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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 March to 26 June 2020.

II. Major developments

National developments and context

2. As much of the rest of the world, Colombia has been affected by the coronavirus disease (COVID-19) pandemic, and its effects on the implementation of the Final Agreement for Ending the Conflict and Building a Stable and Lasting Peace have been increasingly evident. The President, Iván Duque, and the Presidential Counsellor for Stabilization and Consolidation have reiterated their assurances that progress on the implementation of the Final Agreement has continued despite this situation. However, the pandemic and social distancing and isolation measures have affected peace-related programmes and have had a considerable negative impact on vulnerable conflict-affected communities. The Government and Fuerza Alternativa Revolucionaria del Común (FARC) have taken steps to adapt to the situation, including through joint efforts, and the international community and the United Nations have also provided support.

3. As at 26 June, Colombia reported 84,442 cases of infection and 2,811 COVID-19-related deaths. President Duque has extended the quarantine until 15 July and the state of health emergency until 31 August, while gradually easing measures and reopening sectors of the economy. Among other measures, subsidies have been granted to more than 3 million people who have been particularly affected.

4. State institutions have adapted to the new reality in various ways. The courts have continued to function through virtual sessions and hearings. In Congress, despite differing positions on whether they should meet in person, both chambers and their committees have continued to work through virtual and semi-presential sessions, including holding discussions on draft bills and constitutional reforms. While discussion of some peace-related legislation has been delayed, specific sessions on



matters related to the Final Agreement were held during the reporting period, including on compliance with the Final Agreement by the Government and FARC and on the continuing attacks against and killings of social leaders and former combatants. The Mission participated in some of these sessions.

5. Some members of Congress from the ruling party have suggested reopening discussions on possible modifications to the Final Agreement and have signalled their intention to introduce legislation to that effect. Opposition parties and civil society groups have strongly criticized this initiative. Government representatives have declared that it is not the Government's intention to modify the Agreement.

6. The work of departmental and municipal authorities has also been affected by the pandemic, including discussions on development plans for the next four years. The Office of the Presidential Counsellor for Stabilization and Consolidation, the Agency for Reintegration and Normalization, former combatants and the Mission have been working with regional and local authorities to include peace-related issues, including reintegration policies, in the plans. Regional and local authorities from across different political parties have reiterated their interest in programmes related to the implementation of the Final Agreement but have also noted their need for technical assistance and resources.

7. Colombian civil society continued to engage actively on peace-related issues and to insist that implementation should not falter amid the pandemic. Echoing my call for a global ceasefire, civil society actors, including religious leaders and victims' organizations, continued to call on all illegal armed groups in the country to desist from violence to provide relief for communities already affected by the pandemic.

8. Following reports of alleged illegal activities within some military intelligence units, including illicit profiling and wiretapping of journalists, members of opposition parties, union members and others, the Minister of Defence gave assurances that investigations had been launched. Several high-ranking officials have been dismissed, and investigations are ongoing. Members of parties from across the political spectrum and civil society organizations have condemned the alleged illegal activities and asked that those responsible be brought to justice. In May, the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights representative in Colombia issued a statement noting that, according to international human rights norms and standards, the regulation and implementation of intelligence activities must comply with international human rights norms and standards.

Mechanisms for dialogue on implementation issues related to the Final Agreement

9. During the reporting period, the Commission for the Follow-up, Promotion and Verification of the Implementation of the Final Agreement met five times, allowing the parties to discuss key matters of peace implementation. My Special Representative participated at their invitation.

10. Tripartite working groups continued to work on peace implementation. The group on anti-personnel mines, composed of the Office of the High Commissioner for Peace, FARC and the United Nations, is developing a proposal for a procedure to gather information that FARC may have on the locations of landmines. The proposal will be presented to the Commission for the Follow-up, Promotion and Verification of the Implementation of the Final Agreement. The tripartite working group regarding former Fuerzas Armadas Revolucionarias de Colombia-Ejército del Pueblo (FARC-EP) assets, composed of the Government (the Office of the Presidential Counsellor for Stabilization and Consolidation and the Special Assets Administration), FARC and the Mission, met twice to discuss issues related to the location of former FARC-EP assets, including security considerations, especially in rural areas. The parties are developing

a timetable to coordinate their joint fieldwork once movement restrictions have been lifted. The Government set a deadline of 31 July 2020 for finalizing the handover of assets in a decree issued in February, which FARC has challenged as unconstitutional.

Comprehensive rural reform

11. The implementation of development programmes with a territorial focus for 170 conflict-affected municipalities continues, including through virtual channels, increased planning and other measures to adapt to the pandemic. The Government reports that, of the 1,191 planned works under the development programmes, 1,109 have been completed and 82 are under implementation. All 170 municipalities have made binding provisions to include development programmes in their planning instruments. The committee that approves resources for peace-related programmes from royalties from hydrocarbon exploitation has approved 178 projects for the municipalities, 25 of them during the pandemic. In March, there was a new call for the “works for taxes” programme that provides tax rebates in return for business investments in conflict-affected regions; 44 applications were received from the private sector, 20 of which were focused on the municipalities covered by the development programmes.

12. Various actors, including civil society organizations and FARC, have requested that the development programmes with a territorial focus be more closely linked to other aspects of the comprehensive rural reform envisaged in the Final Agreement, including the 16 national plans for comprehensive rural reform, 6 of which have been approved so far. Similarly, local communities, including women’s groups, have asked that they be involved in the implementation phase of the development programmes.

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

13. The components of the Comprehensive System of Truth, Justice, Reparation and Non-Repitition have adjusted their work modalities to the pandemic and are working jointly to ensure coordination.

14. The Special Jurisdiction for Peace has made progress in its seven cases, including by issuing 115 judicial decisions since the start of the national quarantine. Importantly, in April, the Special Jurisdiction issued the guidelines on the sanctions that it will impose upon individuals under its jurisdiction and on the “tasks, works or activities with reparatory and restorative content” that individuals under its jurisdiction can carry out as reparations to victims.

15. The Final Agreement envisions an eventual role for the Verification Mission in verifying compliance with the sanctions of the Special Jurisdiction for Peace. In June, in the context of advancing the casework and planning of the Special Jurisdiction for the issuance of sanctions, there was a public exchange of letters between the Special Jurisdiction and the Government, in which they both reconfirmed their aspiration for the Mission to be able to assume such a verification role.

16. Security for individuals involved in the work of the Special Jurisdiction for Peace, including persons under its jurisdiction and victims and lawyers involved in its cases, is an issue of paramount importance. The Special Jurisdiction initiated an assessment of the security situation of former FARC-EP members and members of the security forces subject to its proceedings to determine whether to issue protective measures. A similar assessment is ongoing on the security situation of lawyers and human rights defenders representing victims in case 003, on extrajudicial killings presented as casualties of combat by State agents (known as “false positives”). In March, the Special Jurisdiction extended the collective protective measures for indigenous and Afro-Colombian communities in Chocó associated with case 004.

17. The Truth Commission held virtual meetings with victims, former combatants, social leaders and others. Considering that its mandate ends in 2021, and the limitations imposed by the pandemic, the Commission has focused its work on accelerating the systematization of its interviews with more than 10,000 victims, witnesses and perpetrators.

18. The Unit for the Search for Persons Deemed Missing in the context of and due to the armed conflict finalized its national search plan and 12 regional search plans. The Unit has received a total of 5,800 search requests. It has also received information on cases of persons reported missing from 174 individuals, including former FARC-EP members, members of the armed forces and other State agents. In June, the Unit established its Advisory Council, with the participation of six civil society organizations and eight public sector entities.

Substitution of illicit crops

19. The Government has identified families participating in the National Comprehensive Programme for the Substitution of Illicit Crops, established under section 4 of the Final Agreement, as a vulnerable group in the context of the pandemic and has reassured them that payments and the delivery of supplies will continue. According to the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC), 41,513 ha of coca have been eradicated by 99,097 families (of which 35,304 are led by women) since August 2017. Compliance with voluntary eradication commitments remains at 96 per cent, and the reseeded rate in 28 monitored municipalities is under 1 per cent. Technical assistance and food security projects continue, with approximately 60,000 families receiving support. However, progress is still limited on productive projects, which are key to helping the families participating in the Programme to effectively transition to legal, sustainable livelihoods.

Developments related to the Ejército de Liberación Nacional

20. In response to my call for a global ceasefire, the Ejército de Liberación Nacional (ELN) declared a national unilateral ceasefire from 1 to 30 April. The ceasefire resulted in a reduction in violence in areas with an ELN presence. Colombian organizations observed significant compliance with the ceasefire and no offensive military operations by the security forces against ELN during April. ELN decided not to extend the ceasefire, stating that it had not been reciprocated. The Government had criticized its limited duration and insisted that ELN release all kidnapped persons and child recruits and cease using anti-personnel mines. Since the ceasefire expired, violence and confrontations have resumed in areas in which ELN and other illegal armed groups are present, affecting the civilian population, particularly through forced displacement and confinement.

III. Mission tasks

A. Reintegration

21. The sustainability of the reintegration process has been affected by the pandemic, primarily owing to its economic impact on former combatants' productive projects and the increased vulnerability of former combatants living outside former territorial areas for training and reintegration, including in new collective reintegration areas, who face greater risks of contagion, as most are far from medical facilities, and have limited social and economic opportunities. In the light of the growing vulnerability of former combatants outside former territorial areas, the Mission is increasingly engaging with the Government and FARC to address their

specific needs, including in terms of access to health care and basic services, and to improve technical assistance to help them to implement their productive projects in the context of the pandemic. The Government and FARC, with support from the Mission and others, have worked to mitigate the impact of the pandemic and to prevent contagion among former combatants, their families and local communities.

22. On 30 March, the Agency for Reintegration and Normalization issued a resolution establishing flexible conditions to be applied until 31 August 2020 in the light of the pandemic to ensure the continuity of the monthly allowance for former combatants. On 2 April, the National Reintegration Council created a working group to follow up on the response to the pandemic on issues related to health, productive projects and access to basic services and food. The group met six times during the reporting period.

Economic and social reintegration

23. The National Reintegration Council met three times during the reporting period and approved eight new collective productive projects, benefiting 232 former combatants (68 women). Of the 57 collective projects approved so far, which benefit 2,712 former combatants (777 women), 48 have received funds, benefiting 2,245 former combatants (637 women). The number of approved individual projects increased to 1,309, benefiting 1,535 former combatants (336 women). Nearly 30 per cent of accredited former combatants have received financial support through these mechanisms. The approval of individual productive projects is increasing more rapidly than that of collective ones: since the beginning of 2020, 415 individual projects, benefiting approximately 492 former combatants, and 10 collective projects, benefiting 258 former combatants, have been approved.

24. According to a survey conducted by the Working Group on Productive Projects of the National Reintegration Council, half of the productive initiatives have been affected by the pandemic. Challenges are mostly related to commercialization, owing to movement restrictions, and technical assistance, which has been limited by the digital gap in rural areas. Projects focused on services, especially small initiatives led by women in urban settings, were the most affected. In April, the Council established a Working Group on Commercialization to help to find commercial partnerships for former combatants' productive initiatives.

25. Eleven former combatant initiatives (six of which are led by women) dedicated to producing textiles in former territorial areas for training and reintegration and in Cali and Medellín have turned to making facemasks, demonstrating their resilience and social engagement. Thousands of the facemasks were donated to vulnerable populations.

26. Progress in the allocation of land to former combatants, essential for the sustainability of the reintegration process, is still limited. To date, only one plot has been purchased by the National Land Agency, in the former territorial area for training and reintegration in Colinas (Guaviare), but it has not yet been allocated owing to legal barriers. In a welcome development, however, the Working Group on Land of the National Reintegration Council, the forum in which the exploration of alternative routes for access to land for former combatants, including for productive projects, is being discussed, met in May.

27. The Working Group on Health of the National Reintegration Council met regularly to coordinate COVID-19 prevention and mitigation measures for former combatants and their families. These measures have been largely respected by former combatants in former territorial areas for training and reintegration. Only four former combatants have been infected, and all cases were duly monitored. The Agency for Reintegration and Normalization distributed 6,490 personal prevention kits and

26 collective hygiene kits to disinfect collective areas in the former territorial areas for training and reintegration. The “Health for peace” programme is reinforcing the capacity of the health-care system in reintegration areas and the 170 municipalities covered by the development programmes with a territorial focus, with an additional \$4.6 million from the United Nations multi-partner trust fund for sustaining peace in Colombia.

28. Food provisions have continued to be delivered during the quarantine to 5,049 former combatants and 1,334 children in all 24 former territorial areas for training and reintegration and 25 nearby areas. FARC has requested that food provision be extended temporarily to former combatants outside former territorial areas for training and reintegration and has claimed that access to clean water is limited. In April, the Office of the Inspector General wrote to the Agency for Reintegration and Normalization highlighting some of these concerns. The Agency and FARC are addressing these issues, including by updating the lists of those entitled to receive food and consulting with the Colombian Family Welfare Institute to ensure that children’s nutritional needs are met.

29. The “Arando la educación” programme, which provides education to 1,372 former combatants and community members (38 per cent women) shifted to virtual education and concluded its most recent cycle in April. In the framework of the programme, 164 former combatants (86 women) graduated from high school. Two educational programmes targeting former combatants outside former territorial areas for training and reintegration are on hold pending adjustments owing to the pandemic.

30. The Agency for Reintegration and Normalization, FARC and the Ministry of Housing and Urban and Rural Planning continue to discuss access to housing for former combatants. Progress is still limited as it is contingent on access to land. The Government has prioritized 1,337 former combatants living outside former territorial areas for training and reintegration and affiliated to national savings and compensation funds for access to housing subsidies.

31. The increase in care-related duties as a result of the pandemic has affected women former combatants to a greater extent than men former combatants, thereby limiting their active participation in political and economic reintegration. Additional issues are related to access to sexual and reproductive health care and the increasing risks of domestic violence faced by women former combatants and their families. The Working Group on Gender of the National Reintegration Council has developed recommendations on the impact of COVID-19 on the reintegration of women, while continuing to call for greater progress on advancing the gender-related actions of the national reintegration policy.

32. The High-level Forum of Ethnic Peoples requested the National Reintegration Council to create a working group to discuss issues affecting former combatants from ethnic communities, including the limited number of productive projects available to them.

33. On 30 March, the Agency for Reintegration and Normalization extended the deadline for completing the design of collective and individual reintegration road maps until October. The Agency and FARC have made some progress on the participatory methodology for the implementation of the reintegration road map. FARC has requested, among other things, that a national reintegration system be established with a view to leveraging a wider institutional response in the implementation of the road map, as provided for in the national reintegration policy (document 3931 of the National Council on Economic and Social Policy).

Transition and consolidation of former territorial areas for training and reintegration, and new collective reintegration areas

34. Most former combatants continue to carry out their reintegration process outside former territorial areas for training and reintegration. According to the Agency for Reintegration and Normalization, 9,279 former combatants are living outside former territorial areas, spread over 500 municipalities. According to FARC, there are at least 75 areas outside former territorial areas in which collective reintegration is taking place, mostly in rural areas with low socioeconomic indicators, and vulnerable to the pandemic because of their remote locations. Fifty or more former combatants live in 27 of those areas, with larger groups in capital cities. During the reporting period, residents of new collective reintegration areas in an Afro-Colombian collective territory in Mandé, in Urrao (Antioquia), and in the Cañamomo Lomaprieta indigenous reservation, in Riosucio (Caldas), and others in Tolima Department formally submitted a request for humanitarian support to the National Reintegration Council.

35. During the reporting period, the Government and FARC carried out technical level meetings with residents of seven former territorial areas for training and reintegration to update them on expected timelines for their ongoing transition and consolidation, and to explore ways to overcome the challenges identified. The security situation in two former territorial areas for training and reintegration is critical: Buenos Aires (Cauca) and Ituango (Antioquia). Viable plots for the transfer of both territorial areas are being identified.

36. A draft strategy prepared by the Agency for Reintegration and Normalization for the transition and consolidation of former territorial areas for training and reintegration, which encompasses the purchase of land, the implementation of housing projects for former combatants and the inclusion of these areas in municipal planning arrangements, was shared with FARC. FARC has requested to have an active role in the design and implementation of the strategy.

37. The Presidential Counsellor for Stabilization and Consolidation and the Director of the Agency for Reintegration and Normalization met virtually with residents of five former territorial areas for training and reintegration to discuss their concerns, which included delays in the implementation of productive projects, access to land, the consolidation of former territorial areas and the response to the pandemic.

Role of communities and local actors

38. The Agency for Reintegration and Normalization and FARC launched a strategy in May to address the growing stigmatization of former combatants by promoting dialogue through workshops targeting members of the armed forces, the media, entrepreneurs and communities.

39. During the reporting period, the 24 local reintegration councils and 12 regional reintegration bodies held sessions focused on pandemic prevention and mitigation measures.

40. The implementation of the community-based reintegration strategy, jointly designed by the Government and FARC, has not begun owing to mobility restrictions.

Political reintegration

41. The FARC party presented 59 draft bills in Congress, both individually and in coalition with other parties, mostly related to peace implementation and the impact of the pandemic.

42. Owing to the pandemic, the FARC party indefinitely postponed its party congress, which had been originally scheduled for April.

B. Security guarantees

43. Killings of former combatants, social leaders and human rights defenders have continued during the pandemic, which further underlines the urgency of immediate and concrete measures to address this issue. In various regions, illegal armed groups and criminal organizations have taken advantage of the pandemic to strengthen their presence in the territories, including through attacks against public security forces, forced displacement and confinement of communities, and threats and targeted killings of social leaders and former FARC-EP members. In some cases, illegal armed groups and criminal organizations have forcibly imposed social control measures, including through illegal checkpoints and targeted violence against individuals violating lockdown measures. The mandatory isolation measures have affected the implementation of some of the security guarantee mechanisms outlined in section 3.4 of the Final Agreement. Vulnerable populations are finding it more difficult to report critical security situations and access institutional response mechanisms.

Security guarantees for former FARC-EP members

44. Attacks against former FARC-EP members have persisted. The Mission verified 13 killings (all men) during the reporting period, for a total of 31 (including 2 women) in 2020. Since the signing of the Final Agreement, the Mission has verified 204 killings of former FARC-EP members (4 women), 48 attempted killings (2 women) and 15 disappearances. Almost half of those killed were former FARC-EP members who had been released from prison in accordance with the Final Agreement.

45. Families of former combatants also continue to be targeted. On 6 June, two relatives of former combatants, one aged 15, were killed along with a bus driver in the vicinity of the former territorial area for training and reintegration in Ituango (Antioquia). Since the signing of the Final Agreement, 44 relatives of former FARC-EP members have been killed.

46. Former FARC-EP members living outside former territorial areas for training and reintegration continue to be particularly vulnerable to threats, attacks, forced displacement and forced recruitment, as well as to stigmatization and retaliation.

47. Criminal organizations and illegal armed groups have reportedly taken advantage of the quarantine to strengthen their control over strategic illicit trafficking routes, especially in Cauca, Meta Putumayo, Chocó, Nariño and Antioquia. The Mission has verified killings of and threats against former FARC-EP members living in former territorial areas for training and reintegration and new collective reintegration areas in those regions. On 8 April, in Frontino (Antioquia), three former FARC-EP members and 12 family members were evacuated and forcibly displaced as a result of threats against them. On 18 April, former combatant Rigoberto García Restrepo was killed in the new collective reintegration area in the Afro-Colombian territory of Mandé, in the municipality of Urao (Antioquia), where illegal armed groups and criminal organizations have repeatedly threatened and forcibly displaced former combatants and local communities, despite military deployment in the surrounding area. On 30 April, in Argelia (Cauca), 16 former combatants had to abandon their homes and productive projects as a result of threats from illegal armed groups. In June, 17 former combatants and their families had to abandon the new collective reintegration area of El Diamante, in Uribe (Meta), also owing to threats. The threat of illegal armed groups in the territory remains, both against communities and the former combatants left behind.

48. Also concerning is the situation in the former territorial areas for training and reintegration of Ituango (Antioquia) and Miranda (Cauca). Former combatants have progressively abandoned these areas as a result of deteriorating security conditions and threats from illegal armed groups, including against local communities. On 17 June, at a meeting to discuss the impact of measures, chaired by the Presidential Counsellor for Stabilization and Consolidation, and with the participation of the Ministry of Defence, the Office of the Attorney General, the Office of the Ombudsman, the Agency for Reintegration and Normalization and local authorities and public forces of both regions, the Deputy Attorney General emphasized the need to execute pending arrest warrants against those allegedly responsible for the violence.

49. In May, the FARC political party requested the Inter-American Commission on Human Rights to grant precautionary measures to protect former FARC-EP members and accelerate the State's fulfilment of the security guarantees in the Final Agreement commitments. In June, the FARC party met with the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights to discuss the security situation facing former combatants and their families.

50. Efforts by the Special Investigation Unit of the Office of the Attorney General led to 8 new convictions and 8 indictments of suspects of attacks against former FARC-EP members, bringing the total to 29 convictions and 20 cases at trial stage. Since the signing of the Final Agreement, 10 suspects have been captured as intellectual authors and 44 as material authors linked to criminal organizations. Arrest warrants are pending against 38 alleged intellectual authors and 72 alleged material authors linked to criminal organizations.

51. The tripartite working group on investigations, which includes the Special Investigation Unit, FARC and the Mission, has been established in Putumayo, Guaviare and Cundinamarca to follow up on potential threats and investigations at the territorial level, with more departments to follow.

52. According to the Specialized Subdirectorate for Security and Protection of the National Protection Unit, since the signing of the Final Agreement, 17 former combatants have been killed while waiting for protection measures. The Subdirectorate continues to report an urgent need for adequate resources to properly implement 11 newly approved and 77 incomplete protection measures. An additional 140 bodyguards and more analysts are necessary to effectively respond to protection requests, as the number of analysts has decreased from 22 in 2018 to 7 in 2020.

53. Women former combatants continue to face challenges in accessing protection measures. However, the Subdirectorate circulated internal guidance in April calling upon its staff to ensure the equal use of collective protection schemes by men and women.

54. With the assistance of the Tripartite Protection and Security Mechanism and the Office of the Inspector General, the Subdirectorate and security forces have supported more than 15 emergency evacuations of former FARC-EP members after receiving imminent threats. A critical inter-institutional evacuation road map is being discussed by the Technical Committee on Security and Protection.

55. Former FARC-EP members have resorted to judicial measures to expedite protection requests. On 21 April, a local court ruled in favour of a request by former FARC-EP members and ordered the National Protection Unit to implement protection measures for a new collective reintegration area in the indigenous reservation of Tallambí (Nariño).

56. The preventive deployment of security forces in the former territorial areas for training and reintegration continues unchanged, except in Mesetas (Meta) and Buenos

Aires (Cauca), where security forces moved their command posts to new locations, prompting concerns regarding the security of former combatants. Almost all new collective areas of reintegration, which account for approximately 4,000 former combatants, continue to lack specific mechanisms for protection from public security forces.

57. On 28 April, the Government issued a decree authorizing the High Commissioner for Peace to verify the “willingness for peace” of organized armed groups, including their willingness to submit to justice and reintegrate into civilian life. Some social organizations and victims’ groups have called on the Government to ensure that the process includes mechanisms to guarantee the rights of victims to truth, justice and reparation. Civil society representatives to the National Commission on Security Guarantees wrote to the Government asking to discuss the decree in relation to the mandate of the National Commission to develop public policy to dismantle illegal armed groups, criminal organizations and their support networks.

Security guarantees for communities, human rights defenders and social leaders

58. According to the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights, during the reporting period, 6 social leaders and human rights defenders (all men) were killed and another 27 cases are under verification (including 2 women and 1 individual from the lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender and intersex (LGBTI) population). In 2020, as at 19 June, the Office had verified a total of 32 cases of homicides of social leaders (including 4 individuals from ethnic communities and 4 women), and 47 more cases are under verification (including 3 women, 13 individuals from ethnic communities and 1 person from the LGBTI population).

59. The highest levels of violence against social leaders continue to be recorded in Cauca Department, despite the increased deployment of security forces, which has almost doubled since the beginning of the year. During the quarantine, in Cauca, five massacres have been reported, as well as killings, including of social leaders and their family members. Illegal armed groups and criminal organizations continue to inflict violence against local communities, including killing children, older persons and pregnant women.

60. The security situation in Putumayo Department also continues to be of grave concern, including specific risks for women leaders, women’s organizations and participants in illicit crop substitution initiatives.

61. The massive forced displacement and confinement of communities, particularly ethnic communities, continues as a result of the actions of illegal armed groups and criminal organizations, and because of confrontations among them and with security forces. According to the Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs, during the reporting period, over 7,500 people were forcibly displaced in the Pacific region (Nariño, Cauca, Valle del Cauca and Chocó). Over 80 per cent of those affected were women and children, and 50 per cent were from ethnic communities. More than 45,000 people were subjected to forced confinement in May, 70 per cent of whom were inhabitants of the Catatumbo region of Norte de Santander.

62. Recruitment and use of children by illegal armed groups and criminal organizations remained a grave concern and the Office of the Ombudsman has reported a heightened risk during the quarantine. The Mission received several reports of cases in Cauca, Guaviare, Meta and Nariño. Some prevention activities, including skills training and awareness-raising with parents, were held in two former territorial areas for training and reintegration in Antioquia and Nariño. The establishment of immediate response teams to address recruitment cases in Cauca was a positive development.

63. Tensions and protests, sometimes leading to violent confrontations, have been on the rise between communities and public security forces over operations of forced eradication of illicit crops, especially in Norte de Santander, Antioquia, Meta, Caquetá, Nariño, Guaviare, Cauca and Putumayo, including in some ethnic territories. During the reporting period, two persons were killed in the context of such protests in Norte de Santander and Nariño. Several actors, including the Ombudsman and peasant and ethnic organizations, have called on the Government to prioritize voluntary substitution over forced eradication and to make progress in the implementation of the National Comprehensive Programme for the Substitution of Illicit Crops.

64. The Office of the Ombudsman continued to issue early warnings for several regions, prioritizing early warnings of imminent character during the quarantine. In total, 12 early warnings were issued, 10 of imminent character, for Norte de Santander, Chocó, Caldas, Antioquia, Valle del Cauca and Bolívar Departments. In addition, a national imminent warning on the security situation of conflict-affected communities in the context of the pandemic was issued, highlighting risks related to actions of illegal armed groups and criminal organizations.

65. The National Commission on Security Guarantees, mandated under the Final Agreement to design a public policy for the dismantling of illegal armed groups, criminal organizations and their support networks, has not been convened since January, although its technical subcommissions on gender and ethnic affairs have met once and twice, respectively. In June, the High Commissioner for Peace, as the secretary of the Commission, presented draft rules of procedure for the Commission. Civil society representatives to the Commission have insisted that the proposal be discussed in a participatory manner. On 19 June, a technical meeting of the Commission was held to advance the discussion.

66. In May, the Ministry of the Interior reactivated the technical committees on the implementation of Decree No. 660 on the comprehensive security and protection programme for communities and organizations in the territories. The Ministry of the Interior announced that it is moving forward with the implementation of five pilot programmes on protection for communities in Guapi (Cauca), Tumaco (Nariño), El Tarra (Norte de Santander), Morales (Bolívar) and San José de Uré (Córdoba).

67. There was modest progress during the reporting period in the implementation of the action plan of the Comprehensive Programme of Safeguards for Women Leaders and Human Rights Defenders. Some progress has been made on the regional pilot of the Programme in Putumayo, resulting in the incorporation of actions related to the Comprehensive Programme into two municipal development plans.

C. Legal guarantees

68. The Office of the High Commissioner for Peace, FARC and the Mission met regularly in the tripartite working group regarding the transition to legality of former FARC-EP members, including to discuss new pandemic-related challenges.

69. The Office of the High Commissioner for Peace has confirmed that 290 additional former FARC-EP members (including 126 women) were accredited during the reporting period, bringing the total to 13,394 (3,101 women). They were part of the list used by the Office of the High Commissioner for Peace, FARC and the Mission in 2019 to jointly address pending accreditations. Owing to movement restrictions, it has not been possible to notify all of them. The Government has confirmed that an additional 134 persons on the list have been identified and are under evaluation for accreditation. The parties have agreed to make an additional effort to identify the remaining 209 persons on the list once movement restrictions have been lifted.

70. The parties made progress in overcoming the challenges related to 206 cases on the list of individuals submitted by FARC on 15 August 2017 whose legal situation is still pending definition, 110 of whom are deprived of liberty. The parties are working on the rules of procedure of a joint mechanism for the settlement of disputes that would help to resolve those difficult cases, as provided for in the Final Agreement.

71. The tripartite mechanism regarding the transition to legality has been addressing the 180 cases of accredited former FARC-EP members who are still deprived of their liberty. The Special Jurisdiction for Peace has confirmed that 153 of these individuals have cases open under its jurisdiction and recently reported that during the national quarantine it has issued decisions in 132 cases, granting conditional liberty in 10 cases and denying it in 122 cases. The FARC party has expressed concerns over the high number of denials and has confirmed its commitment to providing further information to the Special Jurisdiction as requested.

D. Cross-cutting issues

Gender

72. The COVID-19 pandemic and preventive isolation measures have had specific effects on the security situation of women and girls, owing in particular to a marked increase in sexual and gender-based violence, and continued violence against women leaders, human rights defenders and former combatants. According to the Office of the Presidential Counsellor for Women's Equity, during the preventive isolation period, there has been an increase of 150 per cent in reports of domestic violence to the national hotline. In response, the Vice-President and the Office of the Presidential Counsellor for Women's Equity established a high-level working group to devise prevention and response measures for gender-based violence. The FARC National Commission on Women, Gender and Diversity has promoted local campaigns to raise awareness on gender-based violence among former combatants, considering increasing reports of domestic violence in former territorial areas for training and reintegration. Women continue to be at risk of sexual violence perpetrated by illegal armed groups and criminal organizations, particularly in rural areas.

73. The pandemic has presented additional challenges for advancing the gender provisions of the Final Agreement related to reintegration and security guarantees. The active and meaningful participation of women in the implementation of the Final Agreement has been undermined by the economic and social consequences of the pandemic, including loss of livelihoods and restrictions on connectivity and mobility.

74. The Mission has continued its dialogue with women's organizations and women former combatants through virtual means. My Special Representative has promoted dialogue at a national level, in coordination with the United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women (UN-Women), to address the current situation of women social leaders and human rights defenders and the impact of the pandemic on gender-related aspects of the Final Agreement.

Ethnic affairs

75. According to the Agency for Reintegration and Normalization, 74 per cent of former combatants of indigenous and Afro-Colombian origin live in remote areas outside former territorial areas for training and reintegration. Inhabitants of those areas have inadequate access to public services and do not receive sufficient support to start income-generating initiatives or food provisions, making them particularly vulnerable in the context of the pandemic.

76. In some areas, indigenous and Afro-Colombian former combatants have assumed new leadership roles. Three former combatants (one woman) of the Kankuamo indigenous people are now leading the cooperative in the former territorial area in Pongores (La Guajira). The new indigenous local governor of the Embera community of Nevata (Antioquia) is a former combatant, as is the vice-president of the community action board of the Afro-Colombian community of Altos de Murri, also in Antioquia.

77. Violence in ethnic territories, as a result of the presence and activities of illegal armed groups and criminal organizations, remains of grave concern and has persisted during the quarantine. In Cauca and in the Atrato River basin in the border region of Chocó and Antioquia Departments, thousands of people from ethnic communities have been forcibly displaced or confined, many of them facing the risks of recruitment and sexual exploitation.

Children

78. The pandemic has affected the well-being of children in former territorial areas for training and reintegration, hindering, in particular their access to health care and education and protection against domestic violence and sexual abuse. The Colombian Family Welfare Institute has guaranteed nutritional support for the children included in its programmes for early development and day-care centres. The creation of child-friendly spaces in former territorial areas advanced at a slow pace, with some progress made on infrastructure in three former territorial areas, on planning in two and limited advances in four others.

79. During the reporting period, the Office of the High Commissioner for Peace reported that it had issued resolutions recognizing 232 former FARC-EP combatants as children at the time of the laydown of arms and that the total number of children disengaged from FARC-EP stood at 404. With the support of the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF) and the United Nations Population Fund, the Agency for Reintegration and Normalization is designing a youth approach to provide differentiated care and services for young people in their reintegration process.

80. The programme "A different path of life" for 123 young adults formerly associated with FARC-EP is ongoing. The Mission verified the relocation of a participant as a result of threats by an illegal armed group. The Mission also verified two cases of female participants without health coverage for them and their newborn babies. Psychological support remains a challenge. As at April, 71 participants had received monetary reparations, and the reparations for 43 were pending. As part of their reintegration process, one participant is now the spokesperson of the FARC political party in Chocó and another is leading a community youth initiative in Tolima.

Youth and peace and security

81. The first departmental, municipal and local youth council elections since 2005, originally programmed for November 2020, were suspended until 2021 owing to the pandemic. These councils are the official mechanisms for youth participation in the formulation of public policies. Youth representatives of political parties are preparing to campaign, including the FARC party, which plans to field several candidates. In May, the Mission supported the establishment of the Cauca Department Inter-party Youth Committee, bringing together youth representatives from 10 different political parties, including FARC, to promote youth participation. To support former combatants' productive projects during the pandemic, youth leaders in Bogotá created an online platform through which eight former combatants' initiatives are selling their products, with young entrepreneurs providing mentorship for each initiative. In

Guaviare, 37 youth former combatants, indigenous youth and peasants planted 35,000 seedlings to help to reforest the Amazon rainforest and promote reconciliation.

Coordination with the United Nations country team

82. The United Nations country team continues to support the implementation of the Final Agreement, adapting to the new realities of the pandemic, in coordination with the Mission. During the reporting period, a United Nations system-wide effort to coordinate support for the development programmes with a territorial focus was carried out, including a mapping exercise that identified ongoing initiatives totalling close to \$127 million. In addition, 990 other potential initiatives in need of support were identified. The country team has resources available to support about 60 per cent of the identified initiatives.

83. Within the framework of the inter-agency working group on reintegration, the United Nations country team and the Mission coordinated a joint effort to support former combatants in the context of the pandemic in three key areas: health (led by the Pan American Health Organization/World Health Organization), socioeconomic reintegration and food security. The United Nations country team launched a COVID-19 response plan. In collaboration with the Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean and the Mission, the country team is assessing the impacts on Colombian society and social cohesion, the economy and vulnerable groups, including victims and former combatants.

84. The United Nations multi-partner trust fund for sustaining peace in Colombia approved \$3.5 million for civil society organizations and United Nations projects to prevent the recruitment of children and young persons, and to support the High-level Forum of Ethnic Peoples and the Special Forum on Gender.

85. The national steering committee for the Peacebuilding Fund comprehensive reintegration project, composed of the Government, FARC and the United Nations, has requested the extension of the project until December 2020.

IV. Mission structures

A. Mission support

86. The Mission is continuing to address the effects of the pandemic on the Mission's activities, under the overall coordination of a COVID-19 task force, including a review of the Mission's footprint, a programme criticality assessment, a scenario planning exercise and a plan for a future and gradual return to the office, aligned with the decisions of the Colombian authorities. Task forces have also been established at the regional level, as was a welfare committee focused on the mental health and well-being of Mission personnel in remote locations. Regional offices continue to receive personal protective equipment and occupational health and safety briefings. Information technology infrastructure continues to be strengthened as a key enabler in the current work environment.

87. As at 1 June 2020, 49 per cent of all civilian personnel are women. For other categories, women represented: 60 per cent of United Nations Volunteers; 36 per cent of international observers; and 40 per cent of consultants and individual contractors.

B. Safety and security

88. The Department of Safety and Security has adapted its security management strategy to the conditions of the pandemic and is closely monitoring the security

situation. Non-essential missions for the United Nations system have been suspended. During the reporting period, the Department registered 337 security incidents related to the pandemic, particularly related to mobility restrictions and social protests, with Cundinamarca, Antioquia, Cauca and Bogotá as the areas with the most incidents.

C. Conduct and discipline

89. The Mission has adapted its conduct and discipline strategy to prevent and respond to misconduct in the context of the pandemic and mandatory isolation measures. A risk assessment was conducted and corresponding preventive actions have been taken, including the dissemination of information to all staff and the holding of online meetings, with a particular focus on sexual exploitation and abuse, harassment and abuse of authority, misuse of social media and violation of security regulations. From 27 March to 22 June, no allegations of sexual exploitation and abuse were reported.

V. Observations

90. As Colombians face the unprecedented challenge of the COVID-19 pandemic, I commend them for their resilience, creativity and tenacity in mitigating the effects of the health crisis and in taking steps gradually and responsibly to restore normalcy. Those same qualities led to the adoption of the Final Agreement, and those qualities are necessary to continue to push forward with its implementation.

91. The three priorities for peace implementation in 2020 that I recommended in my previous report ([S/2020/239](#)) remain relevant and urgent in the light of the pandemic, namely: stronger steps to protect the lives of social leaders, human rights defenders and former combatants; reinforced measures to ensure the sustainability of the reintegration process; and a focus on conflict-affected communities. I encourage the Government and State institutions, as well as FARC and all other actors to remain focused on them to ensure that the implementation of the Final Agreement continues to move forward. As my Special Representative has noted, peace in Colombia cannot be another casualty of the pandemic. The hard-fought gains of peace have to be safeguarded and expanded.

92. Regrettably, the pandemic has not stopped illegal armed groups and criminal organizations from inflicting suffering and violence upon courageous Colombians who are building peace at the grass-roots level and defending their communities, as well as those who laid down their arms and are seeking to reintegrate into civilian life. In the face of the continued killings of social leaders, human rights defenders and former combatants, I call once again upon the Government and State institutions to make full use of the security guarantees mechanisms devised in the Final Agreement to deliver concrete results and put a stop to such tragedies. Progress has to be made by the National Commission on Security Guarantees in the design and implementation of public policy for the dismantling of criminal organizations and their support networks. Many former combatants and social leaders have been killed while awaiting a response to their protection requests. I reiterate the urgent need for adequate funding and support for the Specialized Subdirectorates for Security and Protection of the National Protection Unit to address the backlog of protection requests to safeguard the lives of former combatants at risk.

93. I welcome progress by the Special Investigations Unit of the Office of the Attorney General in investigating those responsible for crimes against social leaders, human rights defenders and former combatants, and I encourage all relevant actors to redouble their efforts in the fight against impunity, including by capturing individuals

with pending arrest warrants, so that justice can serve as a credible deterrent. More progress is necessary in the implementation of the Comprehensive Programme of Safeguards for Women Leaders and Human Rights Defenders, particularly given the effects of the pandemic on women's security. I reiterate my call to all actors to take all steps necessary to address domestic and gender-based violence. Finally, I encourage the Government to reinforce security for former combatants living in new collective reintegration areas outside the former territorial areas for training and reintegration, especially considering how many of them have been killed in these settlements.

94. Unfortunately, the pandemic has taken a toll on the pace of the reintegration process, particularly on former combatants' productive endeavours. I therefore welcome the extension of flexible conditions until 31 August 2020 to ensure delivery of the monthly allowance. At a time when all economic activities are being affected and their sustainability is at stake, the provision of technical assistance to productive projects and efforts to help former combatants to find commercial opportunities for their products and services have to be reinforced. I also call upon the national authorities to redouble their efforts to work with FARC in the design and implementation of the individual and collective reintegration road maps and to make progress in the allocation of land to former combatants whose productive and housing projects depend on it. It is also important to advance in supporting the reintegration initiatives of women former combatants, including participation in decision-making spaces. I encourage the National Reintegration Council to prioritize the recommendations of its Technical Working Group on Gender. The leadership of women former combatants should be a driving force in the recovery efforts from the crisis. The pandemic has also highlighted the plight of over 9,000 former combatants who live outside the former territorial areas for training and reintegration. The lack of basic services in such areas makes them more vulnerable to contagion. The Government should continue to work to ensure coordination between the reintegration process and the implementation of other parts of the Final Agreement, especially comprehensive rural reform.

95. With regard to ensuring that conflict-affected communities are at the centre of peacebuilding, the reactivation of the technical committees of Decree No. 660 on the comprehensive security and protection programme for communities and organizations in the territories is a welcome step. The resumption of their activities has to translate into concrete progress, for which adequate resourcing is important. I stress again the importance of all relevant actors adopting timely and coordinated responses to the recommendations in the early warnings of the Office of the Ombudsman. The pandemic has demonstrated the vulnerability of communities in areas in which the State presence still remains weak. Providing opportunities, infrastructure, services and investments through the integrated deployment of State institutions is essential to bring security and development to conflict-affected communities. The Government's efforts to implement the development programmes with a territorial focus are noteworthy. I trust that, through constructive dialogue, the parties will work towards the concept of the development programmes with a territorial focus envisioned in the Final Agreement, including by ensuring the continued participation of communities and former combatants in their implementation.

96. I am concerned that illegal armed groups and criminal organizations have taken advantage of the pandemic to expand their territorial control, adding to the suffering of communities and civilians. I reiterate my emphatic call upon all illegal armed groups to put life above any other consideration and refrain from further violence.

97. The Government and FARC set up a COVID-19 working group within the National Reintegration Council. The parties continue to work jointly through tripartite

mechanisms on accreditations, mines, investigations and assets. These examples demonstrate that dialogue and joint work is the best way of finding solutions to the challenges of implementation, and I invite the parties to spare no effort in finding ways of broadening and deepening constructive dialogue on other pending issues. I therefore encourage the National Reintegration Council to reactivate its working group on children and to consider the proposal of the High-level Forum of Ethnic Peoples to create a working group to specifically consider the situation of former combatants from ethnic communities. I hope that the parties, accompanied by the guarantor countries, will continue to meet regularly in the Commission for the Follow-up, Promotion and Verification of the Implementation of the Final Agreement and enhance its functioning to discuss differences and overcome obstacles to implementation.

98. In the spirit of putting victims at the core of peacebuilding, the Comprehensive System of Truth, Justice, Reparation and Non-Repetition continues to play a fundamental role, and I urge all actors to continue to support its three components, including by ensuring the necessary resources for its proper functioning. I commend the Special Jurisdiction for Peace, the Unit for the Search for Persons Deemed Missing, and the Truth Commission for ensuring that their work continues in spite of the pandemic. I call upon all actors, including those under the jurisdiction of the Special Jurisdiction, to fully contribute to the work of the Comprehensive System so as to fulfil victims' expectations and uphold their rights to truth, justice and reparations.

99. I once again urge all actors to avoid reopening discussions on potential modifications to the Final Agreement. Debates on potential modifications have generated polarization and division in the past; and, in the light of the pandemic, it is more important than ever to achieve strength through unity. I note that the Government has affirmed that it does not seek to modify the Final Agreement and has reiterated its position that any reforms or legislation would apply only to future peace processes. Indeed, the commitments made to those who laid down their arms in good faith and remain engaged in the reintegration process have to be respected, most importantly, the full implementation of the entirety of the Final Agreement. Its focus on addressing the root causes of the conflict and forward-looking measures to build genuine peace, security and development throughout Colombia have inspired the world.

100. The consequences of the pandemic will continue to be felt, but I am confident that Colombians can overcome these challenges as they have so many others. I encourage Colombians to be guided by the common goals of preventing contagion, supporting the most vulnerable and ensuring that the gains of the peace process are not only protected but built upon. The United Nations stands firmly behind them in these efforts.