

Statement of ICC Prosecutor, Fatou Bensouda, on the conclusion of the peace negotiations between the Government of Colombia and the Revolutionary Armed Forces of Colombia – People's Army

The announcement on 24 August 2016 of the conclusion of the peace negotiations between the Government of Colombia and the Revolutionary Armed Forces of Colombia – People's Army ("FARC-EP") is undoubtedly a historic achievement for Colombia and its people, whose lives have been deeply affected by the 52-year-long armed conflict. I welcome the announcement of the final peace agreement as a critical step toward ending this protracted conflict during which numerous atrocities were allegedly committed by all parties. This unique opportunity for peace marks the beginning of a long-term process that will require a determined effort in the course of its implementation. I share the hope that this peace agreement will provide a basis for building lasting peace in Colombia. The people of Colombia deserve nothing less.

The paramount importance of genuine accountability – which by definition includes effective punishment – in nurturing a sustainable peace cannot be overstated. As a State Party to the Rome Statute of the International Criminal Court, Colombia has recognised that grave crimes threaten the peace, security and well-being of the world and stated its determination to put an end to impunity for the perpetrators and thus contribute to the prevention of such crimes. I note, with satisfaction, that the final text of the peace agreement excludes amnesties and pardons for crimes against humanity and war crimes under the Rome Statute.

The peace agreement acknowledges the central place of victims in the process and their legitimate aspirations for justice. These aspirations must be fully addressed, including by ensuring that the perpetrators of serious crimes are genuinely brought to justice. The *Special Jurisdiction for Peace* to be established in Colombia is expected to perform this role and to focus on those most responsible for the most serious crimes committed during the armed conflict. The promise of such accountability must become a reality, if the people of Colombia are to reap the full dividends of peace.

I have supported Colombia's efforts to bring an end to the decades-long armed conflict in line with its obligations under the Rome Statute since the beginning of the negotiations. I will continue to do so during the implementation phase in the same spirit.

The ends of sustainable peace are intrinsically linked to justice being done and seen to be done. As Colombia opens a new chapter in its history towards the promise of peace, my Office will continue to support those efforts in accordance with its mandate under the Rome Statute with independence, impartiality and objectivity.

