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H.E. Ambassador José Antonio Ardila
Embassy of Colombia
3 Hans Crescent
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17 October 2019

Dear Ambassador,

It is with great concern that my colleagues in the British Parliament and I view the recent attack on the headquarters of a number of political parties in Bogota. On behalf of the Parliamentary Friends of Colombia (PFC), a cross-party group of more than sixty MPs in the British Parliament, I condemn the attack in the strongest possible terms. As penholder at the UN to the Colombian peace process, the United Kingdom remains deeply committed to the construction of a stable and lasting peace in the country.

Early in the morning of Friday 11 October, the shared offices of the Colombian Communist Party (PCC) and the Patriotic Union (UP) were attacked with gunfire and an explosive device. The attack comes amid an alarming escalation of violence ahead of the forthcoming elections on 27 October, with at least seven candidates murdered and forty others threatened.

These parties targeted last Friday have suffered appalling repression, both historically and in the present day. The Special Jurisdiction for Peace is investigating the murders of more than 3,000 UP supporters between 1984 and 2002, many of whom were killed by paramilitary death squads.

We also note that the office of the Common Alternative Revolutionary Force (FARC) was vandalised and a threatening note was left at its premises. This comes shortly after the release of the latest report by the UN Verification Mission, dated 1 October 2019, which said that 147 FARC members have been murdered since the peace agreement was signed. A subsequent UN article raised this figure to 151.

Although the 2016 peace agreement makes provisions for political participation, certain groups in Colombia still face aggression for attempting to exercise the democratic right to participate freely in elections. This clearly undermines the peace agreement by attacking one of its core principles.

Parliamentary Friends of Colombia

c/o Jo Stevens MP, House of Commons, London, SW1A 0AA

Chair: Jo Stevens MP

Vice-Chairs: Ian Lavery MP, Lord John Monks and Richard Howitt

Members: Lord Alderdice, Rushanara Ali MP, Rosena Allin-Khan MP, Jon Ashworth MP, Clive Betts MP, Paul Blomfield MP, Chris Bryant MP, Richard Burgon MP, Richard Burden MP, Daniel Carden MP, Vernon Coaker MP, Lord Collins, Rt Hon Jeremy Corbyn MP, Neil Coyle MP, Sir David Crausby MP, Jon Cruddas MP, John Cryer MP, Nic Dakin MP, Gloria De Piero MP, Rt Hon Sir Jeffrey Donaldson MP, Jack Dromey MP, Clive Efford MP, Paul Farrelly MP, Vicky Foxcroft MP, Mike Gapes MP, Helen Goodman MP, Patrick Grady MP, Andrew Gwynne MP, Louise Haigh MP, Fabian Hamilton MP, John Healey MP, Sir Mark Hendrick MP, Stephen Hepburn MP, Sharon Hodgson MP, Kelvin Hopkins MP, Rt Hon George Howarth MP, Lindsay Hoyle MP, Lord Judd, Ian Lavery MP, Baroness Lister, Tony Lloyd MP, Caroline Lucas MP, Kerry McCarthy MP, Siobhan McDonagh MP, Rt Hon John McDonnell MP, Catherine McKinnell MP, Angus McNeil MP, Chris Matheson MP, Rachael Maskell MP, Ian Mearns MP, Lord Monks, Madeleine Moon MP, Grahame Morris MP, Lisa Nandy MP, Lord Martin O'Neill, Stephanie Peacock MP, Matt Pennycook MP, Yasmin Qureshi MP, Ellie Reeves MP, Rachel Reeves MP, Jim Shannon MP, Dennis Skinner MP, Andrew Slaughter MP, Baroness Angela Smith, Owen Smith MP, Lord Sawyer, Chris Stephens MP, Jo Stevens MP, Gary Streeter MP, Gareth Thomas MP, Emily Thornberry MP, Chuka Umunna MP, Valerie Vaz MP, Charles Walker MP, Baroness Diane Warwick, Rt Hon Tom Watson MP, Lord Watts, Catherine West MP, Baroness Janet Whitaker, Rt Hon Dame Rosie Winterton MP and Phil Wilson MP.



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In August 2018, I visited Colombia on a delegation of the Justice for Colombia Peace Monitor and met with FARC politicians in their offices targeted last week, as well as with UP politician Aida Avella separately. In a statement, our delegation said it was 'convinced of the [FARC]'s commitment to the implementation of the Peace Agreement'. The UN Mission's latest report re-emphasises the FARC's adherence to the peace deal, while the UP and the PCC have repeatedly stated their support for full implementation of the agreement.

PFC welcomes your government's stated commitment to the peace process and the positive steps it has taken, such as the extension of the ETCR zones for former combatants. However, we remain deeply concerned at human rights violations in the country, with hundreds of social activists killed since the agreement was signed, and the slow implementation of important elements of the peace agreement.

We would welcome an update on the progress authorities have made in the investigation into the attacks on the party offices in Bogota. In addition, we respectfully ask whether any extra security measures will be implemented in the face of the clear risks faced by these parties.

Yours sincerely,

Jo Stevens MP
Chair, Parliamentary Friends of Colombia

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