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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 [2435 \(2018\)](#), by which the Council renewed the mandate of the United Nations Verification Mission in Colombia and requested me to report on its activities every 90 days. The report covers the period from 27 December 2018 to 26 March 2019.

II. Major developments

2. The reporting period has been dominated by growing polarization and divisions relating to a fundamental pillar of the peace process, the Special Jurisdiction for Peace, as well as debates over the proper inclusion of the Peace Agreement in national planning and resource allocation.

3. On 8 February, the Colombian Congress referred the statutory law of the Special Jurisdiction for Peace to the President, Iván Duque Márquez, for his signature. On 10 March, following four weeks of sharp public debate, the President announced his objection to six articles in the statutory law returning the bill to Congress. In addition, he conveyed his intention to propose three constitutional reforms to Legislative Act 01 of 2017 that created the Comprehensive System of Truth, Justice, Reparation and Non-Repetition.

4. President Duque reaffirmed his commitment to the implementation of the Peace Agreement and stressed that the process of review of the statutory law in Congress could be an opportunity to forge a national consensus around the transitional justice system. The proposed changes were aimed, he stated, at ensuring genuine truth, justice, reparations and non-repetition. The presidential decision was applauded by leaders from the Democratic Centre Party and other members of the ruling coalition. The Attorney General, who had earlier voiced some of the same objections to the statutory law, also expressed support. It prompted critical reactions as well, however. Among those was a letter I received signed by representatives to the Havana peace talks from the previous Government and the former Revolutionary Armed Forces of Colombia – People’s Army (FARC-EP), along with other supporters of the Peace Agreement, in which they expressed deep concern that the decision would harm the Special Jurisdiction for Peace and prove damaging to the peace process as a whole. The People’s Alternative Revolutionary Force (FARC) party and other opposition



parties voiced their serious concern. The Inspector General, Fernando Carrillo, said the decision ignored the rulings of the Constitutional Court, which had previously reviewed the measure and declared it constitutional.

5. On 12 March, the Foreign Minister, Carlos Holmes Trujillo García, travelled to New York to provide me with a detailed explanation of the President's objections. I took note of the grounds for the President's decision, stressed the importance of the Special Jurisdiction for Peace and reiterated the concerns expressed by the United Nations with respect to the uncertainty surrounding the adoption of the statutory law. I also conveyed to the Minister my hope for swift action to ensure that that legal foundation would be put in place as soon as possible, ensuring the rights of victims and legal security for all concerned parties. In a joint statement, the United Nations Verification Mission and the United Nations system in Colombia had previously expressed regret that, more than two years after the signing of the final agreement, the Special Jurisdiction for Peace still lacked a statutory law.

6. On 15 March, following a meeting with the Minister for Foreign Affairs in The Hague, the Prosecutor of the International Criminal Court reiterated the support of her office for the Special Jurisdiction for Peace and its commitment to working with national authorities to ensure that the Rome Statute criteria were fully met in the context of the country's accountability mechanisms.

7. On 20 March, the Constitutional Court confirmed that it would undertake a second review of the statutory law following congressional consideration of the objections, noting that Congress should act prior to the conclusion of the current session on 20 June. According to the President of the Court, the unanimous opinion shows that the matter can now be considered "with serenity and without polarization". President Duque expressed his respect for the Court's decision.

8. On 5 February, Congress was convened for an extraordinary session to consider the Government's draft national development plan 2018–2022, entitled "Pact for Colombia, pact for equity". The plan, covering the remainder of the President's four-year term, must be approved no later than 7 May. In accordance with a 2016 law, the budget of the plan must include a specific component for peace, with dedicated resources in addition to investments already programmed by public entities at the national and territorial levels.

9. In a joint statement, 170 social organizations called for a national strike on 25 April, demanding that the implementation of the Peace Agreement and a rights-based approach be adequately reflected in the national development plan and calling for greater guarantees of protection for social leaders and human rights defenders, among other things. In addition, indigenous organizations from Cauca, Huila and Putumayo organized demonstrations in March focused on demands for land rights and the implementation of the Peace Agreement and protesting the continued killing of human rights defenders, among other topics.

10. The bilateral Commission for the Follow-up, Promotion and Verification of the Implementation of the Final Agreement, mandated to cover all aspects of the Agreement, met on 27 February and on 14 and 20 March. On 19 February, the Council of State ruled that the Government was called upon to restore to that body authorities that had been suspended in March 2018, namely to verify that the content of all draft decrees, laws or legislative acts that were necessary to implement the Final Agreement corresponded to the Agreement before they were issued by the President or presented to the Congress.

11. By a decree issued on 8 February 2019, the Office of the Presidency was restructured. Among other adjustments, the High Counsellor for Post-Conflict became the Presidential Counsellor for Stabilization and Consolidation, with continued

responsibility for coordinating the implementation of the Peace Agreement in the context of regional stabilization and consolidation. The Presidential Adviser on Gender Equality was placed under the Office of the Vice-President.

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

12. While awaiting the promulgation of its statutory law, a critical foundation of its work, the Special Jurisdiction for Peace has sought to reassure all parties concerned of its determination to continue to carry out its constitutionally mandated functions. Indeed, the impressive and expanding body of work of the Special Jurisdiction is at times lost amid the polarizing debates over its role.

13. Registered under the Special Jurisdiction for Peace 15 months since its establishment are 9,691 former FARC-EP members, 1,958 individuals from the armed forces, 39 individuals from other public entities and 12 private citizens who petitioned to be placed under its authority. An additional 195 individuals sought and were denied access to this process.

14. The Special Jurisdiction for Peace has received 57 requests to review the applicability of the no-extradition guarantee for crimes committed during the armed conflict and prior to the signing of the 2016 Peace Agreement. To date, 40 of those requests have been reviewed and denied.

15. The Special Jurisdiction for Peace has initiated work on seven cases it has identified as representative of the armed conflict that cover events affecting approximately 820,000 victims. Two of those cases were opened during the reporting period. Victims were given the opportunity to contribute reports and supporting material in relation to their cases, an innovative dimension of the peace process in Colombia.

16. Under case 001, on kidnappings by the former FARC-EP, the Special Jurisdiction for Peace has begun to call 31 former senior commanders to appear and provide information. Nine have already appeared, including FARC leader Rodrigo Londoño. Similarly, 22 former FARC-EP members are also being called to appear for similar proceedings under case 002, on events occurring in the Department of Nariño. Fifty-six members of the armed forces appeared in proceedings under case 003, on extrajudicial killings by agents of the State.

17. Under case 004, which focuses on events in the Departments of Antioquia and Chocó, the Special Jurisdiction for Peace has identified 174 persons who will be called to appear before it and is gathering written documentation, including reports on sexual and gender-based violence. Case 005 focuses on events in the Departments of Cauca and Valle del Cauca, where the Special Jurisdiction is examining both the territorial and ethnic/racial dimensions of the human rights situation. It has identified 151 persons who will be called to appear before it.

18. Under case 006, on the victimization of members of the Patriotic Union by agents of the State, the Special Jurisdiction for Peace is reviewing the petitions to come under its authority, presented by 20 members of the public security forces and 13 members of the former Colombian intelligence service, the Administrative Department of Security (DAS). Sixteen petitions have been accepted to date.

19. In the latest case, case 007, the recruitment and use of girls and boys in the armed conflict will be examined. The Office of the Attorney General and civil society organizations have submitted supporting material on violence and sexual slavery, planned and forced abortions, cruel punishments and the recruitment of children, affecting in particular children from Afro-Colombian and indigenous communities.

20. On 1 March, the Office of the Attorney General announced the arrest of five individuals, including an assistant prosecutor of the Special Jurisdiction for Peace, on charges of bribery and drug trafficking. Initial claims by that Office that the bribery was intended to influence the case of Jesús Santrich were subsequently withdrawn. The Office of the Inspector General also found no evidence to support that allegation, and the lead prosecutor of the Special Jurisdiction confirmed that his office had played no role in Santrich proceedings.

21. The Truth Commission expanded its regional presence and activities during the reporting period, as it embarks on its historic mandate to foster truth as an essential dimension of peace and reconciliation.

22. Also during the period, the Special Unit for the Search for Persons Deemed as Missing hired approximately 80 personnel and began to define procedures and methodologies in consultation with victims, relatives and civil society organizations.

Substitution of illicit crops

23. Reducing violence affecting communities in former conflict areas is inextricably linked to combating the illegal economies that have long fuelled such violence and insecurity. The United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime reported that, as at 31 January 2019, 99,097 families had signed up for the National Comprehensive Programme for the Substitution of Illicit Crops under item 4 of the Peace Agreement. Approximately 34,767 ha of coca has been eradicated voluntarily out of 51,824 ha registered by those families.

24. The Presidential Counsellor for Stabilization and Consolidation, Emilio Archila, has reiterated that the Government would comply with the commitments made to families already included in the Programme. The status of the additional 30,000 families that have applied to enter the Programme but have not yet been officially registered remains unclear.

25. The voluntary eradication rate under the Programme remains high: approximately 94 per cent of the families who received the initial financial benefits from the Programme have eradicated their crops. In addition, one year after eradication, only 0.6 per cent of the crops had been replanted in seven of the municipalities analysed.

26. Additional resources and institutional efforts are required to meet commitments to families under the Programme. Some families are nearing the end of their eligibility for interim payments, but only about a third of them have begun to receive technical assistance. Support for technical assistance as well as alternative development projects is necessary to support legal incomes for families.

Rural development

27. A community-based approach to reintegration is closely linked to progress on item 1 of the Peace Agreement, on comprehensive rural reform. I welcome the announcement on 23 February by the Presidential Counsellor that all 16 development programmes with a territorial focus had been finalized. Those regional plans are aimed at assisting more than 6.6 million Colombians living in 170 municipalities. The Territorial Renewal Agency coordinated the preparation of the development plans and worked with more than 200,000 representatives of small-scale farmers, social organizations, victims, women, lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender and intersex communities, ethnic authorities, local businessmen, academia and local and regional authorities. Approximately 11,000 communities proposed more than 33,000 initiatives.

28. Those plans were envisioned under the Peace Agreement as a pathway to the inclusive and sustainable transformation of the former conflict regions over time with the participation of communities and victims. Dedicated resources and specific indicators should be included in the national development plan. In accordance with the “Peace with legality” plan, timely action on the part of multiple ministries under the coordination of the Presidential Counsellor’s office will be essential as implementation gets under way.

National Liberation Army

29. On 17 January, a car bomb was detonated inside the General Santander National Police Academy in Bogotá, killing 23 people, including 22 cadets, and wounding more than 70. The National Liberation Army (ELN) took responsibility for the attack, which was widely condemned in the country and abroad, including in statements by the Security Council and myself. On 18 January, President Duque ordered the lifting of the suspension of arrest warrants for the 10 ELN members who had been part of the ELN peace delegation in Havana and confirmed that it would consider reinitiating negotiations only if ELN frees all kidnapped persons and ceases acts of violence, conditions ELN rejects. In the absence of negotiations, violence has increased in some regions, affecting the civilian population, infrastructure and environment.

III. Mission tasks

A. Reintegration

Reintegration policies and resources

30. I stressed in my previous report (S/2018/1159) that the tangible implementation of important policy and planning frameworks, such as the National Council on Economic and Social Policy’s national policy for the social and economic reintegration of former members of FARC-EP (CONPES 3931) and the “Peace with legality” policy, is essential. Given the importance of restoring confidence in effective reintegration, our hope is that additional resources critical for the implementation of the reintegration programme will be clearly reflected in the national development plan currently under discussion in Congress.

31. During this period, the National Reintegration Council has continued to meet regularly and remains an important forum for presenting and discussing proposals. In my previous report, I signalled the importance of the clarification, as soon as possible, of the situation of the 24 territorial areas for training and reintegration, which will retain their current legal status and related services only until 15 August 2019.

32. In this regard, the Presidential Counsellor for Stabilization and Consolidation and the Agency for Reintegration and Normalization have analysed the status and conditions of each territorial area of training and reintegration and have made progress on proposals to ensure continuity where possible or to propose alternative solutions where necessary. In addition, they have begun discussing those proposals with FARC representatives to ensure their viability.

33. I welcome those steps and reiterate the need, following consultations, to take decisions and effectively communicate them to those living in the 24 territorial areas for training and reintegration in order to reduce the uncertainty of those living and working there. I trust that the proposals put forward and the decisions taken by the Government will be in line with the numerous statements made by senior officials about the need for flexible and sustainable strategies. In the interim, I welcome the Government’s decision to extend the provision of food and health care until 15 August

2019, as well as its stated intention to extend the monthly allowance beyond that date under certain conditions.

34. Since taking over responsibility for administering the territorial areas for training and reintegration on 1 August 2018, the Agency for Reintegration and Normalization has undertaken much-needed enhancements to infrastructure and basic services that have improved the living conditions of many former combatants. During the reporting period, however, the maintenance of existing infrastructure has slowed and, in two cases, work is urgently required to address potentially serious health risks to 400 former combatants and their families.

35. In February, the National Reintegration Council discussed proposed guidelines on strengthening the territorial approach to reintegration, including procedures for the creation of departmental boards for reintegration. Such decentralization can strengthen linkages between reintegration and departmental and municipal planning led by regional and local actors. It also facilitates coordination between reintegration activities and other regional dimensions of peace implementation, including illicit crop substitution, rural development and reconciliation, including the work of the Truth Commission. Departmental boards operating in Antioquia, Cauca, Chocó, Meta, Santander, Sucre and Valle del Cauca attest to the benefits of regional leadership and engagement.

36. There has been limited progress on the implementation of a gender-sensitive approach in reintegration programmes. I urge the National Reintegration Council to prioritize and accelerate gender-related actions.

Economic and social reintegration

37. As at 27 February 2019, the National Reintegration Council had approved 22 collective projects, up from 20 reported in December. The Agency for Reintegration and Normalization had approved 162 individual projects benefiting 1,592 former FARC-EP members. Funding for 9 collective projects and 133 individual projects had been disbursed.

38. During the reporting period, funding for the first collective project in an ethnic context was approved and disbursed. The project will benefit 240 mostly indigenous former FARC-EP members and the surrounding community and includes an agreement for the use of land in the indigenous reservation of Tumburao, in Silvia, Cauca Department.

39. Despite challenges in adequately reflecting a gender dimension in economic and social reintegration, women continue to play a critical leadership role in activities already under way in territorial areas for training and reintegration. For example, women formed a cooperative to manage a fishery in La Pradera, Putumayo Department. Participation in an egg production project and a convenience store project in Filipinas, Arauca Department, was broadened to women from neighbouring communities, thereby promoting reconciliation.

40. The Presidential Counsellor for Stabilization and Consolidation and the Agency for Reintegration and Normalization have taken steps to enhance the effectiveness and sustainability of investments, including through the creation, with FARC collaboration, of a national reintegration registry, in which the skills and occupational aspirations of more than 10,000 former FARC-EP members are identified. Steps have also been taken to strengthen the technical design of projects, and technical assistance has been provided to 118 cooperatives comprising 4,284 members.

41. Building on the national reintegration registry, the office of the Presidential Counsellor has provided details on a plan to reach 10,070 beneficiaries by August 2019 along three tracks: productive projects (5,520), training and employment

generation (3,600) and housing (950). The plan also includes a fourth track focused on a strategy for the care of children and other family members.

42. Forward momentum is critical to countering the sense of economic insecurity and waning confidence among former FARC-EP members, which, in conjunction with security threats and legal uncertainty, could have a negative impact on the reintegration process. It is of utmost importance that former combatants maintain confidence in the peace process. One of the most visible means to do that is for the National Reintegration Council to accelerate the rate of approval of income-generating and related initiatives and ensure that funds for previously approved projects are disbursed without further delay.

43. Access to land for former combatants is essential to ensuring the sustainability of the reintegration process. In 2018 the Government identified legal avenues for the ownership of land by former combatants and initiated steps to purchase plots in various regions. Regrettably, no land has been granted to former FARC-EP members to date.

44. Donors and the private sector continue to expand their contributions to the reintegration process in support of the Government's efforts. The United Nations multi-partner trust fund and the European Union trust fund for peace in Colombia remain crucial partners, with approximately \$30 million in new funds allocated for economic reintegration. The European Union recently launched a €7.5 million programme to strengthen cooperatives undertaking income-generating activities. A \$3 million project financed by the Peacebuilding Fund is now under implementation by the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), the United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women (UN-Women) and the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF), in close coordination with the Government of Colombia and FARC. Similarly, with support from the World Food Programme (WFP) and private sector foundations, the marketing strategies for goods produced in five territorial areas for training and reintegration are being strengthened.

45. During the reporting period, the Mission and UNDP, in line with the Government's priorities, delivered bridging support to 34 income-generating projects led by former combatants, with contributions from France, Norway and Sweden and the Department of Political and Peacebuilding Affairs trust fund in support of political affairs. Efforts are under way to assist, with similar funding support, women former combatants in the urban areas of Bogotá, Cali, Medellín, Popayán and Quibdó. Alliances with the private sector, academia and local governments have proven effective in promoting women-led productive projects in several territorial areas for training and reintegration.

46. During the reporting period, approximately 14 per cent of former combatants (1,773) were enrolled in basic education classes in territorial areas for training and reintegration through the "Arando la educación" programme, and participants are awaiting a decision on whether the programme will continue beyond March 2019. Those living in new settlements outside of territorial areas for training and reintegration had only limited access to the programme.

47. It is therefore urgent that both the National Reintegration Council and the Ministry of Education work together to define a strategy that guarantees the right to education of former combatants as soon as possible, taking into account the needs of the territorial areas for training and reintegration and new settlements and the double burden of women who have care duties, given the lack of childcare facilities.

48. With respect to health care, 93 per cent (12,129) of accredited former FARC-EP members are covered under the national health-care system. The National Reintegration Council decided to maintain until August 2019 temporary medical

facilities in territorial areas for training and reintegration while reducing visits by primary health-care providers from six to three days per month. The extension of those services beyond August would benefit not only former combatants, but also the surrounding communities in remote areas. Greater effort is required from regional and local authorities to expand health promotion and prevention to those areas. Children, pregnant and lactating women, persons with disabilities and former combatants suffering from chronic illnesses continue to be particularly vulnerable. The lack of a comprehensive psychosocial programme adapted to the needs of former combatants remains a challenge.

49. The Colombian Family Welfare Institute took welcome steps to provide day-care facilities in territorial areas for training and reintegration, and its presence in those areas in Arauca, Cauca, Guajira, Guaviare and Putumayo Departments has improved the living conditions of children. Its impact is still limited, however, given the lack of preventive health, educational, recreational and cultural activities, as well as life-skills programmes and interventions to prevent recruitment into violence. A comprehensive response for more than 800 children living in territorial areas for training and reintegration is required. No progress was registered for cases of former FARC-EP members, especially women, seeking to regularize the legal guardianship of their children.

50. The decision of the Presidential Counsellor for Stabilization and Consolidation to include housing in the new road map is welcome. A project benefiting 350 former combatants in Tierra Grata and Pondores (Cesar and La Guajira Departments) is still pending approval by the National Reintegration Council.

Political reintegration

51. Nine FARC representatives in Congress continue their participation in key discussions there and in public policy discussions more broadly. The FARC political party has held numerous consultations to identify potential candidates for the local elections to be held on 27 October 2019, the first time the party will participate in local polls. The FARC Gender Committee has undertaken outreach to promote women's participation in policy formulation and as candidates.

52. On 20 February 2019, the Council of State found that the arrest preventing Jesús Santrich from being sworn in as a member of the Chamber of Representatives constituted force majeure, and therefore denied the request of the Chamber to remove him from his seat. The decision may be appealed. The request to remove the Senate seat allocated to Iván Márquez, a member of FARC whose exact whereabouts remain unknown, remains under review by the Council of State.

53. The Mission continues to engage regularly with such entities as the Interior Ministry, the National Civil Registry, the National Electoral Council and the non-governmental electoral observation mission on collective efforts to ensure the conduct of elections under equal conditions for all parties. Civil society organizations, the Catholic Church and the FARC party have called for a national political pact against violence, which the Government indicated could be a topic for discussion in the Commission for the Follow-up, Promotion and Verification of the Implementation of the Final Agreement.

B. Legal guarantees

54. During the period under review, regular meetings of the Office of the High Commissioner for Peace, FARC representatives and the Mission have been held to work towards accomplishing the many tasks that fall under the accreditation and transit to legality agenda.

55. The Office of the High Commissioner and FARC have consolidated a list of former FARC-EP members awaiting accreditation and those yet to be notified of their accreditation, and an action plan was agreed between the parties. That approach generated additional information on the whereabouts of almost 200 persons, approximately 116 of whom are now in the process of being accredited.

56. Beyond the action plan, little progress can be reported during the period on the accreditation of former FARC-EP members. To date, 13,061 former members have been accredited by the Office of the High Commissioner, and 12,329 of them have been notified of their accreditation.

57. A total of 164 accredited former FARC-EP members remain in prison. The overall number of individuals designated as “peace advocates” decreased from 254 to 229. Some of those have benefited from the granting of conditional liberty, while others have seen their titles revoked by the Office of the High Commissioner because of non-compliance with the requisites for keeping the title.

58. The 242 former FARC-EP members who were included in the list submitted on 15 August 2017 remain under review. The Office of the High Commissioner and FARC, in tripartite meetings with the Mission and through the Commission for the Follow-up, Promotion and Verification of the Implementation of the Final Agreement, continue work on the matter.

59. There are no developments to report with regard to the approximately 1,000 former FARC-EP members whose names were submitted to the Office of the High Commissioner on 10 August 2018.

60. During the reporting period, the Independent System for Advice and Defence of the Special Jurisdiction for Peace hired 42 lawyers to provide legal representation to all persons subject to the Special Jurisdiction, including armed forces and former members of FARC-EP. More lawyers could be recruited, depending on the workload. The Independent System also hired 10 lawyers to provide legal representation to victims. Furthermore, victims can have access to non-governmental organizations that provide legal representation under the cooperation agreement subscribed between UNDP and the Special Jurisdiction.

C. Security guarantees

Key mechanisms and platforms

61. The Government has put forward a series of initiatives related to territorial and community insecurity, including the prevention and protection measures set out in the Action Plan for the Protection of Social and Community Leaders, Human Rights Defenders and Journalists and the comprehensive security system envisioned in the “Peace with legality” policy. In addition, during the period, a new defence and security policy was issued in which objectives related to the institutional control of territory are described.

62. A continuing challenge is to ensure that the Government’s broader policy frameworks, particularly in areas of former FARC-EP presence and where reintegration efforts are ongoing, are converted into a concrete plan of action on territorial, rural and urban security to tackle the various factors affecting communities and former combatants. In that sense, the current security presence established around the 24 territorial areas for training and reintegration provides an opportunity that may be built upon to consolidate a multifaceted presence of State institutions in the context of national initiatives relating to stabilization and legality.

63. I welcome the reactivation by President Duque of the National Commission on Security Guarantees on 30 January and the leadership of the High Commissioner for Peace, Miguel Ceballos, as well as the decision to undertake subsequent meetings at the territorial level in Cauca, Córdoba and Putumayo. Also during this period, women's organizations sought and obtained participation in this valuable platform for dialogue and confidence-building between civil society and State actors.

Security guarantees for former members of the Revolutionary Armed Forces of Colombia – People's Army

64. Military and police forces continue to provide perimeter security for territorial areas for training and reintegration and surrounding areas. During the reporting period, no major security incidents affecting those areas were reported, but violent clashes between armed groups and, in some cases, against public forces, were reported in nearby areas.

65. Following changes in the military personnel deployed near territorial areas for training and reintegration and new settlements, the Mission has encouraged renewed efforts to ensure that effective channels for dialogue exist among security personnel, former FARC-EP members and communities. The increased representation of women among the deployed military and police personnel remains important. During the period, 401 police personnel undertook training on gender-based violence in seven regions near territorial areas for training and reintegration.

66. The Technical Committee on Security and Protection, under the leadership of the Presidential Counsellor for Stabilization and Consolidation, continues to coordinate protection measures for former FARC-EP and FARC party members and their relatives. The measures are implemented mainly by the Specialized Subdirectorates for Security and Protection of the National Protection Unit. As at 15 March, 198 protection schemes had been put in place, including 38 for women and 33 collective schemes. Still pending are 14 individual protection schemes as well as protection measures for 2 FARC political party headquarters. In total, the Subdirectorates has contracted 1,124 bodyguards, including 696 former FARC-EP combatants and 134 women.

67. Despite the progress made on recruitment and training, the Subdirectorates still lacks a strong institutional framework. Current budgetary shortfalls could limit its ability to function effectively and, in particular, to expand its regional presence.

68. FARC party representatives have tabled a proposal, currently under review by the Government, on security guarantees for their candidates in the electoral process. It is essential that a comprehensive plan setting out actions by all of the institutions represented in the Technical Committee be defined and implemented as soon as possible in advance of the October regional and local elections.

69. The Tripartite Protection and Security Mechanism continues to coordinate security measures for former FARC-EP members at the national, regional and local levels. During the reporting period, the Mechanism visited several territorial areas for training and reintegration to identify security gaps and review protection strategies. Gender training was offered in four regions as part of the Mechanism's broader gender strategy. Comparable efforts are needed for new settlements.

70. Outside the territorial areas for training and reintegration, significant security challenges remain. During the reporting period, 12 former FARC-EP members were killed, including, for the first time, a participant in the reintegration programme for children. The Mission has verified the killing of 99 former FARC-EP members since the signing of the Peace Agreement. The Special Investigation Unit has received information on three additional killings that the Mission is in the process of verifying.

Of particular concern are some cases of sexual and gender-based violence in both territorial areas for training and reintegration and new settlements. Greater prevention efforts are required.

71. Three of the killings reported during this period took place in the Department of Cauca, including two in Argelia, a municipality where seven former FARC-EP members have been killed since the signing of the Peace Agreement. Killings also occurred in Antioquia and Chocó, regions experiencing high levels of violence, disputes between illegal armed groups over territorial control and a weak State presence.

72. The Special Investigation Unit is investigating 102 homicides of former combatants and has reported significant advances in 55 cases. Sentences have been handed down in 4 cases, 9 are at the prosecution stage, 20 are under investigation, including 15 with arrests having been made, and 22 are at other stages of investigation. To date, 32 persons have been detained in connection with attacks against former FARC-EP members. According to the Unit, the main actors responsible for the killings are criminal and illegal armed groups.

73. To ensure a more focused response to the complex regional dynamics, the Special Investigation Unit is expanding from three to six regional offices and enhancing its analytical capacity.

74. During the reporting period, the round table on the investigation of attacks against former FARC-EP members, composed of the Specialized Subdirector for Security and Protection of the National Protection Unit, the Special Investigation Unit, the FARC party and the Mission, continued to meet periodically to monitor developments in three prioritized regions: Cauca, Nariño and Norte de Santander. Additional sessions are planned in Antioquia and Putumayo.

Security guarantees for communities, human rights defenders and social leaders

75. I remain deeply concerned about the continuing attacks against social leaders and human rights defenders and call for swift action to prevent further killings and to bring perpetrators to justice. During the reporting period, according to the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights in Colombia, 29 persons have reportedly been killed, including 4 women. Six of those cases have been verified so far. The Office has verified a total of 226 cases since the signing of the Peace Agreement.

76. Many of those killed were members of local action boards, leaders of victims' organizations, persons engaged in aspects of the Peace Agreement, such as the illicit-crop substitution programme, or individuals involved in land restitution claims. Antioquia, Cauca and Norte de Santander have been the departments most affected. The majority of the attacks were committed by illegal armed groups and criminal organizations, and a lesser number can be attributed to common criminality.

77. As I reported in December ([S/2018/1159](#)), indigenous leaders and the population in ethnic territories, especially in Cauca and Nariño, have been disproportionately affected by disputes between illegal armed actors over territories and illicit crops.

78. During the reporting period, the percentage of leaders killed who were women has increased and, according to four recent early warnings issued by the Office of the Ombudsman, sexual violence continues to be a driver of forced displacement. The continued recruitment of children by illegal armed groups, including dissident FARC-EP groups in Cauca, Guaviare, Meta, Nariño and Putumayo, is of serious concern. In Caquetá, at least seven cases were verified during the period. The full

implementation, in coordination with communities, of government guidelines on the prevention of recruitment and sexual violence against children is urgently required.

79. The Government's Action Plan for the Protection of Social and Community Leaders, Human Rights Defenders and Journalists seeks to provide a more coordinated and tailored institutional response to such threats and killings. To that end, regional sessions were held with community representatives and local authorities in five departments. The Interior Ministry is also working with civil society and the international community on the formulation of a comprehensive policy on prevention and protection and, as part of that process, Ministry officials have visited 15 departments. Also under the Action Plan, the National Protection Unit is developing stronger collective prevention and protection measures with the participation of civil society organizations.

80. The scope and urgency of the threats facing community and social leaders requires a collective effort across Government institutions, regional and local authorities, civil society organizations and political and business actors. In that spirit, on 7 February, a "Round table for life" was organized in Carmen de Bolívar by the offices of the Inspector General and the Ombudsman, with the participation of the Interior Ministry, the National Federation of Departments, several governors, local authorities, social organizations, the Mission and members of the international community. Participants reaffirmed their condemnation of the violence perpetrated against social leaders, renewed their commitment to the "pact for life" signed last year and reiterated the need to fully implement the recommendations of early warning mechanisms and provide resources to important protection entities such as the National Protection Unit.

81. I recognize the ongoing efforts to address the security situation for communities, human rights defenders and social leaders and trust that they will translate into tangible actions on the ground.

Early warnings by the Office of the Ombudsman

82. During the reporting period, the Office of the Ombudsman issued 13 early warnings in which the risks to individuals and communities in 8 departments and 23 municipalities were outlined.

83. Early warnings continue to highlight risks linked to violent interactions between illegal armed groups and criminal organizations. The reports call for specific actions and inter-institutional coordination to respond to increased killings; they highlight trends in different criminal structures, sexual violence, child recruitment, forced displacement, confinement and persistent attacks against social leaders. The Mission will continue to monitor the mechanism, especially the effectiveness of institutional responses and follow-up by the Intersectoral Commission for Rapid Response to Early Warnings, with a focus on the prevention, protection and investigation of attacks.

D. Cross-cutting issues

Gender mainstreaming and engagement with women's groups

84. While the Peace Agreement is properly lauded for its inclusion of a gender-sensitive approach, the follow-through has lagged. I remain deeply concerned about the limited implementation of the gender provisions of the Peace Agreement relating to reintegration and security guarantees. I call upon the Government to prioritize the prompt implementation of, and to provide in the national development plan the necessary financial and technical resources to implement, the gender-related actions

of the national policy on reintegration (CONPES 3931), including targeted actions for the economic and social reintegration of female former combatants and enhanced regional gender capacity in the Agency for Reintegration and Normalization.

85. Women leaders and human rights defenders face increasing threats and attacks, including sexual violence. The killing of prominent social leader Maritza Quiroz on 6 January led to the establishment of a Permanent Forum for Security and Protection for women leaders and human rights defenders in Magdalena Department. I request the Government to accelerate the implementation of the Comprehensive Programme for the Security of Women Leaders and Human Rights Defenders and the immediate establishment by the Minister of the Interior of the Intersectoral Commission for Rapid Response to Early Warnings.

86. According to the Ombudsman's Office report on gender-based violence and discrimination submitted on 18 March, the Office had received 75 reports of threats, physical attacks or sexual violence in 2018 from women and lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender and intersex persons. Over the past year, a woman leader was killed, on average, every 18 days. Protection from sexual and gender-based violence should be prioritized, particularly in areas affected by the presence of illegal armed groups and illegal economies, such as Cauca, Chocó, Nariño and Putumayo.

87. In commemoration of International Women's Day on 8 March, the Mission supported activities in 18 communities and territorial areas for training and reintegration, highlighting the important role of women in peacebuilding and reconciliation. In the territorial area of training and reintegration of Filipinas, Arauca Department, more than 150 people gathered in a series of cultural activities promoting women's role in the reintegration process and fostering links with nearby communities. The activity was organized jointly by the Agency for Reintegration and Normalization, the Mission, UN-Women and the FARC Gender Committee.

Ethnic affairs

88. Security risks continue to grow in ethnic territories, as emphasized in early warnings issued by the Office of the Ombudsman covering areas in Antioquia, Bolívar, Cauca, Chocó, Guaviare and Norte de Santander Departments. During this period, six indigenous leaders were killed, as well as a female Afro-Colombian leader.

89. Ethnic territories have been affected by disputes between illegal armed actors seeking territorial control, by the production and trafficking of illicit crops and the illegal exploitation of natural resources, and by the co-optation of community groups and forced recruitment, which, in some cases, have put whole communities at risk of confinement or displacement. In Cauca, indigenous guards discussed ways to enhance self-protection mechanisms.

90. Hearings were held in February before the Inter-American Commission on Human Rights to denounce killings of and threats against ethnic leaders. Among the measures requested by representatives of indigenous communities were greater enrolment of ethnic communities in the National Protection Unit, more effective protection measures and an action plan on the protection of ethnic leaders. The High-level Forum of Ethnic Peoples urged stronger links with the National Commission on Security Guarantees and the Commission for the Follow-up, Promotion and Verification of the Implementation of the Final Agreement.

Children

91. In February, the Mission verified the killing of a young male individual included in the reintegration programme entitled "A different path of life" who had been a minor within FARC-EP. Although the circumstances are being verified, the case raises

concerns regarding social and economic reintegration and the effectiveness of early warnings and protection measures for persons at high risk. According to the Government, by the end of February at least seven young adults in the programme had reported receiving threats. Two additional cases in which young adults from the programme were victims of sexual violence and new recruitment by armed groups are also of deep concern.

92. The growing role of the Agency for Reintegration and Normalization in the implementation of the programme is welcome. Of the 124 adolescents formally released by FARC-EP in 2016–2017, 116 had reached the age of 18 by the end of February, 104 of them had already received a one-off normalization allowance, 99 were receiving the monthly basic income under the reintegration programme and 83 had benefited from reparations as victims. All 124 had received individualized psychological services. Committees have been established in Antioquia, Arauca, Cucuta and Tolima to follow up on the implementation of the “different path of life” programme, including activities relating to psychosocial support, community strengthening and the building of leadership capacities.

93. The Mission was not able to verify progress towards the enactment of measures to ensure the sustainability and resourcing of the Government’s reintegration programming for children.

Youth, peace and security

94. Young leaders, youth organizations and universities are increasingly engaged in supporting the reintegration process, including through dialogue and reconciliation initiatives, paying visits to tourism projects in the territorial areas for training and reintegration and providing assistance to the former combatants’ entrepreneurial and productive projects. The Mission continues to include a youth perspective in its verification activities, in line with its Mission-wide strategy on youth, peace and security.

95. Youth who have participated in Mission-facilitated initiatives are now leading various innovative projects. For example, in Icononzo, Tolima Department, a municipal youth platform and a foundation composed of young former combatants from the territorial area for training and reintegration have joined forces to produce and broadcast a weekly radio programme. A young entrepreneur from Bogotá organized a visit of youth representatives from prominent restaurants and hotels to explore potential commercial alliances with territorial areas for training and reintegration in Miravalle and Agua Bonita, Caquetá Department. Also in Cauca Department, youth leaders from six political parties have shared their experiences with local universities and are drafting an inter-party youth pact to respect political differences in the context of the local elections. The Mission also worked with Guaviare departmental authorities, UNDP and the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO) to organize a youth dialogue on the reintegration process involving more than 60 youth, including former combatants.

Liaison and coordination

96. During the reporting period, the Mission continued its close liaison with government officials, including the President, the Presidential Counsellor for Stabilization and Consolidation, the High Commissioner for Peace, the Minister of the Interior, representatives of the Ombudsman’s Office, the Attorney General and the Inspector General, as well as with FARC, representatives of the Catholic Church, civil society representatives and members of the international community.

97. Continued dialogue with representatives in Congress and political parties, relating mainly to peace legislation and the legal framework of the Special

Jurisdiction for Peace, has also been important. The Mission participated in several open debates and bilateral meetings related to the way in which peace implementation is reflected in the proposed national development plan.

98. The Mission also continues to engage with all parts of the Comprehensive System of Truth, Justice, Reparation and Non-Repetition, especially the Special Jurisdiction for Peace and the Truth Commission, as they extend their presence in the regions.

99. The Mission continues to support reconciliation efforts at the local and regional levels. During the reporting period, groups of women, youth and victims have promoted activities with communities and former combatants relating to reintegration, environment, culture and civic action. Victims and former combatants are working together to build reconciliation and reintegration strategies with a community-based and ethnic dimension with support from the Catholic Church, the Office of the High Commissioner for Peace and the United Nations system.

E. Coordination with the United Nations country team

100. The Mission and the United Nations country team continue to support the implementation of the Peace Agreement at the national level and through an extended presence across the country. Joint working groups continue to work on reintegration and security guarantees and liaison continues between the Mission and the country team on cross-cutting issues.

101. In January, the United Nations multi-partner trust fund successfully launched the second phase of its project on sustaining peace, mobilizing an additional \$32 million from five donor countries. Priority areas include: (a) the reintegration of former combatants; (b) local stabilization and implementation of development programmes with a territorial focus; and (c) support for reparations for victims and transitional justice. The Fund increased its allocation target for gender equality to 30 per cent.

102. Joint efforts between the Mission, the country team and national authorities are under way to accelerate reintegration. UNDP and the International Organization for Migration (IOM), with funding from the multi-partner trust fund, have provided supplementary support for the launching of the 20 long-term productive projects approved by the National Reintegration Council, covering 17 territorial areas for training and reintegration and benefiting 1,325 former combatants and their families. An additional \$10 million has been allocated by the multi-partner trust fund to support productive reintegration in 2019.

103. The \$3 million project funded by the Peacebuilding Fund complements ongoing support by UNDP, IOM, FAO, WFP and UNICEF in territorial areas for training and reintegration on vocational training, access to employment, market access, housing improvements and support for individual productive ventures for adults and youth. Finally, UN-Women continued to work on the prevention of gender-based violence.

104. During the reporting period, UNICEF, together with national authorities, concluded the disengagement of the 124 underage members of the former FARC-EP. Individual solutions are now being designed on a case-by-case basis.

105. The United Nations country team and the Mission are working together to support the implementation of the Government's Action Plan for the Protection of Social and Community Leaders, Human Rights Defenders and Journalists. In addition, support has been provided for the early warning system of the Office of the Ombudsman and prevention measures of local institutions. Collective United Nations efforts focused on facilitating dialogue among the Government, human rights

organizations and former FARC-EP members on prevention and protection measures, reactivating the National Commission on Security Guarantees and working with indigenous organizations on collective protection mechanisms.

106. The United Nations country team is working to enhance the links among security guarantees, protection and rural stabilization and to reduce the impact of illicit economies in areas with previous FARC-EP presence.

IV. Mission structures

Mission support

107. The implementation of a Mission redeployment plan continued, which was linked to evolving operational requirements, such as the dispersal of former FARC-EP members to new settlements and urban areas. Two camps were closed in December, and their personnel and equipment were reallocated to ensure the continuation of the operations and presence of the Mission in areas where they were newly required. The Mission is currently reviewing the operational viability of four remaining camps. It is continuing to upgrade to office premises in seven new locations, which is scheduled for completion by April 2019.

Gender parity

108. The Mission met its gender parity objectives for the first quarter of 2019 by increasing the overall percentage of female staff in the Professional and Field Service categories on fixed-term, continuing and permanent contracts to 43 per cent as at 7 March. If the trend continues, the Mission will reach its target of 46 per cent by the end of 2019. With regard to other categories of personnel, 60 per cent of United Nations Volunteers and 22 per cent of the international observers are women. Overall, 45 per cent of all civilian staff are women.

Safety and security

109. The residual risk levels after the implementation of the security risk management measures remained medium to low. Two key security developments currently assessed as indirect factors in threat scenarios were seen during this period. The car bomb detonated in Bogotá by ELN was the worst such attack in the capital since 2003. In the Departments of Norte de Santander and Arauca, a number of low-level security incidents occurred. They were assessed as generating low- to medium-level risks for the United Nations system, although no incident targeted or directly affected United Nations personnel or assets. Security risk management measures were activated covering various scenarios.

Conduct and discipline

110. The Mission and the United Nations country team continued to coordinate on the prevention and response to sexual exploitation and abuse by United Nations personnel. No allegations of sexual exploitation and abuse were reported, but training and sensitization activities continued.

V. Observations

111. The peace process in Colombia is at a critical juncture. While many of the early gains of peace are unassailable – the conclusion of a decades-long conflict and an overall reduction in the levels of violence, the most peaceful elections in decades and

the conversion of FARC from insurgency to political party – some of the hardest work to consolidate peace still lies ahead.

112. In my previous report, I noted obstacles to peace consolidation, including the continued killing of social leaders as well as FARC members, a reintegration programme that was slow to gain traction, uncertainty on the part of former FARC-EP members about their legal, physical and economic conditions and the clamouring of communities for a tangible State presence in the form of security, basic services, land and viable alternatives to illegal economies.

113. I welcome the Government's efforts to address those issues. However, challenges persist. While State entities are working to expand their presence and scope of action in conflict-affected territories, the killing of social leaders and FARC members has continued. More concerted and better-resourced efforts across public institutions and regional and local actors working in concert with civil society are needed.

114. The reintegration process continues to advance, although the scale of the programme remains limited. There have been recent efforts to map out clear objectives and engage more closely with regional authorities. I note that the Government is working to define arrangements for the 24 territorial areas for training and reintegration that are currently authorized only until 15 August and that it has begun discussions with former FARC-EP members at the national level. It is important that those discussions culminate in a decision that can be communicated to those living in affected areas as soon as possible.

115. During this period, contentious debates on deeply felt issues of peace, justice and reconciliation were reopened. The Special Jurisdiction for Peace, a central pillar of the Peace Agreement, has been the focus of polarized discussions. The Special Jurisdiction for Peace is the main guarantor of the rights of victims to truth, justice, reparations and non-repetition and also embodies the expression of legal guarantees extended to those who, in good faith, have laid down their arms, with the verification of the United Nations. I welcome the President's pledge to find a common ground and reiterate my call on the Government, Congress and all entities to take swift action to ensure that the statutory law is put in place as soon as possible in accordance with the provisions of the Peace Agreement and that the Special Jurisdiction for Peace is given all the political and practical tools required for its effective functioning under conditions of independence and autonomy.

116. To ensure the proper implementation of the Peace Agreement, its integrity as an interlocking set of commitments is essential. For those in the process of reintegration, the confidence that can be generated by the progressive efforts under way to secure socioeconomic opportunities is diminished if there is, on the other hand, growing legal insecurity owing to the uncertainties affecting the transitional justice system. In a broader sense, I would like to underscore that sustainable peace in a context such as that prevailing in Colombia requires more than a commitment to the reintegration of former combatants – as strategic and as urgent as that task is and however welcome the Government's commitment to it is. Priorities should include: the implementation on the ground of the valuable planning frameworks already in place to stabilize and extend the State's presence in the former conflict areas; the injection of greater momentum into the rural development and gender provisions of the Peace Agreement so that women may both contribute to and benefit from peace; the full inclusion of peace-related obligations in the Government's four-year programme; and the proper allocation of resources to the unfinished peace implementation agenda. However challenging that agenda, may be, I am convinced both of its necessity and of the ability of Colombians, should they choose to work together across institutions and sectors of society, to build the peace that all of them desire.

117. Achieving this sense of common purpose is perhaps still the greatest challenge of all in a country where mistrust remains deep and reconciliation should be nourished. In this context, there is no greater leadership responsibility than that of redoubling the kinds of commitments and gestures that I welcomed in recent reports and that aim to unify the country and bring down the levels of confrontation over the past. This is especially needed at a moment when the upcoming elections risk polarizing the political debate even further. As far as the peace process is concerned, actions and messages that provide absolute clarity with regard to maintaining the commitments to those who laid down arms in good faith are essential, as they are at the heart of the process. The visit by President Duque to the Tierra Grata territorial area for training and reintegration in Cesar Department on 15 March is a positive example. I have taken note of his assurances and those of other high officials that proposed adjustments to aspects addressed in the Peace Agreement have a “future effect”. This principle of non-retroactivity is critical in preserving confidence in the process going forward.

118. Colombia remains a source of inspiration for those around the world who remain locked in cycles of armed conflict. It has broken with five decades of confrontation, demonstrating the resilience of its society and institutions. It is vital that Colombians keep faith in a peace process that has yielded great benefits but still has promises left to fulfil.

119. The Security Council has played a vital role in the Colombia peace process, and its continuing and united support remains critical, as does the continuing strong and active engagement of the international community. The United Nations, through the Mission and the United Nations system in Colombia, continues to offer its support, and I applaud the dedication of the personnel on the ground.
