



19 March 2020

Esteemed members of Movimiento Defendamos la Paz,

I would like to express my appreciation for your letters of 15 January and 25 February 2020, in which you invited me to visit Colombia in response to serious concerns relevant to my mandate. The concerns you describe include violence against social leaders, human rights defenders, members of indigenous and Afro-Colombian communities, as well as against former combatants in process of reintegration.

While we must all celebrate the positive steps taken by Colombia in ending a protracted conflict and in building the foundations of a future in peace, these concerns are very serious and require all possible attention by government authorities. Besides the persistence in the levels of violence documented by the United Nations and by other actors in the country, including *Defendamos la Paz*, I am also concerned at the reported increase of polarizing rhetoric and use of stigmatized language, which could constitute a further risk to vulnerable populations. In this light, I consider it essential for my Office to contribute to any work or mechanisms that could contribute to ensure the protection of populations at risk of further violence, including atrocity crimes.

I am pleased to inform you that I have initiated consultations aimed at engaging both government authorities and community leaders on steps that could be taken to prevent future crimes including, if possible, through a visit to the country. I am particularly interested in learning about challenges and opportunities connected to the work of existing early warning arrangements as well as of Special Jurisdiction for Peace institutions and broader transitional justice initiatives.

I look forward to further discussing these matters with you and I thank you once again for your communication and support to my mandate.

Best regards,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'A. Dieng'.

Adama Dieng  
Special Adviser of the Secretary-General  
on the Prevention of Genocide

Members  
Movimiento Defendamos la Paz  
Colombia

