

Child Protection Issue Brief

Monitoring and Reporting Mechanism (MRM) on Grave Violations Against Children in Situations of Armed Conflict

With the unanimous adoption of United Nations Security Council Resolution 1612 on 26 July 2005, the Security Council established a Monitoring and Reporting Mechanism (MRM) on grave violations against children in situations of armed conflicts. Within UNICEF, the MRM has become an institutional priority, and has been mainstreamed in all relevant strategic planning documents such as the Child Protection Strategy, the Core Commitments for Children in Humanitarian Action, and the more recent Strategic Plan 2014-2017.

The Situation

In situations of armed conflict, children are at extreme risk of violence, abuse, exploitation and neglect. In the decade preceding 2005, over two million children were killed in armed conflicts, and a further six million disabled. Armed conflict and political violence have forced millions of children and their families to flee their homes. Evidence shows that a high proportion of children in conflict and post-conflict situations suffer from sexual violence and exploitation. For many, there is a risk of recruitment into armed forces and armed groups. Children's access to essential services such as health care and education is dramatically reduced by armed conflict. Of the 72 million children out of school today (2013), 37 million live in conflict-affected states.

The United Nations (UN) Security Council has been seized by issues related to children affected by armed conflict (CAAC) since 1999, and has since issued eleven resolutions on this specific thematic. In 2005, as the Security Council adopted its landmark Resolution 1612, which authorized the UN Secretary-General to establish a monitoring and reporting mechanism (MRM), managed by country-based MRM task forces, co-chaired by the UNICEF Representative and the highest UN representative in the country, and aimed at providing timely and reliable information on six grave violations against children: 1. Killing or maiming of children; 2. Recruitment or use of children by armed forces or armed groups; 3. Attacks on schools or hospitals; 4. Rape or other sexual violence against children; 5. Abduction of children; 6. Denial of humanitarian access to children.

The Security Council requested the UN Secretary-General to add specific annexes to his Annual Reports on Children and Armed Conflict, which include names of parties to conflict that abduct children, kill or maim children, perpetrate attacks on schools or hospitals, rape or commit other sexual violence against children, or recruit or use children. The Security Council also has urged parties involved in armed conflict to develop and implement time-bound action plans to halt, address and

prevent these grave violations against children (Security Council Resolutions 1612 (2005), 1882 (2009) and 1998 (2011), 2068 (2012), 2143 (2014) and 2225 (2015)).

UNICEF Strategy

The MRM is the responsibility of the UN as a whole, including of the UNCT and peacekeeping or special political missions in the field. The MRM includes specific responsibilities for UNICEF, in line with UNICEF's mandate to promote and protect the rights of children in conflict, and also provides opportunities to strengthen programmatic response for children affected by conflict, and to advocate to end and prevent grave violations against children. Through the monitoring and reporting of grave violations against children, the MRM provides a unique opportunity to identify patterns of violations, which informs UNICEF evidence-based programme response, advocacy and prevention strategies.

As co-chair of the country-based MRM task forces, UNICEF provides a platform to engage in meaningful dialogue with parties to conflict, including on the development of Action Plans where parties commit to stop, address, and prevent grave violations against children. At the global level, UNICEF, in collaboration with the UN Office of the Special Representative of the Secretary-General for Children and Armed Conflict (OSRSG CAAC) and the Department of Peacekeeping Operations (DPKO), takes a leadership role in developing the necessary tools, guidelines, training materials and policies necessary to strengthen the work of the MRM. In June 2014, three important publications co-signed by the UNICEF Executive Director, the Special Representative of the Secretary General on Children and Armed Conflicts, and the Under Secretary General of DPKO were launched, constituting the common global operational foundation of the Monitoring and Reporting Mechanism: The MRM Guidelines, the MRM Field Manual, and the MRM Good Practices. In addition, a complete set of training modules for practitioners was developed to help maintain the highest capacity and skills at the field level. These resources are available at the <http://www.mrmttools.org>.

Progress and Results

The MRM has evolved considerably since its inception. MRM Country Task Forces were originally initiated in six countries¹ and have been activated since then in a total of 20 countries² (see map on the last page). A total of nine parties have been de-listed due to fulfillment of Action Plans to end, address and prevent grave violations in a total of six countries.³ Parties in Burundi and LTTE in Sri Lanka were removed from the Annexes of the SG Annual report on CAAC without achieving full compliance related to an Action Plan.

Accurate and reliable data have proved to be a solid foundation for engaging in dialogue with parties to the conflict. Since the first Action Plan was signed in 2005, a total of 23 Action Plans (10 with governments and 13 with non-state actors) have been signed. 22 of the 23 Action Plans were developed to address the recruitment or use of children. Some of these action plans also addressed provisions for additional violations, such as in Afghanistan where the action plan with the government of Afghanistan also included annexes on sexual violence and killing and maiming, and in the DRC where the action plan included provisions on sexual violence. To date, one Action Plan was signed with the Government of Somalia on the issue of killing and maiming.

¹ Cote d'Ivoire, DRC, Nepal, Somalia, Sri Lanka, Sudan,

² Afghanistan, Burundi, CAR, Chad, Colombia, Cote d'Ivoire, DRC, Iraq, Myanmar, Mali, Nepal, Nigeria, Philippines, Somalia, South Sudan, Sudan, Sri Lanka, Syria, Uganda, and Yemen,

³ Chad (ATN), Cote d'Ivoire (FAFN and 4 militias), Nepal, (UCPN-M), Sri Lanka (TMVP), and Uganda (UPDF)

A reporting system aimed at addressing the extra-territoriality of grave violations committed by the LRA was developed whereby inputs from the MRM Task Forces in the Central African Republic, the Democratic Republic of the Congo, South Sudan, and Uganda are consolidated and analyzed with a sub-regional perspective. A sub-regional approach is used to document grave violations against children in Syria by collecting information from newly arrived refugee populations in neighbouring countries.

Key websites:

- MRM website: <http://www.mrmtools.org>
- UNICEF MRM: http://www.unicef.org/protection/57929_57997.html
- UN Office of the Special Representative of the Secretary-General on CAAC): <http://childrenandarmedconflict.un.org>
- [UN Department of Peacekeeping Operations \(UN DPKO\) Child Protection: http://www.un.org/en/peacekeeping/issues/children/](http://www.un.org/en/peacekeeping/issues/children/)
- [Security Council Working Group on CAAC: http://www.un.org/sc/committees/WGCAAC/](http://www.un.org/sc/committees/WGCAAC/)
- Watchlist on Children and Armed Conflict: <http://watchlist.org/>

Other key resources:

Security Council Resolutions 1261 (1999), 1314 (2000), 1379 (2001), 1460 (2003), 1539 (2004), 1612 (2005), 1882 (2009), 1998 (2011), 2068 (2012), 2143 (2014) and 2225 (2015)

DPKO, OSRSG CAAC and UNICEF, 2014, [MRM Guidelines](#)

DPKO, OSRSG CAAC and UNICEF, 2014, [MRM Field Manual](#)

DPKO, OSRSG CAAC and UNICEF, 2014, [MRM Good Practices](#)

DPKO, OSRSG CAAC and UNICEF, 2013, [MRM Training materials](#) – For practitioners

UN Special Representative of the Secretary-General for Children in Armed Conflict, 2009: The Six Grave Violations against Children during Armed Conflict. The Legal Foundation.

Conflict Dynamics International, 2011: Bridging the Accountability Gap: New Approaches to Addressing Violations against Children in Armed Conflict. Cambridge.

Conflict Dynamics International, 2009: Strengthening of Protection of Children Through Accountability: The role of the UN Security Council in holding to account persistent violators of children's rights and protections in situations of armed conflict. Cambridge.

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MRM Country Task Forces activated as of 30 June 2015

