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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 [2487 \(2019\)](#), 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 27 June to 25 September 2020.

II. Major developments

2. On 7 August, in an address, marking the second anniversary of his administration, the President of Colombia, Iván Duque, took stock of progress in implementing the three pillars of his Government's national development plan: entrepreneurship, equity and legality. Reporting on peace-related matters, the Presidential Counsellor for Stabilization and Consolidation stated that the Government's efforts had focused on strengthening planning, diversifying funding sources and carrying out actions to comply with the Final Agreement for Ending the Conflict and Building a Stable and Lasting Peace, in particular regarding the reintegration of former Fuerzas Armadas Revolucionarias de Colombia-Ejército del Pueblo (FARC-EP) members, development programmes with a territorial focus, stabilization, victims and substitution of illicit crops. Meanwhile, civil society and political actors, including the FARC party, have continued to voice concerns regarding the Government's approach to the Final Agreement, including that the pace of implementation is slow, that there is insufficient use of the institutions created by the Agreement and that implementation is not comprehensive.

3. President Duque also presented his Government's efforts to respond to the coronavirus disease (COVID-19) pandemic, which as at 25 September has caused 798,317 cases and 25,103 COVID-related deaths. President Duque announced a "New commitment for Colombia", a strategy to overcome the effects of the pandemic, which is focused on five pillars: recovery of employment; clean and sustainable growth; commitment to the poorest and most vulnerable; commitment to rural Colombia and peace with legality; and health. The strategy will require investments of an estimated 10 per cent of the country's gross domestic product (GDP).



4. A new period of Congressional sessions began on 20 July. To date, political parties and the national Government have introduced more than 700 draft bills and proposed constitutional reforms, including some addressing pending issues related to the Agreement. For instance, a draft reform to the electoral code is currently under discussion, as well as initiatives to extend the applicability of the Victims and Land Restitution Act until 2031. The Peace and Human Rights Commissions of both chambers of Congress have continued to discuss the security situation in various regions and the continued violence against social leaders and former FARC-EP combatants.

5. In August, Congress elected the new Ombudsman and Inspector General. Both institutions play key roles in Colombia's peacebuilding efforts. Carlos Camargo took office on 1 September as the new Ombudsman for a period of four years, and Margarita Cabello will assume office as the new Inspector General in January 2021, also for four years.

6. In July, the Government introduced before Congress its draft general national budget for 2021, which must be approved by 20 October. While there is no specific budget line for peace-related matters, the Government included an annex to the bill on peacebuilding expenditure. According to the Government, peace-related investments will increase by 9 per cent as compared with 2020. However, the Government's proposal includes cuts in the investment budgets of entities key to the implementation of the Final Agreement, such as the National Land Agency, the Territorial Renewal Agency and the Rural Development Agency. The draft budget provides for a 10 per cent increase for the components of the Comprehensive System of Truth, Justice, Reparation and Non-Repetition. In September, Congress passed a new law authorizing peace-related funds from mineral royalties forecast for the next 10 years to be used in the implementation of development programmes with a territorial focus in 2021 and 2022. Opposition parties, including FARC, have countered that funding remains insufficient, and that resources that should be used exclusively for the implementation of the Agreement are being used for other purposes.

7. In August, the Office of the Comptroller-General presented to Congress its fourth report on the use of resources in the implementation of the Final Agreement, with a focus on 2019. While it was noted in the report that the use of resources in 2019 had been higher than in previous years, on average, reaching 83 per cent, it was also signalled that, at the current level of expenditure, implementation would take at least 25 years, as opposed to the 15 years initially planned.

8. Departmental and municipal authorities adopted their development plans. FARC members, including many women former combatants, engaged proactively in the preparation of many of the plans. According to the Agency for Reintegration and Normalization, 25 departments and 166 municipalities have included specific reintegration indicators in their development plans. Security guarantees-related matters were included in at least 17 departmental plans, in particular regarding protection of social leaders and human rights defenders. Several plans include actions related to the Final Agreement, such as the Comprehensive System of Truth, Justice, Reparations and Non-Repetition, the National Comprehensive Programme for the Substitution of Illicit Crops and the development programmes with a territorial focus.

9. On 4 August, the Supreme Court of Justice ordered the preventive house arrest of the former President and Senator, Álvaro Uribe, as part of an investigation on charges of procedural fraud and witness tampering during his term as Senator. On 18 August, Uribe resigned from the Senate, after which jurisdiction for the investigation passed from the Supreme Court to the Office of the Attorney-General.

The case led to heightened polarization and caused strong reactions in various sectors of Colombian society.

10. Following the death of a man in police custody in Bogotá on 9 September, demonstrators in Bogotá and other cities protested police abuses and called for reform. Violence, looting and confrontations with public security forces broke out in several places. As many as 13 people have died, and some 300 others and dozens of police officers were injured.

Mechanisms for dialogue on implementation issues related to the Final Agreement

11. During the reporting period, the Commission for the Follow-up, Promotion and Verification of the Implementation of the Final Agreement met on nine occasions. Topics discussed included budgetary issues and the assets of the former FARC-EP, as well as security and gender issues, during meetings of the Commission for the Follow-up, Promotion and Verification of the Implementation of the Final Agreement with the National Commission on Security Guarantees and the Special Forum on Gender, respectively.

12. The tripartite group on anti-personnel mines, composed of the Office of the High Commissioner for Peace, FARC and the United Nations (the Verification Mission and the Mine Action Service), has continued to work on the project proposal to gather information on the location of landmines, but the parties have yet to reach an agreement on its implementation.

13. The tripartite working group regarding the former FARC-EP assets has not been convened since 30 June. On 31 July, the Government issued a decree extending the deadline for the handover of the assets until 31 December 2020. While the extension was necessary to provide clarity on the next steps in the process, the duration differs from that in the timetables jointly proposed by FARC and the Special Assets Administration. FARC claims that the additional five months may be insufficient to properly finalize the handover process, in particular bearing in mind security issues and the delays caused by the pandemic. FARC has also criticized the decree as reaffirming that FARC is responsible for the custody of the assets, some of which are in areas facing serious security challenges.

Comprehensive rural reform

14. The Government has continued the process of planning and approval, through online channels, of projects under the development programmes with a territorial focus for 170 conflict-affected municipalities. The committee that approves resources for peace-related programmes from royalties from hydrocarbon exploitation approved more than 30 projects for those municipalities, and their implementation is expected to begin soon. A further 9,866 initiatives for development programmes with a territorial focus were included by local authorities as part of the local development plans of 160 of the municipalities concerned. In August, the Mayor of Bogotá announced the implementation of programmes inspired by the development programmes with a territorial focus in two areas of the capital.

15. Since the first road map for stabilization under the national development plan was issued in February 2020 for the Catatumbo region, none of the road maps for the remaining 15 development programmes with a territorial focus has been issued. The Government has stated that they will be completed by the end of the year. FARC, civil society actors and others continue to request that the development programmes with a territorial focus be carried out in line with the Final Agreement and that they be more closely coordinated with other elements of the comprehensive rural reform in section 1 of the Agreement, including the 16 sectoral plans, of which 8 have been approved.

16. The Government continues to implement the multipurpose cadastre to update details of ownership and the use of land across the country, with a view to promoting rural development. Of the 79 municipalities where the first phase of the multipurpose cadastre was initiated, 13 were prioritized for a first phase of land titling and organization. In one pilot municipality, more than 1,000 property titles were granted after the implementation of the cadastre.

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

17. The Special Jurisdiction for Peace continued to advance in its seven cases. To date, approximately 308,000 victims have been accredited, the vast majority as part of collective accreditations of ethnic communities. During the reporting period, members of the public security forces delivered 26 individual voluntary testimonies in case 003, on extrajudicial killings presented as casualties of combat (known as “false positives”). In September, several leaders of the FARC political party appeared before the Special Jurisdiction to render their versions regarding case 007, on recruitment and use of children in the armed conflict. Victims participated in the sessions by presenting observations and requesting information on specific cases. Some former FARC-EP leaders acknowledged the presence of children in the ranks of the guerrilla group. In addition, they recognized that sexual violence and forced abortions had been perpetrated and asked for forgiveness. Others emphasized that the guerrilla group did not have a policy of forced recruitment of children and claimed that it was not possible for it to monitor the conduct of all its units. Several victims’ organizations, the Government and other actors criticized that narrative and called on former FARC-EP leaders to acknowledge their responsibilities. The Special Jurisdiction recently reaffirmed that those who failed to contribute to the truth and to acknowledge responsibility would face sanctions and prison sentences.

18. The Truth Commission conducted a series of “dialogues on non-repetition” focused on understanding the underlying causes of the continued violence in five regions. It has received 187 reports from institutions and social organizations, including 46 in 2020. The armed forces provided reports on cases of military personnel who had been the victims of mines and of kidnapping. During the reporting period, some political actors accused the Commission of lack of impartiality. The President of the Commission denied the accusations. Several actors, including civil society organizations, reaffirmed their support for the Commission and highlighted the importance of its work.

19. The Unit for the Search for Persons Deemed as Missing, in coordination with other entities, has to date handed over the remains of 83 persons to their relatives. During the reporting period, the Unit received 740 search requests, (total to date: 7,273). In addition, 56 persons (including former combatants, members of the public security forces and civilians) provided information on persons reported missing (total to date: 230). The Special Jurisdiction for Peace and the Unit ordered the authorities of four municipalities to safeguard areas where the bodies of victims may be buried.

20. In September, members of the former FARC-EP secretariat issued a public apology for having resorted to kidnappings during the conflict and asked for forgiveness from the victims and their families. FARC leaders stated that kidnapping was a “very grave mistake” and reiterated their commitment and willingness to appear before justice, contribute to the truth and work to deliver reparations to victims.

Substitution of illicit crops

21. The implementation of the National Comprehensive Programme for the Substitution of Illicit Crops continues despite the pandemic. After a temporary cessation of activities, monitoring visits resumed in July and are currently ongoing in

various regions. According to the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime, the number of families participating in the Programme remains at 99,097 (35,393 of which are female-headed households), and the number of hectares of coca voluntarily eradicated is currently 42,339. While payments, delivery of supplies and technical assistance for participating families have continued, to date, less than 2 per cent are benefiting from productive projects under implementation. The projects are key to ensuring that families who have complied with their commitment to voluntarily substitute illicit crops will refrain from reseeded once the other components of the Programme end. Security issues in various regions where coca crops are grown are also a concern, as communities and leaders continue to face risks, and insecurity affects monitoring visits.

Developments related to the Ejército de Liberación Nacional

22. After the adoption of Security Council resolution [2532 \(2020\)](#), the Ejército de Liberación Nacional (ELN) sent a letter to the Government proposing a 90-day bilateral ceasefire. The Government reaffirmed its position that it would consider dialogue only if ELN released all kidnapped persons, stopped recruiting children and stopped planting anti-personnel mines. The Government also said that concrete gestures of peace and a final decision by ELN to lay down its arms were necessary. Several members of Congress and civil society organizations asked the Government to consider the ELN proposal and agree to a ceasefire. Confrontations between the Government and ELN, and between ELN and other illegal armed groups continue, affecting communities in various regions.

III. Mission tasks

A. Reintegration

Institutions and policies for reintegration

23. The National Reintegration Council met three times during the reporting period and, in addition to approving collective productive projects for former combatants, continued to discuss key issues related to the reintegration process, including access to land for former combatants and the impact of insecurity on the reintegration process.

24. In the context of the pandemic, on 3 September, the Agency for Reintegration and Normalization issued a resolution extending flexible conditions for former combatants to receive their monthly allowances and to finalize the design of collective and individual road maps until 31 January 2021.

25. FARC has continued to request the establishment of a national reintegration system to leverage broader institutional involvement in the implementation of the reintegration road map, as provided for in the national reintegration policy (document 3931 of the National Council on Economic and Social Policy). According to the Agency for Reintegration and Normalization, progress has been made in the design of the system and it will be discussed in the National Reintegration Council.

26. Regional reintegration councils have increasingly assumed leadership in coordinating responses to reintegration challenges. Their efforts were key to supporting the relocation of former combatants from the former territorial areas for training and reintegration in Ituango (Antioquia). Authorities in Bogotá and in Tolima, Magdalena and Risaralda departments included the establishment of similar bodies in their development plans. Women former combatants and FARC gender committees played an important role in engaging with departmental authorities in

Antioquia, Meta, Risaralda and Cauca to advance in the inclusion of gender and reintegration commitments in regional development plans.

27. The recently approved development plan of Bogotá includes the creation of a district-level board on reintegration, the development programmes with a territorial focus and reconciliation, the aim of which is to promote the implementation of the Final Agreement in the capital.

Economic and social reintegration

28. During the reporting period, the National Reintegration Council approved 9 new collective productive projects, benefiting 216 former combatants (60 women). Of the 66 collective projects approved to date, which benefit 2,928 former combatants (837 women), 49 have received funds (an increase of one since the previous reporting period), benefiting 2,281 former combatants (650 women). Also during the reporting period, 158 individual projects were approved, of a total of 1,467, benefiting 1,734 former combatants (379 women). Nearly a third of former FARC-EP members have received financial support through individual and collective projects. FARC has requested increased information about the approval of individual projects.

29. The National Reintegration Council working groups, with support from the International Organization for Migration (IOM), the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) and the Mission, have taken measures to mitigate the impact of the pandemic on productive projects, including: providing training on food production; supporting small-scale initiatives to improve food security; promoting initiatives to exchange food for products; granting Internet connectivity to 53 productive projects to improve their access to remote technical assistance; and distributing more than 700 face masks for former combatants involved in productive projects. The Mission and UNDP have continued to support the production of face masks by 15 former combatants' tailoring workshops (8 led by women).

30. Active participation by women former combatants in productive initiatives remains limited, including owing to insufficient access to childcare and continued obstacles to their participation in decision-making spaces. Despite these difficulties, as well as the limited implementation of the gender-related actions of the national reintegration policy, women former combatants continue to demonstrate resilience and leadership, including through local FARC gender committees. There are several cases of women former combatants leading thriving initiatives, including a plant nursery in the former territorial area for training and reintegration in Fonseca (La Guajira) and a personal protective equipment project in the former territorial area for training and reintegration of Vista Hermosa (Meta).

31. Access to land for former combatants' productive projects remains an urgent requirement for the sustainability of the reintegration process. In the Working Group on Land of the National Reintegration Council, the Agency for Reintegration and Normalization and FARC began exploring avenues to grant access to land for productive projects and are jointly evaluating existing needs. In addition to identifying available plots of land through the Special Assets Administration, the Agency for Reintegration and Normalization is considering allowing former combatants to use the one-time allowance of 8 million Colombian pesos provided for in the Final Agreement to purchase land for productive projects.

32. The Agency for Reintegration and Normalization, FARC and the Ministry of Housing continue to discuss strategies regarding housing. The formalization of a working group on housing under the National Reintegration Council is under discussion.

33. Since the beginning of the pandemic, at least 88 former combatants (33 women) have tested positive for COVID-19, 2 of whom have died. The Agency for Reintegration and Normalization, FARC, the Ministry of Health and the Mission jointly monitored those cases and worked with local leaders to organize visits by health professionals to seven affected former territorial areas for training and reintegration.

34. Visits by health professionals resumed in former territorial areas for training and reintegration, benefiting communities and former combatants. According to the Ministry of Health, 60 per cent of those who have benefited from the visits in 2020 are women. The “Health for peace” programme increased mitigation and prevention measures with a view to addressing weaknesses in access to health in municipalities with development programmes with a territorial focus.

35. No action has been taken on the recommendation of the High-Level Forum of Ethnic People to the National Reintegration Council to establish a working group on ethnic issues, and there has been no progress during the reporting period on mainstreaming an ethnic approach in the reintegration process.

Transition and consolidation of former territorial areas for training and reintegration

36. One year after the legal status of former territorial areas for training and reintegration expired, the Government and FARC continue their efforts to give permanence to these areas, including by purchasing land, and incorporating them into municipal planning – a key stage which requires proper resourcing and coordination with local authorities. Notwithstanding delays due to the pandemic, the Agency for Reintegration and Normalization intends to purchase plots of land for nine former territorial areas for training and reintegration by the end of the year. In a welcome step, in August, the Government purchased a plot of land for the former territorial area for training and reintegration in Icononzo (Tolima). The allocation of the plot to former combatants will be effective once technical assessments and land titling are completed.

37. The National Land Agency presented a strategy to FARC for allocating land to former combatants, including the activation of the special programme to grant land for reintegration, which allows for land titling directly to former combatants and cooperatives. Implementation is contingent on adequate resources.

38. FARC has continued to insist on increased access to information and a more active role in the process of the consolidation of former territorial areas for training and reintegration. Dialogue is ongoing between the Agency for Reintegration and Normalization and FARC with a view to resuming joint meetings with former territorial areas to discuss the consolidation process.

39. The consolidation of former territorial areas for training and reintegration continues to be affected by insecurity, with those in Buenos Aires (Cauca) and Ituango (Antioquia) requiring relocation for security reasons, including that of their productive projects, such as a successful coffee project in Buenos Aires. On 15 July, 93 residents from the former territorial area for training and reintegration in Ituango, including 35 children, were relocated to Mutatá, also in that department. The transfer was supported by the Agency for Reintegration and Normalization, the Governor of Antioquia, local authorities in Mutatá, security forces, UNDP and the Mission. By mid-August, most of them had moved to the new plot and were still living in tents. Food provisions are being delivered to both former combatants who transferred and those who remained in Ituango. With support from the Ministry of Health, the health-care affiliation of former combatants was transferred to the new location, and there were visits by health professionals to both places. Residents of the former territorial

area for training and reintegration in Buenos Aires are still looking for a viable plot of land.

Collective reintegration outside the former territorial areas for training and reintegration, including new reintegration areas

40. More than 9,300 former combatants living outside the former territorial areas for training and reintegration continue to face greater vulnerabilities in terms of security, productive opportunities and access to institutional support. FARC has identified more than 90 new reintegration areas.

41. A growing number of productive initiatives outside of former territorial areas for training and reintegration are being submitted to the National Reintegration Council, which approved four new productive projects for new reintegration areas in both urban (Tumaco, Nariño) and rural (Pueblo Rico, Risaralda; Riosucio, Caldas; and Pandi, Cundinamarca) settings, benefiting 93 former combatants (19 women).

42. Heightened insecurity for former combatants in new reintegration areas continues to affect socioeconomic reintegration. Owing to security concerns, a successful stockbreeding project from the new reintegration area of El Diamante (Meta) is undergoing relocation. The Agency for Reintegration and Normalization is helping former combatants find an alternative plot, and UNDP and the Mission are supporting the project's relocation.

Community-based reintegration

43. In August, the Agency for Reintegration and Normalization and FARC began implementation of their joint community-based reintegration strategy. The Mission and UNDP approved 11 new community-based reintegration initiatives aligned with the objectives of the joint strategy.

Political reintegration

44. In July, FARC Senator Griselda Lobo was elected second vice-president of the Senate for the 2020–2021 legislative period. Additionally, FARC Senator Israel Zúñiga was elected second vice-president of the congressional legal commission on Afro-Colombians.

45. During the reporting period, the FARC party submitted 13 bills related to the pandemic and peace implementation; supported more than 20 legislative projects from other parties; and promoted specific Congressional sessions on the reintegration process and the killings of social leaders and former combatants.

B. Security guarantees

Security guarantees for former FARC-EP combatants

46. During the reporting period, the Mission verified 19 killings of former FARC-EP combatants (all men), of a total of 50 (2 women) in 2020. Since the signing of the Final Agreement, the Mission has verified a total 297 attacks against former FARC-EP members, including 224 killings (4 women), 20 disappearances and 53 attempted homicides (4 women).

47. During the reporting period, 52 per cent of the former combatants killed were individuals that had been released from prison in accordance with the Final Agreement. The majority were living outside the former territorial areas for training and reintegration.

48. On 28 August, in Bolívar department, a FARC party leader, Jorge Iván Ramos, was killed. Mr. Ramos was one of the highest-ranking former FARC-EP commanders killed since the signing of the Final Agreement and was actively engaged in its implementation, including working in the National Comprehensive Programme for the Substitution of Illicit Crops and in the handover process for FARC-EP assets. The FARC party addressed an open letter to ELN expressing its shock over information that ELN was behind the crime.

49. The Mission verified the 16 July killing of four persons, including two family members of a former combatant, in Algeciras (Huila). In Frontino (Antioquia), illegal armed groups continue to threaten and force the displacement of communities and former combatants. In both cases, local authorities have stated that they cannot provide security guarantees for former combatants and their families.

50. Former combatants residing outside former territorial areas for training and reintegration, including in new reintegration areas, continue to be at greater risk. In 2020, 30 per cent of the killings have been committed near new reintegration areas, which are located mostly in isolated rural regions characterized by limited State presence and where illegal armed groups and criminal organizations fight over illicit economies. The Ministry of Defence and the Presidential Counsellor for Stabilization and Consolidation are coordinating with local authorities to improve security deployments around new reintegration areas in Huila, Cauca and Putumayo.

51. Following the relocation of the former territorial area for training and reintegration in Ituango owing to security issues (see para. 39), part of the security deployment at the former site was moved to the settlement in Mutatá. Various other former territorial areas for training and reintegration, including those in Miranda and Buenos Aires (Cauca), Puerto Asís (Putumayo) and Mesetas (Meta), are facing heightened security risks, causing the departure of an increasing number of former combatants and their families.

52. The displacement of former combatants from new reintegration areas affects the ability of former combatants to carry out their reintegration process collectively. Killings of former combatants leave their family members exposed to security risks and economic hardship. In the National Reintegration Council, the parties are discussing possible measures to assist families of former combatants killed.

53. The approval of 94 urgent protection measures by the Specialized Subdirectorates for Security and Protection of the National Protection Unit during 2020 is noteworthy, as it represents an increase of 81 per cent compared with all such measures approved in 2019. However, according to the Subdirectorates, 1 former combatant was killed during the reporting period while awaiting the approval of protection measures, of a total of 19 since the signing of the Final Agreement. This highlights the need for adequate funding to respond to the more than 400 pending requests without further delay.

54. To date, the Special Investigation Unit of the Office of the Attorney General has reported 31 convictions and 20 cases at trial stage linked to attacks against former combatants. Additionally, 4 more suspects, alleged to be intellectual authors, were captured during the reporting period, of a total of 15 since the signing of the Final Agreement. As stressed in previous reports, a focus on prosecuting intellectual authors is crucial to dismantling these criminal networks and fighting impunity. In July, authorities arrested six men (including one former FARC-EP combatant) and charged them with involvement in the failed attack in January 2020 against the President of the FARC party, Rodrigo Londoño. Investigations continue into the deaths of the two former combatants whom authorities have linked to the attack.

55. The tripartite working group on investigations, in which the Special Investigation Unit, FARC and the Mission jointly follow up on potential threats and investigations, is expanding at the regional level, prioritizing regions with the highest rates of killings of former combatants. During the reporting period, regional tripartite working groups were established in Medellín, Quibdó and Cúcuta.

56. In response to persistent killings and security risks faced by former FARC-EP members, in July, the Special Jurisdiction for Peace adopted protective measures instructing the Office of the High Commissioner for Peace, the Office of the Presidential Counsellor for Stabilization and Consolidation, the National Protection Unit and the Ministry of Finance and Public Credit to convene the relevant security entities and implement the mechanisms for the protection of former combatants stipulated in section 3.4 of the Final Agreement, including the National Commission on Security Guarantees. Following a decision of the Special Jurisdiction, the high-level unit of the Comprehensive Security System for the Exercise of Politics met on 6 August. The Presidential Counsellor for Stabilization and Consolidation and the National Protection Unit appealed some aspects of the decision. In September, the Special Jurisdiction maintained its initial ruling.

Security guarantees for communities, human rights defenders and social leaders

57. Illegal armed groups and criminal organizations have continued to take advantage of the pandemic to strengthen their social and territorial control. Despite a decrease in national homicide rates in the first semester, violence in conflict-affected regions of Colombia has continued, including killings of large numbers of civilians reported in Cauca, Nariño, Antioquia, Arauca, Norte de Santander, Valle del Cauca, Huila, Córdoba, Cundinamarca and Bolívar, which were widely condemned by Colombian society and political actors. In addition, four members of the Army were killed in September in Norte de Santander. President Duque has affirmed that his Government will spare no efforts in bringing those responsible for these crimes to justice. On 9 September, President Duque and the Attorney General reported progress on seven of the crimes, with 17 individuals detained.

58. According to the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR), 42 incidents in which large numbers of civilians were killed have been registered in 2020, and a further 13 are under verification. Among the victims are 19 children and 12 women. These crimes are being perpetrated mainly in areas with a weak State presence, high levels of poverty, illicit economies and disputes between illegal armed groups and criminal organizations. The departments most affected are Antioquia (13), Cauca (8), Nariño (7) and Norte de Santander (4). On 15 August, eight people between 17 and 25 years old, including a woman, were also killed in Samaniego (Nariño). The Office of the Ombudsman had warned of the risks facing the municipality in an early warning in mid-2019.

59. Armed confrontations continued to cause displacement. To date in 2020, some 18,400 people have been collectively displaced and 19,000 individually displaced. Seventy-one per cent of displacements took place in the departments of Nariño, Chocó, Antioquia and Norte de Santander.

60. Violence against social leaders and human rights defenders continues. In 2020, OHCHR has verified a total of 48 homicides, including of 9 members of ethnic communities and 5 women (2 of indigenous origin). An additional 51 homicides are under verification. Cauca remains one of the most dangerous departments for social leaders, with 8 cases of social leaders killed during the reporting period under verification.

61. President Duque convened a plenary session of the National Commission on Security Guarantees on 12 August. Many actors, including civil society

representatives to the Commission, had called for it to be reconvened. The Commission resumed discussion of the public policy for the dismantling of illegal armed groups, criminal organizations and their support networks, which is the Commission's primary task. Civil society representatives are presenting recommendations on the draft policy guidelines put forward by the Government for consideration within the Commission. Three regional sessions of the Commission were held in Nariño, Córdoba and Cauca.

62. During the reporting period, the Office of the Ombudsman issued 19 early warnings (6 of an imminent character). Risks identified in several of the alerts materialized, including sexual violence and exploitation, killings, confinements and forced displacements by illegal armed groups, with indigenous and Afro-Colombian communities particularly affected.

63. Regarding Decree 660 on the comprehensive security and protection programme for communities and organizations, three technical committees continue to meet, with active engagement from the Government and civil society. Pilot initiatives linked to the Programme's protection and security component have been approved for seven communities, in addition to the five existing pilots, and include the implementation of collective protection measures jointly agreed with communities. In addition, the community peace promoters programme will begin in five departments.

64. During the reporting period, confrontations continued between security forces and local communities in various regions over operations for the forced eradication of illicit crops, including Nariño, Norte de Santander and the border zone between Meta and Guaviare.

C. Legal guarantees

65. The Office of the High Commissioner for Peace, FARC and the Mission have continued to meet regularly in the tripartite mechanism regarding the transition to legality of former FARC-EP members, to address the remaining challenges regarding the accreditation of former FARC-EP members. The Office confirmed that 185 former FARC-EP members (including 35 women) were accredited during the reporting period, bringing the total number of accredited former combatants to 13,577 (10,441 men and 3,136 women).

66. There are still 204 individuals whose accreditation is pending definition, while the Office of the High Commissioner for Peace and FARC representatives are discussing the rules of procedure of a joint mechanism for the settlement of disputes regarding these cases, as provided for in the Final Agreement.

67. The tripartite mechanism has also been addressing the cases of the remaining 172 accredited former FARC-EP members (6 women) who are still deprived of their liberty. The Special Jurisdiction for Peace has confirmed that it has denied conditional liberty in 124 of these cases, and 33 are awaiting a decision. The remaining individuals do not have cases under its jurisdiction. Importantly, on 25 August, the Constitutional Court stated that, in order to preserve the applicants' rights to due process, the Special Jurisdiction for Peace should prioritize requests for conditional liberty and continue to implement the measures aimed at addressing the backlog of applications pending.

68. The tripartite mechanism has been monitoring the situation of the 240 former FARC members (7 women) who were designated as "peace advocates" and granted conditional liberty with a requirement to report regularly to the Government. The mechanism concluded that 138 individuals are still meeting the conditions to keep the

benefits of conditional liberty, while the situation of the remaining 102 is still under review.

D. Cross-cutting issues

Gender

69. Violence against women and girls continues to be a major concern and risks have increased during the pandemic. Illegal armed groups and criminal organizations continue to use sexual violence as a means of intimidation and a tool for territorial and social control, targeting women and girls, in particular from indigenous and Afro-Colombian communities, and the lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender and intersex (LGBTI) population. During the reporting period, the Office of the Ombudsman issued 10 early warnings which included risks of sexual violence.

70. Ongoing attacks against women leaders and human rights defenders pose a major challenge for women's active participation in the implementation of the Final Agreement. In July, the Inter-American Commission on Human Rights ordered the Government of Colombia to adopt all measures necessary for the protection of Yirley Velasco, a leader of victims of sexual violence in El Salado (Bolívar) who continues to receive threats despite being under protection measures from the National Protection Unit. Implementation of the action plan of the Comprehensive Programme of Safeguards for Women Leaders and Human Rights Defenders remains limited and circumscribed to only a few regions.

71. Local FARC gender committees and women FARC leaders have continued to raise awareness about the increased risk of domestic and gender-based violence during the pandemic and designed eight local prevention plans with the support of IOM. The Mission has engaged with local actors and authorities to promote the use of referral mechanisms to address potential cases.

Ethnic affairs

72. On 14 September, the High-Level Forum of Ethnic Peoples met for the first time since its creation with the Commission for the Follow-up, Promotion and Verification of the Implementation of the Final Agreement. The Commission made a commitment with the High-Level Forum to verify the status of implementation of the ethnic chapter of the Final Agreement.

73. Ethnic communities remain gravely affected by disputes between illegal armed groups over control of the production and trafficking of illicit crops and the illegal exploitation of natural resources. These groups continue to threaten and attack ethnic leaders, and forcibly recruit indigenous and Afro-Colombian individuals. The Awá people in southern Nariño and the Embera people in Chocó continue to suffer forced displacements, confinements, killings, homicides of their leaders, forced recruitments and accidents involving landmines.

74. To date, 364 ethnic communities have been accredited as collective victims by the Special Jurisdiction for Peace (271 indigenous and 93 Afro-Colombian), which amount to 282,329 individuals, or 91 per cent of the total victims accredited by the Special Jurisdiction.

Children

75. During the reporting period, the Office of the High Commissioner for Peace and the National Reintegration Council, with support from the Mission, moved forward on the tracing and notification of some of the 263 former FARC-EP combatants who were recognized in February and May by the Office as being children at the time of

the laying down of weapons, in order to include them in the programme “A different path of life”, and to grant them access to the process of reparations under the Victims and Land Restitution Act. The total number of children disengaged from FARC-EP now stands at 406 (217 boys and 189 girls).

76. During the reporting period, no major advances were made in former territorial areas for training and reintegration lacking child-friendly spaces. In the former territorial areas for training and reintegration in San Vicente del Caguán (Caquetá), Caldoño (Cauca) and La Paz (Cesar), this is causing frustration among former combatants, many of whom rely on effective childcare to be able to fully participate in reintegration activities. Efforts by the Colombian Family Welfare Institute, the Agency for Reintegration and Normalization and FARC to register former combatants’ children have been delayed owing to the pandemic.

77. The technical working group on children of the National Reintegration Council has not been convened since July 2019. It is an important forum for addressing pending issues, including comprehensive care for children in former territorial areas for training and reintegration and new reintegration areas, the challenges of former combatants in regularizing the legal guardianship of their children, and the adequate implementation of and follow-up to the programme “A different path of life”, in particular on issues such as access to productive projects, reparations and psychological support.

Youth, peace and security

78. Recent attacks against young people galvanized public opinion and led to calls for increased measures to protect youth. In August, two killings took place in which young people were targeted, one in Cali (Valle del Cauca), in which five Afro-Colombian boys aged from 14 to 16 years were found dead with signs of torture, and one in Samaniego (see paragraph 58). Also in August, two children were killed on their way to school in Leiva (Nariño). Youth platforms have condemned the escalating violence against young people and called for measures to protect their rights and stop the stigmatization and victimization of youth in Colombia.

79. Under the National Reintegration Council, the Agency for Reintegration and Normalization and FARC are developing a strategy to support the reintegration of young former combatants.

Coordination with the United Nations country team

80. The United Nations country team continues to provide technical and programmatic support to the implementation of the Final Agreement in Colombia. Victims’ organizations have been supported by the United Nations multi-partner trust fund for sustaining peace in Colombia to contribute to the Comprehensive System of Truth, Justice, Reparation and Non-Repetition. Reports covering 723 victims and documenting 604 cases of forced disappearance were provided by victims’ organizations supported by the trust fund.

81. In coordination with the Mission, the United Nations country team continues to support the reintegration process of former combatants, including the relocation of former combatants from the former territorial area for training and reintegration in Ituango, Antioquia, and mitigation measures taken to address the impact of the pandemic on productive initiatives. During the reporting period, the first 17 former combatants (12 men and 5 women) were certified to undertake mine clearance with the humanitarian demining organization Humanicemos DH, out of 124 former combatants that have received training. In addition to providing employment for former combatants, this helps improve overall civilian capacity for mine action and helps build confidence with communities.

82. The United Nations country team has adapted its support to peacebuilding in Colombia in the context of the COVID-19 pandemic, including by developing a socioeconomic response plan to COVID-19, which is fully aligned with the United Nations Sustainable Development Cooperation Framework signed by the Government of Colombia and the United Nations system in March 2020. Given the effects of the pandemic and of continuing violence upon indigenous populations, United Nations agencies are providing personal protective equipment to indigenous guards and food supplies to their communities, including 15,000 masks produced by former combatants. To date, agencies, funds and programmes have mobilized an additional \$33 million for the socioeconomic impact response to COVID-19 and reprogrammed \$17 million of existing resources.

83. The inter-agency working group on security guarantees, which includes several agencies and the Mission, continues to provide joint analysis on patterns of violence in Colombia and recommendations for joint action. In line with its recommendations, several agencies continued to provide technical assistance to the Presidential Counsellor for National Security in the *Zonas Futuro* stabilization strategy, which is focused on integrated institutional interventions targeting five priority regions, including support for a local governance index and a strategy for strengthening access to justice in conflict-affected areas.

IV. Mission structures

A. Mission support

84. The Mission has continued to implement measures to support staff during the pandemic and to ensure a safe and gradual return to Mission premises, including access controls, distance markings and cleaning and disinfection protocols, as well as for the adequate use of vehicles and the distribution of personal protection equipment to staff in regional offices.

85. Following the death in July of a United Nations Volunteer of Italian nationality working with the Mission in Caquetá department, the Mission, with support from Headquarters, is cooperating fully with Colombian and Italian authorities on their respective investigations to determine the cause and circumstances of this tragic incident.

86. As at 31 August 2020, 51 per cent of all civilian personnel are women. For other categories, women represented: 62 per cent of United Nations Volunteers; 37 per cent of international observers; and 60 per cent of consultants and individual contractors.

B. Safety and security

87. Criminality, in particular, theft, continues to be the main threat affecting United Nations staff and assets. In August, Mission personnel on a field mission in Vista Hermosa municipality (Meta) were evacuated following the explosion of an improvised explosive device reportedly carried out by an illegal armed group; no staff were injured. The Department of Safety and Security has issued security warnings for the border area between Meta, Caquetá and Guaviare departments, as illegal armed groups have circulated pamphlets restricting access to organizations with mandates related to conflict mediation, the environment, human rights and forced eradication. Residual risk levels for all areas range from low to medium.

C. Conduct and discipline

88. The Mission continued to implement its strategy to prevent and respond to misconduct in the context of the pandemic. A protocol to address sexual harassment in the Mission was approved, including protective measures for affected individuals, and procedures to be followed if offenders are external to the United Nations system. No cases of sexual exploitation and abuse were reported during the reporting period.

V. Observations

89. In my report of 26 March 2020 (S/2020/239), I recommended three priorities for the implementation of the chapters on reintegration and security guarantees in the Final Agreement for Ending the Conflict and Building a Stable and Lasting Peace during 2020: more robust steps to protect social leaders, human rights defenders and former combatants; substantial measures to ensure the sustainability of the reintegration process; and a strengthened focus on supporting conflict-affected communities. With three months remaining in 2020, there are several concrete actions that can be taken to ensure meaningful progress in these priorities and peacebuilding more broadly.

90. I join Colombian society, the Government and political actors in strongly condemning the multiple killings that have taken place in the last months, including those of children and young people, and I urge authorities to bring perpetrators swiftly to justice. Several of the areas where these heinous crimes took place were the subject of early warnings by the Office of the Ombudsman. I urge all actors to heed these early warnings and work in a coordinated manner, under the framework of the Intersectorial Commission for Rapid Response to Early Warnings, to address the risks highlighted by the Office of the Ombudsman and act on its recommendations. The unrelenting violence against former combatants continues to take a toll on the reintegration process and the consolidation of peace more broadly, as illustrated by the relocation of former combatants and their relatives from former territorial areas for training and reintegration in Antioquia and Cauca, and the continued departure of former combatants from other former territorial areas for training and reintegration and from new reintegration areas. It is important to maintain security measures for former combatants who decide to stay in former territorial areas for training and reintegration that are relocated, as well as for surrounding communities. The recent approval by the National Protection Unit of 94 urgent protection measures for former combatants is noteworthy, and I encourage the Government to provide sufficient resources so that the Specialized Subdirectorate for Security and Protection of the National Protection Unit can address the pending backlog of over 400 protection requests. Adequate access for women former combatants to protection schemes is also imperative. I also urge all relevant institutions to support the Special Investigations Unit of the Office of the Attorney-General so that it can strengthen its presence in the regions with the highest numbers of attacks against former combatants and continue to advance in bringing both material and intellectual authors to justice. Finally, and building on its recent meeting, I call upon the National Commission on Security Guarantees to finalize the public policy on the dismantling of criminal organizations and their support networks, taking into account the views of civil society, in order to move towards its implementation in 2021.

91. Regarding the sustainability of the reintegration process, the next few months should focus on expediting the consolidation of the former territorial areas for training and reintegration and on providing reinforced support to former combatants who reside outside of them. We are halfway into the two-year transition period for the consolidation of the former territorial areas for training and reintegration, whose

formalization and land titling will help reduce uncertainty and pave the way for longer-term prospects for thousands of former combatants and their families. The recent purchase of land by the Government for the former territorial area for training and reintegration of Icononzo is commendable, and I trust that the Government will continue to work to attain the goal of purchasing land for nine additional such spaces by the end of 2020. Similarly, I am confident that the National Reintegration Council will continue to make strides to find ways to allocate land for productive projects for former combatants, an essential requirement for the projects' viability. I also encourage the Government and FARC to work together to develop a joint strategy for strengthened socioeconomic support as well as effective security for the new reintegration areas. Finally, in the face of the economic crisis caused by the pandemic, I encourage the parties to provide reinforced support to former combatants' productive projects, including technical assistance, access to markets, greater attention to their monitoring and evaluation and increased assistance to former combatants' cooperatives.

92. With regard to the third priority, supporting conflict-affected communities, I welcome progress in the reactivation of the comprehensive security and protection programme for communities and the productive dialogue between the Government and civil society actors in the framework of its technical committees. Translating this engagement into tangible progress for communities on the ground requires proper resourcing of the pilot initiatives, and I encourage the Government and international partners to provide support. Communities affected by illicit economies continue to clamour for viable economic alternatives, including crop substitution. In this regard, it is critical to ensure adequate funding for the National Comprehensive Programme for the Substitution of Illicit Crops and the timely implementation of productive projects for families in the programme so that their transition to licit productive activities can be truly sustainable. Progress would also be welcome on the finalization of the 15 remaining road maps for stabilization provided for in the national development plan, which the Government affirmed would be concluded by the end of the year. It is important that they be developed in line with the priorities identified by communities during the design phase of the development programmes with a territorial focus. Finally, it bears repeating that the integrated presence of the State, through both civilian and security institutions, remains the most effective way of ensuring protection for communities in conflict-affected areas.

93. Advancing in these three priorities requires sustained dialogue and partnership between the parties, and with other actors. The parties should continue to make increased use of the mechanisms for dialogue provided for in the Final Agreement, including the Commission for the Follow-up, Promotion and Verification of the Implementation of the Final Agreement and the National Reintegration Council. I welcome the fact that the Commission is meeting more regularly. It is crucial for the parties to ensure that their representatives make increasing and more effective use of the Commission for the purposes stipulated in section 6 of the Agreement, including dispute resolution, jointly identifying and resolving challenges in the fulfilment of their commitments under the Agreement and receiving inputs from entities engaged in implementation. On a related issue, I welcome the Commission's recent meeting with the High-Level Forum of Ethnic Peoples, and trust that this first meeting will lead to increased follow-up of the implementation of the ethnic chapter of the Agreement.

94. The active engagement of municipal and departmental authorities is also essential, and it is encouraging that so many regional and local governments have included in their development plans measures related to reintegration of former combatants, security guarantees and other peacebuilding matters. This demonstrates the importance that authorities, especially in the most conflict-affected regions in

Colombia, attach to the comprehensive implementation of the Final Agreement, including key components to bring security and development to rural Colombia, such as the development programmes with a territorial focus and the National Comprehensive Programme for the Substitution of Illicit Crops. I encourage the national Government to continue its efforts to partner and coordinate with local and departmental actors to ensure the smooth implementation of these and other programmes provided for in the Agreement.

95. I welcome the recent approval by Congress of the use of additional funds from mineral royalties for the implementation of the development programmes with a territorial focus in 2021 and 2022. As political parties in Congress discuss the 2021 budget, I trust that they will approve the necessary resources to ensure the continued implementation of the Agreement as a whole, especially as investments in conflict-affected municipalities will be crucial to fully recover from the economic effects of the pandemic.

96. As October marks the twentieth anniversary of Security Council resolution [1325 \(2000\)](#) on women and peace and security, I call upon all actors to accelerate the implementation of the gender provisions of the Final Agreement, including through adequate resourcing. I urge the parties to promote measures to strengthen the participation and leadership of women former combatants in economic reintegration initiatives and decision-making spaces. The implementation of the action plan of the Comprehensive Programme of Safeguards for Women Leaders and Human Rights Defenders, in particular as related to gender-sensitive prevention measures, remains critical, especially in the face of continued threats and attacks against women leaders and human rights defenders. Stronger measures to prevent and respond to sexual and gender-based violence are necessary in the context of continued sexual violence by illegal armed groups and the increase in domestic violence during the pandemic.

97. The United Nations stands firmly behind the three components of the Comprehensive System of truth, justice, reparations and non-repetition in their efforts to deliver truth and restorative justice that gives a voice to and provides healing to victims. Respecting the rights of victims to the truth and to effective reparations is a responsibility for those who took part in the conflict. I urge all actors who were involved in the conflict to fully and meaningfully contribute to the truth and acknowledge their responsibilities. The recent statement by former FARC-EP leaders asking forgiveness and pledging full contributions to truth is a positive step toward fulfilling the commitments to justice, truth and reconciliation required by the Final Agreement and expected by Colombian society. I trust that these declarations will be followed by other gestures from them and others willing to fulfil their part in this endeavour, and I encourage all actors to respect and support the work of the three components of the System.

98. President Duque has announced a “new commitment for Colombia” to chart a path forward for the recovery from the impact of COVID-19. As the country continues to deal with the economic and social consequences, it will be essential to bring renewed development and opportunities, improved security and the integrated presence of the State to rural areas of Colombia that suffered from the conflict and are now suffering from the effects of the pandemic. The Final Agreement offers tools and mechanisms to address each of these issues, including through the development programmes with a territorial focus and rural health programmes in section 1 of the Agreement, the reintegration and security guarantees aspects of section 3, and the illicit crop substitution programmes in section 4. I therefore encourage Colombian actors to recognize the potential of the implementation of the Agreement as a key part of the route for economic and social recovery from the pandemic, and to redouble efforts to implement the Agreement comprehensively.

99. In conclusion, I take this opportunity to acknowledge the steadfast dedication of each and every member of the Mission under the leadership of my Special Representative, during a period that is challenging as never before, to the way that we deliver on our mandates around the world. I also extend my sincere gratitude to the observer-contributing countries for their commitment, as well as all national and international partners for the valuable support that they continue to provide to the work of the United Nations for sustainable peace in Colombia.
