HIGHLIGHTS OF THE 37TH
PERIODIC REPORT MAPP/OAS

The information contained in this report describes the findings gathered by the MAPP/OAS between January 1 and June 30, 2024. During this period, the Mission completed 858 field missions across 217 population centers in 107 municipalities spanning 23 Colombian departments. The Mandate was also renewed until January 2027. This report provides 26 recommendations to Colombian Government entities such as the Office of the High Commissioner for Peace; the Peace Agreement Implementation Unit; the Unit for Comprehensive Attention and Reparation of Victims; the Land Restitution Unit; and the Ministries of Foreign Affairs, National Defense, Interior, Justice and Law, Environment and Sustainable Development, among others. See page 33

1. Arbitrary restrictions and penalties imposed by armed groups (AG):

Despite the peace initiatives, talks, and dialogues that were undertaken, AGs continued to impose restrictions on the communities, mainly in matters of civic coexistence, mobility, and the autonomous exercise of political rights. In various communities, they strengthened control actions to enforce compliance with the penalties imposed, for which they used payment slips for the payment of fines, photographs of people doing forced labor, punishment assignments, and the arrangement of places to confine individuals who did not follow their requirements. In Arauca, Antioquia, Caquetá, Cauca, Guaviare, and Norte de Santander, AGs accused external individuals of being collaborators of an opposing group, resulting in a perceived increase in disappearances and forced displacements, kidnappings, and homicides. See page 8.

2. Imposition of monetary obligations by AGs:

This phenomenon became one of the main sources of financing for AGs as other illicit economies weakened. These groups expanded the victim population and the products subject to arbitrary payments, dictated payment rates, and set up collection cycles. They also continued to use violence against people who refused to pay through bomb attacks on business premises, kidnappings of relatives or workers, vehicle theft, cattle rustling, homicides, and the temporary closure of commercial establishments. In Guaviare, Meta, and the Catatumbo region, people who sold real estate were forced to pay between 5% to 10% in retribution to the AGs. See page 10.

3. Environmental Peace:

Since the release of the 34th Report, the Mission has monitored the systematic loss of biodiversity in the country's unique strategic ecosystems due to the armed conflict and how the armed groups hinder the environmental governance of institutions and local communities. This, among other factors, derives from war economies, especially through illegal gold mining in rivers, deforestation for planting illicit crops to produce cocaine, and the bombing of oil pipelines as a method of extortion against oil companies. The MAPP/OAS supports Colombia in its efforts to prevent deforestation and preserve biodiversity in contexts of armed conflict. See page 29.

4. Forced recruitment, use, exploitation, and sexual violence against children and adolescents:

The Colombian Family Welfare Institute (ICBF by its Spanish acronym), in coordination with mayors' and governors' offices, promoted the strategy Juntos por la Niñez (Together for Children), which incorporated goals and strategies in 185 development plans for the prevention of recruitment, use, and exploitation of children and adolescents. However, the AGs continued to recruit by force and use these children, which resulted in other violations to their lives, freedom, and integrity. This dynamic has affected minors as young as 12 years of age. In Caquetá, Cauca, and Chocó, minors from ethnic groups were recruited by force in their homes. In Guaviare, Caquetá, and Meta; in regions such as Bajo Cauca Antioquia and northern Cauca; and in the municipalities of Dagua and Jamundí in Valle del Cauca, the AGs used other children and adolescents to lure and persuade their peers to leave the classroom and join the group. See page 11.

5. Peace talks between the National Government and Estado Mayor Central de las FARC-EP (EMC by its Spanish acronym):

During the first half of the year, the 4th and 5th cycles of the Peace Talks were held between the Colombian Government and EMC. The parties reaffirmed their previous agreements and protocols and signed a new agreement to develop the peace dialogue agenda, establishing ten key thematic areas. The Mission, which is part of the international component of these talks, emphasized actions related to "territorial transformations and immediate implementation agreements," "land and territory," and "environmental peace." However, municipal and departmental authorities reported ongoing violations of the life, integrity, and freedom of civilians, as well as infringements on the autonomy of social and ethnic leaders and organizations in their territories. These issues resulted in a weakening of trust in the progress and effectiveness of the commitments resulting from the peace dialogue. See page 15.

6. Spaces for socio-legal conversation (SLCS) in Buenaventura, Quibdó, and Medellín and the Valle de Aburrá:

In these three spaces, the delegations of the National Government and the urban AGs reaffirmed their willingness to continue working on peacebuilding talks in these territories. However, there are still challenges such as the definition of the legal framework for the transition to legal status of members of the structures, the implementation of the agreements reached and protocols for the operation of the SLCSs, as well as the structuring of their thematic agendas and the inclusion of civil society. See page 17.

7. Initiatives, talks, and dialogues within the framework of the Total Peace policy:

In the first half of the year, the National Government authorized the establishment of the Peace Talks Table with the Segunda Marquetalia-Ejército Bolivariano. From June 24 to 29, representatives from both parties, along with the guarantor and partner countries, formally

initiated the process by conducting the First Dialogue Cycle. During this cycle, they signed the "Agreement on Early Measures for the Comprehensive and Gradual De-escalation of the Conflict" and outlined the operation of the negotiation table, including protocols for handling disputes. Following earlier conversations, the National Government announced in August the establishment of two new Socio-Legal Conversation Spaces with the Autodefensas Gaitanistas de Colombia and the Autodefensas Conquistadores de la Sierra Nevada. The MAPP/OAS was invited to support both processes. See page 20.

8. Effects of the implementation of the cease-fire agreements:

In March, the National Government partially suspended the ceasefire with the former EMC, given the persistence of harm to the civilian population caused by this AG. Consequently, military operations were resumed in the regions of Cauca, Nariño, and Valle del Cauca. and resumed military operations in Cauca, Nariño, and Valle del Cauca. This situation led to fragmentation within the AG and posed challenges to the implementation of the ceasefire in departments where the group's structures are not engaged in the Peace Talks, such as Arauca, Guaviare, Huila, Meta, Putumayo, and Tolima. Despite these challenges, the Monitoring and Verification Mechanism (MVMV by its Spanish acronym) continued with the analysis of the events and cases reported by the parties for their classification within the framework of the ceasefire. See page 16.

9. Illicit crops and dynamics associated with drug trafficking:

The National Government has set a goal to manually eradicate 10,000 hectares by 2024. As of June, 2,183 hectares had been eradicated, which represents a 65% decrease compared to the 6,311 hectares eradicated during the same period in 2023. While the commercialization of coca base paste (PBC by its Spanish acronym) has continued to decline, the drug trade remained more profitable than any other agricultural activity in regions where illicit crops are cultivated. Consequently, growers and producers continued their operations, accumulating PBC in hopes of reactivating its commercialization. See page 24.

10. Border issues:

Colombia is still a transit, destination, and return country for migrants. This situation is influenced by global phenomena, as well as the political, economic, and security conditions in the migrants' countries of origin. During the first half of the year, violence against the lives, freedom, and safety of both Colombian and foreign civilians persisted along the borders with Ecuador, Panama, and Venezuela. Women, children, and adolescents, as well as young people, were the most vulnerable population groups, who faced heightened risks related to human smuggling and trafficking, recruitment into armed groups, forced disappearances, kidnappings, sexual violence, xenophobia, theft, and homicides. See page 31.