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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 [2704 \(2023\)](#), by which the Council extended the mandate of the United Nations Verification Mission in Colombia, and resolution [2366 \(2017\)](#), in which the Council requested the Secretary-General to report on the implementation of the mandate of the Mission every 90 days. The report covers the period from 27 March to 26 June 2024.

II. Major developments

2. During the reporting period there were noteworthy efforts to enhance coordination and coherence among entities involved in the implementation of the Final Agreement for Ending the Conflict and Building a Stable and Lasting Peace. At the same time, different sectors were increasingly vocal in expressing divergent views regarding peace implementation and Government social policies, underscoring a need to seek consensus and join efforts to overcome persisting challenges to the consolidation of peace.

3. On 14 May, during a judicial swearing-in ceremony, the President of Colombia, Gustavo Petro, publicly reaffirmed the duty of the State to fulfil its obligation to implement the Final Agreement signed in 2016. The President stressed that the responsibility for implementing the Final Agreement lies not only with the Executive branch, but with the entire State, arguing that there had been insufficient commitment in this regard. He listed three aspects of the process that required special attention, namely the implementation of the comprehensive rural reform, the transformation of conflict-affected territories and determining the truth concerning events that unfolded during the conflict. He affirmed his intention to bring this message to the Security Council. Separately, following a number of comments by the President on the issue, there was a strong domestic debate regarding whether the Final Agreement calls for the holding of a constituent assembly.

4. For the first time since the signing of the Final Agreement, the parties initiated a process in March to review the Framework Plan for Implementation of the Final Agreement within the Commission for the Follow-Up, Promotion and Verification of the Final Agreement. The Plan constitutes a strategic instrument for planning, setting goals and indicators, promoting policy recommendations and defining the necessary measures for implementation in the years to come. The review of the Plan requires



the involvement of Government institutions and presents a unique opportunity to strengthen their coordination around the implementation of the Final Agreement.

5. To accelerate implementation of the Final Agreement, the National Planning Department and the Unit for Implementation of the Final Agreement – tasked with leading inter-institutional coordination – developed a rapid response plan to meet the goals set forth in the Final Agreement. In addition, the National Planning Department and the Office of the Counsellor Commissioner for Peace (formerly the High Commissioner for Peace) worked on fostering coordinated inter-institutional interventions in prioritized regions.

6. Tensions related to the work of the Special Jurisdiction for Peace persisted. Representatives of the Comunes party continued to state that the Special Jurisdiction for Peace, after seven years of activity, was deviating from its envisioned goals of providing prompt justice for victims and legal certainty for individuals under its authority. On 7 June, Comunes members of Congress held a public hearing at the Senate, during which they reiterated concerns about former combatants' lack of legal certainty and described how these challenges were affecting the day-to-day lives of individuals under the authority of the Special Jurisdiction for Peace. The Special Jurisdiction for Peace has expressed its openness to dialogue. However, it stipulated that some aspects pertaining to those goals are connected to ongoing judicial processes and called for respect for its autonomy and independence. The Special Representative of the Secretary-General for Colombia and Head of the United Nations Verification Mission in Colombia, Carlos Ruiz Massieu, and the guarantor countries, Cuba and Norway, maintained close communications with all concerned actors with a view to helping them overcome the identified obstacles through dialogue, within the framework established by the Final Agreement.

7. The Special Jurisdiction for Peace continued to move towards the issuance of its first sentences, including an important ruling within Case 01 (on hostage-taking, other severe deprivations of liberty and concurrent crimes committed by FARC-EP). The ruling ratified the indictment for war crimes and crimes against humanity that was made during the investigative phase against the seven former members of the Secretariat of the Fuerzas Armadas Revolucionarias de Colombia-Ejército del Pueblo (FARC-EP). A substantive and procedural challenge to the ruling was lodged by the indictees. While the indictees had previously acknowledged their responsibility for events that took place during the conflict, they maintain differences regarding the legal definition by the Special Jurisdiction for Peace of some actions attributed to them. The next stage towards the issuance of the restorative sentences will be determined by the outcome of the appeal.

8. The Government continued six separate negotiation processes with illegal armed groups, with varying degrees of progress and challenges. During the reporting period, President Petro publicly acknowledged the complexities of pursuing total peace.

9. On 25 May, the peace dialogues between the Government and the Ejército de Liberación Nacional (ELN) reached an important milestone when the parties signed an agreement on the participation of society in peacebuilding, which is the first item on the talks agenda. The national bilateral ceasefire – the longest-lasting between the two parties – has been broadly observed. The monitoring and verification mechanism helped to prevent armed clashes on 18 occasions by facilitating the separation of forces between the two sides. However, the negotiations have recently faced severe challenges. Disputes between the parties persisted in the Nariño Department, where the Government continued to engage bilaterally with an ELN Front (Comuneros del Sur), within the framework of a regional peace initiative. In a statement issued on 6 May, ELN announced, to broad criticism, that it would lift its suspension of

kidnappings for ransom, to which it had committed during the fifth round of talks in January 2024.

10. The dialogue process between the Government and the group referred to as the Estado Mayor Central Fuerzas Armadas Revolucionarias de Colombia-Ejército del Pueblo (EMC FARC-EP) also faced important challenges, with some fronts opting out of the process. This occurred mostly in Cauca, Nariño and Valle del Cauca Departments. The Government had unilaterally lifted the ceasefire on 20 March in those Departments, following acts of violence exerted by the group towards the civilian population, in particular Indigenous Peoples. This generated debate regarding the fronts' core objectives about their participation in the peace process. The region, and Cauca Department in particular, suffered a rise in violent clashes, including several attacks by EMC FARC-EP against public security forces.

11. At the ongoing negotiations between the Government and EMC FARC-EP, there was progress in discussions focusing on initiatives for territorial transformations to promote development in the most affected areas, initially in Caquetá, Guaviare, Meta and Norte de Santander Departments, including through initial meetings with community representatives in these areas. The processes are aimed at identifying land where formal tenure could promote the development of social infrastructure, such as health and education centres.

12. During the reporting period, the oversight, monitoring and verification mechanism continued functioning as agreed between the parties in the areas where the ceasefire remained in place, focusing on strengthening dialogue to prevent confrontations. Between February and May, at least 22 people held hostage by EMC FARC-EP were released. The mechanism also reported that coordinated work – at the national level and through its five regional and local branches – prevented nine instances of potential armed clashes between the parties.

13. The Government and the group known as Segunda Marquetalia started formal peace dialogues in Caracas, on 24 June. In April, upon the request of the Government, the Office of the Attorney General temporarily suspended the arrest warrants against nine members of Segunda Marquetalia whose appointment by the group as negotiators in forthcoming talks with the Government was recognized by the President.

14. During the reporting period, large protests for and against Government-proposed reforms mobilized thousands of citizens into the streets, reflecting divisions within Colombian society. The demonstrations were largely peaceful. President Petro has called for a national pact in support of his proposed reforms.

15. Congress continued to discuss draft bills related to the implementation of the Final Agreement. In May, it approved a bill amending the 2011 Victims and Land Restitution Act. The bill, which is now to be endorsed by the President, contains judicial, administrative and budgetary measures for the benefit of the country's more than 9 million registered victims. The bill aims to strengthen measures, including assistance and integral reparation to victims. In June, Congress passed a bill incorporating the Agrarian Jurisdiction into the Colombian judicial framework and defining its structure. It will now undergo constitutional review. However, another bill regulating the operational and procedural aspects of the Jurisdiction was not discussed during the reporting period and was not included in the legislative calendar. The establishment of the first tribunal and five specialized courts was therefore postponed.

III. Main activities and priorities

A. Verification of the implementation of the Final Agreement

16. There have been some encouraging developments in the implementation of the Final Agreement. However, resolute action and a highly coordinated and comprehensive response by the Government and all relevant State entities are still required. The recent issuance of a decree aiming to galvanize the Peace Cabinet, composed of Ministers and other State entities charged with peace implementation, offers a real opportunity in that respect, by defining the roles, responsibilities and actions from the relevant Government entities.

Comprehensive rural reform

17. Progress in the implementation of the comprehensive rural reform requires concerted efforts by the Government and State institutions. Active engagement at the highest institutional level is key to enabling a coordinated, strategic, effective and timely execution of the unprecedented resources allocated to rural reform.

18. The National Agrarian Reform System, driven by the Ministry of Agriculture, established relevant policy guidelines and planned coordinated State interventions, including through the establishment of 100 of the 200 planned rural reform committees at the local level. Further progress requires the full engagement of State institutions and ministries beyond the agricultural sector. In May, President Petro participated in a high-level event on the implementation of the National Agrarian Reform System, during which a nationwide programme with a budget of \$657 million was launched to boost rural productive partnerships.

19. The Government continued to dialogue with key stakeholders. Agreements were reached with cacao and sugar cane producers to increase their productive capabilities and to contribute to the implementation of rural reform. Peasant platforms reached agreements with State institutions on the attribution of land titles, the allocation of peasant reserve zones, and the definition of productive projects. Security, however, remained a concern. Agricultural producers denounced an increase in violence in the territories, which affects the legal security of property. While acknowledging efforts to implement rural reform, peasant organizations and rural women's platforms called for concrete results, including on security guarantees. Incidents affecting peasant leaders, claimants of land restitution and women, were registered in several regions.

20. The new leadership of the National Land Agency adjusted land acquisition criteria, prioritizing large-scale land purchases. It signed agreements to purchase 200 large-scale plots from the Special Assets Administration and the Victims' Compensation Fund. In addition, the Agency committed to purchasing 100 plots as part of an agreement with the Colombian Federation of Cattle Ranchers.

21. It will be important to accelerate the pace of land acquisition and formalization processes in order to meet the Government's goals for 2024. According to the National Land Agency, acquisitions for the Land Fund, established by the Final Agreement, reached 12,194 hectares during the reporting period, totalling 266,156 hectares under the current Administration; of these, 85,002 hectares have been adjudicated. In addition, 35,902 hectares were formalized during the reporting period, totalling 1,128,982 hectares since August 2022. Despite these developments, greater efforts are needed to move forward with the formal adjudication of land with productive assets.

22. In a positive development, the Agency for Rural Development established a coordination committee with the National Land Agency, identifying 27 municipalities

for integrated action in the Caribbean region of Colombia. The provision of land and productive projects to local communities in Córdoba Department were of particular symbolic significance, as this is one of the regions most affected by conflict dynamics.

23. The Agency for Rural Development and the Agency for Territorial Renewal announced investments amounting to \$44.5 million in development programmes with territorial focus. In addition, the Agency for Rural Development allocated \$7.8 million for rural women's projects. The Agency for Rural Development also established a new programme, the National Agrifood Alliance, to stimulate overall regional food production and commercialization.

24. The Land Restitution Unit is adopting new strategies to accelerate the restitution of land to victims. For example, the Unit created a collective track for peasant organizations affected by mass displacement, identifying 17 pilot cases nationwide, including an all-women organization. New requests for restitution were made for more than 45,950 hectares, with another 13,777 hectares handed over to beneficiaries.

25. Participation processes regarding development programmes with territorial focus reached a significant point. Following months of dialogue with newly elected local and regional authorities, development programmes with territorial focus initiatives were included in 97 per cent of development plans in the 170 prioritized municipalities. In 2024, 66 development programmes with territorial focus projects are being implemented with an investment of \$92 million.

26. The first revision phase of the action plans for the development programmes with territorial focus was finalized, with over 10,000 grassroots representatives participating. The process will conclude with the development of investment plans, addressing a key gap which has hindered implementation. As part of this effort, 4,800 initiatives, out of 33,000, have been prioritized, including 24 transformative projects established in the National Development Plan. In the context of this review process, the special consultation mechanisms – created to guarantee the effective participation of ethnic peoples in the development programmes with territorial focus – requested greater involvement in the design of agreed methodologies and enhanced security guarantees for their members. Progress in the design of transformative projects has been achieved in Catatumbo, Norte de Santander Department, and in Nariño Department. In order to make decisive progress in effecting the territorial transformations envisioned in the Final Agreement, the full and coordinated implementation of the development programmes with territorial focus and the national plans for rural reform is essential.

27. The 16 national plans for rural reform are essential to reducing rural poverty and improving food security. The National Planning Department and the Unit for Implementation of the Final Agreement issued policy guidelines to enhance the execution and follow-up of these plans. As a result, action plans for 2024 have been developed for 10 of them. According to the National Planning Department the plans that are showing the most progress in terms of the indicators of the Framework Plan for Implementation are connectivity, solidarity economy, right to food, social protection and electricity. In contrast, the plans on housing and drinking water are lagging. While the rural health plan was still pending approval, there has been progress on health infrastructure, with new hospitals and health centres built in most development programmes with territorial focus subregions during this administration.

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

28. The Government identified both the Comprehensive Reintegration Programme, agreed by the parties to better structure the process – and the National Reintegration

System, which aims to facilitate coordination among various State entities – as key pillars of the sustainable reintegration process for thousands of men and women former combatants. While funding has been made available in the budget of the Agency for Reintegration and Normalization, the decree needed for the formal establishment of the Programme and for setting up the National Reintegration System is pending endorsement by several governmental institutions. In its absence, the Agency's ability to execute its budget is severely hampered. The Programme and the System are essential to achieving programmatic coherence and broader institutional support for former FARC-EP members.

29. The National Reintegration Council held two sessions during the reporting period to discuss strategic reintegration issues. The parties reached consensus on benchmarks within the Comprehensive Reintegration Programme to define an individual's successful completion of the reintegration process. A reintegration index was agreed to track progress towards achieving autonomy, as well as to monitor the provision of enabling institutional support. Monthly stipends will be disbursed based on achieving minimum progress with individual reintegration plans. The Government committed to continue funding individual reintegration benefits until the end of its term. At a session in Cali aimed at addressing the needs of former combatants from the southwest region, security was a prime concern, along with access to fertile lands and sustainable projects.

30. As agreed by the Commission for the Follow-Up, Promotion and Verification of the Final Agreement, an inter-institutional mechanism was reactivated to address the relocation needs of former territorial areas for training and reintegration. The search for plots to relocate former territorial areas from Antioquia, Guaviare and Putumayo Departments is under way. The Agency for Reintegration and Normalization announced the planned closure of two former territorial areas in Cauca Department by midyear, as most former combatants had left owing to insecurity. As former territorial areas are transferred or cease to exist, the security and other needs of the communities left behind must be addressed.

31. Access to land, property rights and housing are essential for the sustainability of the reintegration process as they help secure livelihoods. Those factors are prioritized in a draft decree, which still needs to be enacted, regulating the establishment of special collective reintegration areas, as well as criteria for consolidating former territorial areas for training and reintegration.

32. Despite coordination efforts between the National Land Agency, the Agency for Reintegration and Normalization and former combatants, the limited progress on the definition of selection criteria, procedures and access to resources for land acquisition has led to growing dissatisfaction among former FARC-EP members. Currently, 286 land requests are awaiting processing by the National Land Agency, with additional 23 pending with the Special Assets Administration. The Mission is engaging with Government agencies and with delegates from Comunes and Economías Sociales del Común (ECOMUN) to monitor the status of these land requests, as a decrease was observed in land acquisition for reintegration purposes. The Agency for Rural Development is designing projects to provide technical assistance to former combatants' agricultural, livestock and fish farming initiatives on new plots in Meta Department.

33. The Mission has urged the Ministry of Housing to allocate resources, as foreseen in the Final Agreement, for rural and urban subsidies for former combatants within and outside former territorial areas for training and reintegration. Reestablishing a housing working group with the Agency for Reintegration and Normalization could improve coordination and access to various housing options, including innovative solutions like self-construction, promoted in the former territorial areas for training

and reintegration in Cesar Department. The Ministry of Housing has focused on implementing housing projects in four former territorial areas for training and reintegration. Of note, 74 houses in Caldon, Cauca Department, were built and a tender process in Arauquita, Arauca Department is set to be launched. The Agency for Reintegration and Normalization moved forward with the provision of temporary housing in three recently relocated former territorial areas for training and reintegration, in Meta Department. Arrangements are pending to devise relocation plans with habitat solutions for a former territorial areas for training and reintegration in Guaviare Department.

34. In relation to economic reintegration, many former combatants still prioritize collective economic sustainability as a means of fostering social cohesion. The Agency for Reintegration and Normalization made the landmark decision to directly contract former combatants' cooperatives to strengthen their organizational capabilities, focusing on productive assets, financial and information management. This includes a contract with Economías Sociales del Común and the Coordinator of Federations for Peace for \$700,000.

35. The Agency for Reintegration and Normalization has allocated approximately \$7 million to the sustainability strategy for collective productive projects. However, operational and procedural delays have hindered the participation of cooperatives in the implementation of the strategy. So far, 65 cooperatives have applied for assistance under the strategy, including three led by women, with only six of them benefiting from sustainability plans. There are 16 productive projects facing security risks that have been fast-tracked. Ensuring grassroot-level implementation and an actionable gender-based approach to sustainability remains essential.

36. A project aiming to foster community actions with a gender-sensitive approach continues to make progress in 12 municipalities. In-kind support to joint local initiatives between women former combatants and communities continued. The Agency for Reintegration and Normalization and local authorities also worked jointly on promoting the inclusion of gender issues into territorial development plans. The reactivation of the gender working group of the National Reintegration Council, led by the Agency, could strengthen institutional coordination to mainstream gender issues into public policies.

37. The community-based reintegration strategy launched in 2023 has reached an important phase, defining joint action plans among 10,000 former combatants and community members in 66 municipalities. The continued implementation of the strategy will help prevent stigmatization against former combatants and strengthen reconciliation processes.

38. Reintegration commitments have been included into approximately 100 territorial development plans out of the 147 municipalities prioritized by the Agency for Reintegration and Normalization. Allocating resources to fulfil these commitments is crucial to translating the political will of local authorities into tangible actions for the reintegration process.

39. The Comunes party remained active in Congress, supporting the Government's legislative reforms on pension and health care systems, agrarian issues, peasants' rights and social services. They also held the seventeenth plenary meeting of their national executive board to review programmatic priorities.

Security guarantees

40. In a welcome development, the Government issued a decree formally adopting the public policy to dismantle illegal armed groups and criminal organizations, as well as a related action plan. This was an important outstanding commitment from

the Final Agreement to address structural drivers of persisting violence. Relevant Government entities held a meeting to discuss strategic priorities, including geographical ones, for the implementation of the policy in preparation for their endorsement during a forthcoming session of the National Commission on Security Guarantees.

41. Compared with the previous quarter, during the reporting period there was a reduction in the number of homicides of former FARC-EP combatants (from 11 to 5) and reported killings of human rights defenders and social leaders (42 to 25). However, overall violence continues to be a concern in Antioquia, Arauca, Bolívar, Caquetá, Cauca and Chocó Departments, where illegal armed groups operate. Further developments on the implementation of key inter-institutional frameworks, public policies and decision-making processes regarding the protection and security of populations prioritized by the Final Agreement and the dismantling of illegal armed groups could significantly improve the situation.

42. Since the signing of the Final Agreement, 421 former combatants (including 11 women, 51 Indigenous People and 57 Afro-Colombians) have been reported killed, 142 have survived murder attempts and 40 have been reported as missing. Violence against former combatants continued to be concentrated in Arauca, Caquetá, Cauca, Huila and Putumayo Departments. Disappearances, displacements, recruitment attempts and threats by illegal armed groups continued to affect the security of former combatants. Former territorial areas for training and reintegration located in areas with a strong presence of illegal armed groups, such as Caquetá, Cauca and Meta Departments, continued to require reinforced preventive deployment of public security forces and collective protection measures. Since the approval of the evacuation protocol in November 2023, 30 individuals, including former combatants and members of their families (five women and six children) facing serious risks, including in Arauca, Cauca and Cesar Departments, have been successfully relocated.

43. Throughout the reporting period, the Office of the Attorney General's Special Investigations Unit continued its investigations of the 524 total cases of crimes against former combatants, resulting in two trials initiated and three convictions secured. Of concern is the existence of 234 outstanding arrest warrants and the limited progress in apprehending perpetrators. A total of 451 cases remain under inquiry or investigation, including 26 cases with a gender-specific focus. Strengthening the territorial deployment strategy and fostering coordination with the judicial police continue to be essential to expedite investigations and execute arrest warrants in Departments such as Cauca, Caquetá, Meta and Putumayo.

44. Within the framework of its precautionary measures for the security of former FARC-EP members, on 8 May, the Special Jurisdiction for Peace summoned the Counsellor Commissioner for Peace to provide details on progress with regards to the security of former combatants. The Special Jurisdiction for Peace also requested information on how the issue was being addressed within the context of ongoing negotiations as part of the Government's total peace policy. The purpose was to enhance coordination between policies stemming from the Final Agreement, the total peace policy and the National Development Plan.

45. A coordinated and strategic use of inter-institutional bodies created by the Final Agreement is essential to achieving an effective response in the view of persistent security challenges. To that end, the operationalization of security guarantees mechanisms requires the effective use of the High-Level Unit of the Comprehensive Security System for the Exercise of Politics established under the Final Agreement.

46. The Constitutional Court issued a follow-up ruling to its declaration of an unconstitutional state of affairs owing to the low implementation of the security guarantees provisions outlined in the Final Agreement. Its new orders focus on the

effective implementation of the security guarantees framework, including the strengthening of the Special Investigation Unit of the Office of the Attorney General, the strategic security plan and the comprehensive protection programme for former combatants, as well as the public policy to dismantle illegal armed groups.

47. The aggregated figures for the first semester of 2024 (1 January to 31 May) provided by the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights show a decrease of 13 per cent (from 95 to 82) in reported killings of human rights defenders compared with the first semester of 2023. At the same time, violence by illegal armed groups significantly affected social leaders and human rights defenders in Chocó Department, community action board representatives in Arauca Department, Indigenous authorities in northern Cauca Department and peasant leaders involved in rural reform. The Office recorded 82 allegations (26 verified, 23 under verification, and 33 inconclusive) of murders of leaders and human rights defenders (including 6 women, 8 Indigenous persons, 6 Afro-Colombians and 23 peasant leaders). The Office reported 13 massacres, 4 of which were verified (in Atlántico, Cauca, Norte de Santander and Valle del Cauca Departments), 7 were under verification, and 2 were inconclusive. Verified cases had a total of 15 victims (14 men and 1 child), a decrease of 45.8 per cent compared with the previous reporting period. The cumulative figures for the semester show a decrease of 47 per cent.

48. Between January and May 2024, the Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs recorded 28,151 people affected by mass displacement and 53,065 people in confinement in 52 municipalities of 11 Departments, mainly in Bolívar, Cauca, Chocó and Nariño Departments. In addition, 32,000 individual displacements were registered. Displacement and confinement affected ethnic peoples disproportionately (61 per cent). The Office of the Ombudsman recently highlighted, within its early warning system, the continued use by all armed actors of gender-based and conflict-related sexual violence targeting women and girls in Cauca and Chocó Departments. Security in ethnic territories, especially in southwestern Colombia, continued to be deeply concerning, with cases of child recruitment and violence against women, internal displacement, confinement and the use of landmines. Strategies incorporating gender and ethnic perspectives are needed to address these problems.

49. The use of landmines continues to affect vulnerable communities. Between January and 30 April, the Office of the Counsellor Commissioner for Peace registered 48 landmine victims, 33 of whom were civilians (68.75 per cent) and 21 were members of ethnic communities (43.75 per cent). These figures represent an increase of 20 per cent over the same period of 2023. The highest landmine contamination continued to be in Cauca, Chocó, Nariño and Norte de Santander Departments. Nearly all mine-related incidents happened in rural areas.

50. The Ministry of Interior continued working jointly with Government entities and women's organizations to finalize the second action plan of the Comprehensive Programme for the Safeguards of Women Leaders and Human Rights Defenders. The Programme offers an opportunity to address specific risks to women and their needs for protection.

51. During the reporting period, the Office of the Ombudsman issued early warnings for Cauca, Chocó, Córdoba, Huila, Santander and Valle del Cauca Departments. Strengthening the institutional response to early warnings remained a priority to be addressed.

Restorative sentences

52. The recent holding of public hearings, where victims of the armed conflict were prominently featured, underscored their essential role and their strength and

perseverance in the defence of their rights to justice, truth, reparation and non-repetition. This was the case with a public hearing, within Case 01, for the acknowledgement of truth and responsibility by 10 former commanders of the Joint Central Command of FARC-EP, which was held in April in Ibagué, Tolima Department. During the hearing, the first to be held at the regional level, against former FARC-EP mid-level commanders, victims described the harm endured, inquired about specific cases and spoke of their expectations related to reparations and the search for their missing relatives. The indicted parties acknowledged their responsibility for war crimes and crimes against humanity committed in Huila, Quindío and Tolima Departments. The hearing was held amid a tense security environment owing to reported threats. The Special Jurisdiction for Peace and the Constitutional Court issued orders for the relevant authorities to implement urgent protection measures for the accredited victims and the indicted parties.

53. In May, the Peace Tribunal of the Special Jurisdiction for Peace assumed jurisdiction over eight former members of the public security forces charged with war crimes and crimes against humanity within joint Case 03 and 04 in Dabeiba, Antioquia Department, after the Judicial Panel for Acknowledgement of Truth and Responsibility determined that the eight individuals, including one colonel, had acknowledged their responsibility and provided full, detailed and exhaustive testimony, and were therefore eligible for restorative sentences. Two other colonels, who declined to accept responsibility, were referred to the Investigation and Accusation Unit of the Special Jurisdiction for Peace for prosecution under the adversarial procedure and, if found guilty, could face up to 20 years in prison.

54. Contribution to truth and commitment towards victims continues to be central to the success of the restorative justice process. According to the Special Jurisdiction for Peace, to date about a dozen individuals – all members of public security forces, including several generals – have not contributed to the provision of truth and have not acknowledged responsibility. As a result, they will be referred to the adversarial process under the terms of the Final Agreement.

55. In order to enhance legal certainty for former FARC-EP members under its jurisdiction, in May the Special Jurisdiction for Peace made public its order to relevant authorities to materialize the benefits derived from over 9,600 amnesties granted by the Government in 2017 and 2018. This includes the clearing of criminal records related to political crimes. It constituted a welcome development, although there remain significant workload and procedural challenges before the issues pertaining to the legal certainty of former combatants are resolved.

56. Support for individuals appearing before the Special Jurisdiction for Peace is essential to the success of restorative justice. After extensive consultations with members of the public security forces under the authority of the Special Jurisdiction for Peace, the Agency for Reintegration and Normalization is working to establish a support route for these individuals, originally devised in April 2022 and included in the National Development Plan 2022–2026. The comprehensive assistance would be tailored to the specific needs of thousands of individuals, including health, education, funding of productive projects and measures to foster the success of their participation in the restorative justice process, as well as psychosocial attention. The effective and prompt implementation of this route is key to allow members of the public security forces under the authority of the Special Jurisdiction for Peace to continue to comply with their obligations vis-à-vis the victims.

57. Preparations for the implementation of restorative sentences continued. The fifth session of the coordination mechanism between the Government and the Special Jurisdiction for Peace, which deals with this matter, was held in May. Overall progress in the identification and provision of State-sponsored restorative projects remained

limited. Only a handful of initiatives (e.g. by the Agency for Reintegration and Normalization, the Unit for Land Restitution and the Ministry of Environment) have been preliminarily deemed suitable for these purposes in the short term. Redoubling efforts to ensure adequate conditions for the implementation of restorative sentences remains essential, as is the engagement of high-level Government officials to ensure greater progress.

58. In May, the Special Jurisdiction for Peace, the Governor of Valle del Cauca and the Mayor of Cali, signed an agreement to advance the design of restorative activities, following a similar initiative in March with the Governor of Antioquia and the Mayor of Medellín. This illustrated the important role that authorities at all levels of government play in enabling the implementation of restorative sentences.

59. In April, the Special Jurisdiction for Peace launched its restorative system, which aims to provide opportunities for the individuals under its authority to undertake restorative activities. This concerns individuals who are not deemed most responsible, as well as those who have acknowledged responsibility for grave crimes. The restorative activities would not necessarily be tied to a specific case, criminal pattern or group of victims, but rather contribute to the overall restorative processes under the relevant macro cases. Some victims' organizations have complained about a lack of consultation and a missing connection between restorative activities and the nature of the crime perpetrated during the conflict. They underscored the need to ensure their meaningful participation. Individuals under the authority of the Special Jurisdiction for Peace who are not deemed as the most responsible for conflict-related crimes have also raised concerns claiming, among other issues, that the fulfilment of restorative activities within a strict conditionality regime was not stipulated in the Final Agreement, and that there was no clarity on how participation by sentenced individuals would be measured in relation to the fulfilment of their sentences.

60. During the reporting period, former members of the FARC-EP, as well as members of the public security forces under the authority of the Special Jurisdiction for Peace, continued to call for greater clarity regarding matters which in their view hinder their right to legal certainty. This underscored the need for urgent efforts to address this fundamental issue, which affects thousands of individuals appearing before the Special Jurisdiction for Peace.

Ethnic chapter

61. Enhanced coordination and efficient resource allocation are key prerequisites to success in fulfilling the ethnic chapter's overarching goal of advancing development, empowerment and justice for ethnic peoples. Regarding the pact signed by the Government in November 2023 to bolster the implementation of the chapter's, efforts remained in the early stages of the process and were limited to gathering information from entities with implementation responsibilities. With the pact aiming to achieve the implementation of 60 per cent of the ethnic chapter by 2026, moving forward and achieving tangible results by the end of 2024 will be essential to initiate the long-awaited transformative changes in ethnic territories.

62. In May, the Constitutional Court declared that the law that created the Ministry of Equality, led by the Vice-President, Francia Márquez, was unconstitutional owing to a procedural flaw. The Court ruled that the Ministry could continue to function until 20 June 2026. As relevant authorities address the problem identified by the Court, it is important that the Government remain focused on strengthening gender-responsive coordination efforts and developing key policies and actions related to women and ethnic peoples.

63. During the reporting period, the Unit for Implementation of the Final Agreement and the National Planning Department urged all entities with responsibilities under

the ethnic chapter to update their information and share their goals for 2024 within an integrated information system. Out of 23 entities, 11 have yet to comply, thereby hampering the monitoring of progress and the allocation of resources.

64. The National Commission of Indigenous Territories reported that the National Land Agency had allocated less than 6 per cent of the resources allocated for Indigenous territories. Only 30 per cent of development programmes with territorial focus initiatives focused on ethnic peoples have received funding, compared with 50 per cent for projects without this focus. Although the Agency for Territorial Renewal earmarked 30 per cent of its resources for ethnic initiatives, as agreed to in the pact, they have yet to be disbursed. Initiatives backed with these resources could help move forward with transformations, for instance, in the Pacific region.

65. Many groups of ethnic peoples have applied for collective reparations as victims of the armed conflict, following the extension of the application period for an additional year. The Victims Unit registered 1,454 new cases. In Guaviare, 1,143 individuals of the Nukak Indigenous Peoples were officially registered as victims of the armed conflict, having endured 11 forced mass displacements between 2002 and 2012. Their registration constituted a significant step towards receiving collective reparations, as the Nukak have been prioritized under the ethnic chapter.

66. In April, the Special Jurisdiction for Peace collectively accredited the Bari Indigenous Peoples as victims in Case 07 (on the recruitment and use of children in armed conflict), granting them the right to participate in the proceedings of the Special Jurisdiction for Peace, including submitting observations throughout the process. As at 10 May, the Special Jurisdiction for Peace has collectively accredited over 201,000 Indigenous and 126,000 Afro-Colombians in its 11 cases, representing 96 per cent of the total of collectively accredited victims.

67. Land tenure rights have long featured among the main demands of ethnic peoples. With a backlog of almost 10 million hectares under judicial review, restitution to ethnic peoples is a challenge for State institutions. Five restitution courts specialized in land for ethnic territories were recently established to contribute to this task.

68. A national association of former combatants of ethnic origin was recently established to strengthen their representation in the reintegration process. The association has an important role to play in ensuring that the implementation of the comprehensive reintegration programme and the special harmonization programme – intended to restore harmony in their communities disrupted by the members who participated in conflict – adequately considers the views and needs of these former combatants.

Gender issues

69. Progress in the implementation of the gender provisions of the Final Agreement remained limited. The institutional entities responsible for the coordination and monitoring of its implementation, namely the Vice-Ministry of Women, under the Ministry of Equality, and the Special Forum on Gender, led by civil society organizations, need to be strengthened with the required resources and capacity in order to advance the implementation of the gender provisions.

70. As the Government finalizes the national action plan on women and peace and security, women's organizations reiterated the importance of providing the Vice-Ministry with adequate resources, monitoring and follow-up mechanisms to ensure its impact, particularly at the local level. They continued to highlight the need for coordination with the total peace policy to further advance women's participation and the inclusion of the women, peace and security agenda in peacemaking in Colombia.

71. Within Case 05 (on the situation of northern Cauca and southern Valle del Cauca), the Special Jurisdiction for Peace held two workshops, with the participation of Indigenous and Afro-Colombian victims, to discuss the design of a restorative project addressing the needs of victims of sexual and gender-based violence. In addition, the Special Jurisdiction for Peace conducted two awareness-raising sessions with victims' representatives on the process of accreditation and participation in relation to Case 11 (on gender-based, sexual and reproductive violence and other crimes based on prejudice against persons with diverse sexual orientation, expression and/or identity).

Other developments related to the implementation of the Final Agreement

72. As the parties move forward with the review of the Framework Plan for Implementation within the Commission for the Follow-Up, Promotion and Verification of the Final Agreement, the Government, the High-level Forum of Ethnic Peoples and the Special Forum on Gender began working jointly to ensure that the Plan accurately reflects the needs and demands of ethnic peoples and women. In addition, in April, the Commission held, in Putumayo Department, its first decentralized territorial session since the signing of the Final Agreement, with the participation of ethnic communities, former combatants and victims. Participants discussed their commitments and concerns regarding the implementation process in Putumayo with local and national authorities, in the presence of the two guarantor countries, representatives of the international community and the Verification Mission. A political statement was made reiterating the commitment of the signatory parties to a comprehensive and territorially focused implementation of different aspects of the Final Agreement, aiming to promote greater security and opportunities in the region.

73. Efforts continued towards strengthening an inter-institutional approach to the search for persons who went missing during the conflict. In what constituted an important development, the Government launched the National System for the Search for Persons Deemed as Missing, which was provided for in the National Development Plan. The National System, jointly led by the Ministry of Justice and the Unit for the Search of Persons Deemed as Missing – created by the Final Agreement – seeks to bring public, private and civil society actors together to implement the Unit's national search plan. It also aims to concentrate human, economic and technical resources on the search and identification of the more than 111,000 persons who have been reported as missing.

74. The Special Jurisdiction for Peace issued additional precautionary measures in April, aimed at protecting the rights to memory and truth of the victims of enforced disappearance. Enforced disappearance is a cross-cutting element in all 11 cases being investigated by the Special Jurisdiction for Peace. The measures seek to enhance coordination and efficiency in the work of relevant entities at the national, regional and local levels to better respond to the demands of victims.

75. In May, the Government appointed a new Director for the Substitution of Illicit Crops, who outlined priorities within the 2023–2033 National Drug Policy. These included fulfilling the commitments undertaken in 2017 vis-à-vis 99,097 beneficiaries of the National Comprehensive Programme for the Substitution of Illicit Crops.

B. Developments related to the Ejército de Liberación Nacional

76. While negotiations at the dialogue table have faced many challenges, the Government and ELN continued to implement the partial agreements reached to date, including the participation of society in peacemaking and the ceasefire.

77. The parties held two extraordinary meetings in Caracas. The first one, from 15 to 22 April, focused on the situation in Nariño. In a statement on 8 May, the Government noted that it would treat the Comuneros del Sur Front separately from ELN. During the second meeting, held from 20 to 25 May, the parties examined the outcome of the first phase of the participation process, including a document submitted by the National Participation Committee with a proposed model for the participation of society in the peace process. The outcome was the product of 78 regional and sectorial meetings involving 8,500 participants, including women, young people and ethnic groups. The parties worked to include comments and suggestions from sectors with divergent views, such as the private sector. This phase of the participatory process culminated with the signing of the agreement on the participation of society on 25 May. Also of note, the heads of delegation held their first discussion with representatives of victims' platforms on the sidelines of the meeting in Caracas. The parties agreed to organize a meeting in June to hear the contributions of the victims to the participation model.

78. In relation to the events in Nariño, involving bilateral engagement between the Government and the Comuneros del Sur Front of ELN, the latter publicly expressed that the regional dialogue constituted an act against the agreed terms of the ceasefire and a breach of trust.

79. Ongoing discussions between the parties regarding the situation in Nariño impacted the smooth functioning of the quadripartite national-level instance of the monitoring and verification mechanism. The situation resulted in stagnation and backlog in important areas of the day-to-day work of the mechanism, such as the joint analysis and verification of potential breaches to the ceasefire. Furthermore, it impeded the establishment of joint ceasefire evaluation reports and limited follow-up on ELN unilateral commitment to temporarily suspend ransom kidnappings. The Mission monitored the implementation of the bilateral ceasefire, which was extended by the parties on 6 February 2024 for 180 days and carried out further activities as part of its role within the mechanism.

80. Although the mechanism has not met at the national level since 1 March 2024, important functions were nonetheless maintained, such as the reception of information on potential incidents and the functioning of a round-the-clock communication channel. Furthermore, key monitoring activities in the field, liaison with local and regional communities and awareness-raising were maintained by the Mission and the Catholic Church. During this period, the 9 regional branches and 22 local branches of the mechanism remained operational and held 282 work sessions, processing and analysing potential incidents.

81. Despite the challenges, both parties have broadly respected the terms of the ceasefire, which has significantly contributed to de-escalation of confrontation between public security forces and ELN. While this ultimately benefited communities in many conflict-affected areas, the overall humanitarian situation continued to be adversely affected by ongoing violence involving other armed actors in Arauca, Bolívar and Chocó Departments. An event on 25 May in Cúcuta, Norte de Santander Department, in which one member of ELN was killed and two were captured, constitutes one of the most serious incidents to date and a possible violation of the ceasefire.

82. During the reporting period, women and representatives of the lesbian, gay, bisexual, trans, queer and intersex community, as well as children and young people, advocated within the National Participation Committee and other forums for their full and meaningful participation in the peace process.

IV. Coordination with the United Nations country team

83. The country team and the Mission continued to coordinate support to the ongoing peace dialogues through the Immediate Response Facility of the Peacebuilding Fund. During the reporting period, the steering committee of the Immediate Response Facility project supporting the ELN participatory process met to decide on the strategic priority lines for the Immediate Response Facility in the second half of 2024. Through this project, the country team and the Mission financially and technically supported the first phase of the National Participation Committee within the context of the dialogue between the Government and ELN.

84. In June, during a visit to Guaviare Department, the Steering Committee of the United Nations multi-partner trust fund for sustaining peace in Colombia approved over \$5 million to support peace implementation. It included technical support for the deployment of the Agrarian Jurisdiction; to advance four emblematic cases of land restitution for ethnic groups and peasants, and for the design and implementation of local transformation initiatives in Cauca.

V. Conduct and discipline

85. The Mission prioritized strengthening its misconduct prevention strategy, including sexual exploitation and abuse, by conducting United to Respect workshops and monthly refresher training sessions on the Organization's zero tolerance approach to sexual exploitation and abuse. The Mission's sexual exploitation and abuse task force worked on updating its terms of reference and on enhancing the Mission's institutional capacities to prevent sexual exploitation and abuse, taking into consideration the Mission's expanded mandate, deployment and identified risks.

86. On 22 March, the Mission received an allegation of sexual exploitation and abuse. During the reporting period, it received three other allegations of serious misconduct, harassment, fraud and retaliation for reported misconduct.

VI. Observations

87. The Final Agreement, with its innovative and comprehensive approach to peacebuilding, has been recognized as a model by the international community. Expectations are high, both in Colombia and abroad, especially among conflict-affected communities. I welcome the acknowledgment by President Petro of his historical responsibility for the comprehensive implementation of the Final Agreement. I encourage him, as well as all sectors in Colombia, to join efforts in transforming this laudable aspiration into tangible results for those most affected by conflict.

88. Ongoing work to implement a rapid response plan to accelerate implementation is promising, as is the review process of the Framework Plan for Implementation with its longer-term objectives. Unequivocal commitment from all Government entities to direct efforts and resources towards implementation is imperative.

89. As I have previously noted, the full implementation of the Final Agreement and efforts underway to resolve continuing conflicts through dialogue are mutually reinforcing. The Final Agreement aims to address the root causes of conflict and promote long-awaited transformations, including for peasants, women, youth and ethnic peoples. Dialogue with other armed groups provide a clear opportunity to address the ongoing violence in the countryside, which has impeded fuller implementation of the Final Agreement. Similarly, while fulfilment by the Government and State entities of their obligations in the Final Agreement is essential in its own right, it also sets an important precedent for any ongoing or future peace initiatives.

90. Armed conflict and acts of violence continue to severely affect populations in certain regions of the country, especially women, as well as Indigenous and Afro-Colombian communities. While commendable efforts to foster dialogue with armed groups, and the resulting ceasefires, have reduced violence between public security forces and those groups, much remains to be done to improve the day-to-day lives of communities that continue to suffer the consequences of the struggle for territorial control between different armed actors. To this end, I wish to recall the importance of strengthening civilian protection commitments and complementing the ceasefires with immediate and concrete measures for the benefit of communities. Furthermore, the prompt implementation of the mechanisms of security guarantees of the Final Agreement, as well as the effective and integrated deployment of the State throughout the national territory are of the essence.

91. I welcome that the ceasefire between Government and ELN has been broadly observed and has become the longest-lasting truce between the parties. This has been fundamental to building trust among them. I encourage the parties to extend their ceasefire agreement further and continue efforts to consider expanding its scope so as to further improve security in the territories. I welcome progress made by the National Participation Committee and the adoption by the parties of the agreement on the process of participation of society in peacebuilding. In view of current challenges, I encourage the parties to continue resolving their differences at the negotiating table.

92. Despite a complex situation on the ground, the Government and fronts of EMC FARC-EP have continued their dialogue and have been moving toward defining concrete initiatives to promote development and bring State-sponsored goods and services to certain conflict-affected regions in the east of the country. I encourage the parties to remain focused on the future benefits of the process for all involved.

93. The United Nations will continue to strongly support efforts to resolve conflict through dialogue. Such efforts require the good faith of all parties and gestures of peace and humanity. I reiterate my call on all armed actors to respect the life, integrity, freedoms and well-being of civilians and communities, and to avoid any acts that negatively affect them.

94. In my last report, I acknowledged the existence of differing views regarding the scope of the work of the Special Jurisdiction for Peace, a pillar of the Final Agreement's architecture for transitional justice. My Special Representative will continue to exercise my good offices to help find common ground within the established framework of the Final Agreement. I encourage all parties to show the necessary openness and willingness to reach solutions through dialogue, and to continue working towards the greater good of national reconciliation.

95. The transitional justice process entails a shared responsibility to uphold the rights of victims. I call upon the Government to spare no effort to create, in a timely manner, the necessary conditions for the implementation of the restorative sentences to be issued by the Special Jurisdiction for Peace. I also urge individuals from all sides to the conflict to abide by their obligation to contribute to the truth and acknowledge responsibility for the crimes committed during the conflict. I trust that the Special Jurisdiction for Peace will maintain its focus on the overarching goal of contributing to peace and reconciliation within the framework of the Final Agreement.

96. The Colombian peace process has yielded significant results and laid the foundations for more progress. Colombians now have the opportunity to consolidate and broaden the scope of peace in the country. This will require political will, the active participation of all sectors of society and concrete actions. I urge all concerned to keep their sights set on a peaceful future and build upon these hard-fought gains. The United Nations will remain alongside Colombians in this crucial endeavour.

