



INTERNAL AUDIT DIVISION

REPORT 2025/094

Audit of verification activities conducted by the United Nations Verification Mission in Colombia

**The Mission needed a mission strategy/
concept and plan to guide the strategic
implementation of its verification mandates
and to improve documentation of its activities**

30 December 2025

Assignment No. AP2024-691-01

Audit of verification activities conducted by the United Nations Verification Mission in Colombia

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The Office of Internal Oversight Services (OIOS) conducted an audit of verification activities conducted by the United Nations Verification Mission in Colombia (UNVMC). The objective of the audit was to assess the adequacy and effectiveness of the Mission's verification programme. The audit covered the period from February 2024 to October 2025 and focused on three verification mandated areas: (a) security guarantees; (b) comprehensive rural reform; and (c) monitoring the Bilateral, National and Temporary Ceasefire Agreement between Ejército de Liberación Nacional (ELN) and the Government of Colombia.

The Mission finalized the revision of its verification manual, was reporting to the Security Council as required, and was addressing inadequacies in the Event and Flash Capture Application for the security guarantee mandate. UNVMC, however, had not developed a mission strategy/concept and plan to guide the implementation of its verification mandates. It had also not developed a performance measurement framework/database to track and monitor its overall progress on verifying mandated aspects of the Final Agreement and evaluate the Mission's performance. Annual work plans were inconsistently developed, and documentation of the verification process needed to be strengthened.

OIOS made five recommendations. To address issues identified in the audit, UNVMC needed to:

- Develop a mission concept and mission plan that encompass all priority areas for the delivery of the Mission's mandate.
- Establish mission-specific guidelines with instructions for the development of annual work plans for all its organizational units.
- Develop and maintain a performance measurement framework/database to track and monitor overall progress on the verification of mandated areas of the 2016 Final Peace Agreement.
- Develop an evaluation policy and implementation plan for the Mission.
- Improve data quality and documentation standards to record its work and substantiate its reported activities and preserve institutional memory.

UNVMC accepted all recommendations and has initiated actions to implement them. Actions required to close the recommendations are indicated in Annex 1.

CONTENTS

I. BACKGROUND	1-2
II. AUDIT OBJECTIVE, SCOPE AND METHODOLOGY	2-3
III. AUDIT RESULTS	3-10
A. Verification strategy and governance framework	3-4
B. Development of work plans and monitoring of performance	4-6
C. Implementation and reporting on the verification programme	6-10
D. Security risk management	10
IV. ACKNOWLEDGEMENT	10
ANNEX I	Status of audit recommendations
APPENDIX I	Management response

Audit of verification activities conducted by the United Nations Verification Mission in Colombia

I. BACKGROUND

1. The Office of Internal Oversight Services (OIOS) conducted an audit of verification activities conducted by the United Nations Verification Mission in Colombia (UNVMC).

2. The United Nations Security Council established UNVMC via resolution 2366 (2017) dated 10 July 2017 as the successor political mission to the United Nations Mission in Colombia.¹ This was in accordance with Section 6.3.3 of the 2016 Final Peace Agreement between the Government of Colombia and the Revolutionary Armed Forces of Colombia – People’s Army (FARC– EP) to end the conflict and build a stable and lasting peace (Final Agreement). The United Nations Mission in Colombia concluded its mandate on 25 September 2017, and UNVMC commenced provisional operations in July with full operations on 26 September 2017.

3. UNVMC is mandated to verify the implementation of the following five areas of the 2016 Final Agreement:

- a) Reintegration of former combatants of FARC-EP into economic, social, and political matters;²
- b) Security guarantees for individuals in the process of reintegration into communities and organizations across the country;³
- c) Restorative sentences imposed by the Special Jurisdiction for Peace;⁴
- d) Ethnic chapter;⁵ and
- e) Comprehensive rural reform.⁶

4. UNVMC was also required to support the Government of Colombia’s effort to resolve conflicts through dialogue and, in that framework, verify the implementation of the Bilateral, National and Temporary Ceasefire Agreement between the Government and the Ejército de Liberación Nacional (ELN), mandated by the Security Council through its resolution 2694 (2023) dated 2 August 2023.

5. In its latest resolution⁷ on the Mission (31 October 2025), the Security Council discontinued the ceasefire agreement mandate as well as the mandates on restorative sentences and ethnic chapter.

6. In implementing its mandate, UNVMC is required to interact and closely engage with parties to the Final Agreement, relevant institutions and authorities at the national, regional and local levels, share information gathered in the verification processes, discuss assessments on reintegration and security guarantees, and formulate observations and recommendations as required.⁸

7. The Mission is headed by a Special Representative of the Secretary-General (SRSG) at the level of an Under-Secretary-General, who is assisted by a Deputy SRSG (DSRSG) at the level of an Assistant-Secretary-General. UNVMC’s 2024 proposed programme budget included 770 personnel, comprising: (a)

¹ To verify the bilateral ceasefire and the laying down of arms by the FARC-EP.

² Since establishment of UNVMC July 2017

³ Since establishment of UNVMC July 2017

⁴ S/RES/2574 (2021) of 11 May 2021

⁵ S/RES/2673 (2023) of 11 January 2023 through mandate expansion

⁶ Ibid.

⁷ S/RES/2798 (2025) dated 31 October 2025

⁸ Report of the Secretary-General on UNVMC, S/2017/745, dated 30 August 2017 (first UNVMC report of the Secretary-General)

188 international military and police observers; (b) 182 international and 217 national staff positions; and (c) 183 United Nations Volunteers (UNVs). A backstopping team in the Americas Division of the shared structure of the Department of Political and Peacebuilding Affairs (DPPA) and Department of Peace Operations' (DPO) provides support to UNVMC (six positions). The international observers are unarmed and non-uniformed seconded military and police officers, recruited through the DPO Office of Military Affairs and the Police Division. They operate under UNVMC's civilian leadership and are not part of a military structure.

8. The DSRSR directs the verification processes, which are conducted by personnel based at UNVMC headquarters in Bogota and in field offices as shown in table 1. Field offices include nine regional offices,⁹ eight subregional offices, local offices, mobile teams and ELN ceasefire verification teams.

Table 1: UNVMC personnel

Location	No. of staff
Headquarters offices	
Field Coordination Office	5
Political Affairs Office	10
Ethics Affairs Section	5
Verification of Reintegration and Rural Reform Office	11
Verification of Security Guarantees Office	7
Sentence Verification Office	8
Sub-total	46
Field offices	
Regional offices, subregional offices, hubs and local teams	286
International observers	188
Sub-total	474
Total	520

9. The Mission's expenditure for 2022 to 2024 was \$61.1 million, \$68.4 million and \$80.1 million respectively. Requirements for 2025 were \$86.6 million. In 2023 and 2024, the Mission received extrabudgetary resources amounting to \$743,000 and \$414,300 to provide resources for five initiatives on promoting access to security guarantees, strengthening conditions for reconciliation, facilitating dialogue, restorative sentences, and women, peace, and security efforts.

10. The Mission uses SharePoint databases to document incidents related to the verification of the implementation of the ceasefire between the Government and ELN, as well as the implementation of its rural reform mandate. It uses the Event and Flash Capture Application (ECAP) for the security guarantee mandate, to document security incidents reported and actions taken to verify them. It also uses the Strategic Management Application in Umoja to monitor its performance and deliverables.

11. Comments provided by UNVMC are incorporated in italics.

II. AUDIT OBJECTIVE, SCOPE AND METHODOLOGY

12. The objective of the audit was to assess the adequacy and effectiveness of the Mission's verification programme.

⁹ Regional offices including: Medellín, Bogota, Cucuta, Villavicencio, Florencia, Popayán, Valledupar, San Juan Pasto, Cali

13. The audit was conducted from February 2024 to October 2025 in New York and at UNVMC headquarters in Bogota, regional office in Cucuta, subregional office in Barrancabermeja, and field office in Tibu. The audit covered the period from 1 January 2022 to 31 March 2025 and focused on three verification mandated areas: (a) security guarantees; (b) comprehensive rural reform; and (c) monitoring the temporary ceasefire agreement between ELN and the Government of Colombia. Based on an activity-level risk assessment, the audit covered the: (a) verification strategy and governance framework; (b) development of work plans and monitoring of performance; (c) implementation and reporting on the verification programmes; and (d) security risk management.

14. The audit methodology included: (a) review and analyses of relevant policies, guidelines, and reports; (b) discussions and interviews with concerned UNVMC officials and staff; (c) analytical reviews and tests of verifications conducted under the security guarantees, rural reform and ceasefire mandates, as well as a review of the ECAP database; and (d) field visit and observation of verification processes.

15. To assess the reliability of data in the ECAP and SharePoint databases, OIOS: (a) performed analytical reviews to detect obvious errors in accuracy and completeness; (b) reviewed related documentation, including reports; and (c) collaborated with UNVMC personnel to identify and address any data-related issues. Discrepancies including data entry errors were brought to UNVMC's attention. Based on the review, OIOS determined that the data was sufficiently reliable to address audit objectives.

16. However, OIOS was not granted access to information maintained in the ceasefire agreement internal database which holds information on incidents related to compliance with the ceasefire agreement due to confidentiality reasons. Instead, OIOS was provided with a summary report. While this did not constitute an impairment to the OIOS mandate, it limited OIOS' assessment of how the database supported the implementation of the ceasefire agreement.

17. The audit was conducted in accordance with the Global Internal Audit Standards.

III. AUDIT RESULTS

A. Verification strategy and governance framework

UNVMC needed to develop a mission concept and plan

18. According to the Guidelines on Mission Concept and Mission Plan dated 1 April 2025, UNVMC is required to have a mission strategy/concept that includes a well-articulated longer-term vision and strategy for mandate implementation and identifies strategic priorities and goals for each phase of the mission life cycle. UNVMC is also required to develop a mission plan to: (a) translate the strategic guidance into a plan that encompasses all priority areas of the mission's work; (b) guide the mission's organizational units to align, coordinate and synchronize their activities with the mission's political strategy; and (c) guide the preparation and revision of the mission's budget. The mission concept is revised following a significant change in the mandate, operating environment, or strategic shift for the mission, while the plan is revised when there is a change in the implementation or operationalization of the mission's overall strategy.

19. Since its inception in September 2017, UNVMC did not develop a mission strategy/concept or a mission plan. UNVMC commented that it considered the Secretary-General's 2017 report¹⁰ on UNVMC to the Security Council as its concept of operations, as it outlined the Mission's proposed tasks and strategy under each mandated area. However, there was no update to this document following the expansion of the

¹⁰ S/2017/745

Mission's mandate to cover three additional areas of the Final Agreement as well as for ceasefire monitoring.

20. In the absence of a mission concept and plan, UNVMC senior management indicated that the SRSG relied on his compacts with the Secretary-General, the annual proposed programme budget incorporating the programme of work, and the 2018 Mission's verification manual as the guiding principles for mission planning, and for sharing the mission strategy with staff members.

21. These tools were, however, inadequate in replacing a mission concept and plan. For example, the programme of work is a high-level, overarching planning document outlining the Mission's objective, and broad strategy, planned results and performance measures. By design, it does not detail the implementation modalities for the planned results, associate them with the specific mission components responsible for their delivery, identify specific timelines and milestones over a planning horizon, or elaborate on the basis for allocation of resources. While the SRSG's compacts detailed strategic objectives and specific commitments for delivering UNVMC's programmatic objectives, it similarly omitted some of the elements of a mission concept and plan. Moreover, although these documents are available to staff, they are not the primary audience and therefore did not address their more granular information requirements for individual and section work planning, coordination of activities, and monitoring of deliverables.

22. Furthermore, the verification manual is not a strategic planning tool. In addition, the UNVMC review of the verification manual initiated in 2023 was not finalized until September 2025. Also, the manual did not fully meet staff needs to support consistent, standardized and systematic verification processes, as discussed further in part C of the report.

(1) UNVMC should develop a mission concept and mission plan that encompass all priority areas for the delivery of the Mission's mandate.

UNVMC accepted recommendation 1 and stated that it would draft its mission concept and plan in light of the April 2025 requirements and Security Council resolution 2798 of 31 October 2025.

B. Development of work plans and monitoring of performance

Annual work plans were inconsistently developed

23. The Mission had no specific guidelines on the development of sections' annual work plans. OIOS noted that for the three years covered by the audit, while work plans were developed for the Gender and Legal Units, and the Field Office in Tibu, no work plans were developed for the Military Advisor's Office and the Joint Operations Centre. Also, 2024 work plans were not developed for the following offices: (a) reporting to the Office of SRSG – Office of the Chief of Staff; and (b) reporting to the Office of the DSRSG – the Field Coordination Office and the Information Management Unit.

24. UNVMC management indicated that the mandate, operationalized in the programme of work and SRSG's compact, served as the basis for the development of section-level work plans. However, without specific guidance, individual offices/sections interpreted the documents differently, resulting in inconsistencies and deficiencies in the work plans that were developed for 2022 to 2025. For example, while the work plans detailed the office/section's general purpose, OIOS identified the following:

- a) Key functions were not further elaborated into implementable tasks. It was therefore unclear how mandated activities such as security guarantees and rural reform would be implemented by Mission

components, at the field, regional and sub regional, and headquarters levels to achieve its objectives.

- b) While outputs and outcomes were defined at the Mission level and tracked in the Strategic Management Application, more granular performance indicators were not specified for Mission components with baselines for monitoring progress.
- c) Lead sections/units and staff were not identified for specific tasks.

25. Additionally, the Planning Unit did not develop a consolidated work plan to guide the delivery of the Mission's work at the entity level.

(2) UNVMC should establish mission-specific guidelines on the development of annual work plans for all its organizational units and specify outputs with targets for monitoring progress.

UNVMC accepted recommendation 2 and stated that the Mission was committed to developing standardized section workplans containing clear definition of functions, outputs/outcomes and leads. This will be achieved in phases that include issuing mission-specific guidelines requiring all organizational units to prepare annual workplans based on a template, organizing information and coaching sessions for managers and focal points, and ensuring that strategic priorities are cascaded through sections and individual workplans.

Need to track and monitor overall progress on verifying mandated aspects of the Final Agreement and evaluate the Mission's performance

26. The Final Agreement required the Colombian Government, the FARC– EP and other stakeholders to implement approximately 500 stipulations. UNVMC was to verify the stipulations under five mandated areas. For the areas sampled by OIOS, the stipulations included: (a) for security guarantees - the development of Government programmes, establishment of special commissions and investigative units and providing individual and collective protection; and (b) for comprehensive rural reform - specified goals for land distribution, replenishment of the land fund, formalization of land tenure, and the allocation of land to beneficiaries identified in the Final Agreement, among others, and the establishment of dispute resolution mechanisms; and (c) for the cease fire agreement – to monitor, verify, and prevent incidents that could violate the ceasefire agreement.

27. UNVMC, however, did not develop and maintain a performance measurement framework/database of all required areas for verification together with the Final Agreement's targets and timelines to track the Mission's status of verification. This would enable the Mission to, among other things, establish timelines for its verification programmes, identify overall progress to date, and develop an exit strategy.

28. Furthermore, the Mission did not articulate how it would assess the overall relevance, effectiveness, impact and efficiency of its programme of work as required by ST/AI/2021/3 on evaluation in the United Nations Secretariat. This administrative instruction requires all entities to establish an evaluation policy, develop an annual evaluation plan and allocate sufficient resources for evaluation.

(3) UNVMC should develop and maintain a performance measurement framework/database to track and monitor overall progress on the verification of mandated areas of the 2016 Final Peace Agreement.

UNVMC accepted recommendation 3 and stated that it would develop a holistic performance framework to track and monitor mandate implementation, including the establishment of timelines and

indicators of achievements aligned with the implementation of recommendation 1, to optimize efforts and avoid duplications.

- (4) UNVMC should develop an evaluation policy and implementation plan for the Mission in accordance with the administrative instruction on evaluation in the United Nations Secretariat.**

UNVMC accepted recommendation 4 and stated that it conducted five evaluations on the effectiveness and efficiency of its work during the audit period covering ground transportation issues, environment and carbon footprint, among others. In line with ST/AI/2021/3, the Mission will draft and issue its evaluation policy followed by an evaluation plan. However, increasing evaluation capacity is challenging in the current context of financial constraints and liquidity crisis.

C. Implementation and reporting on the verification programme

The verification manual was finalized

29. UNVMC verification manual aimed to provide guidance on verification of two types of commitments: (a) commitments included in the Final Agreement; and (b) commitments assumed by the parties that were derived from implementation of the Agreement. It indicated that since many of the commitments for verification were complex and involved medium- and long-term processes and impacts, UNVMC verifications would assess progress and challenges progressively and through monitoring of individual and collective cases.

30. The 2018 manual, however, had significant gaps, which the Mission addressed in the revised manual finalized in 2025. OIOS had identified the need for: (a) step-by-step procedures for critical tasks and processes such as conducting interviews and verifying various types of information sources; (b) clear guidance on the type and quality of evidence required to support verification; and (c) definitions of roles and responsibilities. The gaps in the verification manual had resulted in challenges for staff and managers supervising the verification processes in ensuring consistency and performance standards. For example, during field visits, OIOS noted that verification procedures were performed differently at various locations with different documentation practices. OIOS discussions with management and staff indicated that UNVMC staff found the manual difficult to navigate and challenging as a training resource. While staff induction training on the verification processes was scheduled for two to four days, interviews with UNVs and international observers indicated that it took several months to fully understand the concepts of verification in the manual.

31. UNVMC commented that following the publication of the revised verification manual, it developed an action plan to train personnel on its use. The action plan focused on a socialization and pedagogical strategy for each regional office with regular engagement and continued support to integrate the manual into the current ways of working.

Documentation of the verification process needed to be strengthened

32. OIOS review of the three mandated verification areas indicated that verification activities were not adequately documented. Inconsistent documentation of verification activities, including those relating to proactive verification, could undermine the work of the Mission and limit its ability to substantiate reported activities on the delivery of its mandate, including quarterly Security Council reports, and preserve institutional memory. The following are OIOS observations on the activities that were reviewed:

a) Verification of security guarantees

33. Security guarantees in the Final Agreement required the parties to ensure: (i) protection of individuals and communities involved in peacebuilding, especially human rights defenders, social and political leaders, former FARC-EP members, and communities affected by violence; and (ii) dismantling of criminal organizations.

34. The security guarantee verification process is led by the Verification of Security Guarantee Office in Bogota and in regional and subregional offices, hubs and local teams in various regions. Staff and international observers worked closely with national and local authorities, as well as with FARC representatives, to ensure compliance, build trust among all parties, and implement regional and local verification in coordination with Colombian institutions and civil society. Staff also oversaw security and protection programmes for communities and organizations in conflict-affected areas.

35. UNVMC recorded security guarantee incidents (such as threats, homicides, kidnapping armed clashes and other incidents) in the ECAP database and a user manual for ECAP was developed in 2024. To verify incidents, the manual calls for a contrast of sources (triangulation of the information from various sources) and classification of the levels of confidence in the information. The Mission contacted different sources to confirm the events including the Police, Attorney General's Office, Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR), the Ombudsman's Office, the armed forces, civil society organizations, community leaders, ethnic authorities, local and regional governments and other trusted territorial stakeholders and the clergy.

36. However, OIOS analysis of incidents recorded in ECAP indicated that there were long periods of time during which records of actions taken by the Mission were not indicated in the database. This included 214 incidents for which no actions had been indicated at the time of reviewing the database, and 16 incidents for which the latest updates were over a year earlier. Staff interviewed in Cucuta, the sub-region Barrancabermeja, and the field office in Tibu indicated that verifications were not conducted as they were not provided with the necessary resources such as transportation and daily subsistence allowances, as the visits sometimes required multiple days overnight stay at field locations. UNVMC management attributed this to the financial crisis the United Nations was experiencing, which has led to the imposition of severe austerity measures, including restrictions in the frequency and duration of travel.

37. OIOS also noted inadequate documentation and record-keeping on the verification of actions taken regarding security of individuals. From a review of a sample of 30 out of 88 homicides (34 per cent) recorded in ECAP, 15 cases had no supporting documents other than publicly available social media records. Proactive verification activities included conducting training and workshops, hosting events, practicing good offices, producing reports and training, and developing communication and information materials. However, OIOS was unable to substantiate some of these activities as documentation was not maintained. UNVMC management commented that the absence of certain documents in ECAP did not mean that verification activities were not adequately conducted, and that some verification was conducted by OHCHR in accordance with the "emblematic cases methodology" established under the Mission's guidelines.

b) Verification of comprehensive rural reform programme

38. The comprehensive rural reform programme of the Peace Agreement aims at an in-depth transformation of rural areas and former conflict territories, bridging the gaps between rural and urban areas, eradicating poverty, and providing guarantees for non-repetition. The Final Agreement provides for reform in three main areas: access and use of land, development programmes with territorial focus, and 16 sectoral plans to bring services to these areas.

39. The Mission managed rural reform verification through the Verification of Reintegration and Rural Reform Office (11 staff) based in Bogota, and with regional and subregional offices, hubs and local teams based in the various field offices. It developed guidelines on the verification methodology that were first issued in 2023 and updated in 2025. Since receipt of this mandate in 2023, UNVMC has identified a list of interlocutors, priorities for the verification and conducted various trainings for regional offices on the guidelines. The Mission also met with various stakeholders as required.

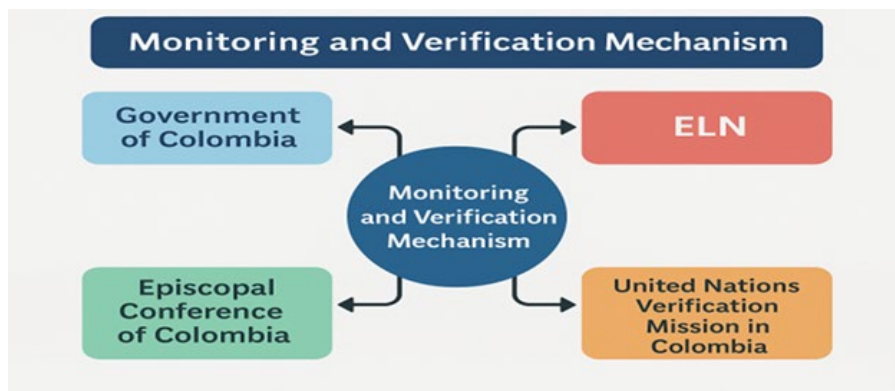
40. However, during its visits to regional, subregional and field offices, OIOS noted that there was a need to adopt standards on the quality and minimum verification information requirements to be captured in the rural reform internal databases. In the absence of this, OIOS was unable to assess whether or how, among others, the Mission verified the size of land that had been adjudicated and how it was distributed. For example, OIOS review of documentation and interviews with staff at UNVMC headquarters including visits to the regional and subregional offices indicated that, at the national level, 11,320 hectares of land was purchased and adjudicated by the Government of Colombia for reintegration purposes between 2019 and 2024. However, apart from obtaining the information from the National Land Agency, there was no indication of other sources used to verify the information. UNVMC commented that while official figures can only be provided by the Government, the Mission systematically cross-checks and contrasts the information received, using the verification methodology reflected in its guidelines.

41. Additionally, rural reform related work was recorded using Excel sheets, and supporting documents were saved in individual staff folders on SharePoint, whereas at headquarters, information was stored in an internal SharePoint database. Different regions maintaining different records made reconciliation and consolidation of data difficult and exposed the records to errors and discrepancies and security risks. UNVMC indicated it continuously addresses data quality control through the review of the verification manual, its guidelines, protocols, and socialization and knowledge sessions with regional offices.

c) Monitoring of ceasefire agreement

42. The monitoring and verification mechanism (MVM) mandate was given to UNVMC in August 2023 to monitor, verify, and prevent incidents that could violate the ceasefire agreement between the Government and the ELN. It was overseen by a body composed of the parties depicted in figure 1.

Figure 1: Composition of the ceasefire monitoring and verification mechanism



Source: OIOS compiled from the ceasefire agreement

43. MVM was deployed throughout Colombia, with the national body based in Bogota, and 9 regional and 22 local bodies.

44. To support MVM, the Mission developed a draft concept note for the operational deployment of personnel, which outlined its deployment plan to monitor and verify the implementation of the ceasefire in a three-phased approach. To implement the ceasefire mandate, UNVMC received approval in 2023 for 68 additional international observers as well as 72 civilian personnel (33 staff and 39 UNVs), out of which 122 were to be deployed across 26 locations. UNVMC conducted its verification role through mobile and ceasefire verification teams based in regional, subregional and local offices. The teams were guided by an internal handbook developed by the Mission that provided guidance on the principles, scope, responsibilities, functions, and protocols of the Mechanism, and operational tools and guidelines.

45. As UNVMC did not grant OIOS access to review the ceasefire database on the grounds of confidentiality, OIOS reviewed the summary report and noted that ceasefire incidents were registered in the database for the initial mandated period, i.e., August 2023 through February 2024. However, UNVMC on its own could not determine whether there was non-compliance as each case needed to be presented to the MVM, which would jointly decide if there was a violation of the agreement. Moreover, at the time of the audit, the ceasefire agreement had expired.

46. As the MVM at the national level had not convened since April 2024, and OIOS did not have access to the full ceasefire database and its related documents, OIOS was unable to conclude on the effectiveness of UNVMC activities on the ceasefire agreement monitoring or to conduct an assessment of how the database supported the implementation of the ceasefire verification mandate.

(5) UNVMC should improve data quality and documentation standards to record its work and substantiate its reported activities and preserve institutional memory.

UNVMC accepted recommendation 5 and acknowledged that documentation practices can be further strengthened. During 2026, the Mission will conduct ongoing reviews of the monthly verification and context report format, update the ECAP dashboards to strengthen data-driven analysis, establish Mission-wide documentation standards and training sessions, and further develop the user manual for the comprehensive rural reform system defining standards for data collection, verification principles and guidelines, access protocols, roles and responsibilities, as well as information flows.

Inadequacies in ECAP database were being addressed

47. OIOS noted several inadequacies in the maintenance of the ECAP database. These included: (a) ineffective controls in ensuring that the “source” field reflects complete information on the data sources used to verify incidents; (b) inadequate information on the origin of initial reports of incidents to enable cases to be prioritized; and (c) various fields including victim information within the database were editable and could be deleted after creation. Furthermore, due to limitations in the data, staff only conducted minimal reporting, analysis and tracking of the impact of reported cases to identify cross-cutting issues; patterns in cases; and similarity in locations, victims or perpetrators. There was no evidence of staff documenting follow-up actions in the system, and all reporting on cases was conducted outside of the ECAP database.

48. UNVMC commented that quality control over the information submitted by local offices in ECAP was managed at the regional office level. As part of the action plan to operationalize the revised verification manual, the Mission was organizing a series of training courses to support teams to enhance their skills and perform according to the guidance.

UNVMC reported to the Security Council as required

49. UNVMC presented reports to the Security Council as required every three months (12 reports) during the audit period from January 2022 to March 2025. OIOS reviewed nine reports and noted that the reports were prepared by the substantive component of the Mission under the leadership of the DSRSG and reviewed and approved by the SRSG. They were presented to the Security Council on a timely basis and included updates on major developments in Colombia, Mission activities undertaken during the reporting period, cross-cutting considerations, coordination with the United Nations country team, and the Mission's observations. UNVMC also produced infographics including statistics in a more visually appealing format, which were also published on its website, to complement the Security Council reports. UNVMC management commented that to ensure the integrity and quality of the information reflected in the report of the Secretary-General, UNVMC conducts rigorous verification, cross-checking of sources and direct monitoring in the field. However, as indicated above, OIOS noted the need to improve documentation standards to enhance substantiation of information provided in the Security Council reports.

D. Security risk management

UNVMC conducted security risk management and security planning, and senior management were participating in security management team meetings

50. The SRSG UNVMC served as one of the United Nations' Designated Officials (DO) in Colombia and shared accountability with the Resident Coordinator for the safety and security of all individuals covered by the United Nations Security Management System (UNSMS) in Colombia. The Chief Security Advisor (CSA) served a dual role as advisor to the DO and head of security of UNVMC.

51. Security plans for Colombia, covering all 11 security areas were documented for the period under review. OIOS review of the plans indicated that the UNSMS contact lists, warden system, evacuation and relocation plans, medical plans, specific response plans as well as emergency field communications were included as critical components. Premises risk assessments were conducted for all 30 UNVMC locations, including headquarters, regional offices, local offices and hubs.

52. OIOS reviewed minutes of 19 meetings of the security management team (SMT), which indicated that the CSA and/or the Deputy CSA were present at all SMT meetings reviewed. There was, however, limited participation by UNVMC senior management, with none of them participating in 13 of the 19 meetings reviewed. Discussions with the security staff noted that UNVMC senior management thought they were already well represented by the CSA/Deputy CSA and did not attend the SMT. However, the CSA's dual role in the security architecture in Colombia could not equally represent UNVMC as well as to advise the DO and SMT adequately in the SMT meetings. UNVMC has since designated the Chief of Staff to represent the Mission at the meetings.

IV. ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

53. OIOS wishes to express its appreciation to the management and staff of UNVMC and DPPA for the assistance and cooperation extended to the auditors during this assignment.

Internal Audit Division
Office of Internal Oversight Services

STATUS OF AUDIT RECOMMENDATIONS

Audit of verification activities conducted by the United Nations Verification Mission in Colombia

Rec. no.	Recommendation	Critical ¹¹ / Important ¹²	C/ O ¹³	Actions needed to close recommendation	Implementation date ¹⁴
1	UNVMC should develop a mission concept and mission plan that encompass all priority areas for the delivery of the Mission's mandate.	Important	O	Receipt of the mission concept and mission plan.	31 August 2026
2	UNVMC should establish mission-specific guidelines on the development of annual work plans for all its organizational units and specify outputs with targets for monitoring progress	Important	O	Receipt of mission-specific guidelines on the development of annual work plans that specify outputs for all its organizational units.	31 March 2027
3	UNVMC should develop and maintain a performance management framework/database to track and monitor overall progress on the verification of mandated areas of the 2016 Final Peace Agreement	Important	O	Receipt of UNVMC initiatives to develop a performance management framework/database to track and monitor overall Mission progress on the verification of mandated areas.	30 November 2026
4	UNVMC should develop an evaluation strategy and implementation plan for the Mission in accordance with the administrative instruction on evaluation in the United Nations Secretariat.	Important	O	Receipt of UNVMC evaluation policy and implementation plan.	30 June 2026
5	UNVMC should improve data quality and documentation standards to record its work and substantiate its reported activities and preserve institutional memory	Important	O	Receipt of evidence of actions UNVMC has implemented to improve its data quality and documentation standards.	31 December 2026

¹¹ Critical recommendations address those risk issues that require immediate management attention. Failure to take action could have a critical or significant adverse impact on the Organization.

¹² Important recommendations address those risk issues that require timely management attention. Failure to take action could have a high or moderate adverse impact on the Organization.

¹³ Please note the value C denotes closed recommendations whereas O refers to open recommendations.

¹⁴ Date provided by UNVMC in response to recommendations.

APPENDIX I

Management Response

Management Response

Audit of verification activities conducted by the United Nations Verification Mission in Colombia

Rec. no.	Recommendation	Critical ¹ / Important ²	Accepted? (Yes/No)	Title of responsible individual	Implementation date	Client comments
1	UNVMC should develop a mission concept and mission plan that encompass all priority areas for the delivery of the Mission's mandate.	Important	YES	Chief of Staff and Mission Planning Officer	Mission Concept: June 2026 Mission Plan: August 2026	<p>The Mission is in agreement with the recommendation to develop a Mission Concept and Plan in line with Guidelines on Mission Concept and Mission Plan effective on April 2025.</p> <p>It's important to highlight that until April 2025, these instruments were not mandatory for the UNVMC, being a non-integrated special political mission.</p> <p>The Mission ensured its strategic priorities and guidance to support mandate implementation through its reports to the Secretary-General, following its set-up (S/2017/745), and mandate expansion as well as its annual programme plans, integral part of the annual resources' requirement request document.</p> <p>Considering the recent guidelines as well as the Mission mandate reviewed pursuant to Security Council Resolution 2798 of 31 October 2025, the Mission will</p>

¹ Critical recommendations address those risk issues that require immediate management attention. Failure to take action could have a critical or significant adverse impact on the Organization.

² Important recommendations address those risk issues that require timely management attention. Failure to take action could have a high or moderate adverse impact on the Organization.

Management Response

Audit of verification activities conducted by the United Nations Verification Mission in Colombia

Rec. no.	Recommendation	Critical ¹ / Important ²	Accepted? (Yes/No)	Title of responsible individual	Implementation date	Client comments
						<p>launch the drafting of the Mission Concept and Mission Plan.</p> <p>This exercise will be carried out in January 2026 by the Mission Planning Officer, under the overall supervision of the Chief of Staff, in coordination with relevant sections.</p> <p>First elements will be highlighted in the Mission's Programme Plan for 2027. Mission Concept will be further developed in consultation with UN headquarters and the Mission leadership. It is expected to be completed by June 2026, followed by the Mission Plan by August 2026.</p>
2	UNVMC should establish mission-specific guidelines on the development of annual work plans for all its organizational units and specify outputs with targets for monitoring progress.	Important	YES	Chief of Staff, in coordination with Mission Planning Officer and Chief Human Resources	Implementation in phases: 1. March 2026; 2. March 2027.	<p>In line with recommendation 1, the Mission agrees with the recommendation to strengthen its guidance to the development of section's workplans, being the Mission Concept and Plan the ultimate guidance.</p> <p>To note that as mentioned in paragraph 24, the SRSG's compact, the Mission's annual programme of work and the trimestral priority guidance paper issued by the DSRS - as supervisor for the verification pillar-, are the guidance for the development of section's workplan. The latter will then inform the</p>

Management Response

Audit of verification activities conducted by the United Nations Verification Mission in Colombia

Rec. no.	Recommendation	Critical ¹ / Important ²	Accepted? (Yes/No)	Title of responsible individual	Implementation date	Client comments
						<p>Individual workplans as per Performance Management and Development System, as indicated in the Administrative Directives (ST/AI/2021/4 and ST/AI/2021/4Rev.1)</p> <p>The Mission is committed to developing a standardized section's workplan containing clear definition of functions, outputs/outcomes and lead.</p> <p>This will be achieved in phases:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Develop a standardized section's workplan for the Mission, taking into account instructions and recommendations from the Office of Human Resources (OHR) at headquarters and Mission's requirements – expected to be completed by March 2026. 2. Human Resources and Planning Teams will issue mission-specific guidelines requiring all organizational units (HQ and field) to prepare annual workplans that specify outputs with measurable targets based on template - for performance management cycle 2026-2027. 3. Third phase follows the completion of recommendation 1

Management Response

Audit of verification activities conducted by the United Nations Verification Mission in Colombia

Rec. no.	Recommendation	Critical ¹ / Important ²	Accepted? (Yes/No)	Title of responsible individual	Implementation date	Client comments
						<p>with the development of the Mission Plan. In addition to the guidelines, this will serve as an overall guidance to Sections on the Mission's strategic priorities to be reflected in the sections' plans.</p> <p>4. Planning and HR Teams will organize information and coaching sessions for managers and focal points to support the preparation, communication and monitoring of these section's workplans - throughout 2026 and 2027.</p> <p>5. With the Plan and standardized template, the Mission will ensure the cascading of its strategic priorities through Sections and Individual workplans – expected completion by March 2027 for performance cycle 2027-2028.</p>
3	NVMC should develop and maintain a performance measurement framework /database to track and monitor overall progress on the verification of mandated areas of the 2016 Final Peace Agreement	Important	YES	ODSRSG, Mission Planning Officer and Chief Information Management Unit	November 2026	The Mission understands that this recommendation refers to the development of a holistic performance framework to track and monitor mandate implementation, including the establishment of timelines and indicators of achievements. In this regard, the Mission concurs with its relevance to enhance performance monitoring.

Management Response

Audit of verification activities conducted by the United Nations Verification Mission in Colombia

Rec. no.	Recommendation	Critical ¹ / Important ²	Accepted? (Yes/No)	Title of responsible individual	Implementation date	Client comments
						<p>Accordingly, the Mission will align the implementation of this recommendation, with recommendation 1, optimizing efforts and avoiding duplications.</p> <p>It is important to note that developing additional databases could lead to duplication, redundancy and inefficiency. The Verification Mission is a pioneer in the use of information management platforms and tools to support mandate implementation. The Mission developed specific and tailored platforms for sentences verification, security guarantees and rural reform. The latter was the latest to be developed, as one of the newest mandated tasks (LINK HERE).</p> <p>These tools contrast official data with multiple sources to identify gaps in the Peace Agreement's implementation. This analysis informs the identification of progress and challenges, guiding advocacy efforts and actions aimed at strengthening institutional responses by those responsible for the Agreement's implementation.</p> <p>Regarding Comprehensive Rural Reform, the platform, launched in October 2025, includes the</p>

Management Response

Audit of verification activities conducted by the United Nations Verification Mission in Colombia

Rec. no.	Recommendation	Critical ¹ / Important ²	Accepted? (Yes/No)	Title of responsible individual	Implementation date	Client comments
						<p>monitoring of land allocation, guidelines, and a platform focused on access to land to collect data and track progress in implementation.</p> <p>The ECAP Platform—an advanced tool for registering violent events and cases against former combatants and communities—supports the Mission’s efforts to understand patterns of violence. This analysis drives advocacy at national and territorial levels to activate institutional responses in prevention, protection, investigation and combating stigmatization.</p>
4	UNVMC should develop an evaluation strategy and implementation plan for the Mission in accordance with the administrative instruction on evaluation in the United Nations Secretariat.	Important	YES	Chief of Staff	June 2026	<p>Important to note that in 2023, the Mission underwent an OIOS Evaluation to assess relevance effectiveness, impact and efficiency of its programme of work (IED-23-005). As a result, the Mission’s work was considered “<i>highly relevant and played an instrumental, integral and unique role in the implementation of the Final Agreement</i>”. The Mission’s work was highly praised as relevant, effective, coherent, with personnel having clear understanding of its mandate and consistently mainstreaming gender, human rights, and disability inclusion. Main recommendations, relevant to the</p>

Management Response

Audit of verification activities conducted by the United Nations Verification Mission in Colombia

Rec. no.	Recommendation	Critical ¹ / Important ²	Accepted? (Yes/No)	Title of responsible individual	Implementation date	Client comments
						<p>present report, included enhanced engagement with former combatants outside Territorial Areas for Training and Reintegration (TATRs) and enhanced awareness of restorative sentences.</p> <p>The Mission has conducted five evaluations for effectiveness and efficiency of its work during the audit period of 1 January 2022 to October 2024. These covered ground transportation issues, environment and carbon footprint, among others. In June 2024, these evaluations were shared with the OIOS Inspection and Evaluation Division (IED) as part of the overall OIOS assessment of evaluations performed by entities. Similarly, the Mission informs IED of its ongoing, completed and/or planned evaluations as part of its reporting, and compliance to ST/AI/2021/3 yearly.</p> <p>In line with ST/AI/2021/3, 5.4, the Mission will draft and issue its evaluation policy followed by an Evaluation Plan in respect to timeframes established in section 2.4 of the above-mentioned Administrative Instruction. The Mission commits to finalizing the UNVMC policy by June 2026.</p>

Management Response

Audit of verification activities conducted by the United Nations Verification Mission in Colombia

Rec. no.	Recommendation	Critical ¹ / Important ²	Accepted? (Yes/No)	Title of responsible individual	Implementation date	Client comments
						It should be noted that the Mission currently has one International United Nations Volunteer assigned as Associate Monitoring and Evaluation Officer, within the small Planning Team. Increasing this resource, for external evaluator or to strengthen the team is however challenging in the current context of financial constraints and liquidity crisis.
5	UNVMC should improve data quality and documentation standards to record its work and substantiate its reported activities and preserve institutional memory.	Important	YES	Chief Information Management Office Principals Security Guarantees and Rural Reform Offices	December 2026	The Mission acknowledges that documentation practices can be further strengthened and is actively taking steps to address this recommendation. With regards to the guidelines for the verification of the comprehensive rural reform, first issued in 2023 and updated in 2025, the document refer to the various sources of information used by the Mission to conduct its work. The primary source of information comes from field offices, through verification carried out directly with beneficiaries and territorial actors. Additionally, multiple sources are used, government agencies and institutions, civil society, international community and other UN Agencies, Funds and Programmes, other State bodies responsible for oversight, such

Management Response

Audit of verification activities conducted by the United Nations Verification Mission in Colombia

Rec. no.	Recommendation	Critical ¹ / Important ²	Accepted? (Yes/No)	Title of responsible individual	Implementation date	Client comments
						<p>as Office of the Inspector-General, Ombudsperson, Congress, as well as verification bodies established by the Peace Agreement.</p> <p>As such, the Mission formally requests reports to all relevant institutions regarding progress made and remaining challenges. It meets with beneficiaries, the private sector, the international community, academia, oversight entities and other verification entities, to cross check information provided by Government institutions. Information collected therein is also reflected in the Secretary General's quarterly reports.</p> <p>In verifying the comprehensive rural reform, the Mission focuses on identifying broader trends and challenges related to land access and delivery. It monitors the impact to beneficiaries and analyses the comprehensive approach to land access; while providing technical support to enhance land productivity opportunities. This analysis informs the identification of progress and challenges, directing advocacy efforts and actions aimed at bolstering institutional responses by those responsible for the implementation of the Agreement. This approach enables the Mission to contribute to</p>

Management Response

Audit of verification activities conducted by the United Nations Verification Mission in Colombia

Rec. no.	Recommendation	Critical ¹ / Important ²	Accepted? (Yes/No)	Title of responsible individual	Implementation date	Client comments
						<p>sustainable solutions to rural areas in Colombia.</p> <p>Lastly, to address and resolve the data management issue raised on paragraph 41, the Mission advanced the development and launched an online verification tool that standardizes collection of information on access to land as a result of the verification and contrast with various sources. The tool went live in October 2025 and a workshop with all regional focal points was held in October 2025.</p> <p>With regards to improving data quality and standards, it's important to note that, the action plan for socialization of the revised verification Manual, referred to on paragraph 31, also addresses data quality control and standardization, with continuous efforts to enhance data quality control.</p> <p>Recent progress includes:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Publication of the revised Verification Manual and its socialization action plan in September 2025.

Management Response

Audit of verification activities conducted by the United Nations Verification Mission in Colombia

Rec. no.	Recommendation	Critical ¹ / Important ²	Accepted? (Yes/No)	Title of responsible individual	Implementation date	Client comments
						<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Development and launch of the database for the verification of the Rural Reform (LINK HERE). - Joint field and Mission HQ efforts to establish a methodology for monitoring relevant verification cases (<i>Guidelines for Verification of Emblematic Cases</i>) in June, 2025. <p>Forward looking actions to be carried out throughout 2026, include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Ongoing review of the Monthly Verification and Context Report format, following SCR 2798/2025. - Under the Security Guarantees mandate, work is underway to update the ECAP dashboards to strengthen data-driven analysis. Data quality improvements include: - Establish Mission-wide documentation standards and training sessions, updating the ECAP manual to require clear records of actions taken, supporting documents, and dates of verification; addressing gaps identified by OIOS; completing missing entries and conducting regular data-quality reviews;

Management Response

Audit of verification activities conducted by the United Nations Verification Mission in Colombia

Rec. no.	Recommendation	Critical ¹ / Important ²	Accepted? (Yes/No)	Title of responsible individual	Implementation date	Client comments
						<p>and ensuring that verification undertaken by partners, such as OHCHR, is properly reflected in the system. Document when resource constraints limit field verification, improve the use of remote verification methods, and designate focal points to oversee data quality. These measures will help further substantiate reported activities, improve consistency across field offices, and preserve institutional memory.</p> <p>- Progress on the User Manual for the Comprehensive Rural Reform system, defining standards for data collection, verification principles and guidelines, access protocols, roles and responsibilities, as well as information flows.</p>