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UN Human Rights Council
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Item 2
Annual report of the United Nations High Commissioner for
Human Rights and reports of the Office of the High
Commissioner and the Secretary-General

General Debate

Madam President,

The government of President Santos has made a number of important commitments to improving respect for human rights in Colombia.

There have been, however, few tangible improvements in the overall human rights situation

Guerrilla groups, paramilitaries and the security forces continue to be responsible for crimes under international law. Those particularly affected include Indigenous Peoples, Afro-descendent and peasant farmer communities, human rights defenders and trade unionists.

The government must implement effective measures to dismantle paramilitary groups and to break their links with some sectors of the security forces and powerful economic and political groups. It must also put an end to the violations, still being committed by the security forces.

All guerrilla groups must immediately end all forms of kidnapping and hostage-taking, as well as to all other human rights abuses. The recent announcement by the FARC that it will stop kidnapping for ransom is a positive, but insufficient, first step.

Although implementation of the *Victims and Land Restitution Law* is undeniably a sign of progress, many victims are still excluded from its provisions. Amnesty International is concerned that the lack of effective security measures will lead to further killings of persons campaigning for land restitution and those seeking to return to their land.

Despite some progress in a number of emblematic investigations, most perpetrators of human rights abuses, especially those implicated in conflict-related sexual crimes, continue to evade justice. Ongoing threats against and killings of persons participating in investigations highlight how impunity continues to be a cause and a consequence of serious human rights abuses.

Continued efforts by the government to extend the military justice system's role in investigating and prosecuting human rights violations implicating the security forces could, if successful, represent a serious setback in efforts to combat impunity.

We urge the Colombian government to pursue more vigorously its expressed commitment to put an end to impunity.

Thank you Madam President.