

THE MONITORING AND REPORTING MECHANISM (MRM) ON GRAVE VIOLATIONS AGAINST CHILDREN

Background on the MRM

The UN Monitoring and Reporting Mechanism on grave violations against children in situations of armed conflict (MRM) is a Security Council-mandated mechanism for compliance by parties to conflict with their child protection obligations.

Once any party in a particular situation of armed conflict has been listed in the Secretary General's Annual Report on Children and Armed Conflict (CAAC), the mechanism requires the UN, through the establishment of a UN Country Task Force on Monitoring and Reporting (CTFMR), to conduct regular monitoring to collect information on six grave violations committed against children by all parties to the conflict. In countries where the MRM has been activated (14 total), UNICEF co-chairs the CTFMR together with the highest UN Representative in country (either the Resident Coordinator or the SRSG in DPKO/DPA mission settings), while the CTFMR itself is composed of relevant UN entities in-country and, depending on the context, a number of international and/or local NGOs.

Legal Framework of the MRM

The MRM system is guided by the international legal framework on children and armed conflict, and is mandated by Security Council resolutions 1261, 1379, 1460, 1612, 1882 and 1998 and others that task the UN with monitoring and reporting on grave violations against children perpetrated by parties to the conflict to inform response and promote compliance through advocacy and dialogue.

The Secretary-General's 2005 report on CAAC identified in South Sudan the former-SPLA, now SSPDF as a group that recruits and uses children in armed conflict. Following the eruption of conflict in December 2013, the 2014 Secretary-General's report listed the SPLA also for the grave violation of killing and maiming and also listed the SPLA-in Opposition (SPLA-iO) and allied groups for recruitment and use as well as killing and maiming. The White Army was listed for recruitment and use. The 2016 Secretary-General's report also listed the SPLA for grave violations of rape and other forms of sexual violence against children and for the abduction of children.

The violence, abuses and exploitation documented by the UN and partners in South Sudan constitute violations of Security Council Resolutions, as well as international human rights law, including the *UN Convention on the Rights of the Child (1989)*, and its Optional Protocol against recruitment and use of children in armed conflict, as well as international humanitarian law.

For example, UN investigations show that children have been systematically targeted for their ethnic background or for the political affiliation of their relatives or community members. The accumulation of data shows patterns of such targeting, resulting in grave violations relating to killing, sexual violence, abduction and recruitment and use, among others. The impact on individual children, their families and communities will be life-long.

The MRM documents six Grave Violations committed against children:

- 1 Killing and maiming of children
- 2 Recruitment or use of children
- 3 Rape and other forms of sexual violence against children
- 4 Attacks on schools or hospitals
- 5 Abduction of children
- 6 Denial of humanitarian access to children

There are currently 14 situations of the Children and Armed Conflict framework implementing the MRM



3,677
verified incidents
of grave violations
2014-2019



with over
98,481
verified children
affected



of whom
53,701
verified were
boys



and over
41,243
verified were girls



and over
3,529
children verified
whose sex is
unknown

Children and Armed Conflict (CAAC): Grave Violations and the Monitoring and Reporting Mechanism in South Sudan

For the reporting period of July to December 2019 the Country Task Force on Monitoring and Reporting (CTFMR) reported and verified a total of 74 grave violations (incidents) affecting 73 children (62 boys, 11 girls), 43 of which took place prior to the reporting period. The CTFMR also verified one incident of denial of humanitarian access. 29 grave violations affecting 29 children (23 boys, 5 girls and 1 sex unknown) were documented but remain unverified. The unverified violations are mainly of recruitment and use of children. The number of grave violations against children increased compared to the previous reporting period.

The extension of the pre-transition phase to a unified government by 100 days since 12 November is intended to enable the implementation of critical prerequisites for the transition, including the resolution of the number of States and their boundaries; review and drafting of key legislation; incorporation of the Revitalised Agreement into the Transitional Constitution; and cantonment, training and redeployment of unified forces, among others.

The security situation remained relatively stable with a few military clashes in some parts of the Equatoria region. CTFMR continued to receive positive cooperation from the parties to the conflict in the implementation of the MRM mandate.

In the spirit of the draft Comprehensive Action Plan to end the six grave violations against children in South Sudan, the

CTFMR formed a Joint Verification Committee in April, consisting of the SSPDF, Pro-Machar SPLA-IO, SSOA, Taban Deng- allied SSPDF, National DDR Commission, UNMISS and UNICEF. The Committee's mandate is to visit all military bases across the country to screen and release children associated with all armed forces and armed groups and conduct child protection awareness raising and sensitisation with the forces. Releases of children associated with armed forces and armed groups were successfully conducted.

The CTFMR also engaged and carried out advocacy campaigns and training of the parties to the conflict. As part of the prevention, protection and response strategy, the CTFMR conducted child protection induction and mainstreaming training for UN personnel.

UNICEF carried out training on MRM and children and armed conflict with partners of child protection, education, health, emergency, nutrition, WASH, shelter, NFI, security, with camp coordination and camp management and with protection and cluster partners to strengthen the MRM incident and case reporting. A special focus was put on several mobile teams accessing remote areas.

During the reporting period, the parties to conflict in South Sudan held a face-to-face meeting in Juba. The meeting was a significant step towards the implementation of the pre-transition period to a unified government.



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More information on the situation in South Sudan and UNICEF's response, including the latest situation reports, can be found at www.unicef.org/southsudan

* Reported during 2014-2018. From 01 January 2019, reporting will revert to updated revision of the MRM Database per OSRSG-CAAC Review

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