



Getting It Done and Doing It Right

Implementing the Monitoring and Reporting Mechanism on Children and Armed Conflict in

Sri Lanka



JANUARY 2008

Watchlist Mission Statement

The Watchlist on Children and Armed Conflict strives to end violations against children in armed conflicts and to guarantee their rights. As a global network, Watchlist builds partnerships among local, national and international non-governmental organizations, enhancing mutual capacities and strengths. Working together, we strategically collect and disseminate information on violations against children in conflicts in order to influence key decision-makers to create and implement programs and policies that effectively protect children. www.watchlist.org

IMPORTANT NOTES

General supervision of Watchlist is provided by a Steering Committee of international non-governmental organizations known for their work with children and human rights. Though many agencies and actors provided information for this report, the views presented in this report do not represent the views of any one organization or member of the Steering Committee.

Watchlist is grateful for the generous support and guidance of a number of agencies and individuals which made this report, its companion country-reports and the global study possible. Grants from the Government of Canada's Department of Foreign Affairs and International Trade (DFAIT) and other donors provided Watchlist with the necessary resources to carry out this project.

Information in this report was collected primarily during Watchlist's visit to Sri Lanka, between August 10 and August 25, 2007. Additional information was gathered through follow-up consultations.

PHOTO CREDITS

Cover, Norwegian Refugee Council (NRC), Sujeewa de Silva; Page 1, UNICEF, HQ06-1571, Shehzad Norrani (left) and NRC, Sujeewa de Silva (right); Page 4, NRC, Sujeewa de Silva; Page 6, UNICEF, HQ06-1575, Shehzad Norrani; Page 8, NRC, Sujeewa de Silva; Page 10, NRC, Sujeewa de Silva; Page 13, NRC, Sujeewa de Silva; Page 15, NRC, Sujeewa de Silva; Inside back cover, NRC, Sujeewa de Silva.

Please Note: The people represented in the photos in this report are not necessarily themselves victims or survivors of human rights violations or other abuses.

Acronyms

ACF	<i>Action Contre la Faim</i> Action Against Hunger
CFA	Ceasefire Agreement
GBV	Gender-based violence
GoSL	Government of Sri Lanka
HRC	Human Rights Commission of Sri Lanka
ICRC	International Committee of the Red Cross
ILO	International Labour Organization
LTTE	Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam
MRM	Monitoring and Reporting Mechanism
NCPA	National Child Protection Authority
NGO	Non-governmental organization
OHCHR	Office of the High Commission for Human Rights
OSRSG-CAAC	Office of the Special Representative of the Secretary-General for Children and Armed Conflict
SCR	Security Council Resolution
SLMM	Sri Lanka Monitoring Mission
SLRC	Sri Lanka Red Cross Society
SOP	Standard operating procedure
UN	United Nations
UNCT	United Nations Country Team
UNDP	United Nations Development Programme
UNFPA	United Nations Population Fund
UNHCR	United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees
UNICEF	United Nations Children's Fund
UNOPS	United Nations Office for Project Services
UNSC	United Nations Security Council
UXO	Unexploded Ordnance
WHO	World Health Organization



Introduction

In July 2005, the United Nations Security Council unanimously adopted Resolution 1612. In addition to calling for other important measures to protect children, the Security Council requested that the Secretary-General establish a mechanism to monitor and report on violations of children's rights in situations of armed conflict. The implementation of the UN-led Monitoring and Reporting Mechanism (MRM) is an important step in improving the protection of children affected by armed conflict. However, some challenges remain.

In an effort to address these challenges, Watchlist undertook a global study on monitoring and reporting and the implementation of the MRM between July and December 2007. This study documents and analyzes lessons learned, challenges, and successes in monitoring and reporting and provides practicable and action-oriented recommendations to key stakeholders and decision-makers to advance and improve monitoring and reporting on children's rights.

The findings and recommendations of this study are presented in five reports: one global study on the implementation of the MRM and four country-specific reports on monitoring and reporting in Colombia, the Democratic Republic of Congo, Sri Lanka, and Uganda. While the global report and its companion country-specific reports identify challenges encountered in implementing the MRM, it is important to note that the purpose of

this study is to highlight opportunities to strengthen the implementation of the mechanism and to build upon the successes to date.

Security Council Resolution 1612 & the MRM

The UN-led Monitoring and Reporting Mechanism (MRM) on grave violations of children's rights is the product of many years of focused efforts to improve the situation of children affected by armed conflict. Between 1999 and 2005, the United Nations Security Council (UNSC) passed six resolutions related specifically to children and armed conflict. In 2004, Resolution 1539 laid the groundwork for the creation of a mechanism to monitor violations of children's rights by providing timely, objective, accurate, and reliable information to the UNSC and others.

In February 2005, in his fifth report on children and armed conflict to the UNSC (S/2005/72), Secretary-General Kofi Annan proposed an action plan for the creation of a mechanism which would systematically monitor, document and report on violations of the rights of children in armed conflict, focusing specifically on the following six grave violations:

- Killing or maiming of children
- Recruitment or using child soldiers
- Attacks against schools or hospitals

Key Recommendations

- The Taskforce should examine the various roles and responsibilities of each Taskforce member and outline the potential roles and responsibilities of government authorities as well as international and national NGOs and UN agencies to help create a more formal division of labor and responsibility within the Taskforce.
- The Taskforce should identify confidential ways for NGOs and other actors to submit information about violations perpetrated by armed groups directly to UNICEF or other UN staff at the district level.
- Taskforce members should devise a strategy to help identify, reduce, and prevent security incidents related to monitoring and reporting. This strategy should include methods by and ways in which Taskforce members will uphold ethics related to data collection, including the principles of confidentiality and informed consent.
- UNICEF and other members of the Taskforce should improve collaboration with experts on human rights monitoring, GBV, and database management to improve the overall functionality of the MRM. This could include increasing the participation of these actors in Taskforce meetings and increasing their role in assisting with the collection and verification of information, where feasible.
- UNICEF and the MRM Taskforce should explore ways to collect information through program-related data from actors who provide services to survivors of violence, particularly to survivors of GBV. This might include developing appropriate agreements or memoranda of understanding to solicit additional information while still maintaining confidentiality and the safety of the survivor.
- Taskforce members should devise a list of potential and specific responses which Taskforce members or other actors can take upon receiving information on child rights violations collected through the MRM in Sri Lanka. Such responses might include issuing press releases and public statements, refining and revising programmatic interventions to respond to the needs of children whose rights have been violated, or referring child survivors and respondents to other agencies for specific social or legal services.
- Taskforce members should identify international advocates to liaise and partner with those who can issue public statements, including press releases, and internal notes of concern to key policymakers in instances where public advocacy is difficult or impossible.

- Rape or other grave sexual violence against children
- Abduction of children
- Denial of humanitarian access for children

In this report, the Secretary-General also identified 54 armed groups in 11 countries that were recruiting and using children in situations of armed conflict. He divided these groups into two annexes: Annex I included groups already on the agenda of the UNSC while Annex II listed groups that were not on the agenda of the UNSC.¹ These lists have been updated in the Secretary-General's subsequent reports on children and armed conflict.

In July 2005, the UNSC unanimously adopted Security Council Resolution (SCR) 1612, its sixth resolution on children and armed conflict. Among other things, SCR 1612 formally established the MRM to systematically collect data on the six grave violations of children's rights and to monitor the compliance of armed groups to international standards.² In 2005, seven countries were selected as pilot countries for the MRM from Annexes I and II of the Secretary-General's 2005 report on children and armed conflict: Burundi, Côte d'Ivoire, Democratic Republic of Congo, Somalia, and Sudan from Annex I, and Nepal and Sri Lanka from Annex II. At the time of writing, MRM Taskforces were also operational in Chad, Myanmar, Philippines, and Uganda.

The MRM in Sri Lanka

In 2005, Sri Lanka was one of seven pilot countries selected by the United Nations to implement the UN-led Monitoring and Reporting Mechanism. The UN officially established the Sri Lanka Monitoring and Reporting Taskforce in July 2006. Later that year, the Taskforce submitted its first annual report to the Office of the Special Representative to the Secretary-General on Children and Armed Conflict (OSRSG-CAAC). On December 20, 2006, the UN Secretary-General submitted his first report on children and armed conflict in Sri Lanka (S/2006/1006) to the Security Council Working Group on Children and Armed Conflict (SCWG-CAAC). The SCWG-CAAC considered this report on February 9, 2007 and issued subsequent conclusions on June 13, 2007 (S/AC.51/2007/9).

The UN Resident/Humanitarian Coordinator in Sri Lanka chairs the Taskforce while the UNICEF Representative serves as the Deputy Chair. Members of the Taskforce include the UN Development Programme (UNDP), UNICEF, the UN High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR), the International Labour Organization (ILO), the senior human rights adviser to the UN Country Team, Oxfam Great Britain, and Sarvodaya, a national non-governmental organization (NGO). Two agencies of the Government of Sri Lanka, the Human Rights Commission of Sri Lanka (HRC) and the National Child Protection Authority (NCPA), also serve as members. The

International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) and the Sri Lanka Monitoring Mission (SLMM) both serve as observers on the Taskforce.

Over the last year, armed violence and attacks on humanitarian workers have increased, in turn amplifying international pressure on the Government of Sri Lanka (GoSL) to protect civilians and resolve the conflict. Despite the growing international attention given to the conflict in Sri Lanka, many humanitarian and human rights actors in the country contend that the conflict remains largely overlooked by the international community and relatively unimportant within prevailing global political priorities.

Members of the Taskforce have the added challenge of balancing the need to submit timely information to the New York-based Steering Committee on Monitoring and Reporting while also thinking through the implementation of the MRM as a whole. Several Taskforce members reported that this was a consistent challenge, particularly at the outset when the Taskforce was given little time to formally establish the group, field-test data collection forms and methodology, and submit its first report.

This is further complicated by the reality that key MRM actors in Sri Lanka maintain varying views about the overall objectives of the MRM. Some UN agencies see the MRM as a way to improve the capacity of government institutions to monitor and report on human rights violations while others see the MRM as a substitute human rights monitoring mechanism in the absence of a UN human rights monitoring mission which the GoSL has consistently blocked. Furthermore, while many donor governments and NGOs see the MRM as a way to publicly advocate at the national level for the improved protection of children, diplomats from a few donor governments are hesitant to use the MRM for public advocacy, believing that closed-door sessions with parties to the conflict are more effective.

Having submitted an update to its first annual report to the OSRSG-CAAC in September 2007, the Sri Lanka Taskforce now has the opportunity to reflect upon lessons learned since its inception to help improve the future implementation of the MRM.

The MRM in Sri Lanka

UNSC Resolutions

On Children and Armed Conflict

Resolution 1261	August 25, 1999
Resolution 1314	August 11, 2000
Resolution 1379	November 20, 2001
Resolution 1460	January 30, 2003
Resolution 1539	April 22, 2004
Resolution 1612	July 26, 2005

The following report seeks to identify challenges faced in implementing the MRM in Sri Lanka and opportunities to build upon the Taskforce's successes to date. The findings and recommendations of this report are presented within the following categories:

- The Government of Sri Lanka and the MRM
- The participation of NGOs in the MRM
- Maintaining security and respecting rights
- Leveraging networks and resources
- Triggering a response to violations

A set of recommendations for action is included at the end of each section and also consolidated at the end of this report.

Methodology & Limitations of Research

Watchlist staff traveled to Colombo from August 10 to August 25, 2007 to meet with a range of actors involved in human rights monitoring, child protection and child rights. This included consultations with staff from national and international NGOs, UN agencies, Sri Lankan government agencies, embassies and donor governments, and multilateral institutions. Watchlist staff conducted additional follow-up consultations by phone and via email to provide clarification or to solicit new information where in-person meetings were not possible during the time of Watchlist's visit.

At the outset, it is important to acknowledge the limitations of this research which may have an impact on the overall findings of this report. During Watchlist's visit, some key experts were unable to meet with Watchlist, either due to travel schedules or demanding workloads. It was thus necessary to conduct some consultations by phone or email, creating an inconsistent methodology for soliciting information and potentially impacting the specificity of information collected. In addition, Watchlist staff did not travel outside of the capital and thus held all consultations with agencies or actors who were able to meet in Colombo. This may have impacted the breadth and depth of the information collected. Finally, given the increasing insecurity and direct threats and attacks which humanitarian and human rights organizations face, some interviewees were either unwilling or hesitant to speak openly and share information.

The Government of Sri Lanka & the MRM

Unlike other Taskforces around the world, government agencies are represented on the MRM Taskforce in Sri Lanka. This is in part because there "was a lack of clarity [about the structure and purpose of the Taskforce] from the beginning," as one UN staff person noted. SCR 1612 notes that the "mechanism must operate with the participation of and in cooperation with national Governments and relevant United Nations and civil society actors." (S/

RES/1612 (2005), Paragraph 2(b)) The GoSL interpreted this text at the time of establishing the Taskforce to mean that the GoSL should serve on the Taskforce.

The Government of Sri Lanka is represented on the MRM Taskforce by two agencies: the NCPA and the HRC. Many respondents noted that neither the NCPA nor the HRC are seen as politically neutral or impartial institutions and both lack the resources and capacity to document rights violations and provide adequate follow-up to the cases which are reported to them.

SUCCESSSES

As government institutions, the HRC and NCPA have access to a wide range of government networks and systems, including case-specific information from the police. This gives them the ability to collect and submit a large amount of information on child rights' violations to the MRM Taskforce. For example, the HRC reported to Watchlist that it receives between 300 and 400 cases of human rights abuses reported through the 24-hour hotline they operate. While not all of these cases are relevant to the six grave violations against children, it underscores the potential access the HRC could have to case-specific information were it able to improve its financial and human capacities and independence.

CHALLENGES

The presence of national government authorities on the Taskforce creates an obstacle for the effective implementation of the MRM in many ways. One respondent noted that serving on the Taskforce would be a challenge as it requires working alongside the government for a common purpose while also potentially criticizing it for supporting groups that violate children's rights. Others observed that the legitimate fear of retributive threats or attacks by groups associated with the government against those who speak out against abuses discourages many from participating in the MRM (see below: Maintaining Security & Respecting Rights).

To date, no identifying information has been shared at the Taskforce level. However, as members of the Taskforce, the HRC and NCPA could potentially have access to specific case-related information which may be shared with all members in order to assist with the verification of cases. Survivors of violence, respondents and data-collectors face additional risks if this case-specific information is shared outside of the Taskforce with other government institutions like the Ministry of Defense.³ Though this scenario is extremely rare, one respondent cited an incident in which confidential information that had been shared with social service agencies of the GoSL was later fed to government security and justice bodies (see below: Maintaining Security & Respecting Rights).



The presence of government agencies on the Taskforce can also impact the quality of information solicited and submitted by the Taskforce. Many respondents remarked that the presence of the GoSL on the Taskforce impacts the impartiality and neutrality of the Taskforce. Both of Sri Lanka's two largest armed groups—the Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam (LTTE) and the Karuna Faction—have been accused of violating the rights of children in Sri Lanka. However, when cases are brought to the MRM Taskforce to be verified, some respondents noted that the government often examines cases allegedly perpetrated by the Karuna Faction⁴ or government forces themselves in greater detail than cases allegedly perpetrated by the LTTE. This is, in part, because the HRC and NCPA operate in areas where Karuna and government forces have allegedly carried out violations. In these areas, local GoSL counterparts have not been approached to assist in the verification or investigation of alleged incidents. This has subsequently led the government to call for more stringent investigation and verification at the capital level. However, agencies and authorities of the government should not participate in verification in order to avoid the potential politicization of this process.

Similarly, other respondents noted that the government tends to adopt a very legalistic approach towards the verification of cases, treating the MRM Taskforce like a court of law and using legal standards of proof to verify cases. The end result is that the information ultimately verified by the Taskforce may potentially be one-sided, calling into question the Taskforce's adherence to the principles of impartiality and neutrality. In recent years, the impartiality of the Human Rights Commission of Sri Lanka had also been questioned as the President has directly appointed many of the members of HRC. One human rights expert noted that as a result the HRC has lost all credibility, particularly the Colombo office.

The government's limited access to information about violations in some areas of the country poses an additional challenge. The access of government social service agencies to LTTE-controlled areas and other conflict-affected parts of Sri Lanka is limited or non-existent. Furthermore, if a member of an armed group commits a violation, a survivor may be unwilling or unable to report the attack to government authorities either out of fear that these authorities will not or cannot take any action or because they are allied with the perpetrators themselves.

The overall capacity of the HRC and NCPA also raises questions about their participation on the Taskforce. Irrespective of the alleged biases of the NCPA and HRC, some respondents noted that the NCPA and HRC lack the financial and human resources to fulfill their mandates. At the same time, limited funding has reduced the size of HRC field offices leaving many respondents wondering about the effectiveness and impact of HRC.

Overall, respondents questioned the added value of including the NCPA and the HRC, given their limited access to resources and their potential for impacting the impartiality of the mechanism. One person noted that these institutions submit very few cases or information to the Taskforce and take little advocacy action to respond to the cases received by the Taskforce.

OPPORTUNITIES & RECOMMENDATIONS

Having submitted two reports to the OSRSG-CAAC in New York, the MRM Taskforce in Sri Lanka now has the opportunity to reflect on successes and challenges to date. As part of this process, the Taskforce should consider:

- Examining the various roles and responsibilities of each Taskforce member and outlining the potential roles and responsibilities of government authorities as well as international and national NGOs and UN agencies to help create a more formal division of labor and responsibility within the Taskforce.
- Devising standardized methodology for verifying individual cases submitted to the Taskforce to ensure that each case receives the same amount of scrutiny during the verification process.⁵

The Sri Lanka Taskforce could help improve the meaningful participation of government authorities in the MRM Taskforce by:

- Surveying and assessing the various mechanisms used by the government to collect information related to the six violations in order to identify ways in which information from these systems could be shared with the MRM Taskforce in a manner which upholds the confidentiality of survivors and respondents. This would include an assessment of the indicators used by relevant government authorities.

The Participation of NGOs in the MRM

SUCCESSSES

To some extent, the MRM Taskforce in Sri Lanka has successfully engaged local and international NGOs in the implementation of the mechanism. One international NGO—Oxfam Great Britain—and one local NGO—Sarvodaya—officially serve as members of the MRM Taskforce. A number of other NGOs participate informally by providing information to UNICEF. Sarvodaya, one of the largest national NGOs in Sri Lanka, has an extensive network of volunteer and full-time employees throughout Sri Lanka and is aptly positioned to help collect and verify information on violations of children's rights. Additionally, UNICEF has trained NGO partners on the importance of maintaining the confidentiality of

The Participation of NGOs in the MRM

case-related information and referring reported cases to other actors in order to provide immediate support and assistance for child survivors of abuse and violence.

CHALLENGES

High levels of insecurity remain one of the key factors preventing or limiting the participation of both local and international NGOs in the implementation of the MRM (see below: Maintaining Security & Respecting Rights). Armed violence and attacks have steadily increased over the last 18 months, and threats, harassment, and intimidation are used by all parties to the conflict to control the civilian population and the assistance provided to them. Both local and international NGOs remarked on the strong correlation between public statements and advocacy about violence and attacks on aid programs and human rights organizations. This has created a severe and pervasive climate of fear throughout the humanitarian and human rights communities upon which nearly all respondents commented. One respondent remarked that “people are absolutely terrified to collect information.” Another said, “It is lethally dangerous to find the truth.”

On top of this, respondents noted that the GoSL response to threats, intimidation, and attacks is generally weak. Underscoring the link between violations of children’s rights and the intimidation of aid workers, a human rights expert noted that some of the worst harassment and intimidation of humanitarian workers is perpetrated by the Karuna Faction in Batticaloa, one of several parties responsible for the abuse of and violence against children in Sri Lanka.

Many NGOs also reported to Watchlist that the participation of the government in the Taskforce prevented them from participating in the implementation of the MRM as that participation limits the extent to which NGOs can report violations perpetrated by the government or government-backed groups. Other NGOs noted that they are unwilling to assume the potential risks to their staff and programs in order to participate in a mechanism which they feel is only somewhat relevant to their programs in Sri Lanka. NGOs have also expressed concern that the participation of the GoSL in the Taskforce has jeopardized the confidentiality of information shared within the Taskforce, particularly information about respondents and survivors (see below: Maintaining Security & Respecting Rights).

The limited technical capacity of NGOs in Sri Lanka to monitor and report human rights violations also poses an obstacle to their participation in the MRM. A number of humanitarian and service-delivery NGOs have integrated human rights themes into their work and play an important role in the protection of children’s rights. However, many lack the technical capacity and institutional focus to monitor and report violations. One respondent noted that while Sarvodaya has an expansive network of volun-

teers and many years of experience as a grassroots development organization, it has not focused specifically on human rights in its previous programs. Other service-delivery organizations that are in a position to provide information to the Taskforce due to their strong links with the community generally have limited institutional expertise on monitoring and reporting. Several NGOs reported that this was one of the main reasons why they declined to become formal members of the Taskforce, noting that they felt as if their organization was not the “natural channel” for implementing the MRM or that they lacked the internal systems and structures to assist with the objectives of the MRM.

Partnering with humanitarian and service-delivery agencies poses additional challenges. The MRM’s primary objective—submitting information to a political body for UNSC action—may conflict with the humanitarian principles which these agencies uphold, particularly the principle of neutrality. Agencies which firmly espouse the principle of neutrality find it difficult to provide information to the Security Council if this information is used to trigger political or military action. In addition, agencies with a presence in the East or LTTE-controlled areas of Sri Lanka that support the MRM may jeopardize their operational capacity to deliver services in these areas or place the safety of their staff and those they are assisting at risk. While the MRM poses a major political opportunity for humanitarian agencies to increase high-level attention to child rights violations, it also has the potential to compromise the capacity of operational agencies’ ability to protect children at a national-level.

Successfully implementing the MRM requires additional financial and human resources for all participating organizations and agencies. One UN staff member noted that the MRM requires a great deal of effort to obtain a relatively small amount of information. Limited access to resources for monitoring and reporting activities poses a challenge to some NGOs wishing to support the implementation of the MRM. Only two governments, those of Canada and the United Kingdom, have generously provided funds to UNICEF Sri Lanka to implement the MRM, and none of this funding has been made available to support the participation of NGOs. While some UN agencies are in a position to provide funds to NGOs, many NGOs are reluctant to submit proposals solely for monitoring and reporting activities, given the potential security risks, and thus tend to receive funding for more general work on child protection programs, including individual service-delivery and community support.

Recurrent staff turnovers within NGOs result in a frequent change of designated MRM focal points and others who liaise with the Taskforce on monitoring and reporting issues. Staff turnover also makes it difficult for international staff and their organizations to gain the trust of communities necessary to encourage them to submit reports of rights violations. On top of this, many humani-



tarian agencies reported that bringing international staff into Sri Lanka has become logistically more difficult, particularly for staff whose job descriptions include human rights-related work, due to increasingly restrictive government policies on visas and work permits.

Fluctuating relations between the UN and NGOs also create challenges. Several respondents noted that the climate of fear and insecurity in the country impacts how UN agencies and NGOs cooperate together and the extent to which humanitarian groups speak out on rights violations. Others explained that the UN has tended to withhold information about the workings and accomplishments of the Taskforce which may inhibit participation by some NGOs because they are not sufficiently informed for the purpose and work of the Taskforce. Finally, both UN agencies and NGOs have stressed that all parties should be doing more to improve respect for human rights in Sri Lanka.

OPPORTUNITIES & RECOMMENDATIONS

During discussions with Watchlist, several UN staff remarked upon the significant obstacles preventing NGOs from participating in the implementation of the MRM and also added that the UN should do more to help facilitate NGO participation.

Given the constraints that currently limit NGO participation in the implementation of the MRM, UNICEF and other Taskforce members must carefully consider the manner and extent to which NGOs can assist the Taskforce. The more NGOs that can assist in the implementation of the MRM—either by gathering or assisting with the verification of information—the wider the MRM’s reach will be and the more information the MRM will be likely to collect. Expanding NGO participation in the MRM can also help strengthen the link of the MRM to response actions.

The obstacle that safety and security poses to the participation of NGOs in the implementation of the MRM cannot be overstated. To address this, UNICEF and the MRM Taskforce should:

- Identify confidential ways for NGOs and other actors to submit information about violations perpetrated by armed groups directly to UNICEF or other UN staff at the district level (see below: Maintaining Security & Respecting Rights).

To help expand and improve the participation of NGOs in the implementation of the MRM, donors and other stakeholders must consider ways to strengthen the financial and technical capacity of NGOs.

- UNICEF, with support from the UN Country Team, should ensure that any efforts to expand the roles, responsibilities, and participation of national and inter-

national NGOs in the implementation of the MRM are matched with provision of adequate technical, financial, and human resources to enable NGOs to assume these additional duties.

- Donor governments should maintain their support of UNICEF in implementing the MRM in Sri Lanka while also increasing available funding for national and international NGOs to participate in the MRM. This would include making a pool of resources available for NGOs to hire and train personnel to serve as MRM focal points and to assist with the collection and verification of MRM-related data.
- UNICEF, with support from the UN Country Team, should conduct a training needs assessment and develop a country-specific training curriculum for child protection actors involved in monitoring and reporting on children’s rights violations. Training should seek to improve understanding of the MRM and SCR 1612 and increase knowledge and skills on monitoring and reporting, human rights, child protection, and gender-based violence (GBV).⁶
- The Taskforces should develop a country-wide training plan that addresses the gaps and needs identified in training needs assessments carried out in-country.

The MRM Taskforce should also consider expanding NGO participation on the Taskforce, and should, in particular:

- Increase the participation of national-level human rights organizations on the Taskforce that could gather information from conflict-affected areas through fact-finding missions and meetings with community-based organizations there without jeopardizing their own operational presence.

Maintaining Security & Respecting Rights

Sri Lanka has been called one of the most dangerous places in the world for aid workers. In 2006, 23 aid workers were killed in Sri Lanka—the second largest number of deaths of humanitarian aid workers around the world.⁷ Between January 2006 and September 2007, 46 aid workers were killed, went missing or were presumed dead. All the victims except one were national staff members of NGOs.⁸ In August 2006, 17 staff of Action Contre la Faim (ACF), an international NGO, were shot at close range and killed in Trincomalee District, and in July 2007, two staff of the Sri Lanka Red Cross Society (SLRC) were abducted from Colombo and killed. In both cases, the perpetrators remain unidentified, though various actors in Sri Lanka have leveled accusations at particular armed groups. While the government has been quick to condemn acts of violence against humanitarian workers, there has been

High levels of insecurity remain one of the key factors limiting the participation of local and international NGOs.

Maintaining Security & Respecting Rights

a marked absence of investigations into or prosecutions of attacks and killings, even in cases where identity of the perpetrators is clear.

The deteriorating security situation poses obvious challenges for those trying to implement the MRM. While human rights monitors and aid workers face risks in documenting and reporting abuses perpetrated by armed groups, respondents and survivors of abuse face long-term risks to their safety and security as they are unlikely to be able to relocate to safer areas and may be subjected to retributive or repeated attacks, threats, and abuse.

Respecting the confidentiality and informed consent of survivors and respondents is a key way to mitigate the risks of retributive attacks and other violence against them while ensuring respect for their rights and dignity. During the collection of first-hand information, human rights monitors and others may share information with outside actors only after informing those people who are reporting violations how the information will be used and who will have access to the information. Monitors and other information collectors must also request permission to share this information. Reporting abuses can increase security risks for survivors and respondents and it is precisely these individuals who will have to live with any negative consequences of reporting.

SUCCESSSES

UNICEF has facilitated extensive trainings for Taskforce members on confidentiality and the importance of maintaining the confidentiality of specific case-related information. During consultations with Watchlist, several Taskforce members reported that these trainings had proven particularly useful in improving the work of the Taskforce and how it manages confidential information, though specific details were not provided.

CHALLENGES

Humanitarian and human rights workers continue to be threatened, intimidated, and attacked by armed groups and forces for the work they do, particularly those agencies and groups that advocate for peace. One respondent noted that, “if [an agency] has ‘peace’ in its name, it will be a target.”

Secure and confidential means of submitting information to the Taskforce and storing this information remain limited. During an interview with Watchlist, one respondent remarked that meetings were rarely confidential and that information presented in confidential meetings may be presented in a public forum later on. Folders containing confidential information had been stolen from the office of another respondent. While channels of information must be as secure as possible for the MRM to function

properly, many activists in Sri Lanka feel that it will be extremely difficult to achieve this.

Respecting the principles of confidentiality and informed consent also remains a challenge, particularly during the verification of information. The Taskforce lacks internal mechanisms to indicate whether consent has been received from the survivor or his or her family to share specific, case-related information with the rest of the MRM Taskforce. Furthermore, it is unclear which, if any, Taskforce members have access to case-related information.

Pervasive levels of fear in Sri Lanka have prevented survivors and other civilians from reporting incidents of violations perpetrated by armed groups while also preventing agencies from collecting such information. Apprehensive about retributive attacks and threats, some NGOs expressed concern that their involvement in the MRM might impact their operational capacity and their delivery of social services to conflict-affected areas of the country. While some NGOs have carried out threat assessments, few agencies were able to comment on the different levels of threats and insecurity facing national and international staff, human rights and humanitarian agencies, and national and international organizations. Several respondents told Watchlist that exposure to violence appears more dependent on an organization’s level of activism than its mandate or location. However, a few respondents said that national humanitarian and human rights NGOs may face greater threats and insecurity when they serve as the focal points for receiving information about rights violations.

OPPORTUNITIES & RECOMMENDATIONS

Though they all face similar threats of violence, most NGOs have not adopted a strategic or collaborative way to approach attacks and insecurity. Intimidation and threats remain high, yet threat assessments and mitigation strategies remain ad hoc. Improving the ability of humanitarian and human rights actors to assess threats against themselves and their operations will ultimately help NGOs identify ways in which they might increase collaboration with the MRM Taskforce.

- Taskforce members should devise a strategy to help identify, reduce, and prevent security incidents related to monitoring and reporting. This strategy should include methods by and ways in which Taskforce members will uphold ethics related to data collection, including the principles of confidentiality and informed consent.
- Members of the Taskforce should develop a standard operating procedure (SOP) detailing a minimum set of actions different members of the Taskforce should take when the security of respondents, children, or information collectors is threatened during the collection or verification of data.⁹



As the MRM broadens its reach in the coming year, the Taskforce should ensure that all confidential information related to the MRM is protected according to best practices. Specifically, the following recommendations should be considered:

- The Taskforce should devise a Code of Conduct to guide how Taskforce members handle and manage specific case-related information and maintain the confidentiality of this information. All members must agree to support this Code of Conduct.
- UNICEF and other Taskforce members should provide detailed information for all Taskforce members and all others participating in data collection regarding the principles of confidentiality and informed consent, including how to uphold these principles in monitoring and reporting, how to incorporate them into the work of the Taskforce, and the importance of these principles.
- UNICEF and the MRM Taskforce should identify confidential ways for NGOs and other actors to submit confidential information about violations perpetrated by armed groups directly to UNICEF or other UN staff at the district-level (see above: Participation of NGOs in Monitoring and Reporting).

To help improve reporting and build trust with local communities:

- The Taskforce should create a field-friendly, one-page document explaining SCR 1612, the MRM, and how information collected is used. This document should be translated into Sinhala and Tamil.
- The Taskforce should create field-friendly versions of the Secretary-General's reports on children and armed conflict in Sri Lanka and the Security Council Working Group's conclusions on Sri Lanka. These should be translated into Sinhala and Tamil and should be distributed to community leaders and local child protection actors to demonstrate how collected information is being used.

Leveraging Networks & Resources

Given the justified level of fear that has resulted from widespread insecurity in Sri Lanka, collecting verified information about abuses perpetrated by armed groups remains a challenge. The GoSL makes regular attempts to control humanitarian-related information to such an extent that one UN staff person noted that he was denied access to information from an assessment which another UN agency had led as the GoSL had only allowed the assessment to take place on the condition that the information collected would not be shared with any other agencies. These restrictions on information-sharing make it difficult for agencies to effectively collaborate and coor-

dinate their activities. All the same, this restriction makes it critical that the Taskforce work to leverage previously-existing data collection systems and structures in order to feed information into the MRM.

SUCSESSES

To date, UNICEF and other UN agencies have done an admirable job in identifying a variety of sources of information and employing outside resources to improve the implementation of the MRM. In early 2007, UNICEF contracted a consultant to assess the MRM in Sri Lanka and provide practicable recommendations to the Taskforce to improve the overall implementation of SCR 1612. UNICEF now employs a full-time project officer who oversees the implementation of SCR 1612 in Sri Lanka. Monitoring and reporting has also been incorporated into the UNDP Country Programme (2006 to 2012) for Sri Lanka.

Over the past year, the Taskforce has worked with UN agencies to identify previously-existing resources and mechanisms which could feed information into the MRM. Agencies with these mechanisms have since taken the lead on collecting information related to violations which the Taskforce documents. For example, for several years UNICEF has maintained a database related to underage recruitment in Sri Lanka. The information collected through this database has thus been fed into the MRM. Similarly, UNDP's database on landmines and unexploded ordnance (UXO) has helped contribute information on killing and maiming to the MRM. This exemplary inter-agency cooperation within a UN country team should be noted and replicated in other countries.

Information which the SLMM¹⁰ collects has also proven a great resource for reporting and cross-checking cases. While the SLMM maintains its headquarters in Colombo, it also has six district offices throughout the country and a Liaison Office in Killinochi, all of which contribute information to the public SLMM Weekly Monitoring Reports on violations of the ceasefire agreement (CFA), which are reported directly to the SLMM. Reports of violations documented by the SLMM that fall into the MRM categories are thus included in the Taskforce's reports.

With regard to training and capacity-strengthening, UNICEF and the Taskforce have worked with other country Taskforces, in particular the MRM Taskforce in Nepal, to share training materials and strategies. Additionally, the Office of the High Commission for Human Rights (OHCHR) has agreed to send trainers from Geneva to Colombo to assist with the training of Taskforce members in human rights monitoring and reporting.

*Successfully
implementing the MRM
requires additional
financial and human
resources for all
participating groups.*

*Leveraging
Networks &
Resources*

CHALLENGES

The dramatic increase in humanitarian agencies and funding in Sri Lanka after the 2004 tsunami led to the creation of dozens of humanitarian groups and networks, some with a specific thematic focus—such as child protection or GBV—and others with a focus on participants—for example, NGO working groups or donor meetings. The subsequent plethora of meetings has created “meeting fatigue” in Colombo, thus limiting the extent to which actors from other disciplines, such as GBV, are willing and able to lend their expertise to the implementation of the MRM.

While cooperation within the UN Country Team is commendable, several challenges remain. Though SCR 1612 calls for the participation of all relevant UN agencies, not all UN bodies are adequately equipped to support the implementation of the MRM, given their limited institutional and technical capacity to address protection concerns. In addition, not all UN agencies with protection experience and mandates are assisting in the implementation of the MRM in part due to “meeting fatigue” and government restrictions on information-sharing. Many actors also see SCR 1612 as a “child soldier resolution” and therefore the sole responsibility of UNICEF.

Collecting information on rape and other forms of sexual violence remains a significant challenge for the Taskforce. Although many experts have noted that sexual violence perpetrated by armed groups is a problem, to date no such cases have been reported to the Taskforce. Many obstacles exist which prevent the timely and ethical collection of GBV-related data. First, survivors are often wary about the confidentiality of the information they disclose. Inter-ethnic relations also pose obstacles to reporting as Tamil girls often feel hesitant about reporting cases of GBV to Sinhala caseworkers and vice versa. In addition, the Taskforce receives little to no input from UN agencies or NGOs with institutional GBV expertise.

Perhaps the biggest challenge to collecting GBV-related information, however, is the fundamental lack of available services in the conflict-affected areas of Sri Lanka. Without access to appropriate and confidential health, psychosocial, legal, and safety services administered by well-trained professionals, few if any survivors of GBV will ever report an attack.

Rising violence and insecurity coupled with a reduced number of international monitors has reduced the SLMM’s field presence in Sri Lanka. Moving forward, the Taskforce should consider the different ways in which non-members can collaborate with the Taskforce while also supporting their mandates.

OPPORTUNITIES & RECOMMENDATIONS

The Taskforce should increase its communication and partnership with other inter-agency initiatives in Sri Lanka while also drawing on the expertise of specialists in key thematic areas. In particular, the following recommendations should be considered:

- The Taskforce should survey and assess the various agencies and networks in Sri Lanka which collect information related to the six violations and consider the ways in which these groups might collaborate with the Taskforce while supporting their mandates. This includes ensuring that all partnerships and means of collaboration uphold the confidentiality of survivors and respondents.
- UNICEF and other UN agencies should strengthen and create better links between the Taskforce, GBV Forum, and Emergency Child Protection Forum by working with focal points from these groups to identify overlaps and potential points of cooperation and ways to maximize collaboration.
- UNICEF and other members of the Taskforce should improve collaboration with experts on human rights monitoring, GBV, and database management to improve the overall functionality of the MRM. This could include increasing the participation of these actors in Taskforce meetings and increasing their role in assisting with the collection and verification of information, where feasible.

To improve the collection of data, the Taskforce should develop ways to incorporate program-related information from actors who provide services to survivors of violence. Organizations providing basic case management services to GBV survivors may be willing and able to share confidential information with the Taskforce, based on the consent of the survivor.¹¹

- UNICEF and the MRM Taskforce should explore ways to collect information through program-related data from actors who provide services to survivors of violence, particularly to survivors of GBV. This might include developing appropriate agreements or memoranda of understanding to solicit additional information while still maintaining confidentiality and the safety of the survivor.

The Taskforce also has the opportunity to build upon a foundation of successful cooperation within the United Nations Country Team (UNCT) by encouraging all UN agencies to assist with the implementation of the MRM.

- In collaboration, the UN Resident/Humanitarian Coordinator and the UNICEF Representative should identify the potential roles and inputs various UN



agencies can perform to improve the functionality of the MRM.

- As the new lead for GBV in the Taskforce, UNHCR should ensure it works with the United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA) and the World Health Organization (WHO), and in particular the experts at their relevant headquarters, to help improve the methods employed by the MRM to collect GBV-related data.

Triggering a Response to Violations

Responding to abuses is a critical part of monitoring and reporting violations of children's rights. It is logical to assume that access to information may improve when monitoring and reporting are linked to response as communities are able to witness the positive connection between reporting a violation and receiving support and assistance. Generally, providing a response to violations also improves access to information about violations as it enables information collectors to gather program-related data. Finally, when collecting and asking for information about violations, humanitarian actors have an ethical obligation to assist individuals who report abuses by directly providing services or referring that individual to confidential and relevant services, based on the wishes and needs of the survivor.

A variety of response actions may be undertaken to address the needs of individuals or communities after a violation has occurred. Responses range from undertaking national and international public advocacy, revising existing policies to protect the rights of children, working to restore or improve judicial systems to help decrease impunity, improving service-delivery programs to better address the needs of children, and taking immediate action to provide services and support to child survivors. In almost all cases, respondents report human rights violations or abuses to receive support or redress for the consequences of this violation. Providing an appropriate and timely response should always be an objective of the MRM.

SUCCESSSES

The MRM Taskforce in Sri Lanka has made good use of an informal referral system when collecting information. In one example, Sarvodaya received information about the abduction of a child by an armed group in the East. Sarvodaya fed this information to the MRM Taskforce in Colombo while also informing UNICEF and local child protection actors on the ground about the case. Within 48 hours, the release of the child had been secured.

One respondent noted that the success of this case was due, in part, to the level of access which UN agencies have in the East versus LTTE-controlled areas where ac-

cess varies. Though not every case has been as successful, the use of informal referrals for services has helped the MRM Taskforce improve their access to information while also providing much-needed support for children and the communities in which they live.

CHALLENGES

Various members of the Taskforce disagree about the extent to which the Taskforce should respond to incidents. This ultimately stems from a difference of opinion between Taskforce members about the objectives of the MRM. With regard to advocacy, some respondents noted that they hope UNICEF and the Taskforce would become more vocal and increase advocacy efforts in the future, while others largely saw this as unfeasible given the prevailing climate of insecurity.

Access to information also poses a challenge to providing a timely and appropriate individual-level response. While only two NGOs serve on the MRM Taskforce, many more are able to provide services for survivors of violations. However, the challenge of sharing case-specific information with actors outside the Taskforce remains unresolved.

In addition, when a case requires an immediate response, action should be taken before waiting for the Colombo-based Taskforce to receive the information. However, some respondents reported that in some cases, information is not shared with agencies that could provide services at the district level but is instead sent to Colombo first, delaying potential and often time-sensitive interventions to assist survivors and respondents.

Taskforce members also lack clarity about who should respond, particularly with regard to advocacy. Many respondents told Watchlist that the UN should use the information collected through the MRM to take action at the national-level; however, a number of UN agencies noted that undertaking any advocacy activities would be nearly impossible.

Taskforce members also remain divided on how the Taskforce should respond to the cases it receives. Several respondents remarked that the Taskforce ought to engage in national-level advocacy. UN agencies, however, are trying to find the balance between acting within the parameters of their mandates and avoiding threats of expulsion by the government for overstepping their mandates. One NGO staff person noted that the UN's "strategy of engagement" with the government prevented the UN from openly criticizing government actors, and therefore the Taskforce is unable to undertake any meaningful advocacy efforts that target them. This, however, does not preclude active advocacy efforts that target the LTTE.

Triggering a Response to Violations

Responding to abuses is a critical part of monitoring and reporting.

OPPORTUNITIES & RECOMMENDATIONS

Building on the informal referral pathways that have already been employed at the local level, the Taskforce now has the opportunity to establish more formal ways of referring cases for timely assistance and support. National NGOs have noted that the Taskforce should expand its reach, and it can do so by improving its response to violations.

- The Taskforce should conduct a “who, what, where” assessment of various actors in each district who can receive referrals and provide services to survivors of violence. This information should be given to all agencies and individuals collecting information for the Taskforce so they know where to refer cases for support and assistance.
- Taskforce members should devise a list of potential and specific responses which Taskforce members or other actors can take upon receiving information on child rights violations collected through the MRM in Sri Lanka. Such responses might include issuing press releases and public statements, refining and revising programmatic interventions to respond to the needs of children whose rights have been violated, or referring child survivors and respondents to other agencies for specific social or legal services.
- Taskforce members should identify international advocates to liaise and partner with those who can issue public statements, including press releases, and internal notes of concern to key policymakers in instances where public advocacy is difficult or impossible.

The Taskforce should also build links and partnerships with national and international networks to reduce direct attention to the Taskforce while ensuring that advocacy on specific issues or trends is possible.

- The Taskforce should continue to work closely with the OSRSG-CAAC which conducts high-level and national-level advocacy on behalf of children and armed conflict and can direct attention away from UN agencies and NGOs on the ground.
- To improve advocacy efforts, Taskforce members should outline the various actions NGOs can take to use information collected by the Taskforce for national and international advocacy as well as the related protocols NGOs should adhere to when using such information.
- The Taskforce should increase its communication with the diplomatic community, providing them with information on the implementation of SCR 1612 and the MRM on a regular basis. In return, the diplomatic community should increase its support of the Taskforce and the UNCT to implement the MRM.

Recommendations for Action

The following recommendations, also included in the text above, correspond with the sections outlined in this report: The Government of Sri Lanka and the MRM, The Participation of NGOs in the MRM, Maintaining Security and Respecting Rights, Leveraging Networks and Resources, and Triggering a Response to Violations.

THE GOVERNMENT OF SRI LANKA & THE MRM

- The Taskforce should examine the various roles and responsibilities of each Taskforce member and outline the potential roles and responsibilities of government authorities as well as international and national NGOs and UN agencies to help create a more formal division of labor and responsibility within the Taskforce.
- The Taskforce should devise standardized methodology for verifying individual cases submitted to the Taskforce to ensure that each case receives the same amount of scrutiny during the verification process.¹²
- Members of the Taskforce should survey and assess the various mechanisms used by the government to collect information related to the six violations in order to identify ways in which information from these systems could be shared with the MRM Taskforce in a manner which upholds the confidentiality of survivors and respondents. This would include an assessment of the indicators used by relevant government authorities.

THE PARTICIPATION OF NGOs IN THE MRM

- The Taskforce should identify confidential ways for NGOs and other actors to submit information about violations perpetrated by armed groups directly to UNICEF or other UN staff at the district level (see below: Maintaining Security & Respecting Rights).
- UNICEF, with support from the UN Country Team, should ensure that any efforts to expand the roles, responsibilities, and participation of national and international NGOs in the implementation of the MRM are matched with provision of adequate technical, financial, and human resources to enable NGOs to assume these additional duties.
- Donor governments should maintain their support of UNICEF in implementing the MRM in Sri Lanka while also increasing available funding for national and international NGOs to participate in the MRM. This would include making a pool of resources available for NGOs to hire and train personnel to serve as MRM

focal points and to assist with the collection and verification of MRM-related data.

- UNICEF, with support from the UN Country Team, should conduct a training needs assessment and develop a country-specific training curriculum for child protection actors involved in monitoring and reporting on children's rights violations. Training should seek to improve understanding of the MRM and SCR 1612 and increase knowledge and skills on monitoring and reporting, human rights, child protection, and gender-based violence (GBV).¹³
- The Taskforces should develop a country-wide training plan that addresses the gaps and needs identified in training needs assessments carried out in-country.
- The Taskforce should increase the participation of national-level human rights organizations on the Taskforce that could gather information from conflict-affected areas through fact-finding missions and meetings with community-based organizations there without jeopardizing their own operational presence.

MAINTAINING SECURITY & RESPECTING RIGHTS

- Taskforce members should devise a strategy to help identify, reduce, and prevent security incidents related to monitoring and reporting. This strategy should include methods by and ways in which Taskforce members will uphold ethics related to data collection, including the principles of confidentiality and informed consent.
- Members of the Taskforce should develop a standard operating procedure (SOP) detailing a minimum set of actions different members of the Taskforce should take when the security of respondents, children, or information collectors is threatened during the collection or verification of data.¹⁴
- The Taskforce should devise a Code of Conduct to guide how Taskforce members handle and manage specific case-related information and maintain the confidentiality of this information. All members must agree to support this Code of Conduct.
- UNICEF and other Taskforce members should provide detailed information for all Taskforce members and all others participating in data collection regarding the principles of confidentiality and informed consent, including how to uphold these principles in monitoring and reporting, how to incorporate them into the work of the Taskforce, and the importance of these principles.

- UNICEF and the MRM Taskforce should identify confidential ways for NGOs and other actors to submit confidential information about violations perpetrated by armed groups directly to UNICEF or other UN staff at the district-level (see above: Participation of NGOs in Monitoring and Reporting).
- The Taskforce should create a field-friendly, one-page document explaining SCR 1612, the MRM, and how information collected is used. This document should be translated into Sinhala and Tamil.
- The Taskforce should create field-friendly versions of the Secretary-General's reports on children and armed conflict in Sri Lanka and the Security Council Working Group's conclusions on Sri Lanka. These should be translated into Sinhala and Tamil and should be distributed to community leaders and local child protection actors to demonstrate how collected information is being used.

LEVERAGING NETWORKS & RESOURCES

- The Taskforce should survey and assess the various agencies and networks in Sri Lanka which collect information related to the six violations and consider the ways in which these groups might collaborate with the Taskforce while supporting their mandates. This includes ensuring that all partnerships and means of collaboration uphold the confidentiality of survivors and respondents.
- UNICEF and other UN agencies should strengthen and create better links between the Taskforce, GBV Forum, and Emergency Child Protection Forum by working with focal points from these groups to identify overlaps and potential points of cooperation and ways to maximize collaboration.
- UNICEF and other members of the Taskforce should improve collaboration with experts on human rights monitoring, GBV, and database management to improve the overall functionality of the MRM. This could include increasing the participation of these actors in Taskforce meetings and increasing their role in assisting with the collection and verification of information, where feasible.
- UNICEF and the MRM Taskforce should explore ways to collect information through program-related data from actors who provide services to survivors of violence, particularly to survivors of GBV. This might include developing appropriate agreements or memoranda of understanding to solicit additional information while still maintaining confidentiality and the safety of the survivor.



- In collaboration, the UN Resident/Humanitarian Coordinator and the UNICEF Representative should identify the potential roles and inputs various UN agencies can perform to improve the functionality of the MRM.
- As the new lead for GBV in the Taskforce, UNHCR should ensure it works with UNFPA and the World Health Organization (WHO), and in particular the experts at their relevant headquarters, to help improve the methods employed by the MRM to collect GBV-related data.

TRIGGERING A RESPONSE TO VIOLATIONS

- The Taskforce should conduct a “who, what, where” assessment of various actors in each district who can receive referrals and provide services to survivors of violence. This information should be given to all agencies and individuals collecting information for the Taskforce so they know where to refer cases for support and assistance.
- Taskforce members should devise a list of potential and specific responses which Taskforce members or other actors can take upon receiving information on child rights violations collected through the MRM in Sri Lanka. Such responses might include issuing press releases and public statements, refining and revising programmatic interventions to respond to the needs of children whose rights have been violated, or referring child survivors and respondents to other agencies for specific social or legal services.
- Taskforce members should identify international advocates to liaise and partner with those who can issue public statements, including press releases, and internal notes of concern to key policymakers in instances where public advocacy is difficult or impossible.
- The Taskforce should continue to work closely with the OSRSG-CAAC which conducts high-level and national-level advocacy on behalf of children and armed conflict and can direct attention away from UN agencies and NGOs on the ground.
- To improve advocacy efforts, Taskforce members should outline the various actions NGOs can take to use information collected by the Taskforce for national and international advocacy as well as the related protocols NGOs should adhere to when using such information.
- The Taskforce should increase its communication with the diplomatic community, providing them with information on the implementation of SCR 1612 and the MRM on a regular basis. In return, the diplomatic

community should increase its support of the Taskforce and the UNCT to implement the MRM.

Endnotes

1. Annex I of the Secretary-General's fifth report on children and armed conflict included groups in Côte d'Ivoire, Burundi, Democratic Republic of Congo, Somalia, Sudan. Annex II listed groups in Colombia, Myanmar, Nepal, Philippines, Sri Lanka, and Uganda.
2. In addition to establishing the MRM, SCR 1612 also called for the creation of a Security Council Working Group on Children and Armed Conflict (SCWG-CAAC) to review MRM reports, review action plans by parties to conflict to halt the recruitment and use of children in their groups, and consider other relevant information presented to it.
3. In its reports, Watchlist uses the term survivor to refer to an individual who is a victim of violence, abuse or exploitation. Referring to them as survivors recognizes and highlights their strength and resilience. For legal settings, the term victim may be appropriate and required to conform to applicable laws. In non-legal settings, however, being a victim connotes powerlessness and stigmatization, the very outcomes protection actors are seeking to prevent.
4. Many respondents noted that it is commonly understood in Sri Lanka that the Karuna Faction has acted with some level of support from the GoSL. Respondents noted that at the very least, the government is believed to be coordinating its actions with the Karuna Faction.
5. The New York-based Steering Committee on Monitoring and Reporting, co-chaired by UNICEF and the OSRSG-CAAC, is in the process of finalizing guidelines to help facilitate the implementation of the MRM. These guidelines are expected to be released in early 2008 and are likely to include information on verification of cases which should assist the Taskforce to undertake this activity in the Sri Lanka context.
6. It is anticipated that the forthcoming guidelines will provide direction on the creation of a country-specific training curriculum within a common training framework.
7. Afghanistan accounted for the largest number of aid worker deaths with 26 deaths followed by Sri Lanka and then Sudan, where 15 aid workers were killed in 2006. “A Violent Year for Aid Workers.” Reuters AlertNet, December 28, 2006.
8. One national staff of the UN Office for Project Services (UNOPS) was killed in August 2006.

9. It is anticipated that the forthcoming guidelines will provide direction on the development of this SOP.

10. The Sri Lanka Monitoring Mission (SLMM) was established in accordance with the 2002 Ceasefire Agreement (CFA) of 2002 between the GoSL and the LTTE to monitor compliance to the CFA. The SLMM therefore receives its mandate from both Parties and both the GoSL and the LTTE have committed themselves to cooperate with the SLMM. According to article 3.5 of the CFA, the SLMM must be composed of representatives from Nordic countries. At present, monitors come from Iceland and Norway.

11. Women in Need, a national NGO in Sri Lanka that provides case management services to survivors of GBV, is one example of an organization which may be in a position to provide information to the Taskforce, though Watchlist was unable to meet with this organization during its visit to Sri Lanka. See www.winsl.org for more information.

12. The New York-based Steering Committee on Monitoring and Reporting, co-chaired by UNICEF and the OSRSG-CAAC, is in the process of finalizing guidelines to help facilitate the implementation of the MRM. These guidelines are expected to be released in early 2008 and are likely to include information on verification of cases which should assist the Taskforce to undertake this activity in the Sri Lanka context.

13. It is anticipated that the forthcoming guidelines will provide direction on the creation of a country-specific training curriculum within a common training framework.

14. It is anticipated that the forthcoming guidelines will provide direction on the development of this SOP.



Key Points of Security Council Resolution 1612

The UN Security Council:

- Strongly condemns the recruitment and use of child soldiers by parties to conflict and other children and armed conflict violations.
- Expresses serious concern regarding the lack of progress in developing and implementing action plans to halt the recruitment and use of child soldiers.
- Reiterates its intention to consider imposing targeted and graduated measures such as, inter alia, a ban on the export or supply of small arms and light weapons and other military equipment and assistance.
- Requests that the Secretary-General implement a monitoring and reporting mechanism (MRM) on violations against children in five armed conflict situations.
- Decides to establish a working group of the Security Council on children and armed conflict consisting of UNSC member states.
- Urges member states and other parties concerned to take appropriate measures to control the illicit trade of small arms to parties to armed conflict.
- Requests the Secretary-General continue to take all necessary action in relation to the zero-tolerance policy on sexual exploitation perpetrated by peacekeepers.
- Urges troop-contributing states to take appropriate preventive and disciplinary action to ensure full accountability and compliance with UN policies on sexual exploitation and abuse.
- Decides to continue deploying child protection advisers to UN peacekeeping missions.
- Reiterates its request to the Secretary-General to include child protection information in country-specific reports.



The **Watchlist on Children and Armed Conflict** is a network of non-governmental organizations working to monitor and report on violations against children in situations of armed conflict.

Watchlist on Children and Armed Conflict
c/o Women's Commission for Refugee Women and Children
122 East 42nd Street, 11th floor
New York, NY 10168-1289

Phone: 212.551.2941

Fax: 212.551.3180

Email: watchlist@womenscommission.org

Access reports at: www.watchlist.org