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Technical assistance and capacity-building

Technical assistance and capacity-building in Colombia

Report of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights*

Summary

The present report contains a description of the technical assistance and capacity-building provided to national and local authorities and other relevant actors by the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights in Colombia, pursuant to Human Rights Council resolutions 53/22 and 56/14. The report focuses on the technical support provided for the implementation of the recommendations of the Commission for the Clarification of Truth, Coexistence and Non-Repetition.

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I. Introduction

1. The present report has been submitted pursuant to Human Rights Council resolutions 53/22 and 56/14 on enhancement of technical cooperation and capacity-building in the field of human rights in Colombia to implement the recommendations of the Commission for the Clarification of Truth, Coexistence and Non-Repetition (Truth Commission).

2. In those resolutions, the Human Rights Council requested the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR) to provide and step up its technical assistance and capacity-building to national and local authorities and other relevant actors to assist Colombia in the implementation of the recommendations made by the Truth Commission. It also requested that particular attention be dedicated to victims and that a gender perspective be applied that takes into account ethnic origins and their different needs in the areas of investigations of human rights violations and abuses, breaches of international humanitarian law and corruption, human rights and security sector reform, the protection of social leaders and human rights defenders, and the definition and development of a public policy for a culture of peace. In addition, it invited OHCHR to accompany the implementation of the recommendations made by the international human rights expert in her report.[1]

3. The technical assistance provided by OHCHR has had a significant impact and has the potential for further development. However, since July 2023, the liquidity situation of the regular budget of the United Nations Secretariat has directly affected the capacity of OHCHR to provide all the technical assistance envisaged in the four areas identified in the Human Rights Council resolutions, particularly in investigations of human rights violations and abuses and corruption and in the definition and development of a public policy for a culture of peace.

4. In addition, in 2025, long-standing financial contributions from some donors supporting the work of OHCHR in Colombia have been discontinued or significantly reduced. OHCHR is currently reviewing its strategy, structure and organization in order to maximize its efficiency and impact with the available resources. However, the current financial situation will make it difficult for OHCHR to carry out the activities mandated by the Human Rights Council and could lead to a general reduction in the technical assistance it provides.

II. Technical assistance from OHCHR

A. Recommendations of the Truth Commission

5. During 2024, the Government continued to move forward with the strategy for progressively implementing the Truth Commission’s recommendations, led by the Unit for the Implementation of the Final Agreement for Ending the Conflict and Building a Stable and Lasting Peace (Peace Agreement) in conjunction with the National Planning Department and the Committee for Follow-up and Monitoring of the Implementation of the Commission’s Recommendations, focusing on 104 prioritized recommendations.

6. The Government made progress in developing 186 indicators for monitoring the implementation status of 70 of the 104 prioritized recommendations, which represents a major step forward in the consolidation of the implementation strategy.

7. OHCHR designed and introduced a correspondence analysis methodology that was applied to the 104 recommendations, identifying their relationship with specific areas of human rights. These recommendations propose changes with a view to addressing structural problems and strengthening the protection of these rights. In general, they are designed to

[1] A/HRC/55/18.

ensure the rights to equality and non-discrimination, to property, to participation, to a life of dignity and to peace, among others.

8. OHCHR provided technical assistance to the Unit for the Implementation of the Peace Agreement, the Follow-up and Monitoring Committee and the Ministry of Justice and Law through an analysis of the relationship between the recommendations as means of strengthening the protection of rights. It also promoted the mainstreaming of human rights in the development of indicators to measure progress in the fulfilment of the recommendations.

9. In 2024, the Follow-up and Monitoring Committee published its third report, in which it examined the implementation of 20 recommendations related to the right to peace in the light of the dialogues undertaken in the framework of the total peace policy.

10. The Committee highlighted the Government's efforts to advance the negotiations with non-State armed groups. It also expressed concerns about challenges in the implementation of the Peace Agreement, limited citizen participation in the dialogue processes and the lack of differentiated approaches.[2]

11. OHCHR continued to provide technical assistance to the Follow-up and Monitoring Committee, contributing to the strategy for the dissemination of its mandate and reports through a regional meeting and a joint public awareness campaign on the Truth Commission's 220 recommendations that was launched in April 2025. It also supported the strengthening of institutional strategies, dialogue with institutions and civil society and the mainstreaming of human rights in the design of the follow-up and monitoring system.

12. In December 2024, the OHCHR provided technical assistance and sponsored a regional dialogue in Cúcuta, Norte de Santander during which the contents of the third report of the Follow-up and Monitoring Committee were presented, proposals were made and its findings were addressed. More than 40 people participated in the dialogue, including representatives of regional authorities and civil society organizations made up of campesinos, LGBTIQ+ persons, Indigenous and Afro-Colombian women and young people.

13. OHCHR provided technical advice to the Ministry of Justice and Law, the Ministry of Defence, the National Centre for Historical Memory and the Follow-up and Monitoring Committee to support the implementation of recommendations related to human rights archives, the recognition of victims and access to justice.

14. OHCHR recognizes the Government's commitment to fulfilling the recommendations of the Truth Commission. However, it considers it essential to redouble efforts for their comprehensive implementation, as part of a strategic undertaking for transformation and non-repetition.

15. OHCHR considers that the fulfilment of the Truth Commission's recommendations is intrinsically related to the comprehensive implementation of the Peace Agreement and the consolidation of guarantees of non-repetition. Therefore, it stresses the need for stronger action to accelerate the fulfilment of recommendations, including the necessary institutional adjustments to enable the concentration of implementation efforts. In this regard, the international human rights expert, appointed pursuant to Human Rights Council resolution 53/22, recommended the establishment of an entity at the highest level to take the lead on implementation of the Peace Agreement.[3]

B. Investigation of human rights violations and abuses, breaches of international humanitarian law and corruption

16. OHCHR considers that the State should step up efforts to effectively address impunity in cases of serious human rights violations and abuses and breaches of international humanitarian law, in order to ensure access to justice for victims and establish guarantees of

[2] See https://www.comiteseguimientoymonitoreo.co/_files/ugd/0d373e_eb2c5bb1047a4ca3bbdfeed367fc3ecc.pdf.

[3] A/HRC/55/18, para. 104.

non-repetition. These efforts should be part of a comprehensive policy that allows for the coordination and implementation of long-term plans and strategies.

17. The Attorney General's Office adopted a strategic plan for 2024–2028 to ensure that individuals have adequate access to justice and to meet the challenge posed by the investigation and prosecution of increasingly complex and dynamic criminal activity, with diverse and particular manifestations in different regions of Colombia.[4] OHCHR is of the view that this strategy is constructed in such a way that it has the potential to respond to historical and structural challenges in the fight against impunity.

18. OHCHR continued to provide technical cooperation in the framework of the State's investigations into the serious human rights violations and abuses and breaches of international humanitarian law that occurred in the context of the armed conflict, particularly those being dealt with by the transitional justice mechanisms established pursuant to the Peace Agreement, such as the Special Jurisdiction for Peace, and as part of efforts to search for persons deemed missing, including victims of enforced disappearance. It also provided technical cooperation in relation to notorious cases of human rights violations and abuses that occurred after the signing of the Peace Agreement, such as alleged arbitrary killings by members of the security forces and killings of human rights defenders.

19. In July 2024, the Attorney General's Office indicted 24 military personnel accused of the arbitrary deprivation of life of 11 people, including a woman and a 16-year-old child, during a military operation on 28 March 2022 in the village of Alto Remanso, Putumayo. In its indictment, the Office alleged that members of the army carried out an indiscriminate attack on about 50 people who were at a bazaar. It noted that, of the 11 people who died, 8 were unarmed civilians, and the attack was therefore a violation of the right to life and a breach of international humanitarian law principles.[5]

1. Human rights violations and abuses and breaches of international humanitarian law in the context of the armed conflict

20. The Special Jurisdiction for Peace has made progress in processing the 11 open cases, promoting the participation of victims and mainstreaming differentiated approaches. OHCHR considers it essential that steps be taken to optimize the Special Jurisdiction's work so that investigations and trials can be concluded by the end of its mandate.[6]

21. OHCHR highlights the adoption of precautionary measures and the indictment decisions of the Judicial Panel for Acknowledgement of Truth. It also stresses the importance of ensuring that future judgments include restorative justice projects that are commensurate with the harm caused and that contribute to full reparation. It reiterates the importance of ensuring the rigorous monitoring of compliance with commitments undertaken by parties who benefit from decisions to terminate criminal proceedings.

22. The technical assistance provided by OHCHR to the Judicial Panel for Acknowledgement of Truth, the Section for Cases of Acknowledgement of Truth and other units of the Special Jurisdiction for Peace helped to strengthen its analytical and investigative capacity to deal with and investigate international crimes on the basis of international norms and standards. It also contributed to the strengthening of methodologies for the participation of victims, the incorporation of differentiated gender and ethnic approaches with an intersectional perspective and the preparation of restorative justice forums and acknowledgement hearings.

23. In 2024, OHCHR continued to provide, inter alia, technical assistance in the investigation by the Special Jurisdiction for Peace of the cases known as "false positives", in which killings and enforced disappearances were presented as combat casualties by State

[4] See https://www.fiscalia.gov.co/colombia/wp-content/uploads/Direccionamiento_Estrategico_2024-2028.pdf.

[5] See https://www.fiscalia.gov.co/colombia/noticias/medida-de-aseguramiento-contra-un-coronel-del-ejercito-nacional-y-23-militares-mas-por-el-homicidio-de-11-personas-en-el-caserio-alto-remanso-putumayo/.

[6] The term of operation of the Special Jurisdiction for Peace is 15 years. Investigations must be completed and indictments filed by March 2028, with an additional five years to complete the trials.

agents. In particular, it provided support in preparing victims and participants for the acknowledgement hearings and restorative justice forums held in Neiva, Huila and Yopal, Casanare, thus strengthening victims' participation in these processes. OHCHR also provided support for educational and accreditation processes in the framework of case 09 in relation to Indigenous Peoples and people of African descent.

24. In December 2024, OHCHR organized an inter-jurisdictional coordination meeting between the authorities of Indigenous justice systems and their legal representatives, on the one hand, and the Special Jurisdiction for Peace, on the other, in order to promote synergies and the integration of their own legal systems in transitional restorative justice.

25. In November 2024, OHCHR and the Investigation and Prosecution Unit organized a forum on relational analysis methodologies for dealing with serious crimes, which was attended by 50 officials, including prosecutors and national and territorial work teams, and which helped to strengthen investigation strategies. OHCHR also provided technical cooperation in the investigative area in relation to the search for and identification of victims of enforced disappearance in cases of non-acknowledgement of responsibility, and in respect of inter-institutional coordination, contributing to the dignified return of the bodies of victims of enforced disappearance, dignifying their memory and alleviating the pain and uncertainty of their families.

26. The launch of the National System for the Search for Persons Deemed Missing and the formulation of a comprehensive public policy represent a major stride towards addressing the structural causes of disappearance in the country. OHCHR provided the State with technical assistance to mainstream an approach based on human rights and the participation of victims, ethnic communities, persons with diverse sexual orientations and gender identities and civil society organizations.

2. Protection of civic space and access to justice

27. OHCHR continued to provide technical assistance and to participate in the Inter-Institutional Standing Committee convened by the Ministry of Defence, which includes the Attorney General's Office, the Counsel General's Office and the Inspectorate General of Police, in order to advance investigations into the human rights violations that occurred during the protests of 2020 and 2021.

28. The Inter-Institutional Standing Committee was able to update information on 42 cases of killings during the 2021 protests in Cauca and Valle del Cauca, most of which occurred in Cali. It concluded that the security forces were likely responsible for 19 and non-State actors for 10 of the 42 killings. In 23 cases, the Committee was unable to identify the alleged perpetrator. In June 2024, the institutions that make up the Committee held a meeting with relatives of most of the victims, some belonging to the Siloé People's Court. The institutions reported on the progress of the investigations, responded to the family members' concerns and committed to expediting the investigations and keeping the families informed. OHCHR facilitated and moderated the meeting.

29. In 2024, the Committee also began to work on advancing criminal and disciplinary investigations in the cases of eye injuries sustained during the protests. A dataset of 113 cases (involving 100 men and 13 women) that occurred between 2019 and 2023 was compiled from information provided by OHCHR, civil society organizations, victims' organizations and the institutions that make up the Committee.

30. OHCHR also highlights the creation by the Attorney General's Office of a working group to address human rights violations associated with social protest, which is investigating 62 criminal case reports, including in relation to arbitrary deprivation of life and violations of the right to security of person during the 2021 national strike. The Attorney General's Office prioritized the investigation of 27 arbitrary killings, documented by OHCHR, for which the security forces were allegedly responsible.

31. In respect of killings of human rights defenders, OHCHR provided technical cooperation to the Special Investigation Unit of the Attorney General's Office.

32. The Attorney General's Office, in compliance with Constitutional Court judgment No. SU-546/23 of December 2023, held meetings with civil society organizations, with the

participation of OHCHR, to develop an action plan to strengthen its capacity to investigate attacks on and killings of human rights defenders. The plan is structured around the components of: (a) implementing Directives No. 002/2017 and No. 0010/2018, which integrate international human rights standards into investigations of killings of human rights defenders; (b) mainstreaming territorial, differentiated and intersectional approaches; (c) strengthening relations and trust with victims and family members; and (d) promoting contextual investigations, case association and the dismantling of criminal organizations.

33. The effective implementation of the action plan, which will be integrated into a national policy on safeguards for human rights defenders due to be approved in the second half of 2025, could contribute to reducing the high level of impunity in cases of violence against human rights defenders. In particular, it will require a significant institutional effort in the territories most affected by the violence, especially in terms of building trust, communicating with and assisting victims, and in conducting contextual investigations that could result in the dismantling of criminal structures.

34. OHCHR noted the greater transparency and improved accountability of the Attorney General's Office in this area. In February 2025, the Attorney General presented a report on the prosecution of offences committed against human rights defenders. Of the 1,372 cases investigated between 1 January 2016 and 31 December 2024, involving 1,381 victims, indictments were filed in 527 cases and convictions were secured in 217 cases. Of the total number of indictments, 462 cases were linked to direct perpetrators and 82 cases to instigators. Members of criminal organizations were indicted in 472 cases.[7]

C. Security sector reform

35. OHCHR reiterates that the comprehensive implementation of the Peace Agreement, including in relation to the security sector, will enable the State to better fulfil its international human rights obligations.[8]

36. In accordance with the Truth Commission's recommendations to the security sector[9] and with the Peace Agreement chapter on security guarantees, five strategic areas of technical assistance, taking account of gender and ethnic perspectives, were outlined for: (a) the National Commission on Security Guarantees, in the formulation of the public policy on dismantling criminal organizations that undermine peacebuilding, including the so-called paramilitary successor groups and their support networks, and the related action plan, and the implementation of the policy in terms of its impact on access to and exercise of human rights; (b) the Ministry of Defence, in the formulation and implementation of its security policy, prioritizing people of African descent and Indigenous Peoples at risk of extinction; (c) the National Police, in its transformation process; (d) the Ministry of Defence, in the implementation of Directive No. 13 of 2019, which establishes a mechanism for direct dialogue between the armed forces, the National Police and the Ministry of Defence, on the one hand, and OHCHR, on the other; and (e) the National Intelligence Directorate, in the formulation of its human rights policy, and the Congress of the Republic, in the drafting of the amendment to the Intelligence and Counter-Intelligence Act (No. 1621).

37. OHCHR provided technical advice on preparation for the implementation of the public policy on dismantling criminal organizations that undermine peacebuilding, including the so-called paramilitary successor groups and their support networks,[10] notably in terms of the design of a protocol, the definition of measures with territorial approach and the identification of priority municipalities.

[7] See https://www.fiscalia.gov.co/colombia/defensores/unidad-especial-de-investigacion/.

[8] A/HRC/34/3/Add.3, paras. 9 and 10; A/HRC/37/3/Add.3, para. 7; A/HRC/40/3/Add.3, paras. 3, 4 and 10; A/HRC/43/3/Add.3, paras. 1 and 5; A/HRC/46/76, para. 81 (a); A/HRC/49/19, para. 1; and A/HRC/52/25, para. 16.

[9] Recommendations 39, 40, 40-1 to 40-8, 41, 42, 43, 44, 45, 46, 47 and 48. Available at https://www.comisiondelaverdad.co/sites/default/files/descargables/2022-08/FINAL%20CEV_HALLAZGOS_IMPRESION_2022.pdf.

[10] Adopted by Decree No. 0665 of May 2024.

38. OHCHR notes that some progress has been made in this area and considers it essential that implementation of the policy should commence in the prioritized territories as soon as possible. It has developed a system, with human rights impact indicators, for monitoring the implementation of the policy. It calls for the effective participation of civil society in the implementation of this public policy to be maintained and enhanced.

39. OHCHR has provided technical advice to the Ministry of Defence on implementation of the security, defence and citizen coexistence policy. A territorial monitoring methodology and a forum for regular exchange were established, identifying five areas of focus: (a) consistency between the policy and its strategic sectoral plan; (b) the impact of national guidelines at the territorial level; (c) dialogue with communities and inter-institutional coordination; (d) effectiveness of intelligence-sharing; and (e) coordination with local security strategies. The General Command of the Armed Forces was invited to participate in the aforementioned forum in order to increase the attention given to identified needs.

40. In January 2025, a process was initiated with the Ministry of Defence in order to strengthen the security, defence and citizen coexistence policy by harmonizing it with the policy on human rights and international humanitarian law, prepared with the advice of OHCHR and launched in September 2024. The security forces contributed to the development of the policy, which contains a dynamic human rights approach that facilitates its application.

41. The National Police made progress in the revision of its educational and operational doctrine with technical advice from OHCHR. After reviewing the Institutional Education Project and the human rights handbook, more than 700 recommendations for the inclusion of international human rights norms and standards were put forward. These recommendations were approved by the Police Technical Advisory Council on Human Rights and are being incorporated into the human rights handbook. OHCHR also presented recommendations to improve doctrine management and to promote civil society participation and preventive measures.

42. Fifteen regional dialogues between the National Police and civil society resulted in 130 agreements to strengthen mutual trust and institutional legitimacy at the territorial level. In addition, 45 officers (37 men and 8 women) who act as disciplinary judges obtained an academic specialization in human rights. At the request of the Director General of the Police, OHCHR initiated a review of mandatory and competency validation courses with a view to the inclusion of international human rights norms and standards.

43. OHCHR provided technical assistance to the Ministry of Defence and the National Police on the use of force during protests. At the request of the Ministry of Defence, the Office facilitated a dialogue between the police and civil society organizations, structured around the Police Reform Committee, to reach agreements on a regulation on the subject. The first outcome of this process was the adoption of Presidential Decree No. 1231 of 2024,[11] which incorporates international human rights standards on the use of force.

44. In the framework of Ministry of Defence Directive No. 13 of 2019, the committee for periodic dialogue at the national level continued to discuss the human rights issues identified by OHCHR in the conduct of the security forces. Four meetings were held with the Ministry of Defence and the security forces to identify preventive actions. Between July and December 2024, the Office registered a 40 per cent fall in the number of allegations of arbitrary deprivation of life[12] committed by the security forces in comparison with the same period in 2023.

45. In order to extend the reach of Directive No. 13, 10 territorial dialogue forums will be held in the country's military divisions. The first took place in November 2024 in the military division of Sierra Nevada de Santa Marta and Montes de María. OHCHR appreciates the security forces' openness to engaging in such a dialogue at the national and territorial levels.

46. OHCHR provided technical advice to the Congress of the Republic in the drafting of the bill to amend the Intelligence and Counter-Intelligence Act, which will be debated in

[11] See A/HRC/58/24.

[12] Human Rights Committee, general comment No. 36 (2018).

2025. To this end, it prepared a document addressing seven topics to strengthen intelligence management and ensure its compatibility with international human rights standards.

47. In accordance with the memorandum of understanding signed by the Office and the National Intelligence Directorate in December 2024, OHCHR has been providing the Directorate with technical advice for the development of an institutional human rights policy and the revision of its intelligence handbooks, incorporating international standards and best practices.

D. Protection of social leaders and human rights defenders

48. Between June 2024 and the time of writing, OHCHR received 176 allegations of killings of human rights defenders (152 men, 19 women and 5 LGBTIQ+ persons). In 68 cases, it was verified that the victims were indeed human rights defenders and that the killing was related to their activities; in 61 cases, the information was deemed inconclusive; and 47 cases are pending verification.

49. OHCHR notes the persistence of disproportionate violence against Indigenous authorities, members of community action committees and campesino organizations, committed by non-State armed actors who aim to weaken organizational and resistance processes in the territories and to control illicit economic activities. The worst affected departments in the first half of 2025 were Cauca, Norte de Santander, Valle del Cauca and Magdalena.

50. Constitutional Court judgment No. SU-546/23 has prompted a State response to the situation of violence experienced by human rights defenders. Under the coordination of the Ministry of the Interior and in compliance with the Court's orders, the relevant State entities have made progress in formulating a national policy on safeguards for human rights defenders.

51. The national policy on safeguards has been developed in a participatory manner with human rights platforms through seven regional forums, the exchange of documents and dialogue between institutions and civil society organizations. OHCHR has provided technical assistance and support for the policymaking process. In particular, it facilitated and moderated a bilateral policy dialogue held in March 2025 between the human rights platforms and all institutions involved in the policy in order to achieve the broadest possible consensus. The Office is of the view that five specific interrelated challenges, outlined below, must be addressed in order to effectively draft and implement the policy.

52. First, a national information system on attacks on human rights defenders should be established, with the aim of developing a targeting index for special protection areas.

53. Second, departmental and municipal governments should be encouraged to set aside funds, in their development plans and annual budgets, to prepare plans for prevention and the protection of human rights defenders and organizations. It is also essential to strengthen the human rights advocacy role of municipal ombudsman's offices. OHCHR noted that the adoption of Act No. 2422 of 2024 to strengthen the functioning of municipal and district ombudsman's offices has so far failed to ensure that ombudsmen, especially in category 5 and 6 municipalities,[13] can carry out their important work in dignified and safe conditions.

54. Third, the sustainable and effective functioning of the regional committees on safeguards should be guaranteed. Despite efforts by the Ministry of the Interior to activate the 24 regional committees in 2024 and 2025, most of them still operate in an irregular manner, the sub-working groups fail to maintain an efficient work pace, and they continue to face challenges in securing political and financial support from the territorial entities that share responsibility for their functioning.

55. Fourth, it should be ensured that the recommendations contained in the early warnings of the Ombudsman's Office are fully implemented. OHCHR notes that, since August 2024,

[13] Category 5 municipalities have between 10,000 and 20,000 inhabitants; category 6 municipalities have fewer than 10,000 inhabitants.

the Ombudsman's Office has issued eight early warnings covering 53 municipalities in 11 departments. The prevention strategy based on the early warning system requires the strengthening of the Intersectoral Commission for Rapid Response to Early Warnings. In this regard, the Ombudsman's Office and the Ministry of the Interior have set about making some methodological adjustments to the Commission's sessions. The Ombudsman's Office also worked on strengthening the existing set of indicators for evaluating compliance with its recommendations.

56. As for the fifth challenge, OHCHR recognizes the efforts of the National Protection Unit to address the multiple and diverse protection needs of human rights defenders. However, the Unit's response capacity is overwhelmed, which prevents it from comprehensively responding to all requests for protection. In 2024, the Unit received a total of 44,534 individual requests, conducted risk studies of 11,607 cases and granted enhanced protection to 4,683 defenders, representing 10.51 per cent of the total number of requests. Given the enormous security risks faced by human rights defenders and the limited response capacity of other institutions with prevention and protection mandates, such as the National Police and municipal and departmental governments, responsibility for protecting human rights defenders has fallen disproportionately on the Unit. While the Unit's budget has increased in recent years, its individual protection model, based on a personalized security concept and material measures such as the use of vests, escorts or vehicles, is unsustainable.

57. The National Protection Unit also faces structural challenges such as the failure to adapt risk analysis and protection measures, especially in rural areas with high levels of violence. This can be explained by four factors: (a) the lack of adequate training and the limited access of risk analysts to relevant information; (b) analysts' inadequate understanding of the work of human rights defenders and the context in which they operate; (c) limited incorporation of territorial, ethnic and gender perspectives, and their intersectionality, when conducting risk analyses; and (d) the failure to adapt the technical evaluation instrument that weighs individual risk. These shortcomings have a direct impact on the provision of protection measures and underscore the urgent need to update the evaluation tool and improve analysis criteria, ensuring that decisions are more precise and better tailored to the actual risks.

58. According to an OHCHR historical analysis of the decisions of the Committee for Risk Assessment and Recommended Measures, in the past year there has been an increasing trend for the reduction or withdrawal of protection measures for human rights defenders. This trend was particularly noticeable in contexts where a gender perspective is applied and especially affected women and gay men.

59. To overcome the limitations of individual protection, the National Protection Unit has promoted a collective protection pathway, granting measures to 321 groups in 2024. However, OHCHR considers that major changes to the collective pathway are necessary in order to strengthen the adequacy and appropriateness of these measures. The level of implementation of collective measures remains at between 40 and 50 per cent, indicating that operational barriers and limited inter-institutional coordination are hindering effective execution. The highest rate of implementation was achieved by the Unit itself in respect of material protection measures such as the provision of vans, boats, motorcycles and communication equipment. Lower levels of implementation and delays were observed in relation to other collective measures that have to do with organizational strengthening and structural aspects, such as the improvement of roads and communication systems and access to basic services, and which are usually the responsibility of other State institutions.

60. In this context, civil society platforms and various groups have underscored the urgent need to transform the current protection model. OHCHR agrees with this assessment and stresses that the modernization or revision of the National Protection Unit's internal processes will, on its own, be insufficient. It is necessary to embark on a reform of the model that includes a fully participatory process.

III. Conclusions

61. Robust cooperation between OHCHR, national and local authorities and civil society has contributed to progress in implementing the recommendations of the Truth Commission within the framework of the Peace Agreement. In accordance with Human Rights Council resolutions, OHCHR technical assistance has focused on the investigation of human rights violations and abuses, security sector reform and the protection of human rights defenders.

62. In the current context of significant levels of violence and of social and territorial control by non-State armed groups in several of the country's regions, OHCHR considers it essential that the authorities step up efforts to fully implement the recommendations of the Truth Commission. OHCHR reiterates its willingness to provide continued technical assistance for this purpose, with the resources at its disposal. The Office plays a unique and essential role, as a trusted counterpart, in promoting, providing technical advice on and supporting the implementation of a comprehensive human rights approach at the national level, for example, through the transfer of methodologies to ensure stakeholder participation, in cooperation with United Nations agencies and entities and other international organizations.

63. The impact of the financial situation on the presence of OHCHR sub-offices in Colombia and their staff could reduce the Office's continued ability to perform technical assistance tasks and activities in fulfilment of the mandate adopted by the Human Rights Council in its resolutions 53/22 and 56/14; the situation could also adversely affect the Office's ability to support the implementation of the recommendations of the Truth Commission within the framework of the Peace Agreement.

IV. Recommendations

64. **The United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights recommends:**

(a) **That Member States ensure adequate support for OHCHR, through sufficient financial contributions, so that it can continue to perform the unique and essential role of technical adviser in Colombia in relation to the implementation of the recommendations of the Truth Commission within the framework of the Peace Agreement;**

(b) **That the Government strengthen strategies and plans for the implementation of the Peace Agreement, in order to provide guarantees of non-repetition, including the adjustment of the institutional structure with a view to the concentration and acceleration of implementation efforts;**

(c) **That the Unit for the Implementation of the Peace Agreement of the Office of the High Commissioner for Peace and the relevant government bodies intensify efforts to complete the development of institutional planning instruments for the monitoring and implementation of the recommendations contained in the Truth Commission's final report, including human rights-based impact indicators and national and territorial institutional coordination for this purpose;**

(d) **That the National Commission on Security Guarantees simultaneously apply the principles, approaches and guiding concepts of the public policy on dismantling criminal organizations, including the intersectional, gender, ethnic and differentiated approaches and the five international good human rights practices for the dismantling of criminal organizations;**

(e) **That the Special Jurisdiction for Peace, when handing down its first judgments, provide for restorative justice projects that are commensurate with the harm caused and differential impacts and that consider the proposals of victims, and that it continue to strengthen mechanisms for the participation of victims in restorative and adversarial proceedings;**

(f) **That the Special Jurisdiction for Peace, in cases where individuals are put on trial, strengthen forums for dialogue with and participation of the victims and their representatives during the investigation stage;**

(g) **That the Unit for the Implementation of the Peace Agreement and the competent government entities provide the institutional services necessary for the effective implementation of restorative justice projects and the application of the restorative sentences handed down by the Special Jurisdiction for Peace, ensuring their financial, operational and technical sustainability, in coordination with the territorial authorities, and providing the necessary conditions for individuals to comply with restorative sentences and the conditionality regime;**

(h) **That the Ministry of Defence strengthen and accelerate the work of the Inter-Institutional Standing Committee to advance investigations into the killings, eye injuries and gender-based violence, including sexual violence, that were documented during the 2020 protests in Bogotá and the 2021 national strike;**

(i) **That the Attorney General's Office ensure that its strategy for investigating the killings of human rights defenders is strengthened and complemented by the public policy on dismantling criminal organizations, and that it establish a mechanism, with the full participation of civil society, for monitoring the effective implementation of the action plan established pursuant to Constitutional Court judgment No. SU/546 of 2023;**

(j) **That the Government adopt, with the agreement of civil society platforms, the comprehensive policy on safeguards for human rights defenders and increase the budgetary and institutional capacity of all entities involved in the policy;**

(k) **That the Government expedite financial transfers and strengthen comprehensive prevention and protection policies and measures to support the human rights work of municipal ombudsman's offices in category 5 and 6 municipalities;**

(l) **That the departmental governments increase institutional and financial support for the regional committees on safeguards in order to ensure that they function in an effective, sustainable and participatory manner for prevention and the protection of human rights defenders;**

(m) **That the Ministry of the Interior and the National Protection Unit conduct an in-depth reform of the protection model for human rights defenders, led by the Ministry of the Interior and with the full participation of civil society. The new model should incorporate a territorial approach, with comprehensive prevention and protection actions coordinated by civil institutions, and differentiated ethnic and gender perspectives applied to social and collective processes for the defence of human rights. It should envisage actions such as harmonizing Decrees No. 660 and No. 278 on collective protection, ending reliance on the outsourcing of individual protection measures and strengthening self-protection measures developed by groups themselves;**

(n) **That the National Commission on Security Guarantees and the State entities and institutions involved in the action plan related to the public policy on dismantling criminal organizations begin to implement the policy without delay, taking account of the principles, approaches and guiding concepts defined therein, and ensure the effective participation of civil society organizations in the implementation process;**

(o) **That the Ministry of Defence, the armed forces and the National Police bring the strategic sectoral plan into line with the text of the security, defence and citizen coexistence policy;**

(p) **That the Congress of the Republic and the country's intelligence community approve and adopt the bill to amend the Intelligence and Counter-Intelligence Act, incorporating the recommendations proposed by OHCHR, in compliance with the country's international human rights obligations;**

(q) **That the Ministry of Defence and the National Police continue the process of reforming the National Police, ensuring that international human rights norms and**

standards are mainstreamed in its operational and educational doctrine and its institutional standardization process.