

Protocol on the role of the Catholic Church in the Monitoring and Verification Mechanism in the context of the Agreement on a temporary bilateral national ceasefire between the Government of the Republic of Colombia and the Ejército de Liberación Nacional (ELN)

Pursuant to the Agreement on a temporary bilateral national ceasefire between the Government of the Republic of Colombia and the Ejército de Liberación Nacional (ELN), signed on 9 June 2023, the present Protocol sets out the role of the Catholic Church of Colombia and the procedures for the support it shall provide to the Monitoring and Verification Mechanism.

1. Role of the Church in the Monitoring and Verification Mechanism

1.1. As part of its pastoral mission in the quest for peace and reconciliation and in service to the communities that are clamouring for an improvement in their humanitarian situation, the Catholic Church has agreed to participate in the Monitoring and Verification Mechanism, which also includes the Government of Colombia, ELN and the United Nations Verification Mission in Colombia. The role and mandate of the Monitoring and Verification Mechanism are established in the Protocol on the mandate of the Monitoring and Verification Mechanism for the temporary bilateral national ceasefire between the Government of Colombia and ELN.

1.2. As part of its monitoring support role, the Catholic Church shall inform the Monitoring and Verification Mechanism of any situations that arise and of which it becomes aware. The Church shall not evaluate, verify or categorize incidents, nor shall it issue technical opinions, since those tasks fall outside its mission and its members do not have the relevant technical expertise.

1.3. The Church shall assist the members of the Monitoring and Verification Mechanism carrying out the verification tasks that are agreed on by the parties. It shall provide such assistance as part of its pastoral work and for the benefit of the community, as the purpose of the Agreement is to improve the humanitarian situation.

In its participation, the Church shall aim to contribute to the implementation of the Agreement on a temporary bilateral national ceasefire and its Protocols, in accordance with the temporal and territorial conditions governing ecclesiastical jurisdictions, and always in accordance with its doctrine of peace. The Church shall remain impartial and keep the facts and information it receives and/or transmits to the Monitoring and Verification Mechanism strictly confidential.

2. Establishment of levels of ecclesial support for the national, regional and local bodies

2.1. In the national body:

The delegation of the Episcopal Conference of Colombia or its substitute, in order to support the peace talks panel and its processes, shall represent the Church component of the Monitoring and Verification Mechanism and shall be involved in the process of supporting the Monitoring and Verification Mechanism. The component shall have decision-making power over situations relevant to the Church that are not contemplated in the present Protocol.

2.2. In the regional and local bodies:

The Episcopal Conference of Colombia shall liaise with the bishops of the ecclesiastical jurisdictions in order to ensure that they participate directly, or through

their delegates, in the regional and local bodies in which the Monitoring and Verification Mechanism is expected to be present.

Similarly, the bishops shall organize the Church teams they deem appropriate for their support mission.

3. Role of the Church in supporting the Monitoring and Verification Mechanism

The Church shall have the authority to:

3.1. Participate in the meetings and activities of the Monitoring and Verification Mechanism that are considered necessary for compliance with the temporary bilateral national ceasefire.

3.2. Gather information from communities on the implementation of the Agreement on a temporary bilateral national ceasefire and its Protocols, as well as on regional and local dynamics, and share such information with the Monitoring and Verification Mechanism independently or as part of formal monitoring teams. The Church shall maintain the confidentiality of the information and protect its sources of information.

3.3. Help to prevent incidents and protect the population by sharing information on potential or imminent incidents.

3.4. Coordinate the support provided by the regional and local bodies in the implementation of the temporary bilateral national ceasefire.

3.5. Provide training on the content of the Agreement on a temporary bilateral national ceasefire and its Protocols, the functioning of the Monitoring and Verification Mechanism and the mechanisms for safely reporting information. The Church can help to inform and raise the awareness of communities.

3.6. Act as liaison between communities and the Monitoring and Verification Mechanism.

3.7. The Episcopal Conference of Colombia, together with the United Nations Verification Mission in Colombia, shall maintain dialogue with the ELN communications liaisons and representatives of the Government of Colombia in the regional and local bodies with a view to providing the Monitoring and Verification Mechanism with the necessary information to avoid incidents, in accordance with the Agreement on a temporary bilateral national ceasefire and its Protocols.

3.8. As part of the Monitoring and Verification Mechanism, the Episcopal Conference of Colombia shall coordinate with the social monitoring network in the performance of its duties. In addition, it shall coordinate with the agreed-upon humanitarian protection mechanisms at the local level.

Havana, Cuba, 13 July 2023.

Delegation of the Government of the
Republic of Colombia

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Head of delegation

(Signed) Iván Danilo Rueda Rodríguez
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As observers for the Armed Forces:

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(Signed) Maj. Gen. Hugo Alejandro
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As witnesses and depositaries:

Guarantor countries

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