



# Security Council

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## United Nations Verification Mission in Colombia

### Report of the Secretary-General

#### Introduction

1. The present report is submitted pursuant to Security Council resolution [2545 \(2020\)](#), by which the Council extended the mandate of the United Nations Verification Mission in Colombia, and Council resolution [2366 \(2017\)](#), in which it requested the Secretary-General to report on the implementation of the mandate of the Mission every 90 days. The report covers the period from 26 September to 28 December 2020.

2. On 24 November, Colombians marked the fourth anniversary of the signing of the Final Agreement for Ending the Conflict and Building a Stable and Lasting Peace between the Government of Colombia and the Fuerzas Armadas Revolucionarias de Colombia-Ejército del Pueblo (FARC-EP), which put an end to a conflict of more than 50 years and ushered in a new era of peacebuilding in which unquestionable achievements have been attained even as concerns and risks remain. As a result of the Agreement, the country has seen a significant nationwide decrease in violence compared to previous decades, such as notable reductions in homicides, kidnappings and other conflict-related indicators; Colombian democracy has expanded to include more political participation; conflict-affected communities are beginning to see the fruits of long-overdue investments in their regions; and a transitional justice system is working to provide truth, justice and reparations to victims. The parties to the Agreement remain committed to implementing the various components of the Agreement, with the support of Colombian society and the international community, amid formidable challenges, particularly the persistence and concentration of violence in some regions.

#### Major developments

3. In the light of the dire security conditions facing them, hundreds of former combatants marched in late October from various regions of the country to Bogotá in a “Pilgrimage for life and peace” to demand effective actions from the Government and from State entities, including to enhance security guarantees and strengthen the reintegration process. The mobilization was triggered by the killing on 16 October of a well-known regional leader of the Fuerza Alternativa Revolucionaria del Común (FARC), Juan de Jesús Monroy, who was actively leading reintegration activities, and one of his bodyguards, Luis Alexander Largo, who was also a former FARC-EP member. The mobilization was peaceful and orderly, and measures were taken to prevent coronavirus disease (COVID-19) contagion. No security incidents were reported.



4. On 6 November, the President of Colombia, Iván Duque, hosted a meeting with representatives of the Pilgrimage at the Presidential Palace, following several meetings with senior government officials in Meta department and in Bogotá. The President reiterated his commitment to the reintegration process and to strengthening security measures for former combatants and announced that in 2021 he would visit all the former territorial areas for training and reintegration that he has not yet visited. Both the Government and representatives of the Pilgrimage highlighted the positive results of the meeting; the Presidential Counsellor for Stabilization and Consolidation, Emilio Archila, recognized the constructive nature of the exchange and the representative of FARC, Pastor Alape, highlighted the importance of the dialogue with President Duque as a positive step in fighting stigmatization against former combatants. On 17 December, six weeks after the meeting, President Duque visited the former territorial area for training and reintegration in Dabeiba, Antioquia, where he announced a land purchase for productive and housing projects for former combatants.

5. In October, thousands of indigenous people from south-western Colombia, organized in a form of social mobilization known as a *minga*, marched to Bogotá demanding increased security in their territories and the implementation of the Final Agreement. In Bogotá, representatives of the *minga* attended a session of the House of Representatives and mobilized peacefully in the city to express their demands. The Government has emphasized its efforts to meet commitments adopted in previous discussions with the communities, and several meetings have taken place in Cauca department after the mobilization.

6. In October, Congress approved the general national budget for 2021. The Government informed that peace-related investments increased by 9 per cent. Opposition parties, including FARC, have argued that funding remains insufficient, especially for the comprehensive rural reform envisioned in section 1 of the Final Agreement, and for the National Comprehensive Programme for the Substitution of Illicit Crops established in section 4. Congress also approved a 10-year extension of the Victims and Land Restitution Act, which was due to expire in 2021.

7. In November, the media reported the existence of audio recordings from mid-2019 from the drug trafficking case against former FARC-EP commander and now member of a FARC-EP dissident group Seuxis Hernández, alias “Jesús Santrich”. These reports have stirred controversy over an alleged lack of cooperation from the Office of the Attorney-General at the time with the Special Jurisdiction for Peace. Civil society and political actors have called for a thorough investigation on the matter.

### **Implementation priorities for 2021**

8. In his report of 26 March 2020 (S/2020/239), the Secretary-General proposed three priorities to guide the implementation of sections 3.2 (reintegration) and 3.4 (security guarantees) of the Final Agreement in 2020. Progress was accomplished in some areas, despite complications arising from the COVID-19 pandemic. This section analyses the progress made and the remaining challenges over the reporting period, while also proposing five priorities for 2021 focused on the Mission’s verification of sections 3.2 and 3.4 of the Final Agreement, as well as elements which are essential for progress in the implementation of these sections, and the Final Agreement more broadly: consolidating State presence, strengthening constructive dialogue between the parties, and promoting reconciliation.

**Ensure protection and security for former combatants, conflict-affected communities, and social leaders and human rights defenders**

9. The greatest threat to the implementation of the Final Agreement continues to be the persistent violence against the thousands of men and women who voluntarily laid down their arms in good faith and remain committed to peace, against the communities that have endured violence for decades, and against the social leaders and human rights defenders who work on their behalf.

*Attacks against former combatants*

10. Since the signing of the Final Agreement, the Mission has verified 248 killings of former combatants (six women), including 21 during the reporting period (two women, three of indigenous origin and two Afro-Colombians) and a total of 73 during 2020. Additionally, the Mission has verified 55 attempted homicides (three women) and 20 disappearances (all men) since the signing of the Agreement.

11. Threats from illegal armed groups are driving former combatants away from former territorial areas for training and reintegration and new collective reintegration areas in several regions. With support from the Government, 191 former combatants have relocated. However, there are cases where former combatants do not report their decision to leave, fearing this may heighten their security risks. In many cases, their families, including children and partners, are left behind with little institutional support.

12. The security situation for former combatants in the border area between Meta, Caquetá and Guaviare departments has deteriorated sharply in recent months. Taking advantage of limited State presence, FARC-EP dissident groups have expanded their reach and are jeopardizing the reintegration process by threatening and attacking former combatants, co-opting their economic projects and sabotaging their political and social initiatives. Several local FARC leaders have left due to security issues and have expressed reluctance to return.

*Precautionary measures ordered by the Special Jurisdiction for Peace*

13. In November, senior Government and State officials were called before the Special Jurisdiction for Peace to update on actions taken to comply with its orders, issued in July, to bolster the measures provided for in the Final Agreement for the security and protection of former combatants. The Special Jurisdiction for Peace had also previously ordered precautionary measures for the protection of ethnic communities accredited as victims in the three macro-cases focused on specific regions of the country.

14. During the hearing, the Government reiterated its commitment to the protection of former combatants and highlighted measures such as the deployment of public security forces around the former territorial areas for training and reintegration and its support for the National Protection Unit. The Government reported that it allocated approximately \$3.8 million to the Unit in September, in compliance with the order by the Special Jurisdiction for Peace for a plan to fill over 680 vacancies of bodyguards and over 50 vacancies of security risk analysts within the Specialized Subdirector for Security and Protection of the National Protection Unit, tasked by the Final Agreement with the protection of former combatants. To date, none of these additional bodyguards and only 27 analysts have been recruited.

15. Since the signing of the Final Agreement, 25 former combatants (all men) have been killed while awaiting a response to their protection requests by the National Protection Unit. Concerns remain about the more than 1,000 protection requests pending evaluation and implementation. Equal access to security and protection schemes by women former combatants remains a challenge, despite internal guidance

issued in April by the Specialized Subdirectorate calling on its staff to ensure equal access to protection schemes by both men and women former combatants.

16. The orders of the Special Jurisdiction for Peace to submit the guidelines and action plan for the public policy to dismantle criminal organizations and their support networks, and to advance in the formulation of the Strategic Plan for Security and Protection have invigorated discussions within the National Commission on Security Guarantees and the Technical Committee on Security and Protection, respectively. However, the finalization of these instruments, which are provided for in the Final Agreement, is still pending.

17. The Special Jurisdiction for Peace had also ordered the Office of the High Commissioner for Peace to convene the High-level Unit of the Comprehensive Security System for the Exercise of Politics, to operationalize the comprehensive protection programme for members of the FARC party, as per the Final Agreement. The Office of the High Commissioner for Peace has reported several meetings of the Unit between September and October, including with the participation of FARC, to discuss a draft document to establish the protection programme.

#### *Special Investigations Unit*

18. The work of the Special Investigations Unit of the Office of the Attorney-General, created by the Final Agreement, is critical to fight impunity by bringing to justice those responsible for attacks against former combatants and social leaders, including intellectual authors.

19. The Special Investigations Unit has reported 289 cases of attacks against former combatants under its purview. During the reporting period, the Unit reported three new convictions, for a total of 34, as well as 20 cases in trial phase, 38 under investigation, and an additional 49 with arrest warrants issued. The Unit also reported the arrest of 27 individuals allegedly involved in killings of former combatants, including 2 individuals who belong to a FARC-EP dissident group operating in the tri-border region between Meta, Caquetá and Guaviare and who are linked to the killing of Juan de Jesús Monroy and his bodyguard.

20. The lack of security measures and remoteness of some rural areas where these crimes take place affect the ability of the Special Investigations Unit to carry out its mandate. Strengthened support from public security forces is necessary to enable prompt access to these areas and to execute arrest warrants.

21. Strengthening local judicial capacity, particularly in the regions most affected by violence, is also key to combat impunity. At the Special Investigations Unit hearing in November, the Deputy Attorney General highlighted the role that regional specialized judges can play in bringing perpetrators to justice and in dismantling local criminal organizations.

#### *Deployment of public security forces*

22. Army and police units continue providing protection around former territorial areas for training and reintegration. These deployments have helped protect former combatants in former territorial areas for training and reintegration, with only two killings registered therein since the signing of the Final Agreement. Approximately 35 per cent of killings in 2020 have occurred in new reintegration areas or in their vicinity, around which there are no dedicated security deployments. During the reporting period, the presence of public security forces has been reinforced in former territorial areas for training and reintegration located in municipalities where there are ongoing confrontations between the armed forces and illegal armed groups.

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

23. During the reporting period, the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR) received information about 42 killings of human rights defenders and social leaders (1 documented and 41 under verification), for a total of 53 verified this year (including 11 indigenous leaders and 2 Afro-Colombian leaders), 5 of whom were women and another 74 cases are under verification. Since the signing of the Final Agreement, OHCHR has reported 378 killings (including 44 women, 6 lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender and intersex persons, 69 indigenous leaders and 15 Afro-Colombian leaders). OHCHR has also reported 13 killings of large numbers of civilians during the reporting period, while an additional 10 incidents are under verification. In 2020, 269 civilians have been killed, including 24 children and 19 women, in 69 such incidents.

24. Attacks against women social leaders and women human rights defenders continue hindering their participation in the implementation of the Final Agreement and peacebuilding more broadly. For example, in December, the organization Mujeres Andinoamazónicas temporarily withdrew their participation in the Special Forum on Gender due to ongoing attacks against its representative and limited security guarantees for her participation. In November, in accordance with the Comprehensive Programme for Safeguards for Women Leaders and Human Rights Defenders, the National Protection Unit presented a new protocol for gender-sensitive risk analysis; civil society and women's groups have requested to provide inputs. More progress is still necessary to implement the rest of the action plan of the Comprehensive Programme.

25. Political parties from across the spectrum reported violence against their members, including three members of the Colombia Humana political movement who were killed in Antioquia, Cauca and Huila; a female member of the Puerto Guzmán municipal council, Putumayo department, from the Partido Conservador who was killed alongside her husband, a former FARC-EP combatant; and threats against Senator José Obdulio Gaviria, reported by the Centro Democrático party. These events highlight the importance of strengthened prevention and protection measures for all political parties, including through the Comprehensive Security System for the Exercise of Politics. In December, the System activated its gender working group, which will focus on measures to protect women members of political parties.

*National Commission on Security Guarantees*

26. The National Commission on Security Guarantees met once and several technical-level meetings were held during the reporting period; however, it has yet to finalize its public policy to dismantle criminal organizations and illegal armed groups and their support networks. In November, arguing that the Government has not given due consideration to their proposals, civil society representatives to the Commission presented their own draft guidelines for the public policy.

*Regional dynamics of violence*

27. Attacks against former combatants, social leaders, human rights defenders and communities continue to be concentrated in rural areas where there is limited State presence, illegal armed actors, illicit economies and high levels of poverty. Of the killings of former combatants in 2020, 75 per cent occurred in rural areas, 75 per cent in municipalities with illicit crops and 72 per cent in municipalities where the development programmes with a territorial focus are being implemented. 78 per cent of killings of social leaders and human rights defenders occurred in rural areas, 98 per cent in municipalities with illicit economies, especially drug production and illegal

mining, and 45 per cent in municipalities with development programmes with a territorial focus. In municipalities with similar characteristics, humanitarian actors reported that the violence from illegal armed groups was impacting communities in terms of rising indicators of displacement, confinement, forced recruitment and sexual violence.

28. The violence is concentrated in specific departments. Those with the most killings of former combatants this year have been Meta (11), Valle del Cauca (8), Cauca (8), Chocó (7), Putumayo (7) and Nariño (6), while those with the most homicides of social leaders and human rights defenders were Cauca (12), Norte de Santander (9), Putumayo (8), Valle del Cauca (5) and Chocó (4). During 2020, the Office of the Ombudsman issued the highest number of early warnings for municipalities in Chocó, Antioquia and Cauca. The concentration of violence in these departments demonstrates the importance of tailored strategies to mitigate the risks and address the specific needs of these areas.

### **Ensure sustainability of the reintegration process**

29. Four years after they laid down their arms, more than 13,000 former combatants (23 per cent of whom are women) remain actively engaged in the reintegration process, and the Government and FARC continue working together to overcome challenges to the process, including within the National Reintegration Council.

#### *Access to land and housing*

30. Chief among these challenges is access to land for former combatants, which is essential for the sustainability of the reintegration process. Following his meeting with former combatants in November, President Duque committed to accelerate the purchase of land for former combatants' housing and productive projects, starting with the recently announced purchase of land for the former territorial area for training and reintegration in Dabeiba. During his visit, President Duque also announced that the technical studies required for housing projects in five former territorial areas for training and reintegration were finalized, allowing for the design and building process to begin, and that the first 35 homes are expected to be handed to former combatants in Dabeiba in May 2021.

31. As part of its efforts to give permanence to the 24 former territorial areas for training and reintegration, which host approximately 2,500 former combatants, the Government has so far purchased land for three of these territorial areas and is in the process of purchasing land for an additional three out of the nine it had committed to by the end of year. The allocation of these plots is now required.

32. In October, the Ministry of Housing issued a decree to include former combatants as beneficiaries of subsidies for rural housing. In November, the Government issued a decree allowing the allocation of rural land for former combatants' productive projects from the Fund for Rehabilitation, Social Investment and Fight Against Organized Crime, and Congress approved legislation on housing for victims and former combatants which creates a path for them to access housing opportunities.

33. FARC has made proposals to expedite existing avenues to access land and explore new ones, including the allocation of additional resources for the special programme for granting land for reintegration. The Agency for Reintegration and Normalization has committed to analysing these proposals and has suggested including former combatants in the registry of land beneficiaries of the National Land Agency, to make it possible for them to access subsidies and mechanisms to obtain land and formalize ownership.

*Former combatants residing outside former territorial areas for training and reintegration, including in new reintegration areas*

34. Over 9,500 former combatants reside outside former territorial areas for training and reintegration. Their continued challenges, including insecurity, lack of productive opportunities and uneven institutional support, were at the core of former combatants' demands during the Pilgrimage, and remain one of the key issues requiring prioritization within the reintegration process.

35. Former combatants who are pursuing their collective reintegration process in new reintegration areas require increased institutional attention. While 44 per cent of collective productive projects approved by the National Reintegration Council are outside former territorial areas for training and reintegration, these projects involve only about 11 per cent of former combatants living outside former territorial areas for training and reintegration. In its second report on the implementation of the Final Agreement, the Office of the Inspector-General called for scaling up the institutional response in new reintegration areas.

36. Deteriorating security conditions continue affecting collective reintegration outside of former territorial areas for training and reintegration. In areas like El Diamante, La Pista and Nueva Esperanza in Meta, Algeciras and Neiva in Huila, and La Blanquita in Antioquia, former combatants facing threats have relocated to protect themselves and their families.

*Relocation of former territorial areas for training and reintegration due to security challenges*

37. With support from local authorities, the Agency for Reintegration and Normalization is on track to purchase a plot of land in Caquetá for the transfer of the former territorial area for training and reintegration in La Macarena, Meta. Despite efforts by the Agency for Reintegration and Normalization and FARC, no suitable plot of land has been identified to relocate the former territorial area for training and reintegration in Buenos Aires, Cauca. In October, in a visit to Mutatá, Antioquia, the Government and former combatants who relocated from the former territorial areas for training and reintegration in Ituango in August agreed on temporary housing solutions, whose implementation is pending. Although food provisions were delivered and health brigades visited in a timely manner, water and sanitary conditions remain deficient and increased efforts are needed to find permanent solutions. Lessons learned from the difficulties encountered in the relocation of that former territorial area for training and reintegration should inform other future relocations, especially the need to ensure housing and basic services.

*Productive projects*

38. Approximately 41 per cent of accredited former combatants have received financial support for productive projects through mechanisms stipulated in the Final Agreement. These include 86 collective productive projects approved by the National Reintegration Council (20 during this period) benefiting 3,353 former combatants (935 women), 61 of which have received funding, and 1,865 individual projects (398 approved this period) benefiting 2,269 former combatants (517 women). FARC has requested more information on the approval, monitoring and support provided to individual projects.

39. While the pace of approval of projects should continue, many projects face challenges in terms of market access and technical assistance, which have been compounded by the COVID-19 pandemic.

40. A total of 46 per cent of accredited women former combatants (1,433 women) have benefited from productive projects. However, their participation in decision-making instances remains limited, including due to their caregiving tasks, which have intensified during the pandemic.

#### *Health, including COVID-19*

41. The Working Group on Health has continued monitoring and responding to COVID-19 cases among former combatants. According to the Agency for Reintegration and Normalization, 154 former combatants (55 women) have tested positive for the virus, 3 of whom died (all men).

42. Visits by health professionals to former territorial areas for training and reintegration have continued without disruptions. According to the Ministry of Health, around 80 per cent of beneficiaries of these health visits in 2020 were community members and 64 per cent were women.

43. In December, the National Reintegration Council approved the continuity of health services in former territorial areas for training and reintegration in 2021. The Technical Working Group on Health is analysing options to prioritize health interventions in rural areas hosting new reintegration areas by engaging local and regional authorities.

44. According to the Agency for Reintegration and Normalization, 1,222 former combatants (161 women) identify themselves as persons with disabilities. In November, the Agency launched a pilot initiative to determine the needs of 220 of these former combatants. Support to provide functional rehabilitation is included in the programme CaPAZcidades, financed by the European Union, which has yet to be presented to the National Reintegration Council.

#### *Reintegration policies and institutions*

45. During the meeting between President Duque and former combatants, they agreed to hold seven sessions of the National Reintegration Council outside Bogotá, with the objective of defining local action plans.

46. Progress was made in fine-tuning the methodology for the reintegration road map, which establishes the long-term framework for the socioeconomic reintegration process. Three exercises were undertaken as pilots to design collective and individual road maps. The implementation of the road map has not begun, as FARC has stated that the establishment of the national reintegration system is a precondition. Such a system is envisioned in the national reintegration policy (CONPES 3931) as a coordination mechanism among all entities involved in reintegration. FARC argues that a national reintegration system is necessary to ensure a whole-of-Government approach to the reintegration process. Submission to the National Reintegration Council of a proposal on the system will allow formal discussions between the parties in this regard.

47. The Working Group on Gender of the National Reintegration Council reports some progress on inter-institutional coordination to implement the gender provisions of the national reintegration policy, but funding remains limited, especially for local entities.

#### *Political reintegration*

48. In December, the National Council of the FARC party met to have preparatory discussions regarding the upcoming Assembly of the party, which will address four issues: the party's political platform; guidelines for the 2022 elections; the possibility of changing the party's name; and the election of a new legal representative.

49. In November, FARC Senator Griselda Lobo chaired a plenary session of the Senate, becoming the first FARC party member to do so.

50. Some former combatants involved in local politics have reported stigmatization and security concerns related to their political activity in Caquetá, Huila, Meta and Valle del Cauca. Ensuring security for former combatants during the 2022 elections was among the commitments made by FARC and the Government during the Pilgrimage.

### **Consolidate the integrated presence of the State in conflict-affected areas**

51. One of the greatest challenges facing Colombia is closing the long-standing gap between urban and rural areas regarding the integrated presence of the State, especially in areas affected by the conflict. The Final Agreement established objectives and programmes aimed at closing this gap, including, among others, the development programmes with a territorial focus to bring infrastructure and services to rural areas; the comprehensive security and protection programme for communities and organizations in the territories to improve security for communities who continue to be wracked by violence; and the National Comprehensive Programme for the Substitution of Illicit Crops to provide families with viable alternatives to move away from illicit economies. Although the Government has reiterated its commitment to all three programmes, maintaining momentum and ensuring adequate resources is important to bring to fruition the full promise of these instruments.

#### *Comprehensive rural reform*

52. Steady progress has been achieved over the last four years in implementation of the development programmes with a territorial focus for 170 conflict-affected municipalities: norms were issued, participatory planning was carried out locally, small infrastructure works have been completed, additional funding sources were identified and are being utilized, and coordination improved between national and regional authorities. FARC and other opposition parties, as well as various civil society actors, have reiterated that the development programmes with a territorial focus must preserve the spirit of the Final Agreement and be articulated with other elements of the comprehensive rural reform envisioned in section 1 of the Final Agreement, such as the 16 national sectorial plans (of which only 8 have been approved). State oversight entities and civil society organizations have called for the continued participation of local communities in the implementation of the development programmes with a territorial focus.

53. In addition to the 1,110 completed works under the development programmes with a territorial focus, 102 are currently being implemented. Additionally, out of 173 projects approved with royalties from hydrocarbon and mineral exploitation, 3 have been concluded and 79 are under way. Of the 100 projects approved in the “works for taxes” programme with the private sector, 57 are focused on municipalities covered by the development programmes.

54. The Government committed to finalizing, before the end of the year, the 15 remaining stabilization road maps for regions with development programmes with a territorial focus, the main instrument for inter-institutional coordination to implement the development programmes; however, all 15 are still pending.

55. In October, the Government issued a decree regulating the integral subsidy for access to land, in compliance with the Final Agreement. The Government also presented a bill to Congress, currently under discussion, to create a dedicated judicial mechanism for the resolution of land-related disputes, also provided for in the Final Agreement, to guarantee timely access to justice for the rural population.

56. The Government has reported that 1,033,468 hectares have been added to the Land Fund to grant land for peasants, out of the goal of 3 million in the Final Agreement. However, the Office of the Inspector General has indicated that a large majority of these plots are currently occupied, so they still require formalization and regularization rather than being counted as plots for allocation.

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

57. The technical committees of the comprehensive security and protection programme for communities and organizations, created by section 3.4 of the Final Agreement, continue to meet. There has been progress in training 135 leaders (87 women and 48 men) as community peace promoters in seven prioritized departments, who are expected to begin working in early 2021.

*Illicit crop substitution*

58. The National Comprehensive Programme for the Substitution of Illicit Crops, established in section 4 of the Final Agreement, continues to be implemented in 56 municipalities in 14 departments concentrating 65 per cent of the country's coca crops. There are 99,097 families participating in the Programme (36.5 per cent of which are headed by women). According to the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC), compliance by participating families stands at 97 per cent and reseeded is only 0.2 per cent. This demonstrates the effectiveness of voluntary eradication and its potential to allow families to transition out of their dependence on illicit crops, provided that sustainable development opportunities reach these communities more quickly.

59. The Government, communities and local authorities recently signed agreements within the framework of the Programme for the Substitution of Illicit Crops in municipalities in Vichada, Guainía, Cauca, Valle del Cauca and Nariño, for the participatory development of essential infrastructure works. In regions affected by poverty and violence, where illicit crops persist, peasant communities and leaders continue to call upon the Government to prioritize voluntary substitution over other eradication strategies.

**Reinforce constructive dialogue between the parties**

60. Progress in the implementation of the Final Agreement depends on constructive dialogue between the Government and FARC to discuss and jointly resolve the various challenges facing the process, especially through the mechanisms established by the Agreement.

61. Under the Final Agreement, the Commission for the Follow-up, Promotion and Verification of the Implementation of the Final Agreement is the main forum for dialogue between the parties regarding its implementation. While the Commission has been meeting more regularly this year, it is not being used to its full potential and not all key senior Government officials attend the meetings regularly, affecting the Commission's ability to have substantive discussions. In October, the Commission dedicated a session of the Special Forum on Gender to present its report on the implementation of the gender provisions of the Final Agreement, which noted limited progress in this regard.

62. In addition to bilateral forums such as the Commission for the Follow-up, Promotion and Verification of the Implementation of the Final Agreement and the National Reintegration Council, the parties have used tripartite mechanisms with the support of the United Nations to engage in constructive dialogue over various implementation issues. The tripartite working group on transit to legality, composed

of the Office of the High Commissioner for Peace, FARC and the Mission, has made substantial progress over the past year in addressing pending accreditations of former combatants, which are necessary for them to access reintegration benefits. As of November 2020, the total number of accredited former combatants is 13,589 (10,453 men and 3,136 women). There are still 139 individuals (6 women) whose accreditation is pending definition, most of whom are in prison.

63. The tripartite working group on mines, composed of the Office of the High Commissioner for Peace, FARC and the United Nations, has approved the project proposal to gather information on the location of landmines. The project proposal is undergoing final legal review by the Office of the High Commissioner for Peace.

64. The Tripartite Protection and Security Mechanism, composed of the National Protection Unit, the national police and the army, and the Mission, has continued to monitor the security of former combatants, including during the Pilgrimage.

65. The deadline set by the Government for the handover of the former FARC-EP assets is 31 December 2020. While the Government, the Special Assets Administration and FARC have continued to make efforts to meet this deadline, there are security, legal and financial challenges affecting the process. A more effective use of the tripartite working group regarding former FARC-EP assets, is important in order to help the parties jointly find suitable solutions.

#### **Strengthen conditions for reconciliation**

66. With the aim of placing victims' rights at the centre of the Final Agreement, the parties established the Comprehensive System for Truth, Justice, Reparation and Non-Repetition, which is helping to lay the groundwork for reconciliation. Since its three components started functioning in 2018, the Special Jurisdiction for Peace has made progress in its seven macro-cases dealing with specific crimes and regions; the Truth Commission continues gathering and analysing thousands of testimonies for its final report; and the Special Unit for the Search for Persons Deemed as Missing continues to bring relief to the families of forcibly disappeared persons.

67. The Special Jurisdiction for Peace informed that by mid-2021 it will issue its first sentences defining responsibilities of individuals for crimes committed during the conflict within some of its macro-cases. President Duque has indicated that the Government will request the Security Council to expand the Verification Mission's mandate to include verifying compliance with sentences to be issued by the Special Jurisdiction for Peace. FARC and the Special Jurisdiction for Peace have expressed their support for the Mission to perform this task as envisaged in the Final Agreement.

68. Several victims' organizations have continued presenting reports on conflict-related sexual violence and calling for the opening of a specific case investigating sexual and gender-based violence. While the Special Jurisdiction for Peace is considering this request, it is investigating conflict-related sexual violence within most of its cases.

69. Based on the testimonies of former members of the public security forces, the Special Jurisdiction for Peace has located six mass graves in Dabeiba, Antioquia, containing remains of potential victims of extrajudicial executions and forced disappearances. To date, it has handed over four remains, including of two minors, to their families.

70. Since October, FARC leaders have acknowledged responsibility, apologized and pledged to contribute to the truth regarding emblematic crimes committed during the conflict, including several high-profile assassinations. The Special Jurisdiction for Peace, which is determining its jurisdiction over these assassinations, requested the Office of the Attorney-General to share its investigations and called several FARC

leaders to render their versions. Several victims have deemed these recognitions as a step towards reconciliation, some have accepted the apologies by FARC, and some have asked for evidence and the full truth. Victims' organizations continue calling on all actors, including current and former State officials, members of the public security forces, members of the private sector and former members of other illegal armed groups, to fully contribute to the truth and acknowledge their responsibility for crimes committed during the conflict.

71. The Truth Commission has continued receiving testimonies from actors from different sectors of Colombian society, including former presidents, members of Congress, and other senior State officials, as well as social leaders, members of military forces, and former members of illegal armed groups. The Commission appointed Afro-Colombian social leader Leyner Palacios, a victim of the conflict whose community in Chocó department continues to be affected by illegal armed groups to replace commissioner Ángela Salazar, who passed away.

72. The Special Unit for the Search for Persons Deemed as Missing recovered 24 bodies of potential victims of enforced disappearance in a cemetery in Caldas department. The Unit also found several persons alive who had been declared as missing and helped them reunite with their families. The Unit began the identification of some of the bodies it has located, using DNA samples from 182 relatives of victims of forced disappearance.

#### *National Council for Peace, Reconciliation and Coexistence*

73. Section 3.4 of the Final Agreement mandates the National Council for Peace, Reconciliation and Coexistence to produce a public policy on reconciliation, coexistence and non-stigmatization. In October, the Council presented the guidelines for the public policy to President Duque, following a two-year participatory process that included inputs from more than 1,700 individuals and organizations. In December, the Council and the Ministry of Interior validated the public policy with civil society organizations. According to the framework plan for the implementation of the Final Agreement, the policy must be approved by 31 December. Council members have expressed concern regarding the lack of resources allocated for the implementation of the policy in the 2021 national budget.

74. The Office of the High Commissioner for Peace has provided technical assistance to 32 departmental and 497 municipal authorities for the establishment of local councils for peace, reconciliation and coexistence, which are important spaces for civil society and institutions to engage in dialogue in the territories.

#### **Cross-cutting issues**

##### *Role of municipal and departmental authorities*

75. Departmental and municipal authorities continue taking on an increasingly active role in the implementation of the Final Agreement. Authorities in several municipalities and departments met with former FARC-EP members during the "Pilgrimage for life and peace" and facilitated logistics for the mobilization. Local and departmental governments in Antioquia, Meta and Caquetá have also provided support for the relocation of former territorial areas for training and reintegration owing to security risks.

76. Two new departmental working groups on reintegration were established in Risaralda and Tolima, and another one in Bogotá. The latter is a milestone for promoting reintegration opportunities for approximately 800 former combatants living in the capital. The existing 15 regional coordination mechanisms play a critical role in the reintegration process by supporting socioeconomic initiatives at the local

level. According to the Agency for Reintegration and Normalization, 198 municipalities, hosting 84 per cent of former combatants, have included a reintegration component in their development plans.

77. In November, the Office of the Inspector-General, the Office of the Ombudsman and the National Federation of Departments organized a Round table for the Protection of Life with departmental authorities from Cauca, Antioquia, Norte de Santander, Huila, Nariño, Córdoba, Putumayo and Chocó to discuss measures to address the killings of social leaders and human rights defenders in those departments.

#### *Gender*

78. While the Final Agreement continues to be praised as a global example of a gender-inclusive peace process, the implementation of its gender provisions, including those related to reintegration and security guarantees, continues to show limited progress. Women's organizations have expressed particular concern about insufficient delivery of gender-sensitive services and programmes for women former combatants and over the worrying security situation facing women leaders and human rights defenders. The High-Level Forum on Gender of the Government has reported some progress in the 51 gender indicators of the framework plan for the implementation of the Final Agreement. Additional technical and financial resources remain necessary to accelerate the implementation of the gender provisions related to reintegration and security guarantees.

79. Social leaders and human rights defenders from the lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender and intersex community suffer additional discrimination and limited access to protection measures. In November, members of the lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender and intersex community, two of whom were registered victims of the conflict, were displaced in Tumaco, Nariño, due to threats. In December, a lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender and intersex leader was killed in Antioquia. In October, the non-governmental organization Colombia Diversa presented a report to the Truth Commission documenting over 30 cases of violence, including sexual violence and torture, against lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender and intersex persons during the conflict in Nariño, Putumayo and Tolima departments.

80. The Mission and the United Nations country team participated in various activities to commemorate the anniversary of Security Council resolution [1325 \(2000\)](#) on women and peace and security, including an event with the Deputy Secretary-General of the United Nations and the Vice-President of Colombia, Marta Lucía Ramírez. During her virtual visit marking the anniversary, the Deputy Secretary-General also met with the President and top peace officials, national women organizations and female human rights defenders as well as with women peacemakers in Meta. As part of the International Day for the Elimination of Violence Against Women on 25 November, the Mission, in partnership with local actors, organized 18 local events with women former combatants and from local communities to raise awareness on prevention and response to violence against women, which has increased during the pandemic.

#### *Ethnic affairs*

81. Security conditions in ethnic territories remain critical in Cauca, Chocó, Nariño and Antioquia, including for indigenous and Afro-Colombian leaders and their communities, as well as for former combatants, owing to the actions of illegal armed groups and criminal organizations fighting over control of illicit economies. In Chocó, the Emberá indigenous peoples and Afro-Colombian communities have been particularly affected by illegal armed groups and criminal organizations, with mass displacements and confinements, including the displacement of over 900 individuals

after the killing of one of their leaders in Bahía Solano municipality in December. In Cauca, indigenous organizations denounced the forced recruitment of at least 32 indigenous children in 2020, allegedly by former FARC-EP dissident groups. During the reporting period, these groups twice attacked an indigenous senator, Feliciano Valencia, of the Alternative Indigenous and Social Movement (MAIS) political party and also declared 23 indigenous leaders as military targets. In Nariño, clashes between armed groups combined with the installation of anti-personnel mines led to the confinement and displacement of the Awá people, and 12 members of the community were killed during the reporting period.

82. Former combatants of ethnic origin continue to face challenges in accessing housing opportunities and productive projects tailored to their specific circumstances, and the National Reintegration Council has yet to establish a working group on ethnic issues, as recommended by the High-Level Forum of Ethnic Peoples.

83. The Ministry of Interior is currently reviewing a draft decree with measures to improve protection in indigenous territories, including strengthening the indigenous guards and the development of individual and collective protection road maps tailored to the security challenges facing indigenous people.

#### *Children*

84. Of the 123 participants (68 women) in “A Different Path of Life”, the programme for adolescents who were separated from FARC-EP as children, 69 have received compensations and 14 have received resources for productive projects. Reparations for members of the programme are on hold following a resolution of the Victims Unit prioritizing other vulnerable groups.

85. The Office of the High Commissioner for Peace and the Agency for Reintegration and Normalization continued working to trace and accredit 263 individuals (111 women) recognized in 2020 as being children at the time of the signing of the Final Agreement. The Mission is supporting tracing efforts for several of them. Further details are needed regarding how to include them in the “A Different Path of Life” programme, as well as in the victim’s registry so that they can receive reparations.

86. Currently, 2,191 children of former combatants are beneficiaries of the programmes of the Colombian Institute for Family Welfare, 389 of whom are in former territorial areas for training and reintegration. The parties continue designing a programme to provide education to former combatants’ children up to five years old. With support from the Peacebuilding Fund, the United Nations Children’s Fund and the United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women (UN-Women), in coordination with FARC and the Government, childcare areas were built in five former territorial areas for training and reintegration.

87. In December, the Office of the Ombudsman reported that, between March and September, it registered the forced recruitment of 83 children and adolescents (34 female) by various illegal armed groups, mostly in Caquetá and Cauca, with 21 and 19 cases respectively. Twenty of these children are indigenous and two are Afro-Colombian.

#### *Youth*

88. The Truth Commission carried out four regional dialogues with youth to discuss their perspectives on the conflict and the specific ways that they were and continue to be affected by violence. The youth representatives expressed concern over stigmatization against youth leaders and emphasized the importance of guaranteeing youth participation in peacebuilding spaces at the local, regional and national level.

Various youth platforms in Colombia commemorated the fifth anniversary of Security Council resolution [2250 \(2015\)](#) in December.

89. In addition to forced recruitment, there are reports of increasing threats against youth leaders by illegal armed groups and criminal organizations. In November, a FARC-EP dissident group spray-painted the house of a youth indigenous leader in Caloto, Cauca, giving him 24 hours to leave the municipality.

90. The Agency for Reintegration and Normalization and FARC continue working through the technical working group on youth of the National Reintegration Council to consult at the regional level a draft reintegration road map for young former combatants.

### **Developments related to the Ejército de Liberación Nacional**

91. Amid ongoing hostilities, civil society organizations and communities in the areas affected by the Ejército de Liberación Nacional (ELN) continue to call for a resumption of talks between the Government and the ELN.

92. In October, the Government announced that a prominent commander of an ELN front operating mostly in Chocó, was killed by the public security forces. The authorities held him responsible for acts of kidnapping, homicide and forced recruitment, among others.

### **Coordination with the United Nations country team**

93. The United Nations country team adopted the joint workplans for the implementation of the United Nations Sustainable Development Cooperation Framework, signed with the Government in March 2020. For the 2020–2023 period, the country team estimates \$496.5 million in investments for peacebuilding.

94. The Mission and country team continued coordinating closely on the Secretary-General's outlined priorities for 2020 through the reintegration and security guarantees working groups. Regarding reintegration, the United Nations multi-partner trust fund for sustaining peace in Colombia has provided support for access to land and housing in former territorial areas for training and reintegration, including for feasibility studies and designs for housing projects, and for 20 initiatives by grass-roots organizations to promote coexistence and reconciliation in reintegration settings.

95. The United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), the International Organization for Migration (IOM), the World Food Programme and the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations continued providing technical and financial support for the sustainability of former combatants' productive projects, including by ensuring Internet access in the context of the pandemic to allow them access to technical assistance and education. In addition, UNDP and the Mission began the implementation of 12 community-based reintegration initiatives. Regarding security guarantees, the multi-partner trust fund provided support for human rights defenders organizations to reactivate 13 territorial round tables for security guarantees, through which they were able to advocate with national and local institutions for prevention and protection plans. Twenty-two former combatants (6 women) were certified for humanitarian demining activities with the non-governmental organization Humanicemos DH, out of a total of 124 that have been trained by the United Nations Mine Action Service. In October, Humanicemos DH began demining operations in Caquetá.

96. The country team continues to support the COVID-19 pandemic response in the regions most affected by violence. Health care was provided to more than 10,200 people in regions under development programmes with a territorial focus through the health brigades from the "Health for Peace" programme implemented by IOM, the United Nations Population Fund and the World Health Organization, while 170

municipalities under the development programmes with a territorial focus received personal protective equipment for their health personnel.

### **Mission support**

97. The Mission continues its COVID-19 prevention efforts while taking measures for a safe return to offices. As part of the Mission's continued efforts to better focus mandate delivery and make more effective use of existing human resources and assets, field offices in Antioquia and Caquetá departments were reconfigured.

98. As at 25 November 2020, women constitute 49 per cent of the Mission's civilian personnel, 60 per cent of United Nations volunteers, and 33 per cent of international observers.

### **Safety and security**

99. In areas mentioned in paragraph 12 where FARC-EP dissident groups pose heightened risks for former combatants and communities, security incidents also affected United Nations personnel. In October, members of a FARC-EP dissident group forced a team from OHCHR, the Truth Commission and the Office of the Ombudsman out of their vehicles and incinerated the OHCHR vehicle in La Macarena, Meta. Also during the reporting period, a team of United Nations Department of Safety and Security personnel was stopped by an illegal armed group in Toribío, Cauca; and two UNODC teams in Puerto Rico and Solita, Caquetá had to be evacuated after being questioned by illegal actors; the Department of Safety and Security continuously updates the corresponding security risk management measures.

### **Conduct and discipline**

100. The Mission continued its efforts to prevent misconduct and sexual exploitation and abuse. The Mission will distribute a brochure with information on its Code of Conduct, including reporting mechanisms, to local communities in regions where the Mission is deployed.

101. No cases of sexual exploitation and abuse were reported during the reporting period.

### **Observations**

102. For Colombia and the entire world, 2021 is set to be marked by the recovery efforts from the COVID-19 pandemic. I once again urge Colombians to view the comprehensive implementation of the Final Agreement as part of these efforts. The Final Agreement provides instruments to bring development opportunities, security and peace to the communities that were most affected by the conflict and have now been affected by the pandemic.

103. President Duque's meeting with former combatants in November was a positive step forward in constructive dialogue between the parties on concrete measures to address issues facing the reintegration process and security guarantees for former combatants. I trust that the relevant Government institutions will make all the necessary efforts to implement the commitments made by President Duque during the meeting.

104. Bearing in mind those commitments, and in the context of the priorities for implementation outlined in the present report, I will focus my observations on concrete recommendations to make progress on these priorities, especially in the short term.

105. Ongoing violence in several departments – the product of limited State presence, illicit economies and the presence of illegal armed groups, exacerbated by high levels of poverty – has a direct and damaging effect upon the reintegration process, the implementation of the Final Agreement and peacebuilding more broadly. Improving

security in conflict-affected areas requires simultaneous progress on various fronts, such as improved protection measures for the individuals and communities who are being targeted; effective action against the illegal armed groups and criminal organizations responsible for much of this violence; and ensuring that individuals and actors responsible are brought to justice.

106. Regarding protection, ensuring the full staffing of the Specialized Subdirector for Security and Protection of the National Protection Unit is necessary to prevent the killing of any more former combatants. It is also important to ensure that women former combatants have equal access to protection schemes, including through the full implementation of internal guidance within the National Protection Unit regarding the equal use of collective protection schemes by men and women. Given the heightened vulnerability of former combatants outside of former territorial areas for training and reintegration, it is essential to strengthen protection and security measures tailored to their specific circumstances. A focused strategy for providing security to new reintegration areas is key, including through effective deployments of public security forces around these areas. Once again, I urge all actors to respond in a timely and effective manner to the risks identified in the early warnings of the Office of the Ombudsman, including through the Intersectoral Commission for Rapid Response to Early Warnings.

107. A public policy for dismantling illegal armed groups and criminal organizations and their support networks, the principal mandate of the National Commission on Security Guarantees, is long overdue. I recognize the preparatory work that has taken place thus far by its subcommissions and concur with Security Council members in once again urging the Commission to promptly adopt the public policy, bearing in mind the recommendations of civil society.

108. Reinforced support for the Special Investigations Unit of the Office of the Attorney-General, and for local judicial entities, is key to bring to justice perpetrators of threats and killings of social leaders and former combatants. Such support includes additional efforts to prosecute and convict intellectual authors, which is crucial for dismantling the criminal organizations behind this violence. The public security forces also have an important role to play in assisting the Special Investigations Unit in executing arrest warrants and providing timely access to crime scenes and information.

109. On reintegration, I welcome the Government's efforts to move forward with the purchase of land for former territorial areas for training and reintegration and hope this momentum continues for the remaining areas. I trust that President Duque's commitment to accelerate access to land for former combatants, including for productive projects, will soon translate into additional positive results. Furthermore, I encourage the parties to advance in jointly finding permanent housing solutions, including through the establishment of a working group on housing in the National Reintegration Council. The parties' decision to hold sessions of the Council at the regional level is also welcome, as an opportunity to listen directly to the concerns of former combatants, including of those living outside of former territorial areas for training and reintegration, and define local-level action plans with clear commitments, responsibilities, resources and timelines that also ensure that local communities benefit from the process. It is also key to ensure greater focus by the National Reintegration Council on measures to support the long-term sustainability of productive projects, including through enhanced technical assistance and greater access to markets, and implementation of measures to increase women former combatants' participation in decision-making spaces. Finally, it is important to ensure that former combatants who have had to relocate due to security concerns continue receiving institutional support.

110. I once again urge the Government and FARC to work together to make progress in the gender provisions of the national reintegration policy, including through the allocation of necessary technical and financial resources. Given the difficulties

indigenous and Afro-Colombian former combatants face, the National Reintegration Council should give due consideration to the recommendation of the High-Level Forum of Ethnic Peoples to create a working group on ethnic issues. I trust that the National Reintegration Council technical working group on youth will soon finalize its reintegration road map for youth former combatants, following the consultations in the territories. I also encourage all actors to reinforce measures to facilitate spaces for greater participation of young people in peacebuilding and reconciliation efforts.

111. Consolidating an integrated presence of the State in conflict-affected areas remains a necessary condition for lasting peace and sustainable development. Continued implementation of the development programmes with a territorial focus will bring much-needed investments to those communities, particularly in the context of the recovery from the pandemic. It will be important for the technical committees of the comprehensive security and protection programme for communities and organizations in the territories to make progress during 2021 on the pilot initiatives in the regions, in order to strengthen local capacities for conflict resolution, prevention and response. It is also key to ensure the success of the next phase of the National Comprehensive Programme for the Substitution of Illicit Crops, which is to provide families with licit and sustainable income-generating opportunities so that their transition away from illicit economies can be complete and sustainable. Finally, it is fundamental to ensure complementarity among these programmes and between them and the rest of the Final Agreement, including the reintegration process.

112. Constructive dialogue between the Government and FARC regarding implementation of the Agreement, at the political and technical levels, has proven effective for overcoming challenges on various issues. In that spirit, I encourage the parties to continue discussions in the tripartite working group regarding the former FARC-EP assets. It is in the interest of victims, and with a view to upholding their right to reparations, that the Government and FARC continue to work jointly and make every possible effort to find ways to meet that commitment. As always, the Mission stands ready to assist them. Similarly, I urge the parties to fully utilize the Commission for the Follow-up, Promotion and Verification of the Implementation of the Final Agreement to hold substantive discussions and agree on concrete solutions.

113. Transitional justice is at the heart of the peace process and its prospects to carry Colombia from violent conflict to a peaceful future. Colombia's innovative Comprehensive System for Truth, Justice, Reparation and Non-Repetition is built to guarantee rights and reparations to victims, to provide spaces for society to come to terms with its past, and to ensure that the crimes committed during the conflict are never repeated. In 2021, the Special Jurisdiction for Peace will deliver its first sentences and the Truth Commission is scheduled to issue its final report. The Special Unit for the Search for Persons Deemed as Missing continues determining the whereabouts of victims. It is therefore more important than ever for all individuals who were involved in the conflict to acknowledge their responsibilities, for all institutions to fully cooperate with the three components, and for Colombian society to extend its full support for the System so that it can continue its contributions to reconciliation.

114. The recommendations I have outlined in the present report underscore the interconnected nature of the various sections of the Final Agreement and, hence, the importance of ensuring its comprehensive implementation. Progress in the reintegration process and the development programmes with a territorial focus must be matched by more vigorous implementation of other sections, particularly those geared towards improving security in the territories, which is the necessary pre-requisite for a firm and lasting peace to take root. As the country enters the fifth year of peacebuilding in the framework of the Final Agreement, I congratulate Colombians on the achievements the peace process has delivered so far and encourage the parties to persevere so that its transformative potential can be truly realized.



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