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Report of the Secretary-General on the United Nations Mission in Colombia

I. Introduction

1. The present report is submitted pursuant to Security Council resolution [2261 \(2016\)](#), by which the Council established the United Nations Mission in Colombia and requested that I report to the Council on the implementation of the mandate of the Mission every 90 days after the start of monitoring and verification activities. The report covers the activities of the Mission and related developments from 25 March to 23 June 2017 and provides initial recommendations for the establishment of a second special political mission, as requested by the President of the Security Council in a letter addressed to me dated 9 June 2017.

II. Major developments

2. The reporting period culminated with significant progress in the laying down of individual weapons of the members of the Revolutionary Armed Forces of Colombia-People's Army (FARC-EP) assembled in camps and of militia members carrying arms. On 16 June, the United Nations Mission in Colombia confirmed that it had received and stored 60 per cent of those weapons. The final phase, involving the laying down of the remainder of the weapons, began on 20 June. A ceremony marking the completion of this historic step was scheduled for 27 June.

3. The achievement of this major milestone in the peace process followed intensive negotiations between the Government of Colombia and FARC-EP to reach consensus on a road map of mutual commitments to enable the full laying down of weapons in camps and the collection of weapons in arms caches. A special session of the Commission for the Follow-up, Promotion and Verification of the Implementation of the Final Agreement, held on 25 and 26 March in Cartagena, led to a first set of agreements and the gradual release into United Nations custody of around 1,000 weapons belonging to FARC-EP members called upon to participate in the implementation of a range of measures in the peace agreement. On 29 May, following two weeks of negotiations, the Commission agreed on a road map for the implementation of commitments stemming from the peace agreement. Its main features were made public in a communiqué issued the same day, in which FARC-EP committed to hand over all of the weapons of its members in the camps as well as those of militias to the Mission between 1 and 20 June, thereby allowing for their transition to legality. The Mission will then extract the containers with weapons collected from the camps by 1 August. In collaboration with FARC-EP and the



Colombian security forces, the Mission will conduct operations to extract arms and destroy explosives located in arms caches until 1 September. Any arms caches remaining after that date will be disposed of by the Government in collaboration with FARC-EP. In the communiqué, the transformation of zones and points where FARC-EP is assembled for the purpose of the laying down of arms into “territorial spaces for training and reintegration” after 1 August was also announced.

4. The Government committed to the implementation of provisions of the peace agreement that ensure the legal, physical and socioeconomic security of FARC-EP. Legal measures include the effective application of amnesties or conditional release for all incarcerated FARC-EP members; the lifting of arrest warrants for all FARC-EP members after the handover of their arms, pending the resolution of their legal situation through amnesties or decisions of the Special Jurisdiction for Peace; and the issuance of a presidential decree to apply amnesties to all FARC-EP members having laid down weapons and having been certified by the High Commissioner for Peace.

5. The Government committed to enhance physical security through the issuance of decrees to create a comprehensive security system for the exercise of politics by FARC-EP and a special investigation unit within the Office of the Attorney General and an elite police unit to combat criminal organizations in areas in which FARC-EP formerly had a presence. The Government also committed to initiate pilot projects for the dismantling of criminal groups in Buenaventura (Valle del Cauca Department) and Tumaco (Nariño Department), and to launch the training of FARC-EP members designated to become part of a National Protection Unit to protect FARC-EP members.

6. Socioeconomic security during the reintegration phase would be promoted through basic stipends and economic support to FARC-EP members reintegrating into society. To that end, the Government issued decrees on socioeconomic reintegration and the reform of the Colombian agency for the reintegration of persons and armed groups. A working group has been established to determine over a 60-day period the design of viable productive projects.

7. With regard to international verification, the parties agreed to request, to the Secretary-General and the Security Council, that the tasks of the second United Nations political mission provided for in the peace agreement be brought forward, to begin before 10 July. Recommendations in that regard are included in section V of the present report. The parties also agreed to activate the international component of the Commission for the Follow-up, Promotion and Verification of the Implementation of the Final Agreement, whose composition and functions are specified in paragraph 10 below, by 30 June.

8. The visit of the Security Council to Colombia from 3 to 5 May underscored the high level of international engagement with and commitment to the peace process. The visit also provided an opportunity for political parties in Congress and civil society to express their hopes and concerns with respect to peace implementation and their expectations regarding the support of the international community.

Key implementation bodies

Commission for the Follow-up, Promotion and Verification of the Implementation of the Final Agreement

9. The agreement reached on 29 May in the Commission for the Follow-up, Promotion and Verification of the Implementation of the Final Agreement will enhance the role played by implementation bodies, including the National

Reintegration Council and the National Commission on Security Guarantees, as the priorities outlined therein are at the core of their mandated tasks. The Commission met frequently throughout the reporting period to consider peace-related legislation prior to its submission to Congress and to resolve differences between the parties.

10. On 30 March, the international component of the Commission was formally established in the city of Cali in the presence of the former President of Uruguay, José Mujica, and the former President of Spain, Felipe González, who were designated as “notables” with verification responsibilities. With the support of a technical secretariat, the two former leaders are expected to produce reports, make pronouncements on the implementation of the agreement and offer recommendations to resolve impasses, as needed. Their terms of reference exclude issues under the purview of the United Nations Mission.

11. On 11 April, the Commission established a special entity to ensure that a gender perspective, including on lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender and intersex issues, is mainstreamed in the implementation of the peace agreement. This entity will make recommendations to the Commission, follow up on the implementation of gender provisions in the agreement and establish a permanent dialogue between women’s groups and peace-related bodies. The Commission is currently reviewing applications to appoint the seven women who will serve in their personal capacity but who have been nominated by their respective organizations.

National Reintegration Council

12. The National Reintegration Council, comprising two government and two FARC-EP members, has met approximately 30 times since its creation in late December 2016. Its main tasks are to define a reintegration strategy and to implement short-term measures during the first phase of concentration of FARC-EP members in the zones and points. Although those are its broader aims, the Council’s efforts during the period were focused mainly on three specific issues: the reintegration of children in FARC-EP ranks; the release of incarcerated FARC-EP members who have been pardoned; and the preparation of a socioeconomic and education census of FARC-EP members.

13. In line with the separation protocol established for the reintegration of children in May 2016, the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) reported the separation of 86 children from guerrilla ranks as at 12 May. Reception of these minors was supported by the International Organization for Migration and the United Nations Children’s Fund.

14. With regard to pardoned former combatants, the National Reintegration Council arranged for temporary housing centres provided by international donors and the Catholic Church, although the goal of FARC-EP is for them to move towards zones and points when logistical conditions allow.

15. A socioeconomic census of FARC-EP members has been conducted by the National University of Colombia since the beginning of May; its results are expected by the end of June. The census aims to gather information from former combatants concentrated in zones and points or currently serving sentences in prison with respect to their needs and aspirations, level of education, professional background, family situation and health. The results will be delivered to the National Reintegration Council to shape reintegration policies.

16. The Colombian Agency for Reintegration, transformed by presidential decree into the Agency for Reintegration and Normalization, will include a specific programme on the socioeconomic reintegration of FARC-EP members and will coordinate government institutions and NGOs.

17. Other positive developments include the approval of a decree establishing a cooperative organization (Ecomun) for FARC-EP projects and financial disbursements for the first phase of reintegration, as foreseen in the peace agreement. On 5 June, in accordance with the road map of 29 May, the National Reintegration Council established a working group that was given 60 days to formulate economic projects to be implemented by communities or other organizations.

National Commission on Security Guarantees

18. The bilateral ceasefire and cessation of hostilities between the Government and FARC-EP held during the reporting period; there was just one serious incident with no casualties reported as a result of confrontation between the parties. Nonetheless, concerns persisted regarding the security situation in the areas most affected by the conflict and the activities of armed groups and organizations termed the successors of the demobilized paramilitary groups. Attacks against community leaders and human rights defenders continued. From 1 January to 23 May 2017, the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights verified the killing of 17 human rights defenders who had also been social leaders. Fifteen additional cases remained under review. Colombian human rights organizations reported higher numbers. In addition, during the reporting period, three FARC-EP members were killed, as well as 10 of their relatives, reportedly at the hands of armed groups including FARC-EP dissidents. The most recent case involved an amnestied FARC-EP member reported to have been killed in Caquetá Department on 19 June. Rural areas formerly under FARC-EP control and where the illicit economy has proliferated present a higher risk for human rights defenders and social leaders, posing a challenge for the State in its efforts to increase security.

19. The attacks against social and community leaders as well as FARC-EP members and their families have heightened concerns about their security during the reintegration phase while underscoring the importance of the provision of security guarantees and the establishment of measures to prevent such violence. In this regard, the work of the National Commission on Security Guarantees, led by the President of Colombia, Juan Manuel Santos Calderón, has gained further relevance for peace consolidation.

20. On 22 May, the Commission reviewed the legislation required to strengthen security mechanisms in compliance with the peace agreement, and decided that some provisions could be implemented by decree. That decision was made effective by the issuance, in the lead-up to the road map of 29 May, of a series of presidential decrees on peace implementation that included security-related measures, as outlined in paragraph 5 above.

Colombia in Peace Fund

21. On 27 April, the President announced the creation of the Colombia in Peace Fund, which is expected to coordinate funds to address post-conflict priorities. The Government indicated that the fund would have an initial allocation of 750 billion Colombian pesos (around \$247 million). It is expected to consolidate funds from the national budget, royalty revenue, private donations and contributions from the international community, including the multi-donor trust fund, which has mobilized \$58 million to date.

Legislative and institutional implementation of the peace agreement

Major legislation approved under “fast track” procedures

22. The Colombian Congress continued to consider and approve peace-related legislation under the “fast track” procedures allowing for expedited congressional approval. Towards the end of the period, the Government obtained a six-month extension of the procedures, which had been set to expire on 1 June. Key legislation included:

(a) A law on the creation of a Comprehensive System of Truth, Justice, Reparations and Non-Repetition, which establishes a Special Jurisdiction for Peace to address crimes committed during the armed conflict. Congress is expected to approve a statutory law that will effectively activate the functioning of the Special Jurisdiction for Peace;

(b) A law on the statute of the opposition, which was called for in the peace agreement and had remained pending since the approval of the Constitution of Colombia of 1991. The statute provides for additional financing for political parties and movements declaring themselves in opposition to the Government; ensures a right of public reply through the media for the opposition to respond to major public pronouncements of the Government; and allows the opposition to set the agenda for legislative debates five times in each legislative period;

(c) A law providing guarantees for the implementation of the peace agreement through a transitional article in the Constitution specifying that aspects of the peace agreement relating to norms of international humanitarian law or fundamental rights will be obligatory parameters for the interpretation of norms and laws to implement the peace agreement. The legislation notes that all State institutions and authorities are to comply in good faith with the provisions set out in the peace agreement;

(d) A law on the political reintegration of FARC-EP, outlining modalities for the transition of FARC-EP into a political party or movement, including its financing. It establishes that the political party or movement to be created by FARC-EP will have a minimum of five seats in both the Senate and House of Representatives during the next two electoral periods (2018-2022 and 2022-2026).

Major presidential decrees relating to peace implementation

23. The President made use of his extraordinary powers, under fast-track procedures, to issue decrees relating to peace implementation. In the context of the road map agreed on 29 May, the President issued 22 decrees relating to, inter alia, the social and economic development of areas affected by the conflict, the socioeconomic reintegration of FARC-EP members, the reintegration of children from FARC-EP, the establishment of a special investigation unit in the Office of the Attorney General, the system of security for the exercise of politics and a national programme for crop substitution.

24. Previously, the President had issued a number of peace-related decrees, including decrees establishing the selection committee for the justices and other officials of the Comprehensive System of Truth, Justice, Reparations and Non-Repetition; the Commission for the Clarification of Truth, Coexistence and Non-Repetition; and the unit for the search of persons considered to be disappeared in the context of and owing to the armed conflict. The selection committee is in the process of considering members who will serve as officials in the justice component foreseen in the peace agreement. It has confirmed Néstor Raúl Correa as the Executive Secretary of the Special Jurisdiction for Peace. The President also issued

a decree on a special judicial mechanism for members of the armed forces and a decree to facilitate the implementation of amnesty provisions for FARC-EP members.

Review of legislation by the Constitutional Court

25. Legislation already approved under “fast track” provisions remains subject to review by the Constitutional Court, which has found three peace-related presidential decrees unconstitutional on technical grounds. On 17 May, the Court invalidated a decree providing for the expansion of the National Protection Unit to incorporate some 1,200 FARC-EP members, as envisioned in the peace agreement, for reasons relating to the Unit’s budget expected to be rectified shortly. The Court argued that the budget for the Unit should have been expanded prior to the decree. More significantly, on the same day, the Court issued a ruling invalidating aspects of the “fast track” procedures for congressional approval of peace-related legislation. As a result, such legislation can be debated line by line rather than only in its entirety, and proposed amendments would no longer be limited to those having prior approval of the Government after its determining of their consistency with the peace agreement.

26. Both decisions generated significant concern on the part of FARC-EP and the supporters of the peace process with regard to the role of the Constitutional Court in peace implementation and the legal guarantees provided by the peace agreement. In an effort to mitigate those concerns, political parties supporting the peace process pledged publicly to vote in favour of peace-related legislation. Congressional approval at the level of peace committees immediately after the Court’s ruling suggested that Congress is still able to expedite the approval of legislation.

27. The court announced in mid-May that it would initiate a review of the amnesty law in conjunction with its review of the broader law on the Comprehensive System of Truth, Justice, Reparations and Non-Repetition. The reviews will be watched closely for their potential impact on the peace process.

Negotiations with other armed groups

28. The first round of talks with the National Liberation Army (ELN), launched on 7 February, was concluded on 6 April in Quito. Against a backdrop of continued military confrontation, in an effort to de-escalate the violence, the Government and ELN announced a humanitarian demining pilot project as well as their intention to reach agreements in conformity with international humanitarian law. The ELN central command and the FARC-EP secretariat met in May in Havana in an encounter organized by the Government of Colombia. In a joint statement issued on 11 May, both groups underscored their common goal of reaching peace, through different yet complementary paths. A second round of talks was launched on 16 May with a focus on de-escalating violence, protecting the civilian population and promoting civil society participation in peace talks.

III. Mission tasks

29. The Mission serves as coordinator of the tripartite Monitoring and Verification Mechanism, responsible for overseeing implementation of the ceasefire protocol agreed by the parties in the peace agreement. The achievement of near full deployment to its local headquarters has allowed the Mechanism to increase significantly its monitoring activities as well as its engagement with local communities and civil society representatives. Amid logistical delays and missed deadlines along the timeline established in the peace agreement, the Mechanism

proved to be effective in maintaining confidence and addressing incidents relating to the ceasefire and cessation of hostilities agreement and protocols. That only nine serious violations of the ceasefire have been registered since the beginning of the Mechanism's operations in November 2016 is indicative of the parties' commitment to respect their obligations.

A. Activities relating to the ceasefire and cessation of hostilities and coordination of the Monitoring and Verification Mechanism

30. The Mission, as coordinator of the Monitoring and Verification Mechanism, focused on its monitoring responsibilities in zones and points and the surrounding security area, where the armed forces are deployed. The parties requested that the Mechanism assess progress with regard to the establishment of FARC-EP camps, logistical support and the provision of health care. The Mechanism also supported the start of reintegration activities led by private and public entities in zones and points. Such activities included training provided by the national training service, the issuance of identity documents by the national registry, the census conducted by the National University and activities undertaken by universities and non-governmental organizations (NGOs), among others. The Mechanism coordinated with ICRC the movement of children from FARC-EP camps to reintegration centres. The operations are led by ICRC and the Presidential Adviser on Human Rights. Lastly, the Mechanism conducted outreach activities with local communities, civil society and local and regional authorities and hosted the visits of international dignitaries.

Verification of incidents

31. Since the start of its activities, the Monitoring and Verification Mechanism has received 284 requests for the verification of incidents. Of that total, 83 fell outside the mandate of the Mechanism. Of the verified incidents, 21 were failures to comply with the ceasefire and cessation of hostilities protocols owing to misinterpretation or a lack of coordination; 30 were minor violations; and 9 were grave violations (the incident of 13 November 2016 counts as 2 violations). Most violations related to movements of FARC-EP members as well as incursions by the public security forces into the security areas of zones and points or irregularities in the security controls to access zones and points. Three serious violations were reported during the reporting period: an overflight of a zone by a government helicopter; a case of attempted sexual abuse of minors by a FARC-EP member in a camp; and an incursion into a zone by a group of four soldiers, armed and in civilian clothes. One of the soldiers was wounded by gunfire from the guards of the FARC-EP camp.

Status of construction of Revolutionary Armed Forces of Colombia-People's Army camps in zones and points

32. In a joint communiqué with FARC-EP issued on 26 March, the Government committed to complete infrastructure in zones and points, including FARC-EP camps, by the end of April. However, the construction of infrastructure continued to face significant delays. As at the end of May, the Monitoring and Verification Mechanism had assessed that 20 camps were nearly complete in terms of basic infrastructure. Four camps were more than halfway completed and four were less than halfway completed (there are two camps in one of the zones). Delays were due to, among other factors, adverse weather conditions, delays in payments to contractors and some roadblocks owing to protests in the vicinity of zones and points, which prevented the delivery of construction materials.

Verification of installations housing Revolutionary Armed Forces of Colombia-People's Army inmates

33. The Monitoring and Verification Mechanism is responsible for verifying the suitability of installations in the zone of La Guajira (Meta Department) before the Government can transfer FARC-EP inmates who have served less than five years of their sentences for grave crimes and are therefore subjected to the Special Jurisdiction for Peace. An initial certification on 9 March allowed the transfer of the first group of 24 inmates on 24 April. Further transfers of inmates were conducted in May and June. As at 15 June, 229 FARC-EP inmates had been transferred to the zone.

Provision of logistics and medical services

34. The Monitoring and Verification Mechanism has been monitoring on a weekly basis the provision of supplies to FARC-EP camps (including food, clothing, hygiene kits, welfare equipment and cleaning supplies). Improvements observed during the previous reporting period have been maintained, especially in food supplies. Following the parties' joint communiqué of 26 March, there was a notable improvement in the sourcing of food from local suppliers — a recurrent demand of FARC-EP and communities who see the benefit to the local economy. Although the supply of clothing kits began in May, there have been problems in arranging the reception of deliveries in some areas.

35. Significant problems arose with regard to the water supply at some of the local headquarters of the Monitoring and Verification Mechanism, owing to contamination by bacteria and seepage from septic tanks. The Mission has requested the National Institute of Health of Colombia to analyse the drinking water in those locations and has requested Fondo Paz (the government agency in charge of local contracts) to urgently address the problem. Immediate remedial action was taken through the distribution of bottled water, while structural solutions are expected to be in place by the end of June.

36. There have been cases of malaria and dengue in certain zones among members of the Colombian armed forces and FARC-EP, particularly in the zone of Vidrí, Vigía del Fuerte (Antioquia Department), and El Gallo, Tierralta (Córdoba Department). Requests have been made for the supply of medication.

37. In April, the Government deployed medical teams and ambulances to zones and points; these also serve local communities. This has significantly improved living conditions. By 26 May, doctors and nurses had been deployed to all zones and points, ensuring the presence of medical personnel at all locations. Ambulances were deployed to 25 zones and points, with the exception of Vidrí, Vigía del Fuerte (Antioquia Department), and El Gallo, Tierralta (Córdoba Department), which require riverine transport that has been requested but not delivered owing to contractual problems. The Monitoring and Verification Mechanism called upon the authorities to expedite the lifting of arrest warrants for FARC-EP members needing to leave zones and points to receive medical care.

38. The Monitoring and Verification Mechanism, through regular public statements, has kept the public informed on progress regarding the Government-provided logistics and medical care, as well as on the verification of incidents.

Security challenges

39. The work of the Monitoring and Verification Mechanism continued to be affected by security concerns at the local level. At times, operations had to be suspended in areas such as Caño Indio, Tibú (Norte de Santander Department),

because of the actions of armed groups such as the Popular Liberation Army and ELN. The presence of organized armed groups and actions against them by the public security forces also affected the security context. Operations were suspended intermittently in La Variante, Tumaco (Nariño Department), following demonstrations by coca growers, who set up roadblocks. Similar protests affected activities in other locations. Public security forces discovered and destroyed explosive devices in the vicinity of a number of zones and points. Dissident FARC-EP fronts, particularly in the Departments of Caquetá, Guaviare and Meta, posed an additional concern for the Mechanism's operations, including the operations of the United Nations country team, particularly following the detention of personnel of the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC) by one of the dissident fronts in the Guaviare region (see para. 68 below). While remaining modest in relation to the overall size of FARC-EP, a steady increase in the number of individual desertions was reported during the reporting period, bringing the total registered by the Mission to 276 since 1 December 2016. In addition, 45 FARC-EP members have been expelled from the group since that date and 45 have engaged in the individual demobilization programme offered by the State.

Liaison and outreach

40. The communications strategy of the Monitoring and Verification Mechanism has continued at the local, regional and national levels, providing information on the Mechanism's activities, supporting visits of international, national and local actors seeking to learn about the ceasefire process and promoting better understanding about the peace process more generally. The Mechanism liaised on a regular basis with civil society actors, particularly local authorities, governors, local leaders, academics and institutional actors. In addition, the Mechanism provided information to local communities, NGOs, political groups and other actors on the functioning of the zones and points. The Mechanism does not restrict access to zones and points, which may be visited by unarmed civilians, provided that meetings are conducted in reception areas and not within FARC-EP camps, in accordance with the peace agreement protocols.

Engagement with women's groups and gender approach

41. The Mission continued to engage closely with women's groups to exchange information on the gender dimension of peace implementation and the involvement of such groups in this process. It facilitated their interaction with the Monitoring and Verification Mechanism, including the participation of female FARC-EP members in meetings. Women's groups also support the Mission in identifying possible situations of gender-based violence and in developing prevention and protection mechanisms.

42. The Mission supported the Monitoring and Verification Mechanism in preparing a tripartite gender directive that highlights the inclusion and participation of women within the Mechanism. It also defines the tasks to be carried out by the gender focal points at the national, regional and local levels, including understanding the local context with a gender perspective, receiving complaints on sexual violence, activating protection routes for victims and capacity-building for members of the Mechanism.

B. Activities related to the laying down of arms

Registration and collection of arms

43. The peace agreement established an ambitious timeline for the ceasefire and the process for the laying down of arms, with which the parties have been at pains to comply. Logistical delays and a drawn out implementation of provisions of the peace agreement resulted in the start of key activities relating to the process for the laying down of arms being deferred. The Mission identified and registered 7,132 FARC-EP arms in zones and points from 1 to 25 March and initiated the collection of arms of FARC-EP members serving as observers in the Monitoring and Verification Mechanism. During the course of the session of the Commission for the Follow-up, Promotion and Verification of the Implementation of the Final Agreement held in Cartagena on 25 and 26 March, FARC-EP agreed to hand over the arms of its members involved in peace-related activities, numbering about 1,000.

44. Throughout the reporting period, the Mission has been ready to receive and store the arms of FARC-EP members in zones and points, initially in reinforced metal boxes. As the construction of FARC-EP camps progressed, the Mission installed containers which to date number 44 in 22 zones and points. Four zones and points required the construction of arms storage facilities, as containers could not be transported to those locations.

45. Following the agreement of 29 May on the road map and in particular the new and compressed timeline for the handover of weapons in FARC-EP camps, the Mission, FARC-EP and the Government carried out intensive preparations for the storage of weapons of combatants in camps and militia members in three stages: 30 per cent on 7 June, 30 per cent on 14 June and the remainder on 20 June. It was agreed that militia members would join zones and points to register and initiate their transition towards legality. Those militias carrying arms would hand over their weapons to the Mission and receive the corresponding certification. FARC-EP informed the Mission that the arms of most militia members were located in weapons caches.

46. On 16 June, the Mission confirmed that it had stored 60 per cent of the weapons of FARC-EP members in United Nations containers. On 20 June, it was announced that the final phase, involving the handing in of the last tranche of weapons, had begun in the zones and points. A ceremony was scheduled for 27 June to mark the historic completion of the process.

Certification of the laying down of arms

47. At the request of the parties, the Mission is providing certificates to individual FARC-EP members who have handed over their arms to facilitate their transition to legality, on the basis of lists of FARC-EP members provided by the Office of the High Commissioner for Peace. By the end of May, the Office had provided the Mission with a list of 6,990 FARC-EP members located in zones and points and FARC-EP secretariat members, as well as those involved in the Monitoring and Verification Mechanism at the regional and national levels. In addition, on 8 June, the Office of the High Commissioner for Peace provided the Mission with a list of 2,800 militia members.

Disposal of arms caches

48. FARC-EP faced delays in obtaining information on the number and location of caches. It was not until late in April that FARC-EP informed the Mission that there

were 949 arms caches throughout the country. Their large number and remote location posed a significant challenge, as operations to dismantle caches are complex and involve close coordination with FARC-EP and the Government's public security forces.

49. According to the road map of 29 May, the United Nations Mission in Colombia is to verify the destruction of arms caches by FARC-EP until 1 September 2017, after which date the Government will assume this responsibility, with the assistance of FARC-EP. Until that time, efforts will be made to verify the disposal of as many caches as possible. The Mission is also planning for the neutralization of weapons and their transport out of zones and points.

50. To date, the Mission has conducted six operations to verify the disposal of caches. On the basis of information provided by FARC-EP, and in coordination with the Government's security forces, the Mission has been planning for 40 more, of which 24 were ready to launch as at 12 June, pending only FARC-EP confirmation and the logistical and security support of the public security forces. Each operation could cover several caches.

51. Security is a key factor in operations concerning caches, as some are located in areas where armed groups are operating. Logistics and weather conditions can pose an additional challenge, given their remote location and difficult terrain, and air transport is often required. The Department of Safety and Security of the Secretariat supports these activities by providing advice through security risk assessments for each area, as well as with a physical presence during the operations, ensuring compliance with all standard United Nations security measures.

C. Activities related to the liaison and coordination functions

52. The Mission continued to strengthen its working relationships with local government and indigenous authorities, community action boards (*Juntas de Acción Comunal*) and civil society groups at large. It also broadened its engagement with sectors opposed to, or sceptical of, the peace process, ensuring frequent briefings on the activities of the Mission and the Monitoring and Verification Mechanism while collecting their views on the overall mandate. In general, communities continue to perceive the Mission as a stabilizing factor and support the peace process. However, local frustration is growing with the lack of public economic and social investment. Questions remained over the shape and scope of community-based plans for the reintegration of former combatants into communities.

53. At the national level, the Mission has sought to enhance engagement with a broad array of actors — among them political and social leaders, private sector representatives, parliamentarians, religious organizations and think tanks — in addition to regular meetings with civil society organizations, including ethnic and women's groups.

54. The Mission remained closely engaged with women's groups to exchange information on the gender dimension of peace implementation and the involvement of women's groups in this process.

55. Cooperation with United Nations system agencies, funds and programmes in Colombia has continued, not only at the national level, but also at local levels through the local coordination teams. The Mission has benefited from the analysis of specialized agencies in relation to thematic aspects of the peace agreement and the stabilization activities of the United Nations country team at the local level. United Nations system partners have continued to support the Mission in ongoing training for staff.

56. As noted in my previous report (S/2017/252), the Mission has cooperated with the United Nations country team and the Colombian Agency for Territorial Renovation in participatory community assessments to inform the design of development projects in areas surrounding zones and points. Around \$13 million relating to ongoing programming from the United Nations system and its partners has been reprogrammed to support collective reparation to victims, protection and prevention of recruitment by armed groups, support for small-scale economic initiatives and support for women affected by gender-based violence, including in municipalities hosting zones and points. Other requests for funding are being discussed with the Multi-Partner Trust Fund of the United Nations Development Programme and the Peacebuilding Fund. The above-mentioned assessments are part of the rapid response efforts provided in the Government's stabilization plan, which includes investments in small infrastructure projects, road improvements and crop substitution. Rapid implementation of the projects is desirable.

IV. Mission set-up and structures

57. The Mission achieved full operational capacity during the reporting period, both at its national headquarters in Bogotá and in the eight regional offices and one subregional office. The Medellín regional office operated from temporary premises until 28 April.

A. International observers

58. As at 12 June, the Mission has deployed 448 international observers from 19 countries, under its authorized ceiling of 450, 58 of whom (13 per cent) are women.

59. During the reporting period, the local headquarters of the Monitoring and Verification Mechanism were expanded, allowing for progress in the deployment of the full personnel capacity of United Nations observers. As at 17 May, the Mechanism operated from local headquarters in each of the 26 zones and points. The last three local headquarters to be established were set up in mid-May in Agua Bonita, Montañita (Caquetá Department); Caño Indio, Tibú (Norte de Santander Department); and El Gallo, Tierra Alta (Córdoba Department). The Government and FARC-EP components have yet to deploy some 30 per cent of their respective personnel, pending completion of the expansion of local headquarters capacity.

B. Coordination and substantive

60. The Mission continued to deploy substantive-section observers to local sites, with a major push taking place during the reporting period as a result of advances in the expansion and facilities of local headquarters. Eighty-two per cent of substantive-section staff in the Mission are now operating at their designated locations and as part of local tripartite teams. Efforts to deploy the remaining substantive staff to the field are ongoing and depend on security conditions in some locations and outstanding logistical requirements. The Mission undertook a determined effort to recruit women to fill substantive-section positions to be deployed to local sites, as a means of promoting gender balance among observers. Of the 23 incumbents of Professional posts at the local level and 49 United Nations Volunteers, 50 are women (69 per cent). All local substantive teams of three have been carefully assigned to ensure that they include two female and one male staff.

C. Mission support

61. In the light of the support originally envisaged to be provided by the Government of Colombia, the mission support structure was based on the principles of a light footprint, outsourcing and the leveraging of the existing capacities of a regional mission for administrative support. The Mission is working to finalize a number of letters of assist and memorandums of understanding with the Government of Colombia to operationalize the necessary support for the Mission and the Monitoring and Verification Mechanism specifically, including an agreement on cost-sharing as authorized by the Security Council in its resolution [2307 \(2016\)](#).

62. The Mission has recruited a total of 108 international civilian staff, or 92 per cent of the authorized strength, 65 national staff out of an authorized strength of 100, and 53 United Nations Volunteers, equivalent to 89 per cent of the authorized strength. As of May 2017, 48.2 per cent of the civilian staff of the United Nations Mission in Colombia were women.

63. A mission support plan was developed to facilitate the deployment and maintenance of the Mission and the tripartite Monitoring and Verification Mechanism by ensuring smooth and uninterrupted logistical and administrative support to international observers and staff in all eight regional offices and 26 zones and points. The support includes follow-up to the timely implementation of contractual arrangements entered into by Fondo Paz and the coordination of logistical resupply movements.

64. The headquarters in Bogotá, the eight regional offices and the 26 zones and points were provided with Internet connectivity and communications infrastructure within two months of the Government's request, dated 19 January 2017, that the Mission take full responsibility for the provision of these services to all components of the Monitoring and Verification Mechanism. The Mission has put in place contractual arrangements to provide sufficient Internet and telephone connectivity to ensure compliance with minimum operating security standards for operations in the zones and points, as well as portable equipment for Internet, radio, telephone and Global Positioning System support to teams deployed to carry out arms cache operations.

65. The Mission has concluded a letter-of-assist arrangement with the Government of Colombia for the provision of medical services Mission-wide to all personnel, as appropriate, including the deployment of combat nurses, ambulances, medical kits, pharmaceuticals and evacuation capacity.

66. The two helicopters that were deployed to the Mission area for operational support undertook regular and special flights, logistics supply flights and related movements. This capability will continue to be essential, in particular given the requirements for the Mission to transport stored weapons and ammunition from the zones and points to more central locations, to deploy personnel to remote areas to recover material from arms caches and, in general, to support priority tasks related to the second mandate.

D. Safety and security of United Nations personnel

67. The Government of Colombia, specifically the National Police, continues to provide security to the Monitoring and Verification Mechanism and the Mission. The Department of Safety and Security provides ongoing leadership and operational support and advice on the policies and procedures of the United Nations security

management system, in close cooperation and liaison with the Colombian authorities.

68. On 3 May, members of a dissident FARC-EP front detained a UNODC employee who was conducting activities in the municipality of Miraflores (Guaviare Department). Despite initial indications that the UNODC employee would be released, he remains retained. A United Nations hostage incident management team was immediately established under the overall leadership of the designated official for security in Colombia. In the light of security concerns, non-essential, unescorted missions in areas of Antioquia, Cauca, Chocó, Guaviare and Meta Departments were suspended. This first instance of hostage-taking of United Nations personnel in the country has altered the threat environment for United Nations operations in the foreseeable future.

69. The security risk assessment developed for the Mission predicts that residual risk levels in relation to most identified threats (kidnapping, attack by spoilers, crossfire and violent demonstrations) vary between low and substantial. From a security management perspective, the activities planned for the Mission are viable insofar as the relevant risk management measures are fully implemented. The threat of landmines continues to pose considerable risk in some areas.

E. Conduct and discipline

70. Efforts continued to ensure that the behaviour of United Nations personnel abides by United Nations rules and regulations as well as Colombian law, with a particular focus on the prevention of sexual exploitation and abuse. The Mission issued a directive on conduct and discipline that outlines the expectations, procedural aspects and consequences of misconduct. In addition, the Mission disseminated guidelines that specifically prohibit any relation other than professional of Mission staff with the members of the Monitoring and Verification Mechanism as well as with local communities, particularly in the context of the 26 local headquarters in zones and points. The Conduct and Discipline Team conducted induction training for new staff, as well as regular presentations in regional offices and monthly conferences for Heads of Offices, civilian staff and observers in Bogotá. Furthermore, the Conduct and Discipline Team, in cooperation with the Mission's Public Information Office, included a link on the Mission's web page providing information on United Nations standards of conduct and reporting mechanisms.

71. During the reporting period, two allegations of sexual exploitation and abuse were reported to the Mission. Investigations and the need for further action regarding both allegations are under review at United Nations Headquarters.

V. Request for the establishment of a second mission and recommendations

72. The peace agreement provided for a second United Nations mission to be established upon completion of the mandate of the current Mission, to focus on the reintegration of FARC-EP and the implementation of personal and collective security and protection measures. As part of the road map of 29 May, the parties agreed to request that the envisioned verification tasks of the second mandate be brought forward to coincide with the start of reintegration activities in July 2017. In keeping with this agreement, the President of Colombia, in identical letters dated 5 June 2017 addressed to the President of the Security Council and to me, requested the establishment of the second mission before 10 July 2017 (see [S/2017/481](#),

annex). On 9 June, the President of the Security Council asked me to provide the Council with initial recommendations on how such a request could be met.

73. In his letter, the President of Colombia indicated that, in accordance with item 6.3.3 of the peace agreement, the second mission would verify the political and socioeconomic reintegration of FARC-EP; the implementation of personal and collective security and protection measures; and the implementation of security and protection programmes for communities and organizations in conflict-affected areas. The road map of 29 May provides for the start of preparations for the reintegration process on 1 June. It also provides that by 1 August, the local zones and points would convert into territorial spaces for training and reintegration. Furthermore, it states that the first United Nations Mission will continue until the end of its mandate on 26 September. Its tasks, according to revised timelines in the road map, include the verification of the laying down of individual arms by 20 June and of the disposal of arms caches until 1 September.

74. Successful implementation of the reintegration phase will be crucial to consolidate peace in Colombia. The second mission can be an important factor to build trust in the process and support the parties in their efforts to meet their mutual commitments. I therefore recommend that the Security Council consider the request favourably. In order to respond to the expectations of the parties, and taking into account both the remaining responsibilities for the completion of the current mandate and the existing capacities of the Mission on the ground, I wish to inform the Council of the following:

(a) Until such time as the second mission can be fully established upon completion of the current mandate on 26 September, the current Mission is in a position, if so authorized by the Council, to initiate some tasks of the second mandate on a provisional basis in order to satisfy the request of the parties to move forward the verification tasks to coincide with the start of the reintegration process. The Mission can do so, within available resources and from its current 8 regional and 26 local headquarters, pending further assessment to determine the requirements for full implementation;

(b) The initial verification of aspects related to the socioeconomic and political reintegration of FARC-EP members can be undertaken by United Nations Mission personnel currently in place who have already been monitoring a number of activities other than the ceasefire and the laying down of weapons, such as camp construction and the provision of logistical support and health care to FARC-EP;

(c) With regard to security guarantees for FARC-EP members following the laying down of weapons, and more broadly for communities in the areas most affected by the conflict, the geographical scope of verification is larger than the current zones and points where the FARC-EP members are assembled. Such verification will involve observation of the security situation in conflict areas and the sharing of information and recommendations with competent bodies. Initial verification in this case will require the reassignment of some local headquarters personnel. The Mission has determined that, if authorized by the Council, it is in a position to assign a small number of local headquarters staff to the verification of security guarantees in July. After 1 August, given that the transition of the zones and points to territorial spaces for training and reintegration will reduce the extent of verification tasks required under the current mandate, the Mission would be able to allocate additional resources to the verification of security guarantees;

(d) Our ability to meet the request of the parties would be facilitated should the Council authorize preparations for the second mission to be initiated immediately, as it did in paragraph 3 of resolution [2261 \(2016\)](#) in relation to the current Mission. With this authority, I would undertake an integrated planning

process for the second mission and submit a report to the Council by August, informed by practical experience on the ground and including detailed proposals regarding the Mission's functions, size, structure and operational aspects.

VI. Observations

75. Colombia's peace process has taken important strides forward on the strength of the will of the parties to implement the peace agreement and the support of many in Colombian society who share their determination. After waging armed struggle against the Colombian State for more than five decades, FARC-EP is honouring its commitment under the peace agreement to lay down its arms. This is a historic achievement that is not diminished because of temporary delays in the finalization of the laying down of arms process. I commend the parties for their determination to persevere in the implementation of the terms of the peace agreement in the face of obstacles over the past months and am confident that they will complete the process and abide by their commitments.

76. For now, it is particularly important that the parties continue to work together to carry over the momentum in two key areas: completing the process of the laying down of arms and initiating on solid ground the reintegration phase. This will require thorough implementation of the road map of 29 May, which envisages that the laying down of arms process is accompanied by a corresponding delivery on the part of State authorities of the necessary legal, security and socioeconomic guarantees provided for under the peace agreement.

77. As the phase of the laying down of arms comes to an end, the reintegration of FARC-EP into society faces particular complexities. The presence of the illegal economy, the risks posed by groups outside the peace process, violence against social leaders and recent killings of FARC-EP members and their families all underscore the delicate nature of the process ahead. In this context, there have been welcome acknowledgements of the need to address security concerns that have emerged with force even before the completion of the laying down of arms. There could be no greater message of reassurance to former combatants and communities at large than an effective effort by the Government with respect to its security commitments. The parties' request for the United Nations to initiate without delay the verification of the economic, social and political reincorporation of FARC-EP and security guarantees for its members and community leaders is a sign of the determination to address the challenges ahead.

78. I continue to be concerned about the levels of polarization around the implementation of the peace agreement, which risks increasing in the context of the coming electoral period. The laying down of arms sends a clear signal of the intention of the parties to comply with the commitments they made to the people of Colombia and the international community in the peace agreement they signed in November 2016. Adherence to the ceasefire has saved many lives. I share the hope that, as the peace process delivers concrete dividends on the ground, its benefits will be appreciated by a population that universally expresses a desire for peace. Rather than being a divisive issue, peace can and must become a unifying national objective.

79. The period ahead will also demand a unified effort by all in the international community, including the United Nations, who have been invited to play a supporting role in the verification or the implementation of the peace agreement. The role of the guarantors, Cuba and Norway, remains important in accompanying the Commission for the Follow-up, Promotion and Verification of the Implementation of the Final Agreement, as is the new role to be exercised by the

former President of Uruguay, José Mujica, and the former President of Spain, Felipe González, as “notables” heading the international verification component.

80. I commend Member States and the Security Council in particular for their unfailing support for the peace process and the Mission. I thank once again the observer-contributing countries for their commitment to the Mission and their flexibility in responding to its needs.

81. Lastly, I would like to express my continued appreciation for the efforts of the United Nations Mission in Colombia, under the leadership of my Special Representative, Jean Arnault, to implement the mandate entrusted to the Organization. Its presence on the ground has no doubt contributed to the success of the ceasefire and cessation of hostilities, as well as the progress in the laying down of arms. I commend the Mission’s continued close cooperation with the United Nations country team, which has its own important roles to play in supporting implementation of Colombia’s peace agreement. I thank the parties for their crucial cooperation with the Mission and for the continued faith they exhibit in the United Nations by entrusting to our Organization new and critical responsibilities.
