

Although de la Espriella moderated his rhetoric after the election, his acknowledgement of polarisation was framed around the need for the population to coalesce around the new president. This is notably different from a commitment to govern on behalf of all Colombians, including those who did not vote for him, and raises concerns about how inclusive his administration will be in practice.

These concerns have been reinforced by his recent security announcements. When he stated that upon taking office on 7 August, he was giving illegal armed, criminal one month's notice before deploying the full force of the armed forces against them, making clear that there would be no peace talks and no concessions.

Hard-line military approaches have been tried repeatedly in Colombia over many decades and have not brought an end to the conflict. They have also exposed civilian populations — particularly women

and girls — to heightened risks of human rights violations and abuses, including displacement, sexual and gender-based violence, and restrictions on movement.

This comes at a moment when Colombia's women's civil society organisations are under severe pressure. These organisations are among the strongest in the region and have played a crucial role in peacebuilding, protection, advocacy and the development of the NAP1325. Yet they rely heavily on international funding, the withdrawal or reduction of international support, including from USAID, is forcing many women's organisations to reduce their teams and scale back their work. Even some of the strongest women's organisations now face the risk of disappearing, just as their role in defending women's rights, monitoring implementation of the NAP1325 and keeping the gender provisions of the Peace Accord alive is becoming more urgent.

What does this mean for the way ahead.

- The UK is at the moment is revising its NAP 1325. It is essential that it maintains Colombia as a focus country in this plan and increase the areas where it is giving Colombia support.
 - It should also ensure support for Women's Organisations working with women and girls on sexual and gender-based violence to bring their cases before the Special Jurisdiction for Peace and in Colombia's ordinary justice system.
 - With rural areas suffer from a near-total absence of state protection - survivors rely on local NGOs and informal community networks for violence prevention programs and women's shelters increased funding for these are important.
- As penholder on the UN Security Council, it is essential the UK ensures the renewal of the UNSC Mandate of the Mission of Verification in Colombia in October, and uses its political influence with the new government to maintain a focus on the implementation of the Peace Accord.
- The UK's International Development Minister has made it clear that the UK is "unwavering" in its commitment to the WPS agenda. It is essential therefore to support to Colombian Women's national and grassroots organisations in Colombia who will be working to guarantee the implementation of the NAP1325 and therefore by default also the Gender Provisions in the Peace Accord.
- The UK Government is also part of the Informal Experts Group (IEG) on WPS at the UN Security Council in 2023 they did a report on Colombia. We are therefore asking that the UK Governemnt representative on the IEG on WPS, next year, to invite Colombian Women Defenders to speak to this committee about progress on the implementation of the Colombian NAP 1325