



# International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights

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## Human Rights Committee 138th session

### Summary record of the 4014th meeting

Held at the Palais Wilson, Geneva, on Tuesday, 11 July 2023, at 10 a.m.

*Chair:* Ms. Abdo Rocholl

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Consideration of reports submitted by States parties under article 40 of the Covenant  
(*continued*)

*Eighth periodic report of Colombia (continued)*

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*The meeting was called to order at 10 a.m.*

**Consideration of reports submitted by States parties under article 40 of the Covenant**  
(continued)

*Eighth periodic report of Colombia (continued) (CCPR/C/COL/8;  
CCPR/C/COL/Q/8; CCPR/C/COL/RQ/8)*

1. *At the invitation of the Chair, the delegation of Colombia joined the meeting.*
2. **The Chair** invited the delegation to continue replying to the questions raised by Committee members at the previous meeting.
3. **A representative of Colombia** said that, as part of its efforts to address violence against women within the framework of the National Development Plan, the Government had introduced a national system for registering and following up on cases of gender-based violence. It had also signed an agreement for the operation of a nationwide “155” helpline to register reports of violence and provide assistance and psychosocial support. In addition, it had strengthened the coordination mechanism under which 10 government agencies jointly addressed issues relating to violence, and it was empowering women economically by granting them land and promoting income-generating projects. Thus far in 2023, some 15,850 women had received land titles, and 19.547 billion Colombian pesos had been allocated for income-generating initiatives. Consultations were under way on a national plan for the implementation of Security Council resolution 1325, and a recently established political training academy for women had welcomed its first 280 students. A presidential order issued in March 2023 required the adoption of measures to prevent gender-based violence in the workplace and in the civil service. Awareness-raising campaigns targeting early marriage were being rolled out.
4. **A representative of Colombia** said that 56.9 per cent of the 464 reports of violations of the rights of persons undergoing reintegration had been resolved; verdicts had been issued in 69 cases, 60 were at trial, 42 were under investigation, and 79 arrest warrants had been issued. Ten of the 23 cases involving the murders of women who had signed the peace agreement had been resolved, as had the only case in which a member of the LGBTI community had been targeted. The starting point for the Special Investigation Unit in such cases was to assume that the victims’ deaths had been a consequence of their support for the peace agreement. Most of those crimes, crimes against human rights defenders and the mass killings in the country had been carried out by dissidents of the former Revolutionary Armed Forces of Colombia – People’s Army (FARC-EP), the Clan del Golfo and members of the Ejército de Liberación Nacional (National Liberation Army) (ELN). Mass killings had taken a toll of 195 victims thus far in 2023; 118 of the victims had died in rural areas and 77 in urban zones. There had been 164 such victims in 2022. A total of 18 soldiers, 4 non-commissioned officers and 2 officers would be formally charged in early August 2023 in connection with the March 2022 killings in Puerto Leguízamo. Two convictions had been handed down in the case of Javier Ordóñez.
5. **A representative of Colombia** said that around 400 complaints concerning the prison system were received each week through a free 24-hour hotline. There were human rights committees in place within the prison system. Some 380 criminal complaints of excessive use of force had been received since 2019; complaints of that nature were handled directly by the Attorney General’s Office. Since 2015, nearly 1,600 prison employees had participated in a 120-hour training course on the use of force and human rights. In 2018, the training academy of the National Prisons Institute had held a workshop on the Manual on the Effective Investigation and Documentation of Torture and Other Cruel, Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment (Istanbul Protocol) for officers in the criminal investigation division of the police force who were in a position to receive reports of torture and other cruel, inhuman or degrading treatment or punishment. Another training course dealt with the rights of lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender and intersex persons. Three people had been charged in connection with the events that had occurred at La Modelo prison in March 2020, and a protocol for dealing with similar crisis situations was being developed with assistance from the International Committee of the Red Cross.

6. **A representative of Colombia** said that, with respect to measures of individual reparation, as at 31 May 2023, some 5.729 trillion Colombian pesos in compensation had been disbursed to 716,924 victims; of that sum, roughly 160,000 payments totalling approximately 1.2 trillion pesos had been made to members of ethnic minorities. The victimizing events for which administrative compensation was most often awarded were forced displacement, followed by homicide and enforced disappearance. In 2,532 cases, applications for administrative compensation had been denied because the forced displacement had not been closely related to the armed conflict. Since the new Government had taken office on 7 August 2022, approximately 354 billion pesos in administrative compensation had been disbursed to 47,169 victims; 28,401 of the transfers had gone to women, 22,488 to men and 25 to persons with diverse sexual orientations and gender identities, for a total of 50,914 transfers. Out of that total, 26,104 of the compensatory transfers had gone to members of ethnic minorities and 14,003 to minors. On 22 March 2023, 23 billion pesos in court-ordered compensation had been paid to some 8,000 victims of violations committed by three paramilitary groups in the city of Barrancabermeja.

7. As of May 2023, there had been 903 collective beneficiaries, of which 625 had an ethnic affiliation. The State had publicized the available reparation measures via the traditional media, social media and web pages.

8. **The Chair** said that she would appreciate information on any legislative efforts to reform the prison system and to limit the excessive use of pretrial detention. It would be helpful to have a detailed description of the scope of the definition of trafficking in persons used by the Government. She wished to know whether a single national system was in place to consolidate information on cases of trafficking in persons, what mechanisms were used to monitor the activities of local governments and what financial and human resources were available to them to implement the country's anti-trafficking strategy. It would also be helpful if the delegation could explain why periodic reports under Act No. 1985 of 2005 were not made public, how many national or local government employees had received training in preventing and identifying cases of trafficking in persons, what strategies were used to involve the media in the fight against trafficking in persons and what types of campaigns the State party ran to raise public awareness about trafficking. In addition, she wondered how closely the State party coordinated its efforts with States whose nationals were victims of trafficking in Colombia and what support services the State party provided to victims. She would also like to know what steps the State party was taking to fight impunity, what the outcomes of trafficking cases had been and what measures of reparation had been provided to victims.

9. **Ms. Kpatcha Tchamdja** said that she would be grateful for information about the legal basis for the measures taken by the Government during the coronavirus disease (COVID-19) pandemic, any recent steps taken to ensure that detainees received health-care services and were protected from communicable diseases, and the measures taken to prevent armed clashes from leading to internal displacement. Updated, disaggregated data on displaced persons would also be appreciated.

10. **Mr. Gómez Martínez** said that the Committee was concerned that provisions on transfers for protective purposes were being used to detain participants in public protests and wished to know how many people had been subject to such transfers, how many protective transfer centres there were and where they were located, and whether the new Public Safety Act or recent Constitutional Court decisions had had any effect on such transfers. The Committee would appreciate information on any steps taken to ensure that legal professionals could do their jobs in a safe and independent manner, that investigations into threats and attacks against legal professionals were effective, independent and impartial and that those responsible were punished. Information would also be welcome on the measures that had been taken to guarantee the independence of the main oversight bodies, particularly the Attorney General's Office. It would be helpful to know what measures were in place to safeguard the rights of both defendants and victims during judicial hearings held online, what steps were being taken to facilitate access to justice for people living in remote areas, under what circumstances cases being heard by an ordinary court could be transferred to the Special Jurisdiction for Peace or vice versa and what types of penalties the Special Jurisdiction for Peace could hand down.

11. **Mr. Carazo** said that he wished to know what measures were in place to ensure that government agencies in charge of cybersecurity did not engage in the illegal surveillance of human rights defenders or the illegal monitoring of social networks, that online educational platforms were secure and student data were not misused and that the multibiometric identification system of the National Civil Registry Office was used for no purpose other than to process the civil identification data of Colombian citizens. Could the delegation comment on how effective measures to prevent the illegal restriction of human rights defenders' freedom of expression had been in practice? It would be helpful to know what role civil society had played in the drafting of the Public Policy Framework for Comprehensive Protection and Guarantees for Social and Community Leaders, Journalists and Human Rights Defenders and when the Framework was expected to be implemented. He would welcome an update on the State party's implementation of the injunction issued by the Cundinamarca Administrative Court concerning the activation of the National Safeguards Process and the roll-out of the Comprehensive Security and Protection Programme for Communities and Organizations in the Territories provided for in Decree No. 660 of 2018.

12. He was curious about the reasons for the significant discrepancies between the figures on killings of human rights defenders provided by different organizations and wondered if anything was being done to clarify the situation. Regarding the abuses committed during the protests in 2021, he would welcome information on investigations, prosecutions, penalties and reparations. He would also like to know how many State officials had been involved and what the sex, age, ethnicity and nationality of the victims were.

13. It would be useful to learn how the State party enforced the laws on freedom of assembly, whether the laws were effective and, if not, what amendments were planned. In the same vein, he would appreciate an update on the status of amended Decision No. 1190 of 2018, as well as information on how Decree No. 003 of 2021 would be applied, in conjunction with Decree No. 575 of 2021 on freedom of movement, to ensure that no one was injured during protests in future.

14. It would be interesting to hear how the State party intended to fully realize the right to prior consultation throughout the country, given the difficulties experienced in that regard in such instances as the preservation of Quebrada Cañaveral ancestral territories and in the case of the Nukak people.

15. Given the systemic racism experienced by persons of African descent, the link between race and poverty, the political instrumentalization of racism illustrated by the numerous racist attacks against Vice-President Francia Márquez and the disproportionate impact of the internal armed conflict on Indigenous populations and persons of African descent, but also the positive legislative steps taken to address those issues, he wished to know how the State party intended to develop a policy on the eradication of racism and racial discrimination within the time limit set by Act No. 2294 of 2023. Did the State party expect the adoption of that policy to be a meaningful step towards overcoming the effects of racism, racial discrimination and colonialism?

16. **Mr. Quezada Cabrera** said that the Committee wished to know what steps were being taken to prevent the ongoing practice of arbitrarily detaining persons between the ages of 18 and 24 years for the purpose of recruiting them into the armed forces. It would also be helpful to learn more about the membership and work of the Interdisciplinary Commission on Conscientious Objection and the reason why such a body was deemed necessary. The Committee had been informed that conscientious objectors were charged the same – quite high – fee for certificates of military service (*libreta militar*) as persons who needed to regularize their situation because they had evaded compulsory military service. Were there plans to rectify that situation? He would welcome information on the status of the implementing regulations for Act No. 2272 concerning community service as an alternative to military service, the involvement of civil society in the development of those regulations and the body that would be responsible for overseeing that system.

17. He noted that the Committee had not received a response concerning the matters raised in paragraph 24 of the list of issues in relation to the individual protection provided to human rights defenders, social and community leaders and journalists. He would therefore appreciate information on the investigations undertaken into the thousands of cases of

violence against human rights defenders occurring between 2017 and 2022, including murder and assault, and on the number of cases thus far in 2023. Had steps been taken to boost the capacity of the Special Investigation Unit with a view to reducing impunity in such cases? Could the delegation comment on reports that the security forces had purchased open-source surveillance tools allegedly for use in monitoring journalists?

18. **Mr. Santos Pais** said that it would be useful for the Committee to hear how many cases brought by the Attorney General's Office had ended in conviction and what penalties had been imposed. In reference to the judgment of the Constitutional Court banning remote participation in trials, he noted that there were situations where, out of fear of reprisals, victims and lawyers alike might feel unsafe having to attend a hearing in person. He questioned the validity of a policy that allowed the mass arrest of participants in social protests. It was for all branches of Government to find a way of upholding the right to freedom of assembly while addressing legitimate security concerns. Moreover, where offences were committed, protesters should be charged appropriately, not with participation in a criminal enterprise or involvement in acts of terrorism.

*The meeting was suspended at 11 a.m. and resumed at 11.20 a.m.*

19. **A representative of Colombia**, noting that all the delegation's responses would be followed up with further details in writing, said that certain instruments that were not in line with the peace agreement had indeed been enacted pursuant to the Timely Action Plan for Individual and Collective Prevention and Protection concerning the Rights to Life, Freedom, Integrity and Security of Human Rights Defenders, Social and Community Leaders and Journalists. That instrument had been adopted after civil society had withdrawn from the consultation process because its representatives felt that no effective safeguards for defenders were actually on the table.

20. However, the current Government was not applying those instruments or the Timely Action Plan. Instead, it was working to revamp the prevention policy, whose implementation was fragmented and reactive and involved more meetings than effective action. The first phase of that process – assessment and consultation among State institutions – would be completed in 2023 so that, in the following year, the next phase – consultation with civil society, including consultations with 2,000 people in 15 different territories – could proceed.

21. Concerning Decree No. 660 of 2018, the budget for the Comprehensive Security and Protection Programme for Communities and Organizations in the Territories had been increased by approximately 4,000 per cent. The Programme was open for registration, but it had not been functioning optimally, so there were plans to revitalize it, introduce protective measures in respect of 95 communities and temporary settlements, and provide financial support for nearly 130 community self-protection initiatives.

22. The discrepancies in the figures on the killings of social leaders were the result of the multiplicity of sources that were used, but reference to such a wide variety of sources was necessary in order to obtain the most balanced picture of the situation possible. Although there had been a 20 per cent reduction in cases compared to the same period in 2022, the fact remained that the general trend since 2017 had been upward. The Government was cognizant that it must do more to address the problem.

23. Regarding trafficking in persons, pursuant to Decree No. 1818 of 2020, nearly 380 technical capacity-building sessions had been held for some 7,050 public officials and representatives of non-governmental organizations and international cooperation agencies. According to the national registry, between November 2020 and December 2022, the relevant measures provided for in the road map had been activated in more than 345 cases. Almost all of the persons who had been trafficked had been either Colombian or Venezuelan, and the great majority of them had received assistance, including help returning home. In acknowledgement of the fact that the true numbers were likely much higher, the Ministry of External Affairs, the Ministry of the Interior and the relevant Office of the Presidential Adviser were working on a strategy for addressing forced recruitment and the trafficking of foreign nationals.

24. With regard to the issue of prior consultation, the current National Development Plan was the first such plan to have been approved in its entirety by Afrodescendent and

Indigenous communities. The current Government had initiated over a hundred prior consultations, and the establishment of a standing committee to conduct consultations with the campesino population was envisaged.

25. Decision No. 1190 of 2018 on freedom of assembly was fully in force, and work had begun on new legislation to regulate the management of social protests, including the thorny issue of transfers for protective purposes. Lastly, in line with the Government's commitment to dialogue, the measures provided for under the National Coexistence System had been applied at over 300 protests, drastically reducing the use of force and, thus, the number of injuries occurring during police operations.

26. **A representative of Colombia** said that 25 civilians and 3 police officers had been killed during protests in the period from April to July 2021. The investigations had been completed in slightly over half of the cases. In 60 per cent of those cases, the alleged perpetrator was a member of the National Police Force; some officers had already been convicted, while others had been indicted and were awaiting trial. Some of the individuals arrested during the protests were members of ELN or former members of FARC-EP.

27. There had been 65 reports of eye injuries involving 70 victims during the protests; 8 members of the National Police had been charged in those cases. As the first Director of the Special Investigation Unit, she wished to stress that the Unit investigated not only persons suspected of having attacked human rights defenders, but also those suspected of instigating those crimes. Of the homicide cases that had been investigated, 70 per cent had been found to have been ordered or carried out by leaders of criminal organizations. Thus far in 2023, 92 human rights defenders had been killed. A special team had been designated to handle attacks directed at Vice-President Francia Márquez. In the two instances registered so far in 2023, the perpetrators had been identified and indictments were being prepared.

28. The separation of powers and the independence of the judiciary were among the greatest concerns of the Attorney General's Office. There had been cases of members of the judiciary being detained, including a case in Tarazá involving the Clan del Golfo that had forced the Office to withdraw its personnel from the area, thus weakening access to justice in that territory. Social media were a complicating factor, especially when government officials reposted unverified information.

29. Proceedings were under way in a case involving 300 child victims recruited by ELN. Human trafficking carried a severe penalty in Colombia, and the Government was determined not only to prosecute those responsible but also to cut off the revenue streams of trafficking rings.

30. **A representative of Colombia** said that the Government had allocated funding to the judiciary equivalent to 0.5 per cent of the country's gross domestic product in order to ensure its total independence. All necessary guarantees were in place to ensure that courts such as the Special Jurisdiction for Peace operated freely and to provide protection for their officials. Protection was particularly necessary for the officials of the Special Jurisdiction, who had been the targets of attacks following their investigation into extrajudicial executions of protected persons. The Government had taken careful note of the recommendations of the Truth Commission on the independence of the judiciary.

31. In response to the COVID-19 pandemic, two 30-day states of emergency had been declared and 115 decrees issued. Owing to the constraints imposed by the pandemic, those decrees had been subject to less stringent scrutiny than usual by the Constitutional Court, which had nevertheless declared 6 per cent of them unenforceable and 44 per cent provisionally enforceable subject to the Court's subsequent interpretation. Almost half of those decrees had been issued by the previous Government on the last day of the states of emergency in an attempt to prolong the associated restrictions. A health emergency had also been declared at that time which had also introduced a number of restrictions. Many of the limitations placed on people's movements had also had the effect of restricting protests.

32. Having taken note of the concerns expressed by various United Nations bodies about the fact that many protesters had been charged with crimes relating to terrorism and criminal conspiracy, the Government had introduced draft legislation that addressed that problem.

Unfortunately, those bills had ultimately not been adopted. The Government was nonetheless continuing its efforts to rectify that situation.

33. Remote court hearings had been introduced during the COVID-19 pandemic in some cases, and suitable facilities had been established in prisons, where hundreds of such hearings had taken place. Following the pandemic, the Constitutional Court had ruled that, under certain circumstances, judges should decide whether hearings should take place in person or remotely but that oral proceedings should be conducted in person in criminal cases, except in cases of force majeure verified as such by the court. The requirement for in-person oral hearings in criminal proceedings sought to uphold basic guarantees, such as the right to a defence.

34. **A representative of Colombia** said that the Special Jurisdiction for Peace had signed a cooperation agreement with the ordinary justice system aimed at combating impunity. That agreement focused on three main areas. Firstly, it required the Attorney General's Office to refrain from suspending investigations into serious human rights violations and violations of international humanitarian law until such time as the Special Jurisdiction for Peace had identified the persons to be brought before the transitional courts. Secondly, it instituted improvements to the investigation procedures applying to cases involving civilian third parties and State agents not belonging to law enforcement agencies, who had initially fallen under the competence of the Special Jurisdiction but who were now subject to its jurisdiction only on a voluntary basis. A mechanism had therefore been created for determining how investigations concerning persons who had voluntarily turned themselves over to the Special Jurisdiction, who currently numbered 178, could be expedited and how the Attorney General's Office could prioritize its own investigations. Thirdly, the agreement provided for increased information-sharing to strengthen the macro cases being considered by the Special Jurisdiction.

35. The sentences imposed by the Special Jurisdiction for Peace were restorative in nature and were limited to a maximum of eight years of restrictions on personal freedom. The persons sentenced by the Special Jurisdiction were the persons who had been in the upper echelons of the relevant organizations and the leading participants in the crimes investigated by the Special Jurisdiction. Victims had assisted in developing the sanctions, and the Government had established an inter-agency committee to ensure that the reparative actions provided for in the sentences handed down by the Special Jurisdiction effectively benefited the victims of those crimes.

36. **A representative of Colombia** said that, as Human Rights Commissioner of the National Police, he supervised compliance with international bodies' human rights recommendations. Transfers for protective purposes were intended to safeguard people's lives. More than 86,000 such transfers had been undertaken in 2021, almost 123,000 in 2022 and around 22,000 since the beginning of 2023. Police officers did not always comply fully with the relevant protocol, however, and an order had therefore been issued to make it clear that such transfers could be made only to one of the country's 11 protective transfer centres, which were run by civilian authorities and subject to oversight. Training on the protocol was provided.

37. More than 21,000 persons, including approximately 1,500 convicted persons, were being held in the country's police stations. That was far in excess of their design capacity. In addition, more than 1,400 persons, including 82 convicted persons, were detained in rapid-response units. That situation was a result of a failure to construct the necessary infrastructure, but its resolution would require major changes in the prison system as a whole.

38. The Truth Commission had made 10 recommendations relating to security, including a recommendation on the creation of a new vision of citizen security in partnership with communities and the transformation of the security sector through normative and political change and education. Progress towards implementing those recommendations included legislative reforms to ensure that human rights violations alleged to have been committed by police officers were dealt with by the Attorney General's Office rather than the police force's internal disciplinary body, the restructuring of the police force and ongoing efforts to ensure that the recruitment and promotion of police officers were transparent and aligned with human rights standards.

39. A total of some 300 incidents involving human rights defenders and social leaders, ranging from threats to murder, had been recorded across the country so far that year. The police force's Unit for Dialogue and Order had been restructured, and organizations of human rights defenders had helped draft a new manual to guide its operations. Since the current Administration had taken office, no violations of the right to life or integrity of the person had taken place during the Unit's operations. The measures taken to reform the police force had focused on eight strategic areas. Funding for that purpose had been received from the Government of the United States of America.

40. **A representative of Colombia** said that the National Protection Unit evaluated the risks posed to individuals and communities and implemented appropriate protection measures. Approximately 9,000 persons benefited from its services, including high-level officials, human rights defenders and journalists at risk of violence as a result of their work, activism or political affiliation. The Unit also protected communities, with 217 collective protection measures having been implemented. Its budget had risen by almost 40 per cent between 2022 and 2023; it had approximately 5,000 vehicles, including armoured vehicles, and a range of other tools that it used to provide protection. The number of social leaders, human rights defenders and journalists being protected by the Unit was at a three-year high, totalling more than 3,700 persons, including over 1,180 persons who had signed the peace agreement and around 160 journalists.

41. One of the main difficulties encountered by the Unit was a shortage of vehicles, and one of various reasons for that problem was that vehicle suppliers and/or public officials sometimes diverted vehicles meant for the Unit to criminal organizations; one such individual, a former high-level official in the Unit during the previous Administration, had recently been apprehended. Various measures to strengthen the Unit's protection services had been taken, including the adjustment of the level of protection provided for persons deemed to be at lower risk, increased funding for the acquisition of more vehicles and the establishment of a communications network with the military.

42. **A representative of Colombia** said that the Government had reviewed the impact of the two national action plans on business and human rights implemented to date with a view to informing future action in that respect. There were plans to develop a public policy on business and human rights that would take gender, ethnicity and other forms of diversity into account.

43. An intersectoral commission had been set up to address the recruitment of minors by armed and criminal groups; 5 billion pesos in funding and technical assistance were being provided to local authorities in order to strengthen protection from forced recruitment at the local level.

44. **A representative of Colombia** said that the Committee's recommendations and Views were binding under Act No. 288 of 1996, which had been the first law passed anywhere in the world that explicitly stated that the implementation of the Views of the Human Rights Committee and the decisions of the Inter-American Commission on Human Rights was mandatory. In the past, however, the Government had failed to comply with that Act. The current Government was taking steps to rectify that situation.

45. **A representative of Colombia** said that work was under way to frame a policy for the eradication of racism that would be implemented through ongoing cooperation with the black, Afro-Colombian, Palenquero and Raizal communities. An intersectoral commission would be created to coordinate action to provide reparations for the past transatlantic trafficking in enslaved persons, slavery, colonialism and structural racism. Act No. 70 provided guarantees for the fundamental rights of black, Afro-Colombian, Palenquero and Raizal communities, and progress was being made in the recognition of their territorial rights, in particular.

46. **A representative of Colombia** said that the Government would welcome the Committee's guidance on reducing its disproportionate use of pretrial detention.

47. **Mr. Gómez Martínez** said that he wondered whether a police or judicial investigation had been opened following the detention by members of the Clan del Golfo of public prosecutors and a judge in Tarazá in reprisal for the refusal of the Attorney General's Office



to withdraw a search and arrest warrant. He would also like to know whether the police force had a specialized division focusing on the persistent problem of criminal gangs and, if so, whether it was attached to the Ministry of the Interior or the Ministry of Justice or if it was part of the criminal investigation police department.

48. If a person violated the terms of a sentence handed down by the Special Jurisdiction for Peace, was that considered to be equivalent to a failure to comply with the terms of a judicial sentence?

49. He wished to know how long persons transferred for protective purposes were deprived of their liberty in a protective transfer centre and whether, once that period had elapsed, they were brought before a judge.

50. **Mr. Quezada Cabrera** said that he would appreciate answers to the questions he had asked on military service, conscientious objection and the alternative of community service under the Social Service for Peace programme, and the arbitrary detention of young persons as a means of recruiting them into the army.

51. He would like more information about the situation of the journalist Claudia Julieta Duque, whose personal data had reportedly been violated on repeated occasions by the National Protection Unit while she was supposed to be under its official protection.

52. It was unclear to him whether, when the public prosecutor referred to the “*esclarecimiento*” (solving or clarification) of cases of violations of the rights of human rights defenders, that term also encompassed convictions, or whether the determination of the facts of a case and convictions were considered to be separate matters. Statistics detailing the number of convictions in cases involving the murder of human rights defenders would be appreciated, as would information on the progress and results of investigations into other human rights violations such as threats, sexual violence and other assaults.

53. **Mr. Carazo** said that the Government had an ambitious programme to implement in a short time frame. Recent efforts by the police to use dialogue to resolve challenging situations instead of resorting to force were commendable, and the introduction of the Social Service for Peace alternative to military service could help the Government make significant progress as it looked to consolidate peace in Colombia.

54. **Ms. Kpatcha Tchamdja** said that she would appreciate an answer to her earlier question about measures taken to protect people from internal displacement and forced confinement in connection with territorial disputes.

55. **A representative of Colombia** said that the police force had five units specialized in combating criminal gangs: a criminal investigation police directorate, which reported to the Office of the Attorney General; a carabineros and rural security directorate; a peacebuilding unit; an anti-kidnapping and anti-extortion directorate; and an elite police unit that helped the Attorney General’s Office solve killings of signatories of the peace agreement and human rights defenders. That agency had made close to 600 arrests and had more than 800 arrest warrants yet to carry out.

56. Persons transferred for protective purposes were entrusted into the care of a family member as soon as possible and under no circumstances did they remain in transfer centres for more than 24 hours; they were not required to appear before a judge.

57. The military and police forces were, of course, prohibited from making arbitrary arrests. Allegations of any such actions would be looked into on a case-by-case basis.

58. The National Protection Unit and the national police force were both involved in the case of Claudia Julieta Duque. She had agreed that the officials who were charged with protecting her needed to know where she lived.

59. **A representative of Colombia** said that the Ministry of Defence was not currently conscripting young people into military service. Economic incentives were instead being offered to encourage young people to join the armed forces. The Social Service for Peace programme was the result of the Government’s efforts to transition away from the national military service model and introduce other national service options for young people. The Government respected the right to conscientious objection. The Interdisciplinary

Commission on Conscientious Objection remained in operation; in addition, 11 peoples and communities were exempt from compulsory military service.

60. **A representative of Colombia** said that persons who were carrying out their mandatory military service, rather than opting for the Social Service for Peace programme, were not sent to areas involved in the armed conflict. With respect to internal displacement and confinement, he was pleased to report that a ceasefire had come into effect with ELN just a few days ago. The Government had also announced the start of negotiations with the Estado Mayor Central Fuerzas Armadas Revolucionarias de Colombia - Ejército del Pueblo, the largest dissident group of the former FARC. The conditions attached to both of those processes would have a positive impact on the situation with respect to internal displacement, recruitment and sexual violence.

61. **A representative of Colombia** said that an arrest warrant issued for José Gonzalo Sánchez (alias “Gonzalito”), leader of the Clan del Golfo, had not yet been carried out. Representatives of the Attorney General’s Office had not returned to Tarazá thus far owing to the absence of security protocols in a region where that group had a very strong presence. A criminal complaint had been opened and an investigation had been launched concerning the army’s failure to provide protection to the public prosecutors and judge who had been detained by the Clan del Golfo as they travelled to Medellín.

62. The criminal investigation division was made up of two sections: a technical investigation body that reported solely to the Attorney General’s Office and a branch of the national police force.

63. In order to be able to hear more cases concerning violations of the rights of human rights defenders and secure more convictions in those cases, a number of judges had been appointed to deal solely with cases of that kind. There had also been a change in methodology under the current Government designed to focus on bringing to justice the persons who bore the greatest responsibility for the murders and assaults directed against human rights defenders. As such, more than 300 investigations were currently under way that were intended not only to bring perpetrators of human rights violations to justice but also to tackle the criminal organizations behind them by focusing on the persons who ordered the killings of human rights defenders, signatories of the peace agreement and members of the general population.

64. **A representative of Colombia** said that persons sentenced by the Special Jurisdiction for Peace needed to comply with a set of conditions in order to continue to enjoy the corresponding benefits. Compliance was monitored on an ongoing basis and, depending on the severity of any breach of those conditions, individuals could be expelled from the Special Jurisdiction for Peace and be required to resume serving the original sentence they had received under the conventional justice system. Persons testifying before the Special Jurisdiction for Peace who gave truthful accounts about the armed conflict but failed to acknowledge their responsibility for the events in question were required to stand trial under the conventional justice system and could be sentenced to up to 20 years in prison.

65. **A representative of Colombia** said that the Administrative Sector for Social Inclusion and Reconciliation had strengthened social investment to support the return of victims of forced displacement to their land and prevent the displacement of vulnerable populations. Additional economic resources had been funnelled to poorer areas, an initiative to introduce a basic income was under consideration, and steps were being taken to ensure the food security of families in vulnerable situations so that they would be able to remain in their home territories.

66. **Ms. Taylor Jay** (Colombia) said that the Government was determined to reduce inequality and promote human rights in all their manifestations. Despite the existence of forces working against that process, she was convinced that, through a combination of constructive dialogue, international cooperation and political will, it would be possible to build a society that was more just, inclusive and respectful of the rights of all people.

*The meeting rose at 1 p.m.*