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United Nations Verification Mission in Colombia

Report of the Secretary-General

I. Introduction

1. The present report is submitted pursuant to Security Council resolution [2754 \(2024\)](#), by which the Council extended the mandate of the United Nations Verification Mission in Colombia, and resolution [2366 \(2017\)](#), in which the Council requested the Secretary-General to report on the implementation of the mandate of the Mission every 90 days. The report covers the period from 27 September to 26 December 2024.

II. Major developments

2. The reporting period was marked by activities commemorating the eighth anniversary of the signing of the Final Agreement for Ending the Conflict and Building a Stable and Lasting Peace, which ended over five decades of conflict between the Government and the former Fuerzas Armadas Revolucionarias de Colombia-Ejército del Pueblo (FARC-EP). A high-profile event on 21 November in Bogotá was attended by the President of Colombia, Gustavo Petro, former FARC-EP representatives, national authorities, civil society organizations and representatives of the international community. The Under-Secretary-General for Political and Peacebuilding Affairs, Rosemary A. DiCarlo, represented the Secretary-General.

3. The parties renewed their commitment to the Final Agreement while expressing concerns about its state of implementation. In his statement, President Petro underscored that the comprehensive rural reform will remain a priority for his Government. The President acknowledged that limited progress had been made on this chapter since the signing of the Final Agreement and called for Congress to adopt legislation to speed up land distribution. He set a goal of adjudicating 600,000 hectares to peasants, rural women and victims by the end of 2025, moving towards the overall target set out in the Final Agreement of providing 3 million hectares of land established under the Final Agreement. Comunes (former FARC-EP) political party leader, Rodrigo Londoño, representing the other signatory Party, stated that the Final Agreement constituted a road map for building sustainable peace and had set an international standard. He deplored, however, the number of former FARC-EP combatants killed since the adoption of the Final Agreement and that thousands had been internally displaced. The Under-Secretary-General said the world shared Colombia's hope and faith in peace. She commended the parties and civil society for their commitment, she paid homage to victims, slain former combatants and women



peacebuilders and she echoed the call by the Secretary-General for Colombians to persevere through the challenges.

4. On 22 November, for the first time since the signing of the Final Agreement, the parties announced a revision of the Framework Plan for Implementation of the Final Agreement, with updated indicators and time frames for its implementation. The revision agreement was reached within the Commission for the Follow-Up, Promotion and Verification of the Implementation of the Final Agreement. The Framework Plan's system of 80 indicators for assessing progress and for planning was adjusted to current realities and to focus on results and impact. The parties also discussed possible extensions within the existing implementation time frame, which would be subject to approval by Congress.

5. In October, the Minister of the Interior, Juan Fernando Cristo, officially presented the rapid response plan to accelerate the implementation of the Final Agreement, announced by President Petro and Foreign Minister Luis Gilberto Murillo during the meeting of the Security Council on Colombia in July. The plan contains six points: the establishment of pacts between national and local authorities to accelerate the implementation of the development programmes with a territorial focus; focus on the comprehensive rural reform; a legislative agenda to speed up the process; strengthening of the Comprehensive Security System for the Exercise of Politics; implementation of provisions of the Final Agreement aimed at eliminating violence from political life; and the attribution of roles and responsibilities regarding the implementation of the rapid response plan.

6. Efforts by Colombia to consolidate peace over the years has continued to serve as a valuable source of knowledge and experience in peacebuilding and conflict resolution, with the country hosting various events of international significance. Events included the sixteenth meeting of the Conference of the Parties to the Convention on Biological Diversity, held in Cali, Colombia, from 21 October to 1 November, with the Government of Colombia placing the event under the theme of making "Peace with nature". The Secretary-General, who participated in the meeting from 28 to 30 October, recognized the efforts by the Government to accelerate the implementation of the Final Agreement and acknowledged the continued and firm commitment of the former FARC-EP combatants. In November, the Special Representative of the Secretary-General on Sexual Violence in Conflict, Pramila Patten, attended the first Global Ministerial Conference on Ending Violence Against Children, which was held in Bogotá. The Special Representative emphasized the urgent need for access to justice for survivors of conflict-related sexual violence and the importance of prevention, protection and guarantees of non-repetition. In December, the Working Group on Children and Armed Conflict, established pursuant to resolution [1612 \(2005\)](#) visited the country to follow up on its recommendations and to gain first-hand knowledge of the situation regarding children and armed conflict.

7. On 30 November, Colombia launched its first national action plan on women and peace and security, developed through broad societal consultations and supported by the United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women (UN-Women), the Verification Mission, and other United Nations agencies, funds and programmes. The plan's 10-year strategic framework defines thematic areas, targeted outcomes and specific actions to be led by government entities. Key themes include access to justice, gender-based violence prevention and assistance for displaced women and refugees with mainstreamed safeguards for Indigenous and Afro-descendant women. The Ministries of Foreign Affairs, Equality, Defence and of the Interior and the Unit for Implementation of the Final Agreement have been tasked with coordinating the implementation and monitoring the plan, producing annual

progress reports and holding biannual consultations with women's organizations. Adequate funding and strong local ownership will be key to the plan's implementation.

8. The Government continued to pursue simultaneous dialogue processes with nine armed actors as a complementary strategy to its efforts to implement the Final Agreement. Parallel peace talks were held with groups that the Government deemed as political in nature: the Ejército de Liberación Nacional (ELN); factions of the group known as the Estado Mayor Central Fuerzas Armadas Revolucionarias de Colombia-Ejército del Pueblo (EMC FARC-EP) that continue in the dialogue process and are now self-identifying as Estado Mayor de los Bloques y Frentes (EMBF); the group known as the Segunda Marquetalia, which split during the current reporting period, resulting in ongoing negotiations with a faction that now identifies as Coordinadora Nacional Ejército Bolivariano (CNEB); and the Comuneros del Sur in Nariño Department. Talks with criminal organizations – “socio-legal dialogues” aimed at advancing their possible submission to justice – continued in the cities of Buenaventura, Medellín and Quibdó. The Government took initial confidence-building steps with the Autodefensas Gaitanistas de Colombia (AGC) – also known as the Clan del Golfo – and with the Autodefensas Conquistadoras de la Sierra Nevada (ACSN).

9. During the reporting period, the Government and ELN held two extraordinary meetings in Caracas, following a six-month hiatus (see para. 72). Armed clashes between the parties continued in the absence of a ceasefire, resulting in multiple casualties among the parties and affecting rural communities, particularly in the Departments of Antioquia, Arauca, Chocó and Norte de Santander (see para. 73). The parties have agreed to meet again in January 2025 to address their divergences and seek ways to renew negotiations on a strengthened ceasefire agreement and to continue the participation process (see para. 72).

10. Despite ongoing peace efforts, disputes between armed groups and clashes with public security forces continued in several regions, following the suspension or non-renewal of ceasefire agreements. These conflicts were concentrated in regions historically affected by violence, such as Antioquia, Arauca, southern Bolívar, Caquetá, Cauca, Chocó, Meta, Nariño, Norte de Santander, Putumayo and Valle del Cauca.

11. In Departments with limited State presence and illegal economies, conflict dynamics varied. In some of the country's north-western regions, there was a notable expansion of AGC. The south-east region was mostly affected by disputes between EMBF and the factions of EMC that opted to leave the peace table, bringing to an end the ceasefire agreement with the Government; and the disputes between EMBF and CNEB, in particular in Putumayo. Most of the clashes between EMC and public security forces took place in the south-west region of the country. Armed clashes continued between public security forces and ELN in Arauca and Norte de Santander Departments, following the expiration of the ceasefire agreement on 3 August (see para. 73). There has been an increase in the recruitment of children and the use of antipersonnel mines. Conflicts have further confined and displaced civilians, in particular in the north and north-eastern regions of Antioquia. Rural communities and civil society organizations have reiterated calls for greater action by the State to address the situation.

III. Main activities and priorities

Verification of the implementation of the Final Agreement

12. The implementation of the Final Agreement advanced more in rural reform than in the ethnic chapter and gender provisions. The Government made an intensive effort to boost land adjudication and formalization as the year came to an end. However, overall progress in this respect continued to fall short of the goals in the Final Agreement that aim to overcome long-standing inequalities. With regards to reintegration, the active involvement of some 12,000 former combatants in programmes coordinated by the Agency for Reintegration and Normalization constitutes a notable success in the eight years since the signing of the Final Agreement. However, measures to make their transition into civilian life more sustainable, such as the provision of land, housing and livelihoods, have made limited headway.

13. On security guarantees, despite continued threats and attacks, a downward trend in the number of killings of former FARC-EP combatants and of social leaders was maintained during the reporting period (see para. 41). Nevertheless, insecurity remained a concern, including in Putumayo and Norte de Santander Departments, where two territorial areas for training and reintegration experienced deteriorating security due to the presence of armed groups (see para. 77). There were reports of confinement and displacement of civilians in different parts of the country (see para. 39), half of these reports involved Indigenous and Afro-Colombian communities. Meanwhile, the strategy to accelerate the implementation of the public policy to dismantle illegal armed groups and criminal organizations moved forward with the design of local-level plans in two pilot regions (see para. 37).

14. As for transitional justice matters, the Special Jurisdiction for Peace continued to make progress, including indictments against individuals deemed most responsible for grave crimes and their acknowledgement of responsibility. Expectations mounted for the issuance of the first restorative sentences, while the Verification Mission continued to encourage the Government to move forward with establishing the conditions required for their implementation. However, controversy was reignited over matters of legal certainty after statements to the media from the Special Jurisdiction for Peace regarding the possibility to send cases under its purview back to the ordinary justice system, should the time at its disposal to finalize investigations be insufficient. This would entail imposing prison rather restorative sentences. Former FARC-EP representatives and other actors voiced their criticism and highlighted the negative consequences this would have for individuals under the Special Jurisdiction for Peace and the guarantees of the peace process. The Special Jurisdiction for Peace has since reassured that it will guarantee legal certainty to those under its authority who fulfil their obligations, and pointed out that progress within the established time frame requires efforts by the Special Jurisdiction for Peace and all actors involved.

15. While measures were taken to expedite the implementation of the Final Agreement, current fiscal restrictions and overall budgetary constraints anticipated for 2025 may hamper the implementation efforts.

Comprehensive rural reform

16. In 2024, the Government and key partners focused on accelerating the implementation of rural reform, enhancing institutional coordination and prioritizing target regions. This was evidenced by the high-level session of the National Agrarian Reform System in September and by the emphasis on rural reform in the Ministry of

the Interior's rapid response plan. However, measures benefiting peasants, rural women and victims are yet to materialize at the local level and the security situation remains an obstacle to progress on rural reform.

17. In November, the Mixed Commission for Peasant Affairs held a high-level session in Congress with the participation of President Petro, members of the Cabinet, and national and local peasant leaders. Amid a polarized context, the Ministers of the Interior and Agriculture engaged in negotiations to build consensus in Congress on the approval of the bill regulating the operational and procedural aspects of the recently established Agrarian Jurisdiction. The bill is now in its final discussion phase.

18. Inequitable land distribution is one of the root causes of the conflict. To address it, the Final Agreement foresees the provision and formalization of land for the benefit of peasants, rural women and victims. At eight years since the signing the Final Agreement, adjudication stands at 5.7 per cent of the 3-million-hectare goal of the Final Agreement. Formalization of land tenure has reached 43.8 per cent of the goal of 7 million hectares established in the Final Agreement. Adequate funding remains key for progress on both fronts.

19. The National Land Agency continued efforts to acquire more land for the Land Fund, mainly with purchases through the Special Assets Administration – the State entity managing confiscated, illegally-held assets – and the Victims' Reparation Fund created by the 2011 Law on Victims and Land Restitution. During the reporting period, 74,023 hectares were acquired, bringing the total to 205,494 in 2024. As at November, a total of 32,480 hectares of acquired land were handed over during the reporting period, bringing to 173,796 hectares the amount of land delivered since the signing of the Final Agreement. In a symbolic case, the National Land Agency handed over 8,400 hectares to victims in Córdoba Department, land previously owned by former paramilitary leaders. Progress remained short of the Government's 2024 target of 500,000 hectares, with 11.3 per cent being adjudicated in 2024.

20. Another key focus of rural reform is the provision of formal and definitive land tenure for smallholdings held by peasants without legal recognition. The Government formalized 55,108 hectares during the reporting period, bringing the total during the year to 591,263, reaching 60 per cent of its overall goal to formalize 1 million hectares in 2024. According to the National Land Agency, the total amount of land formalized under the current Administration reached 1,256,871 hectares (18 per cent), of the 7-million-hectares-goal set in the Final Agreement.

21. Under the current Administration, peasants have been prioritized as beneficiaries of land acquisition. To date, they have received 54 per cent of the adjudicated land (84,749 hectares). As for formalized land, only 25 per cent (244,279 hectares) of formalized land has been attributed to them. In November, a decree was issued establishing a long-awaited special land programme for rural women, foreseen as part of the Government's National Development Plan.

22. The Final Agreement also highlighted the importance of land restitution to victims of the conflict. A collective track was established earlier this year for cases of mass displacement. During the reporting period, 36,405 hectares were restituted or compensated to victims, bringing the 2024 total to 97,565 hectares. The Government and Congress began to explore instruments, including draft legislation, to expedite restitution for victims in cases with no competing claim from third parties – approximately 36.6 per cent of all claims.

23. As the rural reform also seeks to boost local economies and food production, incipient efforts were under way to combine land delivery with assistance for agricultural production. The Government is planning to complement these measures

with targeted public investments in regions with development programmes with a territorial focus and in prioritized “agrarian districts” benefiting from large-scale land adjudication, located mainly in the Caribbean and Magdalena Medio regions.

24. During the sixteenth meeting of the Conference of the Parties to the Convention on Biological Diversity, the Government showcased linkages between the rural reform’s environmental provisions, the role of peasants in sustainable land management and efforts for conflict prevention and peacebuilding. The National Land Agency also announced the establishment of four new peasant reserve zones in Antioquia, Tolima and Valle del Cauca Departments. In total, 18 peasant reserve zones have been established, 11 under the current Administration.

25. After completing the consultation and prioritization phase across the 16 development programmes with a territorial focus regions, the Agency for Territorial Renewal is designing a funding plan for strategic projects for peasants, rural women and ethnic communities. Grassroots consultations with those communities emphasized the importance of environmental conservation and food production. Many of these projects could receive funding through the territorial pacts to be established under the rapid response plan.

26. In 2024, the national plans for rural reform foreseen in the Final Agreement, that have so far been lagging in their implementation, saw some progress as instruments for reducing rural poverty. While the rural health plan was still pending adoption, there was progress on related policies in 2024, with \$222 million invested in actions benefiting rural populations, such as the establishment of over 3,000 basic health teams in 360 prioritized municipalities, including nearly all of the development programmes with a territorial focus municipalities. Similarly, the “right to food” plan received an allocation of \$80 million by the Ministry of Equality to address food insecurity.

Reintegration of former combatants of the Fuerzas Armadas Revolucionarias de Colombia-Ejército del Pueblo

27. Progress continued in the implementation of the Comprehensive Reintegration Programme – agreed to by the parties in the National Reintegration Council. Approximately 99 per cent of the 11,187 former combatants (27 per cent women) registered with the Agency for Reintegration and Normalization have enrolled in the Programme. More work is needed to operationalize the National Reintegration System, a Government-led coordination mechanism established in July, encompassing 39 State entities. Former combatants expressed concerns during the latest National Reintegration Council, held in December, over a potentially significant reduction in the 2025 budget for the Agency. They fear that the cut would severely impact the implementation of key components of the Programme, the consolidation of territorial areas for training and reintegration, and compromise the presence of the Agency at the regional and local levels.

28. The Agency for Reintegration and Normalization was yet to issue a resolution providing guidance on how to obtain formal recognition as a special collective reintegration area to groups of former combatants living collectively outside territorial areas for training and reintegration, approximately 3,000 in all. The resolution is essential to ensure and expand the provision of State-sponsored support and services for former combatants, regardless of their location.

29. During the sixteenth meeting of the Conference of the Parties to the Convention on Biological Diversity, former combatants showcased their involvement in environmental conservation. They presented, for example, a project to preserve key ecological regions, including 84,000 hectares in the Amazon, through a native seed and plant nursery network established with local communities.

30. Former combatants have raised concerns over the slow pace of land acquisition, with 611 requests still under consideration by the National Land Agency. The target of acquiring 100 plots in 2024, set during a National Reintegration Council session held in September, proved difficult to meet owing to technical and operational challenges. In response, the National Land Agency and the Agency for Reintegration and Normalization agreed on a contingency plan to secure at least 10 new plots by year-end. As part of this effort, a plot of 1,350 hectares was purchased in Huila Department, for the benefit of four former combatants' cooperatives. Following the purchase of a plot in Yalí for the relocation of the territorial area for training and reintegration of Remedios, Antioquia Department, land ownership has been formalized for a total of 14 of the 24 territorial areas for training and reintegration. To date, approximately 32 former combatants' cooperatives located outside territorial areas for training and reintegration have received 48 plots for productive purposes.

31. According to the Agency for Reintegration and Normalization, only 1,938 former combatants currently report owning the house they reside in, underscoring the need to expand access to housing subsidies and to develop pathways to home ownership. Regarding permanent housing within territorial areas for training and reintegration, the Ministry of Housing has so far built 118 houses in Cauca Department and 34 in Caquetá Department. Procedural delays impacting construction persisted in territorial areas for training and reintegration in Guaviare and Meta Departments. As for former combatants who have chosen to live outside territorial areas for training and reintegration (10,372), some solutions were found at the territorial level with, for example, the Office of the Governor of Antioquia providing 12 houses in the municipality of Ituango. At the national level, the Ministry of Housing and the National Land Agency agreed to include former combatants as potential beneficiaries of rural housing subsidies to be provided under the rural reform. The Ministry has also renewed its commitment to ease housing access in urban areas and to enable self-built housing.

32. Making productive projects more sustainable and expanding job opportunities are essential for economic reintegration. As at November, approximately 80 per cent of accredited former combatants (including 2,844 women) were engaged in over 6,000 individual and collective projects. Nearly two years after the adoption of the Agency for Reintegration and Normalization sustainability strategy for collective productive projects, 93 initiatives (16 led by women) have applied to receive technical assistance under its auspices. According to the Agency, 3,076 former combatants (857 women) secured formal employment in 2024. However, barriers such as limited work experience, social stigma and gender bias persist. A strategy developed by the National Reintegration Council in 2023 to foster access to and retention in the labour market for former combatants has yet to be implemented.

33. Eight years into the social reintegration process, 5,505 former combatants (1,937 women) have graduated from secondary schools and 25 (16 women) from higher education institutions. While flexible rural education models have proven a success, they have faced implementation delays and security risks. The role of the Ministry of Education is key to ensure progress.

34. Within the framework of the community-based reintegration strategy launched in 2023, former combatants and communities developed 66 joint initiatives, including a road-paving project in Caquetá Department that improved community mobility. Such activities help build trust among former combatants, communities, victims and authorities.

35. Territorial reintegration working groups, especially at the departmental level, increased their activity in 2024, furthering local ownership of the process. The groups

play an important advocacy and oversight role, helping to promote the implementation and funding of reintegration-related commitments in territorial development plans.

36. The Comunes party in Congress has focused on rural reform, environmental conservation and community development bills for conflict-affected areas. The party has supported peace implementation in various congressional commissions. As part of the Comprehensive Reintegration Programme, 253 former combatants (29 per cent women) were enrolled in political leadership schools during the reporting period.

Security guarantees

37. The public policy to dismantle illegal armed groups and criminal organizations moved forward through pilots in two regions – Magdalena Medio-southern Bolívar and northern Cauca – with a strategy combining simultaneous actions for investigating aggregated patterns of crime linked to illicit economies and prosecuting those involved, along with prevention, protection and social services for affected communities. Stakeholders have stressed the importance that this strategy be compatible with ongoing peace efforts and that it be provided with sustained inter-institutional engagement and coordination. In December, the territorial plan for the policy’s implementation was launched in northern Cauca.

38. In November, regulations governing the High-Level Unit of the Comprehensive Security System for the Exercise of Politics were approved, a necessary step forward, as the System was still lacking a decision-making body. The step is expected to contribute to better coordination and oversight of the implementation of provisions of security guarantees of the Final Agreement.

39. Between 27 September and 26 December, the Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs reported the displacement of 176,609 persons (128,459 people in individual events and 48,150 people in mass events) and the confinement of 138,795 persons across 17 departments and 77 municipalities, representing a 60 per cent increase in confinement and a 20 per cent decrease in mass displacements compared with the same period in 2023. Of the affected population, 57.5 per cent were ethnic peoples. The Pacific region and ethnic peoples were disproportionately affected by these events. The Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR) received 29 allegations of massacres (25 verified, 1 under verification and 3 inconclusive), compared with 18 during the previous reporting period.

40. Since 27 September, the Office of the Ombudsperson has issued two early warnings, identifying security risks in two Departments. The Intersectoral Commission for Rapid Response to Early Warnings convened in Quibdó, Chocó Department and in Santander de Quilichao, Cauca Department. Specific risks to women and children were highlighted, including threats, femicides, recruitment and displacement by illegal armed groups. The Intersectoral Commission underscored the urgent need to follow-up on the recommendations made by the Office of the Ombudsperson in its early warning system. Both entities agreed on geographical prioritization to strengthen the inter-institutional response, beginning with the Magdalena Medio region.

41. Since the signing of the Final Agreement, 441 former combatants have been killed (11 women, 59 Indigenous, 57 Afro-Colombians), 158 have been victims of attempted homicides (17 women), and 45 are deemed as missing (all men). Ten former FARC-EP members were killed during the reporting period, compared with eight killed during the previous reporting period. Six former combatants survived attempted homicides and three were reported as missing (all men) including a situation with involvement of public security forces in Chocó Department and one attempted femicide in Meta Department. There were 33 former combatants killed

during 2024, down from 48 in 2023. Arauca, Cauca, Guaviare and Meta Departments continued to be the most affected regions, with threats driving forced displacements.

42. Former FARC-EP combatants and their families residing in the territorial area for training and reintegration of Puerto Asís, Putumayo Department, faced an increase in threats, extortion and pressure from armed groups in the context of escalating violence in the region. The former combatants face mounting uncertainty about their ability to remain in the area. The situation in the territorial area for training and reintegration of Tibú, Norte de Santander Department, was also of concern, with reports of pressure from armed groups to dislodge the public security forces that protect 50 former FARC-EP members and their families. A change to the deployment of police security in the territorial area for training and reintegration in San Juan de Arama, Meta Department, generated disagreement between the authorities and former combatants, with the Mission seeking to assist in finding a suitable solution. These developments highlighted that sustainable reintegration in territorial areas for training and reintegration requires the financing and allocation of prevention and protection measures, including the maintenance of in situ security deployments. The decree to establish the comprehensive protection programme for former FARC-EP members is still pending adoption.

43. The strategic security and protection plan for former FARC-EP members, established under the Final Agreement, continued to be implemented through emergency procedures, with the evacuation of at least 29 former combatants from various high-risk areas. Progress was made with the implementation of emergency protection measures on 19 occasions by the Specialized Sub-Directorate of the National Protection Unit. However, the fact that 45 former combatants have been killed while awaiting protection measures since the signing of the Final Agreement, and that 14 were killed despite the protection measures in place, highlights the need for more effective solutions.

44. Sexual and gender-based violence against women, children and adolescents in reintegration areas remained a protection concern that needs to be addressed effectively. Three cases involving former combatants were reported in Antioquia and Meta Departments. In addition, the National Protection Unit has yet to develop an internal protocol for prevention and response to gender-based violence and discrimination. Since 2019, seven cases involving personnel from the National Protection Unit have been reported to the authorities. The Verification Mission continued to monitor the situation and support institutional response for the protection of victims and their access to justice.

45. Regarding violence against social leaders, OHCHR received reports of 37 alleged killings (21 verified, 6 under verification and 10 inconclusive) compared with 50 received during the previous reporting period. The attacks were mainly concentrated in Antioquia, Arauca and Cauca Departments. The victims were primarily leaders of Community Action Boards, including Indigenous and Afro-Colombian leaders, and peasants involved in the implementation of the Final Agreement. Since 2016, OHCHR has reported an increasing trend in homicides against leaders involved in environmental protection and land restitution. As at 26 December 2024, OHCHR had documented 21 homicides, with 6 additional cases under verification, mostly in the Pacific region and targeting ethnic peoples.

46. While the public policy on guarantees – a key tool to ensure the protection of social leaders and human rights defenders – was yet to be launched, progress was made in implementing the Comprehensive Programme for Safeguards for Women Leaders and Human Rights Defenders, prioritizing actions in 14 Departments. Additional funding will be required to sustain and expand these efforts.

47. The Special Investigation Unit of the Office of the Attorney General has implemented a new investigative model, aimed at identifying possible connections between attacks against former combatants and attacks against human rights defenders. The new model is expected to increase the prosecution of the main instigators of crimes, facilitate the dismantling of criminal structures and reduce high levels of impunity. To date, 92 sentences have been issued out of a total of 564 cases currently under the Special Investigation Unit's purview, with only six sentences pertaining to the main instigators. During the reporting period, the Special Investigation Unit conducted investigations leading to 43 arrest warrants, two cases reaching trial and two sentences being issued.

Restorative sentences

48. The Special Jurisdiction for Peace, one of the most innovative mechanisms created by the Final Agreement, continued to work despite significant challenges: delivering justice while contributing to the consolidation of peace, upholding victims' rights while providing legal certainty to those who participated in the conflict and conducting comprehensive investigations while producing meaningful results, within the time frame established in the Final Agreement. To fulfil its historic role, the Special Jurisdiction for Peace will need to demonstrate continued flexibility and the will to strike a balance between these mutually reinforcing core principles to ensure that transitional justice effectively contributes to long-term peace

49. In the six years since the Special Jurisdiction for Peace started operating, 158 individuals deemed most responsible have been charged with war crimes and crimes against humanity (54 from the former FARC-EP, including all members of its last secretariat; 100 from the security forces, 3 civilians and 1 non-combatant State agent). All of the former FARC-EP members and over 80 per cent of the security forces members who have been indicted are on the path to receiving restorative sentences, having acknowledged their individual responsibility and provided contributions to establish the full truth regarding the respective crimes. In contrast, 14 individuals have not acknowledged their responsibility and have thus been referred to the adversarial process, including former top army commander, General Mario Montoya, for alleged crimes that took place while he served as a division commander in Antioquia Department.

50. In November, magistrates Alejandro Ramelli and José Miller Hormiga (a member of the Yanakuna and Totoroez Indigenous Peoples) were elected as President and Vice-President of the Special Jurisdiction for Peace, respectively, for a two-year term. Upon taking office, Judge Ramelli emphasized the importance of restorative sentences in terms of legitimacy, restoration of victims' rights and legal certainty. He also noted that it was the Government's responsibility to establish the conditions to implement restorative sentences. Meaningful progress will require more regular and strategic use of the coordination mechanism between the Special Jurisdiction for Peace and the Government devised for this purpose.

51. A significant development in the investigations during the reporting period was the indictment of six members of the former FARC-EP secretariat within Case 07 (on the recruitment and use of children in armed conflict). The six individuals were charged with the war crimes of recruitment and use of children and other associated crimes. They are subject to a deadline of 30 days to acknowledge their responsibility and provide observations. The same deadline applies for the submission of observations by the victims and the Office of the Inspector-General.

52. In November, the Special Jurisdiction for Peace held a public hearing of acknowledgement within Case 01 (on hostage-taking, other severe deprivations of liberty and concurrent crimes committed by FARC-EP). During the hearing, seven

members of the former FARC-EP Western Bloc acknowledged before victims and Colombian society their responsibility for kidnappings and other serious offences, including sexual violence by omission of responsibility to prevent such crimes, in four departments of the Pacific region of Colombia.

53. Over a year since the opening of Case 11 (on reproductive, sexual, gender-based and prejudice-based violence), the Special Jurisdiction for Peace announced the accreditation of 126 victims. Victims and the Office of the Inspector-General have raised concerns regarding delays in the process. Efforts by the Special Jurisdiction for Peace are under way to address the backlog of accreditations in this and other cases, which is essential to ensure victims' meaningful participation.

54. As investigations moved forward, so did cases at the trial stage. In Case 03 (on killings and forced disappearances presented as combat casualties by State agents), the Peace Tribunal of the Special Jurisdiction for Peace ratified the indictment against 12 members of the security forces deemed most responsible for grave crimes committed in the Caribbean region. These included 135 killings and enforced disappearances, mostly of members of Indigenous, Afro-Colombian and peasant communities. In its decision, the Peace Tribunal also included new indictments for torture and persecution.

55. The Peace Tribunal of the Special Jurisdiction for Peace is holding hearings and consultations with the Government and local authorities related to restorative sentences. The process included a hearing to assess the level of readiness for implementing restorative sentences in joint Cases 03 and 04 (regarding the Las Mercedes cemetery of Dabeiba, Antioquia Department). During the session, 28 entities at the national, regional and local levels provided briefings on their possible contribution to the implementation of projects by the eight indicted members of the security forces. In Case 01 and Case 03, specifically regarding crimes committed in the Caribbean Region and in Norte de Santander, the Peace Tribunal held hearings to update victims, inditees and authorities on the status of the Cases. Authorities were queried on preparations for the upcoming restorative sentences, for example, on security, living conditions and the sustainability of the restorative initiatives.

56. The Verification Mission is closely monitoring the advance of the cases and the state of preparations for the implementation of the sentences. In October, following exchanges with the Special Jurisdiction for Peace on the funding for the implementation of its decisions, the Government reaffirmed its commitment to providing the necessary resources and announced an initial allocation of approximately \$20 million for 2025. Ensuring the necessary funds is critical for the judicial activities of the Special Jurisdiction for Peace to continue, considering the expected issuance of the first sentences for Cases 01 and 03. Since their successful implementation depends on a Government-wide approach, continued engagement by the various entities, including Ministries of Defence and of Justice, the Agency for Reintegration and Normalization and the Unit for the Implementation of the Final Agreement, is needed to ensure that conditions are in place to swiftly translate judicial rulings into restorative actions that benefit the victims.

57. Legal certainty continued to be a concern for individuals under the Special Jurisdiction for Peace, including the swift resolution of the legal status of thousands of individuals not deemed as most responsible. For example, despite having been granted either amnesty or parole under the terms of the Final Agreement, some members of the former FARC-EP and the security forces have been detained by police and migration authorities in relation to actions that are under the purview of the Special Jurisdiction for Peace. Eight years after the signing of the Peace Agreement, such situations foster stigmatization and a sense of legal uncertainty and require a holistic approach by the State with a view to avoiding recurrence.

58. As far as the search for missing persons is concerned, the Unit for the Search for Persons Deemed as Missing, created by the Final Agreement as another component of the transitional justice system, achieved a significant result: the initial finding of remains in La Escombrera, a city dump in Medellín. The site is covered by Special Jurisdiction for Peace precautionary measures, by request from victims' and human rights organizations, who have maintained for over two decades that it was used in relation to enforced disappearances. According to the Unit, there are some 125,000 persons deemed as missing during the conflict.

Ethnic chapter

59. November marked the first anniversary of the Pact signed by the Government aimed to accelerate the implementation of the ethnic chapter, aimed at advancing sustainable development, empowerment, and justice for ethnic peoples, and where substantial progress is still required. In relation to the 23 commitments contained in the Pact, there was no significant progress. Reporting issues among entities with implementation responsibilities under the chapter persisted, notably linked to the lack of harmonization and other shortcomings in data collection and monitoring.

60. In October, a presidential decree was issued, in line with the ethnic chapter, to establish environmental governance guidelines applicable to Indigenous territories. The decree empowers Indigenous authorities to manage environmental conservation, protection and the use of resources in a manner compatible with ancestral practices.

61. Further to the updating of the framework plan for implementation of the Final Agreement, the High-level Forum with Ethnic Peoples expressed concern that the revised indicators did not contain an ethnic-sensitive approach and that indicators related to acquisition and formalization of land were eliminated. A similar observation was made by the representatives of ethnic peoples regarding the rapid response plan led by the Ministry of the Interior and the national plans for rural reform. They have called for greater inclusion of ethnic chapter priorities in the plan and other public policy instruments.

62. The Agency for Territorial Renewal reported that there were 58 Government-supported rural development projects under way aimed at benefiting ethnic communities between 2023 and 2024. The special consultation mechanisms – created to guarantee the effective participation of ethnic peoples in development programmes with a territorial focus – have pointed to the lack of ethnic-centric approaches in some of these projects.

63. The most significant challenge is the ongoing violence in ethnic territories and the lack of security guarantees. The situation caused further delays in implementing the ethnic chapter and aggravated conditions for ethnic authorities and communities. The lack of progress in demining activities in territories prioritized by the ethnic chapter highlights the need for the inclusion of these territories as part of the 2025–2030 mine action strategy of the Office of the Counsellor Commissioner for Peace.

64. The Ministry of the Interior completed the assessment phase to design a programme to strengthen mechanisms of self-protection of ethnic communities, an objective of the ethnic chapter. In Cauca Department, the special Indigenous jurisdiction and the Office of the Attorney General established a protocol of understanding to enable Indigenous authorities to activate an emergency search mechanism for missing individuals, including children recruited and used by armed groups.

65. Representatives of the Government and of Indigenous organizations, within the National Commission of Indigenous Territories, agreed to address challenges related to data on land formalized and acquired to date. The Commission expressed concern

regarding limited progress vis-à-vis objectives agreed upon for 2024. For their part, restitution judges and the Land Restitution Unit reviewed the state of affairs pertaining to Indigenous territories and found that minimal progress in restitution and formalization in five prioritized territories was delaying the return of conflict-affected communities. Of the five restitution courts specialized in land for ethnic territories created earlier this year, three have issued rulings in favour of ethnic communities in Cauca and Putumayo Departments. The situation in other territories, such as in Nariño Department, where there are 27 cases, is yet to be addressed.

66. Collective reparations for ethnic communities have advanced slowly in the five territories prioritized for restitution in the ethnic chapter, with limited progress in Chocó Department (two) and Nariño Department (one) and no progress in Córdoba Department (one) or Guaviare Department (one).

67. The Special Jurisdiction for Peace improved the participation of ethnic peoples in its proceedings by accrediting five Afro-Colombian Community Councils and one Afro-descendant organization under Case 09 (on crimes against ethnic peoples and their territories). As at 24 December, 1,051 victims of ethnic origin and 209 collectives had been accredited this year across Special Jurisdiction for Peace cases.

68. The lack of specific reintegration programmes for ethnic former combatants remained a significant concern. Despite an investment of approximately \$1 million in 2024, there was limited progress in implementing the special harmonization programme- intended to restore harmony in ethnic communities disrupted by the members who participated in the conflict.

Gender issues

69. Despite continued efforts to implement the Final Agreement's gender measures, led by the Unit for Implementation of the Final Agreement in collaboration with the Vice-Ministry for Women and other entities, the latest report by the Special Forum on Gender underscored the need for meaningful progress in reducing gender gaps. The Forum recommended increasing the implementation budget by 50 per cent, prioritizing gender-focused actions, and enhancing accountability and transparency through detailed demographic and budgetary reporting. Similarly to the ethnic chapter, there have been calls for strengthening of gender provisions of the Final Agreement through their adequate integration into the Ministry of the Interior's rapid response plan.

70. In October, during a session of the Government's High-level Forum on Gender, key Government entities signed an inter-institutional agreement to promote compliance with the Final Agreement's gender provisions. The Forum would benefit from more proactive leadership and technical assistance for entities with implementation responsibilities.

71. The Verification Mission updated its internal guidelines for all personnel on addressing cases of sexual and gender-based violence and launched a dissemination process with all regional offices aimed at strengthening capacities to provide support to victims and survivors of the conflict. This includes guidelines on referrals of victims to assistance by relevant national authorities, particularly those impacted by sexual and gender-based violence, in line with Security Council resolution [2754 \(2024\)](#).

IV. Developments related to the Ejército de Liberación Nacional

72. After a hiatus of almost six months without meetings, the Government and ELN held two extraordinary meetings in Caracas, from 1 to 7 November and from 19 to

25 November, to overcome the impasse in the dialogue process. At the end of the first meeting, the two delegations announced their intention to reach a common vision of peace within the framework of the Mexico Agreement signed in March 2023. They expressed their hope to strengthen the dialogue table as the only negotiation and decision-making body. At the second meeting, the parties continued to address ongoing differences and agreed to meet again in January 2025 to seek ways to return to the negotiating table, discuss the adoption of a strengthened ceasefire and to resume the societal participation process. These developments constitute significant progress after the tense public exchanges that had taken place between the parties in recent months. Both parties also mentioned their intention to work on a new model of negotiation to make as much progress as possible before the end of the term of the current administration.

73. The Verification Mission continued monitoring conflict dynamics following the expiration of the bilateral ceasefire between the Government and ELN. Incidents of confrontation between the parties increased significantly compared with the low number observed during the year-long ceasefire that expired on 3 August, with fatalities among members of ELN and public security forces increasing from 4 during the ceasefire, to at least 66 in its absence. These incidents took place mostly in the Departments of Antioquia, Arauca, Bolívar and Norte de Santander, specifically in the Catatumbo region.

74. Confrontations have adversely impacted the civilian population, with two instances of forced mass displacements and two of confinements – impacts that had been largely avoided during the ceasefire. The resurgent fighting has particularly affected rural and Indigenous communities, often caught in the crossfire. Local authorities and civil society organizations in affected areas have called on the parties to resume the peace talks and re-establish the ceasefire.

75. Attacks by ELN against public and energy infrastructure, reoccurred since the expiration of the ceasefire. The Investigation and Accusation Unit of the Special Jurisdiction for Peace released a report monitoring conflict dynamics, according to which the halting of attacks against oil pipelines during the ceasefire prevented the spilling of at least 3.1 million barrels of crude oil into the environment.

76. During the reporting period, clashes between the ELN and other armed groups continued, especially in Antioquia, Arauca, Bolívar and Chocó Departments. Between 9 and 16 November, ELN imposed a new enforced confinement in Chocó Department, allegedly in response to the expansion of AGC. On 13 November, ELN agreed to a humanitarian corridor in response to multiple calls, including from President Petro, various institutional actors and civil society.

V. Good offices

77. During the reporting period, the Special Representative of the Secretary-General for Colombia and Head of the United Nations Verification Mission in Colombia, Carlos Ruiz Massieu, continued to provide the good offices of the Secretary-General to foster the implementation of the Final Agreement and to further the political dialogues between the Government and various armed groups.

78. Overcoming lingering differences regarding the implementation of the transitional justice chapter of the Final Agreement is paramount. The Special Representative of the Secretary-General, along with Cuba and Norway, as guarantor countries, remained committed to fostering dialogue between the Special Jurisdiction for Peace and former FARC-EP representatives on matters including amnesties and legal security of former combatants.

79. The peace dialogues accompanied by the Verification Mission share common features: the aim to gradually implement agreements as they are reached, to reduce violence and focus on territorial transformations. This approach requires effective coordination with security policies, prompt and adequate mobilization of funding and other resources by the authorities, coordination between authorities at national and local level, and support from the international community.

80. The Government and EMBF held a sixth round of talks from 11 to 18 October. It ended with agreements on an action plan for territorial transformations, with emphasis on seven prioritized regions, as well as on public participation in the peace process. As a result, separate meetings were held with communities, local authorities and national Government institutions to define territorial transformations in three of the regions. The Government issued regulations extending the ceasefire with EMBF and formalizing the appointment of its delegates to the ceasefire verification mechanism for an additional six months until 15 April 2025. The parties maintained active communication channels, resulting in the prevention of 10 potential armed clashes between them and in the release of three persons held by the group.

81. In November, two armed structures in Nariño and Putumayo Departments, previously aligned with Segunda Marquetalia, announced their decision to separate from the group to pursue independent peace negotiations with the Government. Representatives of these two sizeable factions and the Government convened in Bogotá later that month to assess the status and continuation of the dialogue. During this session, the group formally declared its reorganization under the new name, Coordinadora Nacional Ejército Bolivariano. On 14 and 15 December, the Government and CNEB held a formal meeting in Tumaco, Nariño Department. The parties agreed on a pilot programme to replace 3,000 hectares of coca crops in Nariño and Putumayo Departments. They also decided to meet at the beginning of 2025 in Putumayo Department, with the participation of local communities, and in Bogotá.

82. Other Government-led dialogue initiatives, without United Nations involvement, were maintained. The Office of the Counsellor Commissioner for Peace continued to engage with the Comuneros del Sur in Nariño Department. Four rounds of meetings have been held to date, reportedly focusing on the laying-down of weapons by 30 per cent of the group's combatants by the end of the year, as well as on humanitarian demining and the search for missing persons.

83. Truces between the criminal structures that participate in conversations with the Government in the cities of Buenaventura, Medellín and Quibdó remained in force, contributing to reduced violence in these cities, according to official sources. With the expansion in Quibdó of AGC – not party to the truce – came a significant increase in violence in September, especially against women.

84. During the reporting period, three soldiers held by ELN for several months in Cesar and Norte de Santander Departments were released. The Verification Mission, the Catholic Church and the Office of the Ombudsperson facilitated communication and logistics for humanitarian reasons during the operations involved.

VI. Coordination with the United Nations country team

85. During the sixteenth meeting of the Conference of the Parties to the Convention on Biological Diversity, the country team and the Verification Mission assisted local and national authorities hosting the event and held several specialized side-events.

86. In October, the Steering Committee of the United Nations multi-partner trust fund for sustaining peace in Colombia, which includes Government representatives, agreed to ensure greater alignment between the trust fund's 2025 investment plan and

the Government's rapid response plan to accelerate the implementation of the Final Agreement. The Committee also approved resources to support initiatives, including on humanitarian demining, prevention of disappearances, productive projects of former combatants and assistance for victims and inditees within the framework of the Special Jurisdiction for Peace.

VII. Conduct and discipline

87. The Verification Mission continued implementing its strategy to prevent misconduct and sexual exploitation and abuse. Between 1 September and 30 November, there were two allegations of serious misconduct (fraud and prohibited conduct). No allegations of sexual abuse were reported.

VIII. Observations

88. The eighth anniversary of the Final Agreement is a significant milestone on the road to peace in Colombia. The ambitious nature of the Final Agreement is reflected in its holistic approach to achieving lasting peace by addressing the root causes of the conflict, a process which will require the continued commitment of all involved for years to come. On this important occasion, I wish to congratulate the Colombian people for their vision and determination in undertaking this historic endeavour.

89. That the vast majority of former combatants remain invested in their reintegration and committed to peace is indicative of the overall success of the implementation efforts, notwithstanding the many challenges encountered along the way and still present today. The comprehensive rural reform has moved forward significantly during the current administration. The recently devised rapid response plan of the Ministry of the Interior has the potential to accelerate implementation across the Final Agreement and could only be strengthened through the inclusion of provisions on gender and priorities of the ethnic chapter. I am particularly encouraged by the establishment, under the plan, of territorial pacts on development priorities between communities and local and national authorities. This could be a major step in expanding State presence and bringing peace dividends, including access to livelihoods, education, health and other dimensions of sustainable development, to historically marginalized regions, where persistent violence and insecurity remain the greatest obstacles to implementing the Final Agreement.

90. While the objectives of the Final Agreement are clear and methodologies are continuously being fine-tuned, it is fundamental that its implementation be made possible through adequate funding and efficiency of efforts. I urge all involved to effectively structure, prioritize and streamline the multiple processes under way, along with their coordination and decision-making channels. This applies to the comprehensive rural reform, to the reintegration and protection of former combatants, to the transformation of conflict-affected territories, and to other key aspects of the Final Agreement.

91. The Special Jurisdiction for Peace, as the judicial component of the transitional justice system established under the Final Agreement, continues to move forward with its fundamental mandate. Now that four Special Jurisdiction for Peace cases have reached the trial stage, it is increasingly urgent for the Government to take all necessary measures to establish conditions for the implementation of restorative sentences. The provision of legal certainty to individuals under the authority of the Special Jurisdiction for Peace is fundamental and it is equally important for the Special Jurisdiction for Peace to ensure that the core goals of delivering justice while contributing to the consolidation of peace are met expeditiously for the benefit of

victims awaiting closure following decades of suffering. I urge both the Government and the Special Jurisdiction for Peace to proceed as swiftly as possible and in a collaborative fashion, in accordance with their respective responsibilities and mandates.

92. I welcome the adoption of Colombia's first national action plan on Security Council resolution [1325 \(2000\)](#) on women and peace and security, a key achievement reached through the tireless resolve by women's organizations involved in its design. I trust the national action plan will complement the gender provisions of the Final Agreement and ongoing peace dialogues, thus reinforcing women's participation and the promotion of women's rights.

93. The recent extraordinary meetings between the Government and ELN, constituted a positive step in fostering further dialogue. I am encouraged by the intentions expressed by both parties to move forward as swiftly as possible in the months ahead. I urge them to consolidate progress made to date at the negotiating table and to keep their sights set on the overarching goal of peace. I call upon the parties to establish a new ceasefire as soon as possible, with a robust monitoring and verification mechanism and a sufficiently broad scope to improve the security of conflict-affected communities.

94. The Government continues, admirably, to prioritize dialogue with different armed actors as a means of stopping the violence that has plagued communities in conflict-affected regions in Colombia for decades. Recruitment and use of children and conflict-related sexual violence are unacceptable and must be brought to an end without delay. I urge all involved in the ongoing talks to demonstrate their vision and commitment to peace and to move forward despite the setbacks, which are inherent to such processes.

95. Colombians keep demonstrating their resolve to achieving peace in the face of adversity. I applaud this commitment, reiterate my support and express my hope, near the start of a new year, that in 2025 they will be able to move forward decisively. This will be all the more important as a new electoral cycle approaches and political tensions may rise. I strongly encourage all Colombians to remain steadfast in their overarching aspiration of making peace and greater prosperity a reality across the country.

96. International support for Colombia-led peace initiatives remains extremely important. The United Nations will continue its work with the Government and all actors engaged in bringing these commendable efforts to fruition. I am grateful to the Security Council for its consistent and crucial support to the work of the Verification Mission in Colombia.

VERIFICATION MISSION PRESENCE AND MUNICIPALITIES PRIORITIZED FOR THE IMPLEMENTATION OF THE PEACE AGREEMENT COLOMBIA

Verification Mission
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