

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

The plight of children affected by war was first highlighted in the Graça Machel Report (1996). Since 1999, the United Nations Security Council (UNSC) has placed child protection concerns at the heart of its international peace and security agenda through the adoption of eight resolutions specifically addressing children and armed conflict. In 2005, the Security Council established an unprecedented Monitoring and Reporting Mechanism (MRM) on grave violations against children in situations of armed conflict. The MRM has broken new ground towards ending the impunity of parties who violate children's rights. Holding perpetrators accountable has proven to have both preventive and deterrent effects, making a real impact on children's lives.

What is the MRM?

In July 2005, the UN Security Council adopted the ground-breaking Resolution 1612, which, requested the UN Secretary-General to establish monitoring and reporting mechanisms in situations of armed conflict. The mechanism enhances the protection of children by collecting timely, accurate and objective information on grave violations against children. The Security Council Working Group on Children and Armed Conflict (SCWG CAAC), (established by UNSC Res 1612) reviews and takes action on the reports received from the MRM. The MRM was further reinforced by UNSC resolutions 1882 (2009) and 1998 (2011).

Grave violations against children monitored by the MRM in Somalia

- Killing or maiming
- Recruitment or use
- Attacks against schools or hospitals
- Rape or other sexual violence
- Abduction
- Denial of humanitarian access
- Children used for piracy activities

The MRM aims to hold perpetrators accountable and bring them into compliance with international child protection standards in order to halt grave violations against children in armed conflict. Besides collecting and reporting information, the MRM also systematically triggers appropriate responses to all of the grave violations against children in order to make a real difference in children's lives. Security Council resolution 1612, "stressed the responsibility of United Nations peacekeeping missions and United Nations country teams, consistent with their respective mandates, to ensure effective follow-up to Security Council resolutions, ensure a coordinated response to CAAC concerns and to monitor and report to the Secretary-General." The reports generated by the Secretary-General serve as triggers for action by the Security Council and other relevant actors, resulting in pressure upon parties to conflict to stop violations against children.

What does the Security Council Working Group on Children and Armed Conflict do?

The SCWG CAAC consists of the 15 Security Council members and meets in closed sessions to:

- Review the MRM country reports.
- Review the development and implementation of Action Plans (*for more see Action Plans section, below*).
- Present conclusions to the SC on measures to promote the protection of children affected by armed conflict.
- Addresses requests to other bodies within the UN system for action to support the implementation of Security Council resolutions 1612 (2005) and 1882 (2009).

Where is the MRM implemented?

The MRM is implemented in countries where parties are listed in the annexes to the UN Secretary General's Annual Reports on CAAC. Currently, there are MRM Country Task Forces (CTFMR) functioning in 14 countries. Other countries have also established children and armed conflict working groups, which contribute updates to the Security Council Working Group on CAAC. In Somalia the Task Force is co-chaired by the Special Representative of the Secretary-General (SRSG) and the UNICEF Representative. The Task Force is made up of UN agencies and NGOs.

Countries where the MRM is implemented

Afghanistan	Myanmar
Burundi	Nepal
Central African Republic	Philippines
Chad	Somalia
Colombia	Sri Lanka
Democratic Republic of Congo	Sudan
Iraq	Uganda

Additional countries of concern have established working groups and submit regular reports to the Security Council Working Group on Children and Armed Conflict.

Côte d'Ivoire
Haiti
Israel and the Occupied Palestinian Territory

Who is monitored and reported on?

When a party is listed in the SG's Annual Report on CAAC, it is required that the MRM be established in that country. The MRM will then monitor and report on all parties to the conflict in that country. In Somalia the TFG, AMISON, other armed forces and all armed groups are monitored.

How do parties to conflict get listed in the Secretary-General's reports?

A party that commits grave violations against children in a situation of armed conflict is listed in the Secretary-General's Annual Report on Children and Armed Conflict (CAAC). UNSC Resolutions 1612, 1882 and 1998 set out four triggers for listing a party: recruiting or using children in situations of armed conflict; engaging in patterns of killing and maiming of children; and/or committing rape or other sexual violence; attacks on schools or hospitals against

children in situations of armed conflict. In order to be de-listed, a party must enter into a time-bound Action Plan to halt committing violations. In Somalia the TFG and Al-Shabaab are both listed parties.

What is an Action Plan?

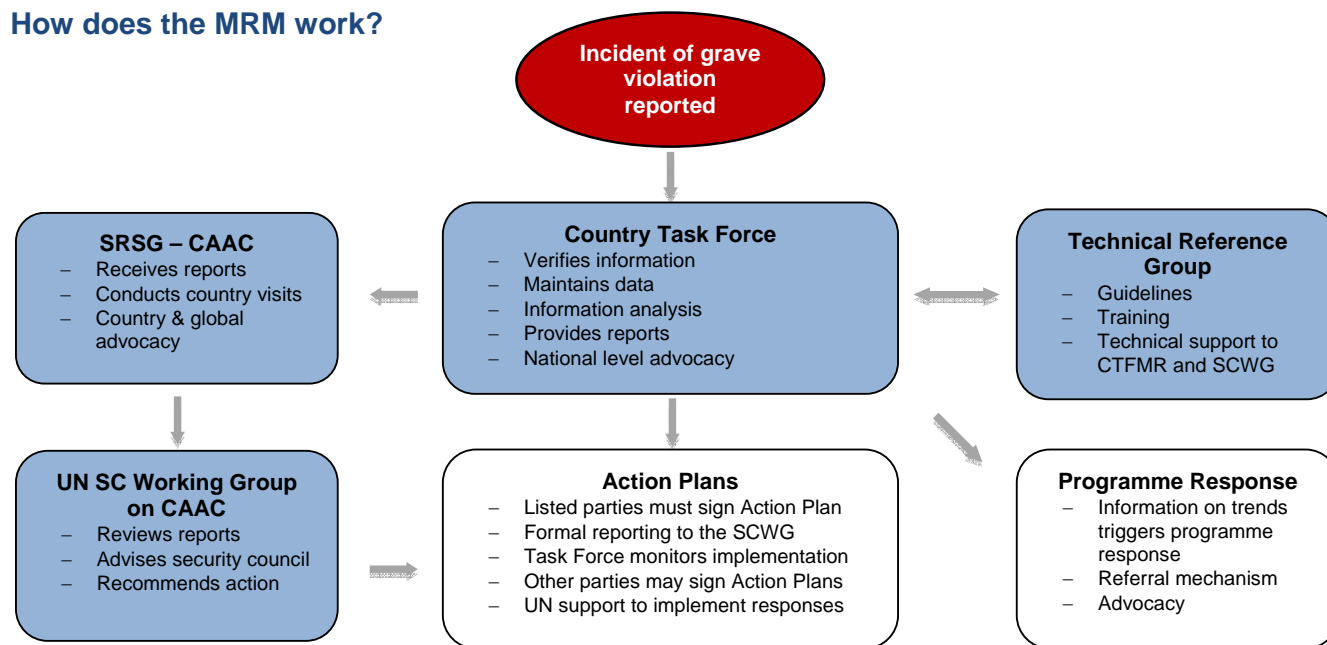
UNSC Resolutions 1539 (2004), 1612, 1882&1998 call for listed parties to conflicts (armed forces or armed groups) to develop and implement Action Plans to halt violations against children in situations of armed conflict. The Action Plans, are signed between parties to conflict and the UN, specifically to establish commitments to cease the violations (listed as triggers) and appropriate responses. Action Plans also determine specific commitments to address all other violations and abuses against children as requested in UNSC Resolution 1882.

Which measures can be undertaken against offenders?

The Security Council Working Group has a “toolkit” to bring perpetrators of grave violations against children into compliance with international law. The toolkit includes applying targeted measures against offending parties for making insufficient progress toward ending violations. Banning the export and supply of small arms, light weapons, other military equipment and military assistance are other possible measures. Additionally, UNSC Resolution 1882 i) requests enhanced communication between the UNSC Working Group and relevant Sanctions Committees and ii) calls upon concerned Member States to take decisive and immediate action against persistent perpetrators of violations against children, through national justice systems and, where applicable, international justice mechanisms. The goal with all measures is to end impunity for those committing crimes against children.

In addition to measures taken by the UN SC Working Group information collected can be used locally to advocate with parties to affect change.

How does the MRM work?



What is the impact for children?

Information gathered can provide substantive information to enable action by the SRSB-CAAC or the SCWG – this action can be high-level advocacy or other actions (e.g. letters to offending parties, recommendations to the Sanctions Committee). The Task Force members can carry out advocacy with parties on specific issues for an immediate response for children in terms of prevention or intervention (e.g. release of children from an armed group).

Analysis of information may illustrate trends in actions or geographic locations that can guide humanitarian programme responses for children.

More information and reports can be found at <http://www.un.org/children/conflict/english/index.html>

What does the MRM look like in Somalia?

The actual information on incidents comes from a wide range of sources, including child/human rights monitors, UN and NGOs who, through their presence in the field, have access to communities and receive information on grave violations against children. Individuals within organisations are provided with training to enable them to determine credible information and provide accurate reports on incidents. Information is collected and analysed to provide regular updates for the situation in Somalia.