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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 [2603 \(2021\)](#), by which the Council extended the mandate of the United Nations Verification Mission in Colombia, and Council 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 present report covers the period from 26 March 2022 to 27 June 2022.

2. The report includes important developments during a period marked largely by the presidential elections. With a view to the coming transition in administration, it aims to provide an overview of the progress, the challenges and the lags in the implementation of the Final Agreement for Ending the Conflict and Building a Stable and Lasting Peace and to highlight matters that merit priority attention for the consolidation of peace.

II. Major developments

3. Colombians cast their vote to elect a President for the second time since the signing of the Peace Agreement in 2016. The first and second rounds were held on 29 May and 19 June, respectively, in mostly peaceful conditions, with a voter turnout of 58.09 per cent in the second round, compared with 54 per cent in 2018. To address problems with vote counting faced during the congressional elections held in March 2022, authorities took additional measures leading to a smooth process and the prompt release of results.

4. Gustavo Petro (Pacto Histórico) won the second round with over 50.4 per cent of the vote (11.28 million votes) and will be sworn in on 7 August. Francia Márquez was elected as the first Afro-Colombian Vice-President in Colombian history. Rodolfo Hernández (Liga de Gobernantes Anticorrupción) came in second with 47.3 per cent of the votes. Owing to the statute of the opposition, a provision of the Final Agreement, Mr. Hernández is entitled to a seat in the Senate and his running-mate, Marelén Castillo, also Afro-Colombian, is entitled to a seat in the House of Representatives. During the campaign, both candidates pledged to continue to implement the Agreement. In his acceptance speech, the President-elect, Mr. Petro, called for national unity and said that peace would be a central goal of his



administration. The Special Representative of the Secretary-General for Colombia and Head of the United Nations Verification Mission in Colombia had previously met with both campaigns to discuss the peace process and reiterated the support of the United Nations for the implementation of the Agreement.

5. Electoral authorities have certified the election of all 187 members of the House of Representatives, including 50 women (26.7 per cent). The Senate results are still under review, in view of claims by political parties of irregularities during the initial count.

6. In a major step for transitional justice in Colombia, the Special Jurisdiction for Peace carried out its first public hearings on acknowledgement of truth and responsibility as part of Case 01 (on hostage-taking, other serious deprivations of liberty and other concurrent crimes committed by the Fuerzas Armadas Revolucionarias de Colombia-Ejército del Pueblo (FARC-EP)) and Case 03 (on killings and forced disappearances presented as casualties in combat by State agents) regarding crimes committed in the Catatumbo region. During the hearings, the indicted individuals voluntarily and publicly acknowledged their responsibility for war crimes and crimes against humanity.

7. In April, with regard to Case 03, 10 former members of the military, including a former general, and one civilian who had already recognized their responsibility in writing in 2021, asked for forgiveness and stated that the victims did not belong to any armed group and that they had falsely been reported as guerrilla members killed in combat. Thirty-five victims participated and, while acknowledging the perpetrators' contribution to the truth, asked for further information on the responsibility of higher-ranking officials. At the request of the victims, the Special Jurisdiction for Peace ordered the former general to expand upon his acknowledgement of responsibility in another public hearing in July.

8. In June, the Special Jurisdiction for Peace convened a hearing on Case 01, during which seven indicted former top FARC-EP commanders acknowledged their responsibility, asked for forgiveness, and provided further details on the crimes committed. Over the course of three days, the former commanders listened to the accounts of 29 victims and their families, recognized the damage caused, and reaffirmed their commitment to the process conducted by the Special Jurisdiction for Peace. Among other things, several victims asked for additional information on the whereabouts of their kidnapped relatives who are still missing. The hearing was held after being postponed on three occasions, including owing to security concerns raised by the former commanders, which was questioned by some of the victims. In addition, the Special Jurisdiction for Peace called on another 52 former members of the FARC-EP to provide individual and collective voluntary accounts.

9. Following those historic hearings, which are an important step towards the issuance of restorative sentences, the Judicial Panel for Acknowledgement of Truth and Responsibility of the Special Jurisdiction for Peace is expected to present its conclusions on both cases and determine whether the acknowledgement of responsibility and contributions to the truth by those indicted are sufficient to make them eligible for restorative sentences.

10. The security situation remained of concern in areas historically affected by conflict. A major controversy arose after 11 persons were killed in a military operation in Putumayo in March. While the Government reported that the operation was conducted against an illegal armed group, local communities and civil society organizations later reported that civilians were among the victims, including a 16-year-old child, indigenous and community leaders. Criminal and disciplinary investigations are ongoing. The Mission and the Office of the High Commissioner for

Human Rights (OHCHR) have jointly followed-up on the authorities' investigations and response, including through field missions.

11. Also in May, Colombian authorities extradited "Otoniel", the top leader of the Clan del Golfo (also known as Autodefensas Gaitanistas de Colombia), to the United States of America on drug trafficking charges. Legal actions by victims' organizations to prevent the extradition, claiming that it would affect their rights to reparation and truth regarding conflict-related crimes, were overruled. In March, the Special Jurisdiction for Peace had denied a request by Otoniel to be subject to its jurisdiction.

12. After the extradition, the Clan del Golfo carried out a five-day armed strike, with reports of widespread violence affecting 178 municipalities in 11 of Colombia's 32 departments. According to the Investigation and Accusation Unit of the Special Jurisdiction for Peace, there were over 300 acts of violence against civilians, including the killing of 24 persons, and 22 attacks against public security forces, killing two of their members.

III. Comprehensive implementation of the Final Agreement

Comprehensive rural reform

13. During the five years of implementation of the Final Agreement, progressive steps have been taken regarding the development programmes with a territorial focus. Participatory planning was carried out in the 16 prioritized regions with some 220,000 members of conflict-affected communities, 1,420 small infrastructure works have been completed, and additional funding sources were identified, allowing for the implementation of larger projects. According to the Government, investment has exceeded \$3.3 billion in 3,354 projects under way in areas including housing, transportation, energy and water and sanitation. The projects include 565 larger projects funded through royalties from hydrocarbon exploitation, 78 of them completed, 321 in progress and 166 pending contracting to begin implementation.

14. Despite the progress, during an oversight hearing in Congress regarding the development programmes with a territorial focus, the Comunes party (former Fuerza Alternativa Revolucionaria del Común (FARC) party) stated that at the current pace, the full implementation of the programmes would take over 25 years, instead of 15 years as originally planned. According to Comunes, this is hindering the potential of the comprehensive rural reform to transform conflict-affected regions. The party further raised concerns because the larger projects are not benefiting 53 of the 170 municipalities with development programmes with a territorial focus, while a number of them are under way outside development programme regions.

15. In addition, in a recent report by civil society organizations tasked by the Final Agreement to monitor its implementation limited citizen participation in the monitoring and development of the programmes was highlighted. Furthermore, in June, the Office of the Comptroller General warned that, as at April 2022, 57 per cent of projects related to peace implementation funded through investment funds from the national budget showed progress at under 10 per cent.

16. The Government reported that an additional 14,034 hectares from the Land Fund were delivered to peasant families during the reporting period, for a total of 487,498 hectares of the intended three million. Civil society organizations insist that most of the land placed in the Fund has legal issues and is therefore not suitable for adjudication. The organizations have also expressed concern that beneficiaries are slow to be identified and few reside in municipalities with development programmes with a territorial focus.

Political participation

17. The executive, legislative and judicial branches of power have a key role to play in the implementation of the section of the Final Agreement on political participation. Key pending matters include electoral, political and citizen participation and social protest reforms. Milestones such as the approval of the statute of the opposition in 2018 and the recent election of the 16 representatives of the special transitional electoral districts for peace in the House of Representatives are a testament to the contribution of the Agreement to strengthening Colombian democracy.

18. In May, the 16 representatives from conflict-affected regions (including three women, one indigenous person and four members of Afro-Colombian organizations) formed a “peace and victims’ caucus” in the House of Representatives for the period 2022–2026 with the goal of defending the Final Agreement and victims’ rights. In doing so, they became a significant force in Congress. In the context of the presidential campaign, the caucus asked candidates to fully implement the Agreement. In their meetings with President Duque, members of Congress and international actors, including the Special Representative, the caucus reiterated the importance of security guarantees for them and their communities.

Substitution of illicit crops

19. The strategies stipulated in section 4 of the Final Agreement were conceived to attain a definitive solution to the problem of illicit drugs and to overcome the conditions underpinning the dependence on illicit crops of thousands of families subjugated by criminal actors in areas of limited State presence, poverty and the proliferation of illegal armed groups.

20. As of May, the Government reported cumulative investments since 2017, of close to \$600 million in the National Comprehensive Programme for the Substitution of Illicit Crops, allocated for areas such as eradication, technical assistance and productive projects. Nearly 46,000 hectares of illicit crops have been voluntarily eradicated by 99,097 participating families (9 per cent in indigenous reservations and 12.6 per cent in Afro-Colombian community councils), with high levels of compliance and low levels of replanting.

21. Nonetheless, civil society actors, opposition parties and oversight bodies monitoring the implementation of the Final Agreement have highlighted problems, including in planning, coordination and the allocation of resources for productive projects. They observed insufficient links with other initiatives under the framework of the comprehensive rural reform, which are essential to the long-term sustainability of the Programme. In addition, the dynamics in regions affected by illicit crops have significantly changed since the inception of the Programme. Illegal armed groups and criminal organizations have targeted communities and crop substitution leaders in areas such as the tri-border region between the Departments of Caquetá, Guaviare and Meta.

Comprehensive System of Truth, Justice, Reparation and Non-Repetition

22. In another milestone of the peace process, the Truth Commission will present its final report on 28 June, following years of research and extensive dialogue with some 27,000 people across Colombian society and drawing from close to 1,000 reports received from different actors. The Commission indicated that the report will be focused, inter alia, on the causes of the conflict and the reasons behind its continuation, as well as on its impacts on ethnic peoples, children, women, lesbian, gay, trans, bisexual and intersex persons and the exiled population. In the report recommendations will also be presented on reconciliation and non-repetition. The

Commission will establish a committee for the follow-up and monitoring of the implementation of its recommendations, expected to operate for the next seven years, and the composition of the committee will be announced after the release of the report.

23. In May, following the resignation of a retired army officer, citing differences with his fellow commissioners regarding the role of the public security forces in the conflict, the Commission informed that it had conducted a participatory process to listen to a broad range of actors, including over 60 dialogue sessions with military personnel, and that it had received more than 150 reports from public security forces.

24. Victims continued participating actively in the proceedings of the Special Jurisdiction for Peace. Over 530 victims (including 208 women), human rights and ethnic organizations provided their observations on the three new cases to be opened by the Jurisdiction on crimes committed by the former FARC-EP, public security forces and other State agents, and on crimes against ethnic peoples and their territories. In May, 96 victims of Case 03 presented their observations during a hearing in Huila regarding the 150 voluntary accounts provided by members of the public security forces regarding crimes in that department. Similarly, 46 victims of case 07 (on recruitment and use of children in armed conflict) presented their observations on the accounts of 15 former FARC-EP members regarding their crimes, including information on sexual and gender-based violence.

25. Recently, the Special Jurisdiction for Peace presented its prioritization strategy for Case 06, on the victimization of the members the Patriotic Union party and called five former State agents and seven members of the public security forces to provide their voluntary accounts. According to the Special Jurisdiction for Peace, at least 5,733 people were killed or disappeared, and these crimes were conducted in a massive, generalized and systematic manner, mostly by State agents and paramilitary forces.

26. The Unit for the Search for Persons Deemed Missing recently announced that 99,235 persons were reported as missing during the conflict and that over 90 per cent remain missing. As it continues its essential mission, during the reporting period the Unit has reported the recovery of the remains of 99 missing persons, for a total of 483 since 2018. In a coordinated effort with several State institutions, the Unit has so far handed over to their families the remains of 142 victims, including 4 during the reporting period.

27. Also during the reporting period, the Unit and former FARC-EP members developed a detailed plan to identify the locations of potential victims of forced disappearance. The plan is in line with the Unit's 22 regional search plans, which cover 258 municipalities.

28. Indigenous organizations recently called for greater progress by the Unit in the search for indigenous victims of forced disappearance. Efforts by the Unit to foster collaboration and strengthen its work with indigenous organizations are ongoing.

Mechanisms for dialogue on implementation

29. Progress in the implementation of the Final Agreement is directly linked to the capacity of the parties to work within the mechanisms devised in the Agreement. When effectively used, the Commission for the Follow-Up, Promotion and Verification of the Implementation of the Final Agreement and other dialogue mechanisms have proven valuable to advance the parties' commitments under the Agreement.

30. In April, President Duque appointed Juan Carlos Vargas as the acting Presidential Counsellor for Stabilization and Consolidation, following the departure of Emilio Archila.

31. In a welcome development, the Commission recently confirmed the members of the Special Forum on Gender elected in 2021, which will allow them to monitor the progress of the Final Agreement's gender provisions. In addition, the parties are developing a plan to visit field locations in the coming months, including former territorial areas for training and reintegration, to identify areas in need of high-level support.

32. Thanks to the parties' commitment and joint work, and the assistance of the Mission and the United Nations Mine Action Service, since 2019 the tripartite working group on mines has proven essential to locate mines planted during the conflict. With information provided by former combatants, the parties have jointly identified nearly 137 potential minefields in several departments, and have recently collected data on over 53 potential mined areas in Antioquia and Tolima.

33. Furthermore, Humanicemos DH, a humanitarian demining organization comprised of former combatants, continued to carry out essential work. A group of 91 former FARC-EP members (24 women) recently cleared three mined areas in Caquetá.

34. Despite its important role in supporting the parties in the fulfilling of their commitments with regard to reparations to victims, the tripartite working group on former FARC-EP assets (composed of the Government, the former FARC-EP and the Mission) has not been convened since June 2020. The process of handing over the assets has been affected by security, legal and financial challenges, as well by the lack of agreement between the parties on the responsibility over the custody of the assets during the process. A decision on the latter by the Council of State is pending.

IV. Mission tasks

Reintegration

35. During the initial years of the implementation of the Final Agreement, progress was made in granting former combatants early reintegration benefits, including a one-off normalization allowance, monthly stipends, enrolment in health care and access to productive projects. Efforts are still required to ensure the sustainability of social, economic and political reintegration, including by reinforcing its linkages with other elements of the Agreement, and by ensuring former combatants' legal and physical security.

Access to land and housing

36. Access to land and housing remained among the most determining factors to consolidate the long-term success of reintegration and are a top priority for former combatants. Since the signing of the Final Agreement, normative and institutional developments promoted by the Government have been instrumental to progress in those key areas.

37. Regarding land for former combatants, the Government has so far purchased land for 10 of the 24 former territorial areas for training and reintegration. Four areas that are waiting for land to be purchased, two in Cauca, one in Antioquia and one in Putumayo, require urgent relocation owing to insecurity. The Government has pledged to purchase land for an additional eight former territorial areas for training and reintegration in 2022.

38. In addition, in keeping with a December 2020 decree allowing for the adjudication of plots managed by the Special Assets Administration, two plots of land for productive projects were transferred to former combatants outside former territorial areas for training and reintegration in Valle del Cauca Department.

39. Regarding housing, the normative framework has been adjusted to provide former combatants access to existing programmes and feasibility studies have been implemented in six former territorial areas for training and reintegration. Preparations are on track to start construction in three former territorial areas in Arauca, Caquetá and Cauca, where the Government has pledged to build 330 houses. Nevertheless, progress regarding construction remains limited overall, and could benefit from a more effective use of the working group on housing of the National Reintegration Council.

40. In a welcome development, in April the Ministry of Housing issued a decree creating a specific subsidy for former combatants to purchase housing in urban areas. Effective access to this mechanism will depend, among other things, on former combatants' income and ability to access credit.

Productive projects

41. The number of accredited former combatants participating in productive projects has increased steadily since 2018. To date, 67 per cent are involved in collective and individual productive initiatives. During the reporting period, the National Reintegration Council approved four new collective projects benefiting 95 former combatants (18 women), and the Agency for Reintegration and Normalization approved 448 individual projects, benefitting an additional 548 former combatants (149 women). Overall, 120 collective projects have been approved, benefiting 3,929 former combatants (1,100 women), and 4,366 individual projects, benefiting 5,284 former combatants (1,246 women).

42. While 74 per cent of women former combatants participate in productive projects and play a leading role in 13 collective initiatives, challenges persist, especially regarding to meaningful participation in decision-making, including owing to competing care tasks and insufficient capacity-building opportunities.

43. Ensuring the sustainability of economic reintegration continues to be a major challenge. To that end, the parties have jointly made progress within the National Reintegration Council in defining sustainability factors such as access to land and markets, technical assistance and linkages with relevant public policies. The approval of a binding instrument in this regard and the joint definition of a similar strategy for individual projects remains pending. Currently, the Government, former combatants, International Office for Migration and the United Nations Development Programme are assessing 81 collective productive projects to define tailored sustainability plans.

44. In addition, insecurity is undermining economic reintegration in Arauca, Cauca, Meta and Putumayo Departments, among other departments, where illegal armed actors continue targeting cooperatives and leaders of former combatants, hindering crucial collective efforts.

Health

45. While nearly all former combatants are enrolled in the national health system, they still face obstacles in accessing care in rural areas. In a welcome development, in April, after months of limited services, the Ministry of Health issued a resolution allocating resources for the resumption of health schemes in all 24 former territorial areas for training and reintegration until February 2023. These schemes remain key

to facilitate access to health care in remote rural areas for former combatants and communities alike.

Former combatants living outside of former territorial areas for training and reintegration

46. The geography of reintegration has continued to evolve from when former combatants gathered in agreed locations to lay down their arms. The majority of them have left these areas. Some 2,300 former combatants (741 women) currently reside in former territorial areas for training and reintegration and the remaining 10,500 (2,526 women) have settled in some 600 of Colombia's more than 1,100 municipalities, including about one-third living in 75 new reintegration areas. These new areas have limited provision of land, housing, health care and security.

47. Although the approval of collective projects outside former territorial areas for training and reintegration has increased (61 are currently under implementation), additional measures that are tailored to the needs of former combatants in these settings are needed, as highlighted by both the Special Jurisdiction for Peace and the Office of the Inspector General. In urban areas, former combatants face stigmatization and insecurity, as well as higher operating costs for productive initiatives.

Role of regional authorities and community-based reintegration

48. The parties continued working on reintegration alongside partners in the framework of working groups at the departmental (20), municipal (12) and local level (24). In addition, 19 departments and 155 municipalities have allocated resources to reintegration-related matters in their development plans. In Ituango, Antioquia, the Offices of the Governor and the Mayor jointly allocated over \$300,000 for a housing project in that municipality. In Bogotá, in the context of initiatives inspired by the development programmes with a territorial focus, investments have been made in rural areas for the improvement of water infrastructure and reconciliation strategies.

49. Alongside local authorities, the Government and former combatants have developed specific action plans involving regional activities for the Departments of Arauca, Caquetá and Putumayo, which have significant security challenges affecting reintegration.

50. The strategy of the National Reintegration Council on community-based reintegration is under way in 65 municipalities, helping to build trust between former combatants and communities through dialogue and joint work. This includes the improvement of schools and community infrastructure in Departments such as Antioquia, Caquetá and Putumayo.

Reintegration policies and institutions

51. As provided for in the Final Agreement, the National Reintegration Council has remained the main mechanism for strategic dialogue on reintegration. The full implementation of the reintegration road map, created in December 2019 by the Agency for Reintegration and Normalization and which sets the long-term goals of the process, is still pending while the parties continue discussing the establishment of the National Reintegration System, which would provide a broader and more comprehensive coordination mechanism. The parties recently agreed to conduct a census to identify former combatants' needs to inform these discussions.

52. The working group on gender has become an increasingly important coordination mechanism to promote gender mainstreaming. It has helped identify challenges facing reintegration, including those related to resource allocation; as well

as ownership by national-level Government entities regarding the gender actions of the national policy on reintegration and indicators to monitor implementation.

Political reintegration

53. The former FARC-EP guerrilla transitioned into a political party in 2017. Since then, the party, now called Comunes, has been an active participant in the political and electoral arenas despite challenges during the early stages, including to access public funds for campaigns and for the party's functioning. In Congress, Comunes has presented, on its own initiative and in coordination with other parties, 128 draft bills, 24 per cent of which are under discussion. The party has also participated actively in 94 oversight hearings, including on the implementation of the Final Agreement, reintegration and violence against social leaders and former combatants.

54. Similarly, former combatants have participated in national and local elections despite security challenges, and 12 former combatants and Comunes members have been elected to office. While their participation has not been free of obstacles, the issues encountered have been addressed in a timely manner by electoral authorities, in close coordination with former combatants and the Mission.

Security guarantees

55. The Final Agreement was effective in ending the conflict between the Government and the former FARC-EP, and the laydown of arms of the former guerrilla led to nationwide reductions of conflict-related violence during the early stages of implementation. However, over the past few years, security strategies that should be anchored in efforts by the State to consolidate its comprehensive presence in areas historically affected by the conflict have proven insufficient. Consequently, initial gains on security are increasingly in jeopardy as a result of the proliferation of illegal armed actors who, in the absence of strong institutional capabilities, compete over illicit economies and territorial control.

56. Civilians, in particular indigenous and Afro-Colombian communities, women and children, are suffering from threats and killings, forced recruitment, sexual violence, the presence of landmines and forced displacement and confinement, among other expressions of violence. For instance, forced displacement and confinement have been on the rise since 2017 according to the Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs. Between January and May 2022, 60,765 civilians have been forcibly confined and more than 33,800 people have been forcibly displaced, most of whom belong to indigenous and Afro-Colombian communities. Likewise, OHCHR has registered an increase in large-scale killings. So far this year, OHCHR has received 53 allegations of large-scale killings, 21 which have been verified, 25 incidents are still under verification and 7 were inconclusive.

Security and protection for former combatants

57. Violence and threats against former combatants not only put their lives and reintegration efforts in peril, but also hinder their broader contributions to peacebuilding, including on transitional justice, humanitarian demining and substitution of illicit crops. Since the signing of the Final Agreement, 327 former combatants have been killed (11 women), 93 have been victims of attempted homicide (6 women), and 27 are deemed as missing (all men). During the reporting period, 11 former combatants were killed, including one femicide allegedly committed by the former combatant's partner.

58. Although State-provided measures of individual protection for former combatants have been reinforced since 2017, in the absence of more comprehensive security strategies for conflict-affected areas, the collective security of former

combatants is being increasingly threatened by the actions of illegal armed groups. Similarly, emergency protection requests have increased significantly (from 144 in 2021 to 150 so far this year), putting additional pressure on the timely implementation of protection measures already approved.

59. The urgency of adapting security measures to the evolving geography of reintegration is evident as insecurity affects former FARC-EP members in both former territorial areas for training and reintegration and new areas of reintegration. This has been acknowledged by both the Special Jurisdiction for Peace and by the Constitutional Court in its January decision to declare an unconstitutional state of affairs regarding former combatants' security.

Precautionary measures issued by the Special Jurisdiction for Peace

60. In view of the killings of former FARC-EP combatants under its jurisdiction, the Special Jurisdiction for Peace has issued several precautionary measures since 2020 which have led to measures to improve their security. The orders have led, for example, to the allocation of additional resources to the National Protection Unit to implement protection measures for former combatants. On the other hand, there has been no progress yet by the authorities in complying with other measures ordered by the Special Jurisdiction for Peace, such as those related to insecurity affecting former combatants in south-west Colombia and in Meta Department. In addition, the development of the Strategic Security and Protection Plan called for in the Final Agreement shows limited progress in the absence of consensus between the Government and Comunes.

61. In May, the Special Jurisdiction for Peace held a hearing to assess progress by the Special Investigation Unit of the Office of the Attorney General regarding investigations on attacks against former combatants and the dismantling of criminal organizations. During the hearing, the Unit for Investigations and Accusations of the Special Jurisdiction for Peace recognized progress but underscored the need for greater advances in the prosecution of those who ordered the attacks and in the dismantling of criminal organizations. The Special Jurisdiction for Peace ordered that the Special Investigation Unit present an action plan to improve its investigative methodology with a view to better fighting criminal organizations.

62. During the hearing, the Director of the Special Investigation Unit affirmed that investigation and prosecution efforts are one component of a necessary whole-of-government approach to dismantle illegal armed groups, and called for urgent progress by the National Commission on Security Guarantees in the adoption and implementation of the public policy to dismantle illegal armed groups.

63. In May, the Special Jurisdiction for Peace reaffirmed its order to the Agency for Reintegration and Normalization that surviving families of killed former combatants shall receive some of the benefits of their relatives, including a monthly allowance. Despite having challenged the decision earlier, the Agency for Reintegration and Normalization is now reaching out to relatives entitled to these benefits.

Special Investigations Unit of the Office of the Attorney-General

64. Of the 379 cases of attacks against former combatants under its investigation (including homicides, attempted homicides and disappearances), to date, the Special Investigation Unit has reported a total of 55 convictions, only four of them against those who ordered the attacks, and 75 cases in the trial phase. According to the Unit, over 80 per cent of these crimes were committed by criminal organizations including the Clan del Golfo, FARC-EP dissident groups and the Ejército de Liberación Nacional (ELN). Prompt and effective response in terms of prosecution and administration of justice, as well as more support by public security forces to reach

crime scenes quickly and arrest suspects in a timely manner, remain crucial to fight impunity.

Deployment of public security forces in former territorial areas for training and reintegration

65. Since the signing of the Final Agreement, the deployment of security forces around former territorial areas for training and reintegration has been a key measure for preventing violence against former combatants. Over five years since their establishment, only 5 of the 327 killings of former combatants have occurred within those areas. However, those key preventive deployments have been gradually reduced and recent changes from fixed units to mobile patrols leave former combatants and nearby communities feeling less secure.

66. The capacity of the public security forces to respond to women-specific security issues, including gender-based violence, remains limited and would benefit from an increased deployment of women officers and specialized training, and from the implementation of the joint workplan established between the Ministry of Defence and the Presidential Adviser for Gender Equity to promote gender equity and prevent gender-based violence.

Attacks against social leaders, human rights defenders and conflict-affected communities

67. Since the Final Agreement was signed, OHCHR has registered an increase in killings of human rights defenders, the current total stands at 541, including 65 women. Indigenous and Afro-Colombian leaders, as well as leaders belonging to local administrative boards, are among those whose security has worsened in recent months. During the reporting period, OHCHR received information about the killing of 56 human rights defenders, including 4 women (7 verified, 39 under verification and 10 inconclusive).

68. In 2022, the Mission has observed an increase in violence against social leaders and civil society organizations in areas of Antioquia, Arauca, Bolívar, Cesar, Putumayo, Santander and Valle del Cauca Departments.

69. In April, as part of its review of legal actions by social leaders and human rights defenders, the Constitutional Court held a public hearing regarding dedicated protection measures for them, with participation of State and Government institutions, civil society organizations and international entities, including the Mission. Participants highlighted the increase in violence and a limited State response. Leaders requested that the Court consider declaring an unconstitutional state of affairs. A decision by the Court remains pending.

70. The Comprehensive Programme for Safeguards for Women Leaders and Human Rights Defenders, established in 2018, represents an opportunity to respond to the specific security needs of women leaders. Promotion and follow-up activities were carried out in Cauca, Magdalena, Nariño and Putumayo, however, the effective implementation of the Programme is limited, owing to insufficient financial resources and the lack of ownership by responsible entities at the national and local level.

National Commission on Security Guarantees

71. Despite the crucially important function assigned to it in the Peace Agreement, the National Commission on Security Guarantees has not been used to its full potential. Five years since its creation it has yet to adopt the much-needed public policy to dismantle illegal armed groups and criminal organizations. However,

technical sessions of the Commission to advance the action plan ordered by the Special Jurisdiction for Peace were held.

Early warning system of the Office of the Ombudsman

72. Since 2017, the early warning system has issued 240 early warnings identifying risks for communities, social leaders and human rights defenders in several departments. Of these, 95 warnings have also included specific risks for former combatants, mainly in Antioquia, Bolívar, Cauca, Cesar, Chocó, Meta, Norte de Santander, Putumayo, Valle del Cauca and Bogotá. During the reporting period, and in the context of the electoral process, the Office of the Ombudsman highlighted that armed groups are present in 521 of Colombia's over 1,100 municipalities.

Comprehensive security and protection programme for communities and organizations in the territories

73. The comprehensive security and protection programme was devised as a mechanism of the Peace Agreement to guarantee security in the most vulnerable regions. However, its impact on the ground has been significantly limited by partial implementation, including due to insufficient human and financial resources.

Restorative sentences

74. The Special Jurisdiction for Peace continued moving forward with its seven cases, with cases 01 and 03 steadily advancing towards the issuance of restorative sentences by its Peace Tribunal. Following the public hearing for acknowledgement of truth and responsibility in Case 03, the Special Jurisdiction for Peace put into place a process allowing the 11 indicted individuals to voluntarily submit their proposals for tasks, works or activities with reparatory and restorative content, which will be made available to victims and the Office of the Inspector General for comments. Furthermore, the Special Jurisdiction for Peace announced that it would discuss these proposals with victims and the indicted individuals, and ordered several State institutions to submit information on projects with reparatory content in which those individuals could participate.

75. To date, the Executive Secretariat of the Special Jurisdiction for Peace has certified 31 tasks, works or activities with reparatory and restorative content (of 179 requests received) involving some 760 former FARC-EP combatants (including the seven former commanders indicted in Case 01) in 11 departments. Those activities refer mainly to early acts of acknowledgment of responsibility, humanitarian demining activities and the construction of small infrastructure works. Certified tasks, works or activities with reparatory and restorative content will be available for the consideration of the Tribunal of the Special Jurisdiction for Peace, as it determines sentences, to assess whether they qualify as early restorative activities.

76. In May, following discussions between the Special Jurisdiction for Peace and the Government on the conditions for the implementation of restorative sentences and on potential tasks, works or activities with reparatory and restorative content to be funded by the Government, the latter released for comments a draft document on policy guidelines for the implementation of restorative sentences. In the document the need for increased coordination is highlighted, acknowledging the Government's obligation to enable the implementation of restorative sentences, while stating the exclusive authority of the Special Jurisdiction for Peace to define all issues concerning the restriction of rights and liberties of those sanctioned.

77. Several stakeholders submitted comments on the document, including five victims' organizations and Comunes, complaining about the lack of consultation. Victims also criticized that there is no reference to their participation in the definition

of restorative sentences, as stipulated by the law. Furthermore, the Office of the Inspector General pointed out that the document only refers to existing programmes, which may be insufficient to comply with the reparative approach intended for the sentences. Comunes also reacted through a letter to the Special Jurisdiction for Peace, claiming that some elements of the document are against provisions of the Peace Agreement. The Special Jurisdiction for Peace has discussed with Comunes to clarify the document's objectives and receive their comments.

78. The Mission continued to prepare for the verification of the compliance with, and implementation of, the restorative sentences to be issued by the Special Jurisdiction for Peace. In particular in the context of the public hearings of acknowledgment of truth and responsibility for cases 01 and 03, the Mission has also liaised with former combatants, representatives of members of the public security forces, and their lawyers, as well as with victims' organizations and the Office of the Inspector General. Dialogue has focused on identifying progress and challenges for compliance with and implementation of restorative sentences.

79. Some representatives of members of public security forces subject to the Special Jurisdiction for Peace have expressed concerns regarding their economic situation, as most are retired or out of active service, as well as their expectations regarding the attention and support route announced by the Government in April. In turn, former combatants and their lawyers have pointed out that restorative sentences should consider their reintegration endeavours and their overall security.

80. The Mission and the Special Jurisdiction for Peace have continued to conduct joint activities, including fine-tuning the Monitoring and Verification Mechanism devised for the verification of the compliance with, and the implementation of, the restorative sentences. A protocol establishing its functions and details of its operations is expected to be formalized and launched in the coming weeks.

V. Cross-cutting considerations

Gender

81. The Peace Agreement remains a global example of the inclusion of gender considerations. Women social leaders, human rights defenders and former combatants remain a driving force of its implementation, despite challenges to their security and meaningful participation.

82. Nevertheless, the implementation of the Final Agreement's gender provisions continues to be constrained by the limited allocation of technical expertise and financial resources. While the Government reports progress in 75 per cent of the 51 gender indicators of the Framework Plan for Implementation, these do not comprehensively address the over 100 gender provisions and narrow the Agreement's gender approach to women's issues, neglecting matters of sexual diversity and gender identity.

83. In April, the Colombian journalist Jineth Bedoya Lima was nominated as a United Nations Global Champion for the Fight Against Sexual Violence in Conflict. In May, in the context of the commemoration of the national day for the dignity of women victims of conflict-related sexual violence (35,046 between 1985 and 2022 according to the Victims' Unit), women's organizations called for increased efforts to prevent these crimes. Women's organizations reiterated their request to the Special Jurisdiction for Peace to open a specific case to investigate those crimes and highlighted that conflict-related sexual violence is a specific criminal behaviour used strategically by armed actors, instead of a conduct committed in connection with other crimes. In May, the Vice-President, Marta Lucía Ramírez, sent a letter to the Special

Jurisdiction for Peace with a similar message, also requesting the opening of a case. The Special Jurisdiction for Peace has so far indicated that those crimes are addressed within all of its cases.

84. Sexual and gender-based violence is hindering the reintegration process. During the reporting period, the Mission received reports of three cases of sexual violence against children of former combatants. This underscores the need for greater prevention measures and swift investigations to bring perpetrators to justice.

85. In June, women's organizations and organizations representing lesbian, gay, trans, bisexual and intersex persons carried out joint advocacy efforts to position their rights as a key topic during the presidential campaign, including issues such as sexual and reproductive health, gender-based and sexual violence, and security guarantees.

Ethnic affairs

86. The implementation of the Final Agreement's comprehensive provisions on ethnic matters is lagging. This is particularly concerning as indigenous and Afro-Colombian communities, leaders and former combatants continue to be victimized by illegal armed groups. In May, the Inspector General urged several institutions to address the humanitarian crisis in Chocó Department. Among other things, the Inspector General acknowledged a historic absence of the State, high levels of unsatisfied basic needs, the presence of illegal armed actors and an insufficient implementation of key provisions of the Final Agreement. The Inspector General's calls included making further progress in the implementation of the development programmes with a territorial focus and the ethnic chapter of the Agreement. Greater collaboration between the Commission for the Follow-Up, Promotion and Verification of the Implementation of the Final Agreement and the High-Level Forum of Ethnic Peoples as the consultative body created by the Agreement on these issues, would help to move forward in this regard.

87. As the National Commission on Security Guarantees develops the policy to dismantle illegal armed groups, consideration of indigenous and Afro-Colombian communities' contexts and needs, including strengthening self-protection mechanisms, remains essential. Similarly, strategies by the Special Investigation Unit to advance in the investigation of crimes against social leaders and former combatants of ethnic origin are still to be developed. Furthermore, there has been no progress in the implementation of measures outlined in the national policy on reintegration regarding former combatants of ethnic origin.

88. During the reporting period, former FARC-EP combatants participated in nine acts of recognition of damage caused to ethnic communities hosted by the Truth Commission in seven departments, with participation of 43 indigenous and Afro-Colombian communities. Former combatants committed to redressing their actions' disproportionate effects on ethnic communities. Of particular importance was the acknowledgement of harm caused to the indigenous peoples during the siege in 1998 by FARC-EP in Mitú, Vaupés Department. Former combatants committed to help locate missing persons, explosive devices and anti-personnel mines.

Children

89. The programme "A different path of life", established in 2017 for children formerly associated with the FARC-EP, has been instrumental to their reintegration. To date, 117 of the 124 participants continue receiving support in areas such as education and productive projects.

90. The working group on children of the National Reintegration Council is working on the measures required to attend to another group of 288 former combatants

recognized, between 2020 and 2021, as children at the time of accreditation. The definition by the NRC of a procedure to determine whether they can be included in the programme is urgent. In April, two persons from this group (both male) were killed in Cauca.

91. In May, an action plan to enhance the implementation of the programme was developed by the working group and is expected to be adopted by the National Reintegration Council in the near future.

92. Children of former combatants continue facing limited access to basic services and care in and outside former territorial areas for training and reintegration, including education, nutrition and childcare.

Youth

93. Inside and outside former territorial areas for training and reintegration, in Departments including Caquetá and Tolima, young former combatants and children of former combatants are increasingly involved in political and economic reintegration activities, as well as in broader community initiatives on environmental and gender issues.

94. In June, the Truth Commission held a national-level event with over 30 young men and women from different regions to discuss the impact of the conflict on children and youth, and their fundamental role in reconciliation and non-repetition. Participants presented youth's peace-related advocacy and cultural initiatives, while highlighting persisting obstacles to their participation in peacebuilding efforts, including stigmatization and the ongoing violence in several regions. Several United Nations entities, including the Mission, have supported and accompanied similar events at the regional level in Norte de Santander and Valle del Cauca.

95. Youth organizations also continue important peacebuilding efforts. In April, the platform of women's organizations Ruta Pacífica de las Mujeres presented the results of a dialogue process among 12 young women's organizations from Bolívar and Valle del Cauca and departments within the coffee-producing region, to consolidate a common advocacy agenda, including on political participation and peacebuilding.

96. The Mission continued liaising with members of municipal youth councils, including Comunes party members and former combatants. It participated, for example, in a council session in Norte de Santander Department in April and organized an event with council members from Cauca Department to discuss the implementation of the Final Agreement.

VI. Coordination with the United Nations country team

97. Under the leadership of the Special Representative and the Resident Coordinator, the Mission and the country team worked closely to develop common messaging and advocacy on behalf of peace and sustainable development priorities in the context of the presidential elections.

98. The country team presented the 2021 annual report of the United Nations Sustainable Development Cooperation Framework to the Government, in which the implementation of programmes with a budget of over \$152 million in support of the Final Agreement is outlined. Results include support to 180 infrastructure projects in municipalities with development programmes with a territorial focus, including technical assistance to adopt the multipurpose land cadastre; and to the reintegration of 5,800 former combatants (40 per cent women); as well as assistance for 169,000 people to access the transitional justice system.

99. The United Nations multi-partner trust fund for sustaining peace in Colombia allocated over \$3.6 million to support Humanicemos DH, the High-level Forum of Ethnic Peoples, and the work of victims' organizations in the search of missing persons. Support also includes the establishment of care services benefiting 1,750 former combatants (28.5 per cent women and 9 per cent people with disabilities). Care services were also funded by the Peacebuilding Fund, benefitting 539 children and youth in 10 former territorial areas for training and reintegration and their surrounding communities. The Peacebuilding Fund is also funding support for the dissemination of the final report of the Truth Commission.

VII. Developments related to the Ejército de Liberación Nacional

100. Armed confrontations between ELN and security forces, as well as between ELN and other illegal armed actors, continued, in departments including Arauca and Chocó, with severe consequences on civilians.

101. During the electoral campaign, civil society actors called upon presidential candidates to include peace talks with ELN in their political agendas. All presidential candidates, including the President-elect, Mr. Petro, stated that they were in favour of exploring the resumption of peace talks with ELN. ELN has stated its willingness to enter a dialogue with the upcoming administration.

VIII. Mission structures

Mission support

102. As at 30 May 2022, 51 per cent of all civilian personnel and 38 per cent of international observers in the Verification Mission were women.

103. The Mission continues to implement adjustments in several field offices to adapt to new requirements and responsibilities, and to accommodate new staff, including through the acquisition of new premises for the regional offices in Cúcuta and Pasto, and an additional container for the camp in Colinas, Guaviare.

Safety and security

104. There were 16 incidents affecting the United Nations system, 44 per cent corresponding to movement restrictions of official missions. Restrictions were mainly caused by illegal armed groups enquiring about the presence of United Nations missions, including in municipalities, of Cauca, Chocó and Norte de Santander.

Conduct and discipline

105. The Mission continued its efforts to prevent misconduct through measures that included training and risk assessments, as well as stronger coordination across the Mission. Risk assessments were conducted and refresher training sessions were given to staff during visits to field locations in Cauca. Induction training sessions on the zero-tolerance policy on sexual exploitation and abuse continued to be conducted online.

106. No allegations of sexual exploitation and abuse were reported. A previous allegation of domestic violence and misuse of office equipment concluded with the summary dismissal of the individual involved.

IX. Observations

107. The issuance of the present report coincides with the conclusion of the second national elections since the signing of the Final Peace Agreement and the transition to a new administration that will have both the responsibility and the historic opportunity to bring Colombia's precious peace process forward. I am encouraged by the largely peaceful conduct of the elections and their pluralistic nature, which stand as evidence of the Agreement's significant contribution to the strengthening of Colombian democracy. This is particularly noteworthy considering that Colombians cast their votes after a period of social strain and unrest, exacerbated by a pandemic that exposed and deepened long-standing inequalities. I commend the people of Colombia and their institutions for their resilience.

108. I welcome the commitments already expressed by the President-elect, Mr. Petro, to further the implementation of the Final Peace Agreement, and I can assure the full support of the United Nations for that effort.

109. Much has been achieved already in a Colombia that is today more peaceful and inclusive than before and is taking inspiring steps to come to terms with its past. I commend the enduring commitment of the over 13,000 men and women former combatants who continue to work towards peace and encourage them and their leaders to remain actively engaged in all matters related to implementation and the fulfilment of their obligations. To that end, I also call upon the incoming administration to maintain the necessary support to ensure the sustainability of the reintegration process.

110. I also applaud the efforts of public servants at all levels whose work is the backbone of progress by Government and State entities in delivering on their responsibilities under the Final Agreement. And I acknowledge the deep commitment, from the grass roots on up, of peacebuilders in Colombian civil society. Yet despite these foundations, much more remains to be done, especially to improve security in conflict-affected areas through both immediate strategies and actions to protect vulnerable communities and populations, and through the deeper transformations that will be required for Colombia to definitively put armed conflict in its past. The Agreement provides the road map: a set of interconnected mechanisms which reflect the parties' realization that there can be no peace without development, and no development without peace.

111. The long-term success of key provisions of the Final Agreement, such as rural reform, reintegration and voluntary crop substitution, is contingent upon the creation of safe and enabling environments, in particular in historically neglected regions. The Agreement envisions an approach to security in which the integrated presence of the State is a prerequisite for the safety of communities. For the Agreement's measures on security guarantees to be effective, simultaneous efforts are required to address the causes underpinning persisting violence. If Colombia is to continue on the path towards sustainable and lasting peace amid the challenges described in the present report, concerted efforts are needed across all branches of power.

112. Furthermore, I trust that the Government will take all the necessary steps to adapt and respond to old and emerging threats by pursuing, whenever possible, negotiated solutions and dialogue.

113. The Truth Commission's final report and legacy will be a stepping-stone for long-term reconciliation, if Colombians seize the unprecedented opportunity it offers for them to come to terms with their past. I invite all Colombians to receive the Commission's work with the utmost respect and openness. Its recommendations carry the hopes of thousands of victims for a future in which no one else has to endure their pain.

114. I am heartened by the strength and generosity displayed by victims during the historic first hearings of truth and acknowledgement of responsibility held recently by the Special Jurisdiction for Peace. The hearings attest to the significant progress made by the Special Jurisdiction for Peace and are a major step towards achieving justice. I also welcome that former FARC-EP commanders and former members of the public security forces publicly recognized the gravity of the crimes committed during the conflict. The next stages of the process must be guided by a victim-centred approach and by the commitment of all parties to the conflict to redressing the damage caused.

115. Developments described in this report are a reminder that peacebuilding can only be resilient if it is inclusive. The relentless efforts of women peacebuilders, indigenous and Afro-Colombian communities, civil society organizations and social leaders, must be matched with sustained commitment by the State. I once more call upon the Government to guarantee the necessary human, financial and technical resources to bring to fruition key pending aspects of the Final Agreement, including its gender and ethnic provisions, and to make full use of its architecture.

116. While Colombians will remain at the forefront, they can count on the continued strong support of the United Nations in the period ahead. And I also take the opportunity to express my gratitude to the men and women across the Mission and the United Nations system in Colombia for their dedication to peace.

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

Verification Mission Geospatial 

