

Ms. Mejía Vélez (Colombia) (*spoke in Spanish*):

I offer my condolences and those of my Government to the people of Germany, Turkey and Russia for yesterday's terrorist attacks. There is no justification for terrorism.

This debate and resolution 2331 (2016), adopted this morning, as Ms. Nadia Murad Basee Taha reminded us in her moving briefing, takes place 12 months after the Security Council's first debate on this item (see S/PV.7585), convened by the United States. The holding of this meeting reflects the importance that the international community attaches to the issue, but it also lays bare the tremendous challenges we still face. As obvious as it may sound, human trafficking is a crime, tragic and brutal in its disproportionate effects on the most vulnerable: women and girls, migrants, refugees and internally displaced persons. If any conclusion can be reached today, it is that, as the Secretary-General said, prevention must be one of our priorities.

Preventive strategies, such as actions to prevent terrorism and violent extremism, cannot be developed in isolation. We are facing a phenomenon that requires joint, collaborative responses based on international cooperation, with full respect for human rights and in the framework of agreements on the protection of civilians, and must be supported by civil society.

With a long internal conflict like ours, we in Colombia have understood that women and girls play a fundamental and proactive role in the prevention and resolution of conflicts, as well as in building stable and lasting peace. That is why we must ensure their rights in a safe and supportive environment. In the peace agreement that is starting to be implemented, with the support of the Security Council, guaranteeing the rights of women and girls has become a common purpose in the work of all the institutions that have been collaborating and incorporating a gender perspective into their various programmes. Legislation, particularly law No. 1719 of 2014, condemns and specifically addresses the crime of human trafficking committed during armed conflict.

In 2016, the Secretary-General, in his report on conflict-related sexual violence (S/2016/361), underscored that, of all peace processes referred to in the report, only Colombia has systematically addressed gender issues, pursuant to resolution 1325 (2000) and resolution 1820 (2008). That is especially true regarding reparations for suffering, particularly providing for compensation and restitution, but also with regard to ensuring non-recidivism and to preventive measures, notably by creating and promoting a culture free of all forms of violence and discrimination, in keeping with international obligations.

Colombia is facing an enormous challenge, but it will continue to make strides towards our common purpose.

