UNICEF HELPDESK

GENDER-BASED VIOLENCE IN EMERGENCIES

Children Associated with Armed Forces and Armed Groups and GBViE Programming

UNICEF GBViE HELPDESK

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About the UNICEF GBViE Helpdesk

The Helpdesk is a technical advice and learning service for UNICEF global, regional and country office staff. Technical support focuses on questions UNICEF staff and partners may have on existing or prospective programming linked to 1) integrating GBV risk mitigation in sector response in line with the IASC *Guidelines for Integrating Gender-based Violence Interventions in Humanitarian Action*[i]; and 2) undertaking GBV-specialist prevention and response programming in line with the UNICEF GBViE Resource Pack[ii] and other global good practice guidance.

Details of the services available for UNICEF staff through the GBViE helpdesk, and access to existing materials can be found at http://www.sddirect.org.uk/our-work/gbv-in-emergencies-helpdesk/

Managed by Social Development Direct, the Helpdesk is staffed by a global roster of GBV experts ready to provide rapid, tailored support to all UNICEF staff and partners—including GBV specialists, sector programmers, coordinators, and management. For more information about the Helpdesk, contact:

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Acronyms

AoR	Area of Responsibility
CAAFAG	Children Affected by Armed Forces and Groups
CCC	Core Commitments to Children
CEDAW	Convention on the Elimination of Discrimination Against Women
CMR	Clinical Management of Rape
CP	Child Protection
CPIMS	Child Protection Information Management System
DDR	Disarmament, Demobilisation and Reintegration
DPI	United Nations Department of Public Information
DPKO	Department of Peacekeeping Operations
DRC	Democratic Republic of Congo
GBV	Gender-based Violence
GBViE	Gender-based Violence in Emergencies
GBVIMS	Gender-based Violence Information Management System
IASC	Inter-Agency Standing Committee
IAWG	Inter-Agency Working Group
IDDRS	Integrated Disarmament, Demobilisation and Rehabilitation (DDR) Standards
INGO	International Non-governmental Organization
IP	Implementing Partner
IPV	Intimate Partner Violence
IRC	International Rescue Committee
ISIL	Islamic State of Iraq and the Levant
JAS	Jama'atu Ahlis Sunna Lidda'awati wal-Jihad (also known as Boko Haram)
MARA	Monitoring, Analysis and Reporting Arrangements
MHPSS	Mental health Psychosocial Support
MRM	Monitoring and Reporting Mechanism
NDC	Nduma défense of Congo
NGO	Non-governmental Organization
OHCHR	Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights

RTAP	Real Time Accountability Partnership
SCR	Security Council Resolution
SDDirect	Social Development Direct
SDF	Syrian Democratic Forces
SG	Secretary-General
SOP	Standard Operating Procedure
SPLA	Sudan People's Liberation Army
SPLA-IO	Sudan People's Liberation Army – In Opposition
SRSG CAC	Special Representative of the Secretary-General for Children and Armed Conflict
SSNLM	South Sudan National Liberation Movement
STI	Sexually-transmitted Infection
SV	Sexual Violence
UN	United Nations
UNDP	United Nations Development Programme
UNHCR	United Nations High Commission for Refugees
UNICEF	United Nations Children's Fund
UNOCHA	United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Assistance
UNODC	United Nations Office of Drugs and Crime
UNU	United Nations University
VAC	Violence Against Children
VAWG	Violence Against Women and Girls
YPG	Yekîneyên Parastina Gel
YPJ	Yekîneyên Parastina Jin

1. Introduction: Children Associated with Armed Forces and Armed Groups

2.1 What do we mean by CAAFAG?

The *Paris Principles and Guidelines on Children Associated with Armed Forces or Armed Groups* (2007, hereafter referred to as the "Paris Principles") define **a child associated with armed forces or armed groups** as:

> *any person below 18 years of age who is or was used by an armed force in any capacity, including but not limited to children, boys and girls, used as fighters, cooks, porters, messengers, spies or for sexual purposes.*[iii]

The Paris Principles preference the term CAAFAG because it is more expansive than the term "child soldier", as a CAAFAG does not necessarily have to take a part in hostilities. This uptake of the term CAAFAG and its ongoing use by the international community reflects awareness of the multiple uses of children by armed forces or armed groups, and in particular has important implications for girls, whose relationship to armed forces or armed groups may not always, or even typically, be captured by the label "child soldier." Thus, the term CAAFAG itself calls upon the international community to recognize and address girls in work to prevent recruitment and facilitate the release and reintegration of CAAFAG.[iv] The Paris Principles specifically highlight the importance of adopting proactive measures to "ensure the full involvement and inclusion of girls in all aspects of prevention of recruitment, release and reintegration, and services should always respond to their specific needs for protection and assistance."[v] The Paris Principles further note, as one of the core lessons learned from global experience, that "the protective environment should incorporate measures to prevent discrimination against girls whose use in armed conflicts is pervasive yet often unrecognised and to promote their equal status in society."[vi]

2.2 The current nature and scope of the problem of CAAFAG

The use of children by armed forces and armed groups has received accelerated international attention over the last two decades, and while progress has been made in addressing the issue, children continue to be engaged in wars around the world. Although it is difficult to identify the exact number of children linked to armed forces or armed groups globally, many tens of thousands of children are currently involved, with hundreds of thousands affected in the last decade.[vii] The Secretary-General's most recent Annual Report on Children and Armed Conflict, released in June 2018, noted that intensification of armed conflicts in countries around the world had led to a sharp increase in some settings of the use of children by armed forces and armed groups:

> *Verified cases of the recruitment and use of children quadrupled in the Central African Republic (299) and doubled in the Democratic Republic of the Congo (1,049) compared to 2016. The number of verified cases of the recruitment and use of children in Somalia (2,127), South Sudan (1,221), the Syrian Arab Republic (961) and Yemen (842) persisted at alarming levels.*[viii]

Armed groups, such as the Islamic State in Iraq and the Levant (ISIL) and Boko Haram in Nigeria, continue to recruit and use children on a large scale, including across borders. Some children have been recruited by force, though many have joined as a result of economic, social or security pressures. Situations of displacement and poverty make children even more vulnerable to recruitment. In the case of girls, gender inequality can play a particularly

important and often devastating role in their recruitment and experience within the armed force/group, as described further below.

In all instances, children associated with armed forces or armed groups are exposed to tremendous violence – regularly forced both to witness and commit violence, while themselves being physically and sexually abused, exploited, injured or even killed as a result. Their condition deprives them of their rights, often with severe physical and emotional consequences. And yet, as noted in the SG's annual report, many boys and girls are often "doubly victimized" by subsequently being detained by governments and/or rejected by families and communities for their former association with armed forces or groups. As an urgent and essential matter in addressing the needs of CAAFAG, the SG underscored as recently as July 2018 that "children that have been recruited should be treated primarily as victims…"[ix] Of particular relevance to this paper, the SG also enjoined member states and the donor community to address funding gaps for the reintegration of children and "to place a specific focus on girls."[x]

2.3 Understanding the particular GBV risks for girls associated with armed forces and armed groups

The SG's report specially highlights the needs of CAAFAG programming for girls because the risks for girls are widespread, gender-based and often invisible, requiring specialized interventions. This is particularly true in reference to girls affected by armed forces and groups and GBV.

Much has been written about girls' exposure to sexual violence as a function of their engagement in armed forces and armed groups. In the often highly patriarchal structures of armed forces and armed groups, girls can become chattel shared among combatants for sexual purposes, expected to engage in intercourse and other sexual activities to maintain soldiers' morale, celebrate a victory, or even ensure soldiers remain awake when an enemy attack is imminent.[xi] In order to avoid this sustained and devastating sexual violence, a girl might agree or seek to become a 'wife' to a higher-level commander. Though this relationship is still highly abusive, it offers some measure of protection, particularly if the combatant is high-ranking, as reflected in one girl's experience during the conflict in Sierra Leone:

> "At the beginning, I was raped daily. At least one person would come to me for sex….I was every man's wife. But later, one of them, an officer, had a special interest in me. He then protected me against others and never allowed others to use me. He continued to [rape me] alone and less frequently."[xii]

It is not unusual for girls to get pregnant as a result of these unions. In Northern Uganda, 37% of the girl respondents in a CAAFAG study, including nearly all the girl mothers, were pregnant with children conceived in captivity.[xiii] Pregnancy may complicate girls' willingness or ability to leave armed forces or armed groups and heighten the stigma they and their child(ren) face upon return to their communities and families of origin; they increase the risk of ill-health for mothers and their children--especially young mothers whose reproductive health systems are not sufficiently mature, At the same time, pregnancies may offer some protection from harassment, according to stories of girls in Angola:

> "Being pregnant liberated the person from work even if there was work to do...the suffering reduced [if you had children] because there were places that children could not go."[xiv]

Also important to recognize—but often overlooked in CAAFAG prevention programmes--- is that GBV may be a driver of girls' vulnerability to recruitment or enslavement in armed groups. Girls may want to flee from the risk of child marriages, or other forms of violence and abuse in their homes or communities. In Jordan, a study commissioned by UN Women (2016) of women's violent radicalisation found that interviewees believed that the most common factor causing women and girls to become radicalised was economic/financial pressures followed by domestic abuse.[xv] In Colombia research also found that many women joined an armed group to escape domestic violence and that a high number of demobilised women had experienced sexual violence from early childhood at the hands of fathers, brothers and other relatives. [xvi] Particularly in very restrictive and gender-discriminatory cultures, girls may feel that association with an armed group provides them a measure of independence that their families and communities do not. In some instances, parents may allow or even encourage their girls to engage with armed forces if that offers other family members some protection or status, or if there is financial gain.

And on the other side, GBV can escalate after girls' release from armed groups if support systems are not established. Girls can be at risk of direct retaliation in communities hostile to girls' participation in armed groups, whether for political reasons, or because of stigma attached to affected girls, often as a result of their presumed sexual activity during their engagement with armed forces or armed groups.[xvii] In Nepal it was found that girls leaving armed groups were at greater risk of early marriage "as a means of social control over girls who may have come back with different ideas about their own lives."[xviii] Some Nepali girls also chose not to return to their communities but rather to urban areas, with some engaging in prostitution as a means of survival. For girls around the world, it is not uncommon for exposure to sexual violence in childhood to contribute to increased sexual risk-taking later in life, as well as increased risk of future victimization and abuse. [xix]

Other impacts of GBV to which girls are exposed can be similarly far-reaching. Not only can exposure impact girls' immediate sexual, physical and psychological health, it also contributes to greater risk of future health problems. Possible sexual health effects include unwanted pregnancies, complications from unsafe abortions, and sexually transmitted infections, including HIV. Possible physical health effects of GBV include injuries that can cause both acute and chronic illness, impacting neurological, gastrointestinal, muscular, urinary, and reproductive systems. Possible mental health problems include depression, anxiety, harmful alcohol and drug use, post-traumatic stress disorder and suicidality. These effects can be compounded by the social stigma and isolation that is often associated with GBV.

Despite the potentially vast negative impact that exposure to GBV has before, during and after girls' engagement with armed forces and armed groups, it is critical to remember and reinforce girls' agency and resilience in release and reintegration programming. And, as the Syria case study below illustrates, programming efforts must be contextualized based on the expressed needs of the affected girls; even in the same crisis, girls' experiences as part of armed forces or armed groups can be very different.

Syria Case Study – Understanding the different needs of girls returning to civilian life and beneficiaries of reintegration programming

Although there have been no formal release and reintegration processes in Syria to date, UNICEF is preparing for the potential need to engage in future DDR processes. This potential varies considerably across different armed groups. Regarding the Kurdish People's Protection Units, including "Yekîneyên Parastina Gel (YPG) for the mixed male/female unit, and

"Yekîneyên Parastina Jin" (YPJ) for the all-female unit, this is likely to take the form of organised caseloads. However, regarding the so-called Islamic State of Iraq and the Levant (ISIL), providing support to CAAFAG presents a different set of challenges, some of which are complex and sensitive in different ways as evidenced below. These are just two of more than eighty armed actors responsible for child recruitment in Syria over the past few years.

2017 saw a large increase in the recruitment of women and girls by YPG as it expanded its territory. [xx] The majority of these female recruits are used in combat roles, through the YPJ, and although there are reports of forced recruitment[xxi] UNICEF interviews have predominantly found CAAFAG who joined 'voluntarily' for ideological and economic reasons.[xxii] Alongside ideological alignment, the monthly stipend of approximately $100 (an amount which continues to vary over time) has become a strong driving factor for girls joining and staying with the YPG/YPJ.[xxiii] In many cases the conflict has offered a kind of social empowerment/status, making them socially independent and/or the breadwinners of their families.

It is likely that DDR for these girls will accelerate following the September 2018 military order of the Syrian Democratic Forces (SDF) about addressing the problem of child recruitment. This situation presents a challenge for UNICEF and DDR programmers. Many of the girls interviewed by UNICEF and others report finding the experience of being in the YPG/YPJ empowering, having been given the opportunity to receive training and have experiences that would previously have been impossible according to conventional social norms. A return to civilian life is challenging for female CAAFAG who have experienced newfound agency, and also for the communities into which they must reintegrate who may struggle to accept the new role of the girls. It is therefore crucial that programming support is community-based, in order to optimise the possibility that the girls are accepted, with livelihood programming that reflects the girls' newfound roles as breadwinners. DDR programmes should be seen as an opportunity to support positive change around girls' empowerment in Syria.

Perhaps because of the perceived benefits that can encourage girls to join the YPG/YPJ, there are far fewer reported instances of GBV amongst the girls who are currently being or about to be demobilised. The experience of UNICEF is that girls who have been interviewed have not spoken about experiencing GBV while associated with the YPG/YPJ – however, caution must be taken in equating low levels of reporting with low numbers of incidents. There is also a recurrent narrative that girls joined the YPG/YPJ because they were escaping from GBV or forced marriage.[xxiv] The challenge for UNICEF and DDR programmers is in creating an environment where survivors of GBV feel safe to seek support in a situation where admission of experiencing GBV may clash with a so-called liberation group's typical narrative of inclusion, rights, equality, etc. DDR programming must therefore promote support for survivors while also avoiding retaliation – such as accusations levelled against DDR programmers and INGOs by female ex-combatants in Nepal who claimed programmers were searching for examples of GBV where it did not exist. It is also important the programme avoid framing female CAAFAG exclusively as victims. In addition, while GBV considerations need to be incorporated into all CAAFAG programming, the primary focus should be placed on making services available and accessible for survivors of GBV, as opposed to attempting to "verify" that GBV has occurred within a particular armed force/group.

As can be seen in other contexts, one major child protection challenge is that GBV – and particularly child marriage and intimate partner violence (IPV) – is widespread in the local context. A key programming challenge is thus how to avoid moving girls from one at-risk situation to another. Moreover, with regard to the YPG/YPJ, in many cases girls have reported feeling empowered by their experience, and reintegration may represent a return to more traditional gender roles within their families and communities. A community-based DDR

programme is therefore both essential and an opportunity to support norm change around gender and GBV.

Providing support to female CAAFAG from ISIL presents a different set of challenges. In the case of ISIL the majority of female CAAFAG are forcibly recruited. While some girls were taken from their families by physical force other families were forced by circumstance; as the OHCHR report states, *"One less mouth to feed was a reason often cited countrywide for early marriage, and increased poverty brought about by the conflict encouraged this harmful practice,"*[xxv] whereas in other instances a family may offer a girl to ISIL *"as a kind of protection bargain."*[xxvi] Girls are also approached by female delegations who apply social pressure to join.[xxvii]

Female CAAFAG who were involved with ISIL are much more likely to have reported experiencing GBV. A 2018 report by OHCHR stated that from 2014 onwards forced marriage of Sunni women and girls to ISIL fighters was increasingly visible, and that "the vast majority" of documented cases were those of girls aged between 12 and 16 years.[xxviii] One official ISIL text states that *"it is considered legitimate for a girl to be married at the age of nine".*[xxix] Some of the girls have been divorced, whereas others have been passed from one fighter to the next as their "husbands" have died in the conflict. Some girls have been held as sexual slaves from as young as aged nine.[xxx]

One of the challenges faced by UNICEF and DDR programmers in the Syria crisis is that of providing support to female CAAFAG who do not want their link with ISIL to be known due to the associated stigma. While there may be differences between the experiences of girls from different geographical areas or ethnic groups, one experience they all share is the perception that they are all perceived as "ISIL women and children". Amongst all communities in Syria a girl's "loss of honour" due to sexual relations, regardless of circumstance, leads to a profound stigma that affects female CAAFAG even after they have escaped. This exists on top of the stigma experienced by both boys and girls as a result of having belonged to ISIL. This means that any programming would have to ensure that the identities and experiences of the girls are protected even as efforts are undertaken to support their specific needs.

Another challenge for programmers is that, unlike in the case of the YPG/YPJ, the release of female CAAFAG from ISIL has been happening as a trickle rather than as an organised caseload. This means that DDR and GBV response programming must be more agile and integrated in larger programming initiatives, not for a specific target group. Furthermore, many CAAFAG are not from Syria, meaning they are likely to return at some point to their home countries and require a continuum of care in terms of GBV response.

2. The responsibilities of UNICEF staff working with girls affected by armed forces and groups

UNICEF's internal commitments, strategies and operational plans reflect and reinforce its responsibility to address the issue of CAAFAG, as well as the problem of GBV in emergencies (and in preparedness, recovery and development operations). Starting from UNICEF's mission statement[xxxi] and its Core Commitments to Children (CCCs), UNICEF has stressed its dual responsibility to child protection and the promotion of gender equality (GE) through girls' and women's empowerment and the reduction and GBV.

This responsibility is further reinforced in UNICEF's Policy for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Girls and Women (2013)[xxxii], and its follow-on Gender Action Plan (2018-2020).[xxxiii] The Gender Equality policy emphasizes:

> *"UNICEF programming has as a premise that discrimination against women and girls is endemic, and where it is not addressed it is likely to be perpetuated. UNICEF therefore tailors its cooperation as necessary to promote equal outcomes for girls and boys, so that gender discrimination is not being inadvertently perpetuated through its programmes."[xxxiv]*

As such, UNICEF and its staff undertake *"to ensure that our humanitarian action is carried out in a gender-responsive manner"[xxxv]*, based on its CCCs.

Actions for child protection under the CCCs reference both GBV and CAAFAG, and emphasize the importance of both prevention and response, from preparedness through to recovery:

- **Child Protection Commitment 5:** Violence, exploitation and abuse of children and women, including GBV, are prevented and addressed
- **Child Protection Commitment 7:** Child recruitment and use, as well as illegal and arbitrary detention, are addressed and prevented for conflict-affected children. [xxxvi]

Actions to be undertaken to meet these commitments are further elaborated in the *Minimum Standards for Child Protection in Emergencies[xxxvii]*, which has two specific standards on violence against children (Standard 8 on Physical Violence and Harmful Practices, and Standard 9 on Sexual Violence) that both briefly reference the importance of addressing the needs of CAAFAG. Standard 11 focuses specifically on CAAFAG, and while many of its recommendations speak more generally to children (i.e. are not specific to girls), there are several recommendations on specifically relating to girls, almost all linked to GBV:

- **When conducting advocacy:** Highlight the additional risk of sexual abuse faced by girls being recruited and used (voluntarily or forcibly), and the stigma and trauma resulting from such abuses
- **During screening and identification**: if the screening is part of a broader, formal DDR process for adults, special provisions must be made to identify children, especially girls, whose presence may be hidden, as they are often considered dependents of the soldiers.
- **When designing interim care:** Girls may have specific needs, particularly if they have been sexually abused, are pregnant, or have young children. Design transitional centres in a way that protects the privacy and safety of girls (for example, with separate washing facilities and sleeping rooms).
- **During family tracing and reunification:** Before families are reunited, social workers should liaise with them to make sure that the child will not be rejected by the family due to fear of judgment by the community (particularly relevant for girls).

Perhaps the most comprehensive of UNICEF's internal guidance on addressing GBV as it affects girls affected by armed forces and groups is in its recently published *GBViE Resource Pack[xxxviii]*, which has an entire module aimed at supporting UNICEF country offices and partners to integrate GBV prevention and response into Disarmament, Demobilization and Reintegration (DDR) processes. It identifies three objectives in UNICEF's work to integrate GBV mitigation and response into DDR processes:

- To respond to the GBV-related health, psychosocial and safety needs of survivors participating in DDR processes and foster their reintegration into the community;

- To reduce the risk of GBV occurring during disarmament and demobilization processes; and

- To build resilience of girls and women[xxxix] recruited and used by armed groups and reduce their vulnerability to GBV after demobilization and during reintegration.

In addition to its internal commitments, UNICEF is a key global leader in promoting the legal and normative framework that underpins prohibitions against the recruitment and use of children by armed forces and armed groups. (For more information about UNICEF's global leadership in CAAFAG and GBV, see Annex A.) This framework includes the Paris Principles, of which UNICEF was a major architect, as well as the Integrated DDR Standards (IDDRS), a repository of policies, guidelines and procedures on DDR, for which UNICEF leads a working group. Both these tools provide female-specific CAAFAG guidance, highlighted in Section 4 below.[xl] (For further description of key resources on CAAFAG that highlight the needs of girls, as well as GBV resources relevant to girls affected, see Annex B.)

3. Key Programming Actions to Prevent, Mitigate and Respond to GBV-related Risks and Needs of Girls Associated with Armed Forces and Armed Groups

The actions identified below are drawn from the Minimum Standards for Child Protection in Emergencies[1], the Operational Guide to the Integrated DDR Standards (IDDRS), the Paris Principles and the recently released UNICEF GBViE Resource Pack. Taken together, these actions represent some of the core priorities for child protection specialists working with CAAFAG to consider when addressing the needs of girls, especially the links between girls' experiences with armed forces and armed groups and GBV. CAAFAG specialists should seek out the advice of GBV specialists as needed when designing and implementing programming. In particular, efforts to address some of the more specialist GBV-related service delivery needs of girls should be undertaken in collaboration with GBV programming experts.

1. Prevention and Preparedness: Successful prevention programs must take into account the underlying gender inequities and discrimination faced by girls and include targeted interventions to ensure a protective environment for girls. At the same time that prevention measures are put in place, efforts also must be underway to prepare for the release of any girls who have already become associated with armed forces and armed groups. These include engaging communities to promote norms of acceptance and practices that contribute to a safe and supportive environment for released girls who have been affected by armed forces and groups.

1.1 Protective Environment: A key step to prevention is to engage actors at all levels to provide a protective environment for girls who are at risk of GBV, recruitment, re-recruitment and abduction into armed forces and armed groups. Another critical and often overlooked aspect of ensuring a protective environment is reducing girls' risk of GBV and gender discrimination at home and in their communities that may drive their participation or recruitment in armed forces and armed groups.

- Identify and support girls who may be particularly vulnerable to forced recruitment or abductions, with special attention to vulnerabilities that are compounded by discrimination against girls, such as in access to education, (including preference for educating boys, unsafe schools zones and risks in getting to schools); the burden of domestic chores (including walking long distances for water and firewood); etc.
- Assist adolescent girls in addressing their specific GBV and other safety concerns, and support their participation in age-appropriate girl-friendly community services, safe spaces, girls' clubs, and other support programmes.
- Strengthen existing community-based child protection mechanisms, parent-support groups, and other local protective networks for girls.

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[1] The Child Protection Minimum Standards were being revised at the time of publishing this note. They are projected to be finalised in the first half for 2019.

- Support and build the capacity of women's organizations to monitor protection needs of girls in their communities and, where appropriate, create standard consultation/feedback mechanisms between women's organizations and child protection actors that are sensitive to the local context as well as to girls' protection rights and needs.
- Deliver GBV education and prevention activities targeting entire communities, including men and boys, in areas affected by child recruitment.

1.2 Preparedness: Preparedness includes assessment and planning to initiate efforts that will support the effective release, demobilization and reintegration of girls with strategies that both attend to their exposure to GBV, and prevent and reduce future risks of GBV.

- Ascertain the number and percentage of women and girls in armed forces and groups as soon as possible, and incidents of child recruitment, recognizing the challenges of ensuring girls are included in CAAFAG data, and in accessing data.
- In collaboration with GBV experts, conduct a joint situation or context analysis that collects information about the numbers, roles and various GBV-related risks for girls within armed groups; the challenges they face in accessing DDR programmes and GBV support services; and the challenges they face in family and community reintegration.
- Assess how awareness can be raised among military commanders about the need to include women and girls as beneficiaries of DDR and ensure their active leadership and participation in the design and implementation of DDR programming.
- Draw on the experience of female ex-combatants, supporters or dependents who have 'self-reintegrated' on what could be incentives and/or obstacles faced by girls from release to reintegration.
- Assess community perceptions of their roles and responsibility towards girls (distinctly from boys) and community capacities to meet the needs of returning girls (distinctly from boys).
- Identify social norms that impact girls' reintegration, including economic participation, and design communications interventions to sensitize communities to the needs and rights of girls and their children and that promote norms of acceptance and support, including of affected girls who are GBV survivors.
- Identify local capacities of women's organizations to provide support and services to affected girls during release and reintegration processes.

1.3 Advocacy: This entails raising awareness and advocating at all levels with families, communities, local, national and international organizations as well armed forces and armed groups about the GBV risks associated with girls affected by armed forces and groups and legal protection against it.

- Map, advocate for and support laws, policies, and national plans of action by both state and non-state actors to end and prevent the recruitment of CAAFAG and to ensure the safe reintegration of girls and their children born as a result of association with armed forces or armed groups

- Initiate dialogue with armed forces or armed groups that underscores that girls used as "wives" or for other forced sexual relations, forced marriage, domestic labour or logistical support in armed conflict constitute acts of recruitment or use and is therefore contrary to fundamental human rights and humanitarian law and standards (and, where relevant, contrary to national law).
- Advocate for inclusive targeting criteria so that female combatants and those recruited and used by armed groups are eligible for DDR services.
- Advocate for GBV-related rights and needs to be reflected within DDR policies and frameworks, and ensure that government-led release schemes include reintegrating girls as well as their children born as a result of association with armed forces or armed groups.
- Include women's voices and experiences in radio sensitization programmes, newspaper articles and other means used to raise DDR awareness among affected girls.
- Include female community leaders and women's organizations in awareness-raising meetings organized to prepare communities to receive ex-combatants, supporters and their dependents.

1.4 Coordination: Given the multi-sectoral response required to address GBV as well as the specific needs of girls affected by armed forces and groups, coordination between multiple sectors, organizations and actors is important to create and implement unified prevention and preparedness strategies.

- Work with local leaders, community groups, schools and women's and youth organizations to take action to prevent recruitment or voluntary participation by girls in armed forces or groups.
- Strengthen community-based early warning systems to monitor and report incidents of girl recruitment and use/disappearances. Ensure that these systems are linked to local and national child protection or protection monitoring systems.
- Ensure ongoing and effective coordination between the Country Task Force on MRM and other mechanisms for monitoring and reporting human rights violations such as the MARA.
- Coordinate with GBV specialists in the assessment, planning, design and implementation of services to survivors.

1.5 Resource Mobilization: 'Resource mobilization' refers not only to accessing funding, but also to scaling up human resources, technical capacities, supplies and donor commitment.

- Assist communities in mobilizing resources to meet the needs of the returning girls (as well as the needs of other especially vulnerable girls in the community).
- Ensure that child protection staff are trained on identification of girls associated with armed forces or armed groups, and the process of release and reintegration.
- Provide technical support for the development of a minimum package of age- and gender-specific GBV protection and response services during each step of the release and reintegration process.

- Solicit funding for economic strengthening and livelihoods initiatives for affected and other at-risk girls and women in return communities.

2. Response: Response covers a broad array of activities aimed at meeting the needs of girls who are released from armed forces and armed groups. Any response mechanisms designed to assist girls affected by armed forces and groups need to strike a careful balance between seeking to identify girls in order to meet their particular needs and not further stigmatizing them. Throughout the entire response, specialized GBV programming should be available to girls. As with all GBV programming, response programming for affected girls must abide by survivor-centered principles that ensure non-discrimination, confidentiality, respect and dignity of girls.

2.1 Release: Release is the first step in the process of social recovery and social integration for CAAFAG. It is the period when formal registration may be undertaken and temporary assistance provided to help meet immediate needs.

- All measures should be taken to ensure girls see themselves as eligible for release and are empowered to participate safely in release, registration and early assistance programmes, through widespread—but careful and non-stigmatizing—outreach, with methods informed by girls themselves.
- In order to increase the likelihood of girls affected by armed forces and groups (including girls who are pregnant or mothers) accessing release programmes that meet their needs, release programmes for girls should always be designed to include the following:
  - The presence of accessible female employees at all times during the process
  - Safe and private accommodation for girls where accommodation is required, either transit//interim care or any residential care sites, with specific health services, including reproductive health care, separate washing and toilet facilities, adapted hygiene kits, and clean birthing kits
  - Measures to ensure the safety and protection of girls in residential settings/interim care sites such as regulated access of male former combatants to the sites, periodic safety assessments, proper lighting and regular surveillance and patrolling by security forces (in which women security personnel are a majority, wherever possible, for girls' areas)
  - Nutrition and health care for infants and young children where necessary and support to girl mothers to care for their children
  - Provision of gender-sensitive non-food items, including those that often get overlooked, such as diapers, baby formula, baby clothes, etc.

2.2 Formal and Informal Disarmament and Demobilization: "Demobilization" broadly refers to the formal and controlled discharge of soldiers from an armed force or armed group. Many child protection organizations may not use the term 'demobilization' because it confers legality or official recognition upon the use of children in armed conflict – yet using children as soldiers is illegal under international law.

However, this does not diminish the importance of attention to CAAFAG in both formal and informal DDR process. This includes attention to girls who have been subject to GBV as a part of their association with armed forces and armed groups.

- When designing DDR interventions, actors should consult girls affected to ensure that services, assistance and programmes respond to their specific concerns and needs, including safety issues such as being separated from available protective mechanisms within the armed force or armed group, being forced to leave children behind; concerns about community rejection; etc.
- Deliver information campaigns targeting girls recruited and used by armed groups to build awareness of their eligibility for DDR programmes.
- Provide training on GBV protection and response to military and civilian DDR personnel working is disarmament and demobilization sites.
- Provide training in GBV prevention and response to Child Protection and other service providers in demobilization sites.
- Include specific training on gender and GBV as part of the DDR process for male combatants.
- Involve women's groups and female community leaders in awareness-raising activities and in monitoring weapons collection and destruction to reduce exclusion and/or exploitation and other harm to girls in the process.
- Ensure that girl mothers who are combatants or otherwise associated with armed forces and groups will not be separated from their children during demobilization.

2.3 Reintegration: Reintegration should be considered a long-term effort, particularly for girls whose ability to reintegrate is compromised by on-going discrimination, stigma, and isolation. Reintegration efforts must work at a variety of levels, supporting the provision of educational, vocational and livelihood opportunities for girls affected, alongside community-based approaches to facilitate their acceptance, support and empowerment.

- Ensure that a community–oriented approach is adopted during the reintegration phase; conduct on-going discussions with key community members about returning girls and how they can accept, support and empower these girls and, where relevant, their children.
- Allocate resources to train girls affected by armed forces and groups, their supporters, dependents and community members on how to care for and cope with those girls as well as their children born as a result of girls' association with armed forces or armed groups.
- Establish additional community-based programming for girls that includes attention to:

Education
- Ensure girls' access to education irrespective of whether they are pregnant or mothers
- Promote equality of access for girls to vocational training in all types of occupations, including those which have traditionally been limited to men and boys.

Economic integration, livelihoods, training, access to land and cash

- Support girls to engage in meaningful (and remunerative) livelihoods activities, such as farming cash crops and raising livestock, as opposed to only engaging in subsistence agriculture.
- Allocate funding for child care, and make the necessary arrangements to allow girls to take part in training (e.g. organize training as close as possible to where they live).
- Give girls a voice in determining the types of marketable vocational skills they should acquire.
- Assist girls to build their houses, taking into account their scheduling needs related to working from home in self-employment activities.
- Take measures to ensure widows of ex-combatants and single female ex-combatants and supporters are recognized as heads of households, and are therefore permitted to own and rent existing housing and land.
- As appropriate, provide direct cash assistance, taking into account female spending patterns and needs when designing cash assistance, as well as the risk of violence by partners, families and communities as a result of girls' having access to or carrying cash.

2.4 Supportive family and community environment: In addition to education and livelihoods programmes noted above, reintegration efforts should also seek to mobilize women's and youth organisations and other community support networks to build systems of social support in the community and in families. This approach will reduce the risks of stigmatization and reprisals against girls affected, while strengthening child protection systems in the long run.

- Provide funding to women's and youths groups to deliver social programmes for affected girls that build on their resilience and capacity.
- Encourage the establishment of formal/ informal self-help groups among female ex-combatants and supporters.
- Encourage safe, ethical, and empowering community mental health practices to deal with girls' specific suffering or trauma, ensuring these practices do not reinforce traditional gender norms or practices.[xli]
- Provide parenting skills and mother and child health education for girl mothers or pregnant girls**.**

2.5 General Health and Reproductive Health Services from Release to Integration: It is important to address girls' (and their children's) basic health needs as part of their recovery and reintegration; lack of access to services can put girls at future risk of GBV, such as when girls risk exploitation in order to pay for basic health services for themselves or their children. General health services should be available from release to reintegration, not only by building capacity of release programmes to provide targeted services, but also by developing sustained health services for girls at the community level.

- Ensure that girls who have been injured or disabled receive appropriate medical assistance, care and follow up.

- Ensure that services for reproductive health problems including infertility, fistula and sexually transmitted infections, as well as risks and results of early pregnancy and induced abortion or miscarriage or birth without adequate medical care, are available.
- Other services available should include pregnancy testing, and management of pregnancy including management of induced abortion, safe termination, and provision of antenatal and postnatal care.
- Ensure that confidential and *voluntary* (never mandatory) HIV testing is available as well as support to girls who are HIV-positive, and to women and girls heading households where HIV-positive ex-combatants may be living.

2.6 Multi-sectoral GBV Response from Release to Integration: As with basic health services, multi-sectoral GBV response must be provided from release through to reintegration, with provision for ensuring that girls affected by armed forces and groups can access safe, ethical and supportive long-term care in their communities of return. Multi-sectoral care includes collaboration and coordination across key sectors that include (but are not limited to) health, psychosocial, legal/justice and security. These services should not be distinct from other community-based services, but rather integrated into services available to entire community to ensure access and sustainability.

- Deliver a standard package of age- and gender-specific GBV protection and response services for girls and women from release through to reintegration and beyond that include, at minimum, medical, psychosocial and safety response.
  - Where not pre-existing, build the capacity of medical facilities to provide clinical management of rape and deal in a sensitive manner with the consequences of sexual assault and abuse (including sexually transmitted infections, attempted abortions, etc.). Ensure staff dealing with GBV must be fully trained and aware of child-friendly assessment and interview protocols.
  - Ensure case management for GBV-related response and protection needs is available through specialized service providers, and also ensure that less formal psychosocial support can be accessed through women's, youth and peer groups for emotional support, particularly related to stigma, discrimination and isolation that affected girls may experience, as well as for human rights and GBV information and education. Introduce prevention mechanisms in case management that seek to reduce risk of future recruitment.
  - In line with safe and ethical research practices that are survivor-driven and survivor-centered and support the welfare of all participants, consider assembling testimonies of GBV during conflict and establishing links between the DDR process and the justice system to prosecute perpetrators of sexual abuse of girls by armed forces and groups.

4. Lessons Learned and Challenges in Preventing, Mitigating and Responding to GBV affecting Girls Associated with Armed Forces and Armed Groups

5.1 UNICEF's CAAFAG programme results

UNICEF's 2017 Annual Results Report highlights some of the important work the agency is undertaking globally linked to CAAFAG, some of which is specific to girls:

- In 2017, UNICEF supported the release and reintegration of approximately 12,000 children from armed forces and groups in 16 countries, and around 13,000 children who were released and received appropriate care and services.

- In Nigeria, UNICEF assisted more than 6,000 children and women associated with armed groups and/or survivors of gender-based violence with reintegration support, including 792 children released from administrative custody by security forces.

- In the Central African Republic, more than 3,000 children (including 865 girls) associated with armed groups benefited from interim care, psychosocial support and family reunification.

- In the Democratic Republic of the Congo, UNICEF's advocacy in collaboration with the United Nations Stabilization Mission and other partners led to the release of 3,204 children from armed groups and provided temporary assistance.

- In Afghanistan, to address child recruitment into the armed forces, 12 Child Protection Units were established within the Afghan National Police. A total of 34 functioning units across the country prevented the recruitment of at least 1,411 children in 2017.

- In the Philippines, the government issued a directive requiring regular self-monitoring and age-assessment guidelines to establish safeguards for the prevention of (re)association of children.

- In the Central African Republic, 3,026 children were released by various armed groups.[xlii]

Of particular note, Nigeria established a new focus on girls linked to non-state armed groups. Through sustained advocacy and support, 456 girls abducted and sexually assaulted by Boko Haram were reintegrated in 2017, further detailed in the case study below.

Nigeria Case Study – Addressing stigma and re-victimisation

UNICEF is the only international organisation providing support to CAAFAG in Nigeria, in spite of the widespread need.[xliii] The agency provides a full programme of support to CAAFAG through its transit centres in Maiduguri, where children stay for up to 12 weeks before returning to their communities. Since the issue of stigmatisation is a big concern for all who have been associated with Boko Haram,[xliv] immediate reintegration back into communities is not possible; the transit centres therefore provide an opportunity to prepare both the former CAAFAG, as well as the communities, for their return.

Many of the girls who enter the centres have experienced GBV at the hands of Boko Haram, which has pursued a systematic policy of impregnating the women and girls they take captive in order to foster a new generation of fighters.[xlv] Interviewed escapees have described being locked in houses by the dozen to be raped, sometimes with the specific goal of impregnation.[xlvi] Women and girls have also been raped by Boko Haram members who claim the act is a sexual "jizya", a tax paid by Christians under Islamic law.[xlvii] As can be seen with women and girls associated with armed groups around the world, "marriage" to one fighter

may represent an alternative to being used by several fighters. Many girls associated with Boko Haram have become "wives".

The issue of stigmatisation for girls who have been associated with Boko Haram is tremendous, and it is common for them to experience rejection and re-victimisation at the hands of their communities. One common fear is that returning girls have become brainwashed and will carry out attacks on the families and communities to which they have returned, as has been the case with girls forced to become suicide bombers.[xlviii],[xlix] In addition to this physical fear, returning girls are also often rejected as "Boko Haram wives", thereby often destroying their future marriage prospects.[l],[li]

Many of the girls who have escaped from or been released by Boko Haram are pregnant on their return. Both these mothers and their children face marginalisation due to the widespread, acute fear and suspicion of children born of sexual violence. The qualitative study by International Alert and UNICEF, *Bad Blood*, provides a wealth of evidence that such children may be perceived as *"a hyena among dogs"* because of the belief that *"a child of a snake is a snake".*[lii] Due to this stigmatisation, some pregnant girls of do not want to keep the child and attempt to abort the pregnancy,[liii] a practice which is illegal and therefore perilous in Nigeria. Others prefer to give up their child: as one who was quoted in *Bad Blood* says: *"I did not follow JAS willingly. The government should take the custody of the child when I deliver."*[liv]

UNICEF has tackled this issue of stigmatisation by working with local community leaders, in particular religious leaders, to help with mediation, acceptance and social cohesion. Additional strategies have included peer to peer support, roundtable discussions, local radio programming, delivering messages through partners in mosques, and the identification of local champions. Key actors leading the message of reintegration have included the Ministry of Woman Affairs and the National Association of Muslim Women, as well as the Women, Peace and Security Networks. Programmers emphasise that government involvement in leading the call for acceptance has been key. The approach has seen some success and, whereas between 2013 and 2015 acceptance of CAAFAG back into their communities was limited, now approximately three-quarters are accepted back without problems.[lv] Once the girls have returned to the community they are linked to referral systems for continuation of support.[lvi]

The UNICEF programme has some limitations, however. Due to ongoing insecurity the bulk of UNICEF programming is restricted to transit centres in the state capital, Maiduguri, and so cannot be accessed by all who need it. In the Local Government Authorities UNICEF offers more remote support to escaped CAAFAG, however the centres are run by the Nigerian military forces – who themselves have been perpetrators of widespread rape and sexual violence – alongside IDP camp officials, security officers, and members of civilian vigilante groups.[lvii]

In Northeast Nigeria a hybrid situation exists whereby there is a combination of mass releases of groups of girls as well as a trickle effect of ad hoc releases and escapes. While UNICEF programming has successfully provided support to those who are able to reach Maiduguri and those who are demobilised en masse, challenges remain around providing support for those who are released in a less systematic manner. One study that interviewed 156 people stated that while STI testing and psychosocial counselling is available to those that are released as part of a large group, *"it is unclear to what extent other survivors of abduction and sexual violence can access such services"*.[lviii]

5.2 Challenges in reaching girls affected by armed forces and groups

Despite gains and the clear effort that UNICEF continues to make to improve its capacity to specifically target girls in its CAAFAG programmes, UNICEF and others continue to experience challenges in addressing the needs of affected girls, particularly in relation to their exposure to GBV. In research undertaken in 2017 to inform a UNICEF GBV Capacity-Development Plan, several key informants noted a concern that UNICEF lacks technical understanding related to programming for girls who have experienced GBV as a driver or as an outcome of their association with armed forces or armed groups.

Given the particular challenges associated with this issue, this finding is perhaps not surprising; the Paris Principles explicitly acknowledge that "guaranteeing girls' access to DDR programmes is a major challenge…for a range of reasons, girls are rarely provided with assistance." The Paris Principles recognize that:

> *While there are commonalities between the circumstances and experiences of girls and boys, the situation for girls can be very different in relation to the reasons and manner in which they join the armed forces or armed groups; the potential for their release; the effects that the experience of being in the armed force or armed group has on their physical, social and emotional well-being; and the consequences this may have for their ability to successfully adapt to civilian life or reintegrate into family and community life after their release.*[lix]

The Paris Principles, alongside other CAAFAG tools and guidelines, have noted the importance of understanding these challenges in a first step to improving response. Some key challenges include, but are not limited to, the following:

✓ **Like women, girls are generally 'invisible' and neglected, both by members of armed forces and groups and by DDR planners and programme staff.** When this happens, DDR personnel may assume that girls are not present in armed forces and groups because they are not visible.[lx] The case study below from South Sudan underscores the challenges of ensuring girls are engaged in release and reintegration programming—while demobilization of girls was successful in one part of the country, in another part of the country girls were almost completely absent from the release caseload.

✓ **It may be more difficult for women and girls to escape armed forces or armed groups** for several reasons. In the DRC it has been noted that is difficult for girls to escape, especially when they are pregnant or have children as this may entail days of walking through dangerous and difficult terrain. In addition, it has also been noted that girls may feel compelled to remain with the armed group to avoid the social stigma attached to their association with rebels when they return to their communities.[lxi] Research in Syria also notes that restrictions on the movements of girls and women, especially in areas controlled by the Islamic State (IS), makes it difficult for women and girls to move without a male guardian (Alsaba and Kapilashrami 2016).

✓ **Members of armed forces and groups are often reluctant to give up their girl captives, who may be serving them as forced wives and domestic servants, among the wide variety of combat and non-combat roles played by girls.** There is some evidence that some groups (for example NDC/Cheka in DRC) fear that they will be held accountable especially for acts of sexual violence against girls, and reportedly hope to avoid arrest by concealing the fact that there are women and girls under their command. As a result women and girls have not been included in surrendering process. Commanders may also not see women and girls as soldiers, and therefore they may not consider them relevant to negotiations around release of child soldiers.

- ✓ **DDR programmes that are reliant on the handing in of weapons often disadvantage girls and women**. Even where women and girls have taken active roles in combat, research notes that the weapons they use often comes from a communal source or they may be using weapons that were not included in the eligibility criteria (such as machetes). There is also evidence from numerous situations of commanders preventing women from participating in DDR programmes by controlling access to weapons (in order to be able to give them to others) and in order to maintain the official position of both government and opposition groups that there were no female combatants.[lxii]

- ✓ **Women's groups, even if they may be a particularly astute source of information about the situation of girls affected by armed forces and groups, may not be considered as a key informant target when assessing and planning for prevention, release and reintegration programming.** Experience in Nepal shows that weak communications channels resulted in many women and children believing that they were not eligible for support and that reproductive health and child health medical services were not available at cantonment camps (even though they were to some extent), and therefore many did not present themselves (DPI, 2016). Due to the high number of girls that do not come through formal DDR processes, it is particularly important that information is disseminated so that service providers can identify these girls or that they can self-register for support. In Liberia it has been noted that working actively with women's groups was a very useful mechanism to reach women and girls.

- ✓ **During reintegration, girls often face particular challenges in being accepted back into their families and communities, with girl mothers and their children born during their association with an armed force or armed group experiencing the highest levels of rejection and abuse upon return.** Girls, especially those who may have children as a result of their association with an armed force or armed group, may be particularly reluctant to engage in standard DDR programmes that do not specifically anticipate and address their concerns, particularly in terms of the safety and well-being of their children and how they will be reintegrated (including in terms of having access to legal identity/nationalization papers for the children).

- ✓ **In some contexts girls and women experience more freedom in armed forces or groups, for example through enhanced decision-making power or through participation in combat,** which can make it difficult for them to return to communities that still practice widespread traditional gender norms restricting opportunities for women and girls (see the case study from Syria, above). This can also hamper their reintegration as women and girls can be confined to low value feminine income-generating activities that offer little opportunity for self-sufficiency. This is particularly problematic for single mothers who must also be able to support a child. On the other hand, women who seek out more remunerative—and therefore typically male-dominated-- forms of employment can be at risk of GBV and backlash for doing so.

- ✓ **The on-going challenges to accurately document the presence of girls associated with armed forces and armed groups (in any capacity) contributes to challenges in meeting their needs.** While data should not be a precondition in any setting to undertaking programming for gender-based violence, the lack of data related to affected girls that is available through existing mechanisms – such as the MRM, MARA, CPIMS or GBVIMS – further contributes to the likelihood that girls can be overlooked in CAAFAG prevention and response. While in some cases this lack of data is reflective of a lack of understanding about the need to disaggregate the experience of girls, it may also be due to girls or armed forces/groups hiding girls' association due to stigma, requiring specific strategies to improve data collection and analysis on girls who are affected.

South Sudan Case Study – Supporting demobilized girls

UNICEF has been providing support to demobilised CAAFAG since the conflict in South Sudan began in December 2013. However, although a peace agreement was signed in August 2016, in one of the conflict affected areas, Yambio, it has only been possible to run a programme of support for CAAFAG since February 2018. This was in part because of the continuing insecurity in the area. A key feature of the South Sudan approach to demobilization is designing reintegration activities that target other youth in the community alongside CAAFAG. There are also a number of community-wide benefits woven in -- such as boreholes, education programmes, health services, etc. – that are meant to help with the community's acceptance of the CAAFAG intervention more broadly.

In Yambio approximately 600 CAAFAG were demobilised by the South Sudan National Liberation Movement (SSNLM), with about a third of these being girls. UNICEF and national DDR Commission's programming for CAAFAG in South Sudan involves a package of care that includes three months' worth of food rations, family tracing and reunification, psychosocial support, education, vocational training and economic strengthening opportunities. UNICEF works with civil society partners and international NGOs to build the protective capacities of children and communities to prevent re-recruitment.

The package provided is line with the Paris Principles and includes gender-sensitive psychosocial support, STI tests and GBV and medical services.[lxiii] Screening is provided for all demobilised CAAFAG, and in a recent caseload of 211 there were 17 who reported having recently experienced GBV. There are interim care centres where services are available as well as accommodation for CAAFAG who are unable to return to their families. One of the issues identified in Yambio is of girls who were taken as "wives" of soldiers and who now have children of their own. Although military commanders may have signed off on the demobilisation programme, individual soldiers are refusing to accept the agreement and continue to make threats to the safety of the girls and their families. Local police and judiciary are ill-equipped to address the situation. [lxiv]

One of the major challenges in providing services to the Yambio caseload, in particular those who have experienced GBV, has been the gap of approximately 18 months between the Peace Agreement and the release of the first tranche. In the interim children have returned to their communities and the opportunity to provide medical and psychological support to survivors of GBV may have been lost.

By comparison, in Pibor, of the 2000 children demobilised by the Cobra Faction, only 5 were girls. Compared to the large proportion of girls in the Yambio caseload it would appear that the Yambio programme was more successful in identifying female CAAFAG. This may be an issue relating to how CAAFAG are defined, which is particularly problematic in Pibor where fighting forces are very much integrated with the community and so female CAAFAG are more difficult to readily identify.

The use of women and girls as armed combatants is not common in South Sudan,[lxv] however in many of the armed groups their numbers may be just as high, used for carrying, cooking, and as "wives".[lxvi] South Sudan has over 40 armed groups[lxvii] and the presence of women and girls in these groups may depend on each group's military tactics. While the more "conventional" forces such as the SPLA, SPLA-IO and SSNLM have barracks and a more tangible presence, others such as the White Army and Cobra Faction have a more mobile strategy and in these cases the identification of female CAAFAG is particularly challenging since the women and girls who fulfil support roles are integrated in the community.

As can be seen in other conflict affected countries (see Syria case study), one of the major challenges faced by CAAFAG programmes addressing GBV is that the prevailing sociocultural norms in South Sudan also allow for widespread GBV, meaning that a demobilised CAAFAG may be leaving one protection issue only to face another. In South Sudan the problem of GBV was endemic even before the current conflict,[lxviii],[lxix],[lxx] with IPV accepted as the norm[lxxi] and child and early marriage being both a form of GBV as well as an enabling factor for other forms of GBV. Although the Child Act (2008) prohibits marriage under the age of 18, and the Penal Code (2008) prohibits sex with a child, customary practices prevail and according to the GBV subcluster 40% of girls will be married before the age of 18,[lxxii] with this figure likely much higher in Nilotic areas. The practice of paying and receiving bride price is a strong contributing factor to the perpetuation both of child marriage and IPV.[lxxiii] Programmers in South Sudan therefore face the challenge of supporting female CAAFAG to leave one situation where they face GBV, only to enter another. Potential responses to this must include the continuation of social norm change programmes alongside emergency response programming.

In a previous DDR programme prior to the current conflict, UNICEF supported 360 demobilised CAAFAG through a programme run in cooperation with Veterinaires Sans Frontieres, which focused on livelihoods. This found that providing small ruminants (sheep/goats) was a successful strategy in deterring children from returning to the SPLA.[lxxiv] Given the economic challenges in South Sudan, and dependence on livestock, it is highly likely that a similar type of support would be beneficial in the current programme.

Annex A: UNICEF's Global Role on CAAFAG and GBV

UNICEF is a key global leader in promoting the legal and normative framework that underpins prohibitions against the recruitment and use of children by armed forces and armed groups. UNICEF led the drafting and endorsement of the Paris Principles noted above and, alongside the Office of the Special Representative of the Secretary-General for Children and Armed Conflict (SRSG CAC) and the Government of France, hosts annual ministerial follow-up forums during the UN General Assembly Sessions in collaboration with members of the Paris Principles steering group. Co-chaired by UNICEF and Save the Children, the Paris Principles steering group encourages governments, intergovernmental organizations and civil society to follow the Paris commitments and the Paris principles and guidelines in all funding, advocacy and programming for the care and protection of children associated with armed forces or armed groups. UNICEF also participates in the Interagency Working Group on Disarmament, Demobilization and Reintegration (DDR), co-chaired by the Department of Peacekeeping Operations (DPKO) and the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), of which one main achievement is the development of the Integrated DDR Standards (IDDRS), a repository of policies, guidelines and procedures on DDR which provides both female- and child-specific DDR guidance.[lxxv] UNICEF co-leads the DDR Standards Working Group.

UNICEF advocated successfully for the ratification and implementation of the Optional Protocol to the Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC) on the involvement of children in armed conflict, adopted into force by the UN General Assembly in May 2000. Of the currently 196 nations that are party to the CRC, as of 2017, 167 have signed the optional protocol,[lxxvi] agreeing in line with the protocol that:

- States will not recruit children under the age of 18 to send them to the battlefield.
- States will not conscript soldiers below the age of 18.
- States should take all possible measures to prevent such recruitment –including legislation to prohibit and criminalize the recruitment of children under 18 and involve them in hostilities.
- States will demobilize anyone under 18 conscripted or used in hostilities and will provide physical, psychological recovery services and help their social reintegration.
- Armed groups distinct from the armed forces of a country should not, under any circumstances, recruit or use in hostilities anyone under 18.[lxxvii]

In addition, UNICEF has supported the drafting and uptake of Security Council Resolutions (SCRs) focused on children affected by armed conflict, including SCR 1612 (2005), which required the UN Secretary-General to establish a monitoring and reporting mechanism (MRM), managed by country-based task forces co-led by UNICEF and the highest UN representative in the country, that are responsible for providing timely information on six grave children's rights violations, of which one is the recruitment or use of children as soldiers.[lxxviii] To this end, UNICEF engages at the country level with government forces and rebel groups perpetrating recruitment or use of children, killing, maiming, rape or other sexual violence to develop action plans to end and prevent these violations from taking place, noting that governments hold ultimate responsibility for protecting children and ending impunity for grave violations against children.[lxxix] At the global level, UNICEF develops tools, guidelines, training materials and information management systems necessary to strengthen the MRM.

UNICEF's work in emergencies further supports the implementation of the UN SCRs on Women, Peace and Security, starting with SCR 1325 (2000), which "encourages all those

involved in the planning of disarmament, demobilization and reintegration to consider the different needs for female and male ex-combatants and to take into account the needs of their dependents." Other WPS SCRs also include women-specific provisions linked to DDR. (See table below.)

SCR 1960 outlines specific steps for the prevention of and protection from sexual violence in conflict, including the establishment of standardized monitoring, analysis and reporting arrangements (MARA), in order to provide timely information on conflict-related sexual violence to the Security Council in an effort to reduce the risk of sexual violence and improve assistance to survivors. In countries where it is operational, the MARA task forces will typically coordinate with the UNICEF-led MRM task forces.

	SCR 1325 (2000)	SCR 1889 (2009)	SCR 1820 (2008)	SCR 1888 (2009)	SCR 1960 (2010)
General scope	First SCR to link women's experiences of conflict to the international peace and security agenda: addresses the impact of war on women and their contribution to conflict resolution and sustainable peace.	Addresses women's exclusion from peacebuilding planning and institutions and consequent lack of adequate funding for their needs.	First SCR to recognize conflict-related sexual violence as a tactic of warfare and a critical component of the maintenance of international peace and security.	Strengthens tools for implementing SCR 1820 through assigning leadership, building, judicial response expertise, and reporting mechanisms.	Urges the Secretary-General to establish monitoring, analysis and reporting arrangements on sexual violence in conflict, and better cooperation among UN actors for a system-wide response to sexual violence.
DDR-specific provisions	Calls for considering the different needs of female and male ex-combatants and to take into account the needs of their dependants in the planning of DDR (OP 13).	Takes into account the particular needs of women and girls in the planning of DDR programmes and ensures their full access to these programmes (OP 13).	Effective protection from violence against women in DDR processes (OP 10).	Sexual violence issues to be specifically addressed in DDR processes (OP 17).	States, with support from the international community, to increase access to health care, psychosocial support, legal assistance and socio-economic reintegration services for victims of sexual violence.

DDR and UN Women, Peace and Security Framework, UNDDR Resource Centre, http://www.unddr.org/key-topics/gender/read-more_6.aspx

Beyond its engagement with MARA, UNICEF has a broad-reaching mandate and responsibility to provide leadership in GBV prevention and response programming globally including ensuring quality and scale of programming efforts in emergencies. UNICEF has endorsed and is an integral partner in a number of inter-agency initiatives on addressing GBV in humanitarian response, such as the Call to Action on Protection from Gender-based Violence in Emergencies ('the Call to Action');[lxxx] the Real Time Accountability Partnership (RTAP);[lxxxi] and the New Global Partnership to End Violence Against Children.[lxxxii] UNICEF has also directly produced or co-produced a number of GBV tools and guidelines relevant to girls specifically, highlighted in Annex B.

Annex B: Summary of Key Resources relating to girls affected by armed forces and groups and GBV

The below provide a **list of key resources in relation to CAAFAG and GBV**. Most of the documents below include specific guidance in relation to how girls and GBV risks should be considered within CAAFAG documentation and programming. However, **it is noteworthy that most of these documents do not make links to longer-term GBV risks**. For example while there is significant consideration for the importance of addressing the stigma often experienced by demobilised girls in their families and communities, there is little discussion about how gender inequality feeds into this and how this increases the risk for girls of experiencing GBV, including by former partners or other demobilised men/boys.

1) *Paris Principles and Guidelines for Children Associated with Armed Forces or Armed Groups (the "Paris Principles")*

http://www.refworld.org/docid/465198442.html

The Paris Commitments and Principles is one of the most important frameworks setting out the rights of CAAFAG. They set out a detailed guidelines for how to protect children from recruitment and for providing assistance to those already involved in armed forces or armed groups. They complement the political and legal mechanisms already in place at the UN Security Council, the International Criminal Court and other bodies that protect children from violence and exploitation. The Paris Principles recognise the specific vulnerability of girls associated with armed forces and groups and provides a specific chapter on protection of girls. It highlights that:

- There are almost always a significant number of girls amongst children associated with armed forces or armed groups and that "**the situation for girls can be very different** in relation to the reasons and manner in which they join the armed forces or armed groups; the potential for their release; the effects that the experience of being in the armed force or armed group has on their physical, social and emotional well being; and the consequences this may have for their ability to successfully adapt to civilian life or reintegrate into family and community life after their release."

- Actors should recognise that **girls are at risk of being 'invisible' and take measures to ensure that girls are included at all stages** including in the planning stage, the design of eligibility criteria and screening procedures for inclusion in release and reintegration programmes and informal release processes through to programming for reintegration, monitoring and follow-up.

- **Actors should invest in learning from each other about how to work effectively with girls associated with armed forces or armed groups**.

2) *Operational Guide to the Integrated Disarmament, Demobilization and Reintegration Standards* (IDDRS United Nations Inter-agency Working Group on DDR (IAWG), 2014 – currently being reviewed and updated

http://www.unddr.org/uploads/documents/Operational%20Guide.pdf

The IDDRS is the other important framework that sets out standards for how to work with CAAFAG. It includes specific reference to how girls are particularly vulnerable to violence both when with armed groups and in the DDR process. The guide has two specific relevant chapters, one on children and one on women, gender and DDR.

Some of the good practices identified in this guide in relation to GBV and CAAFAG include:

- The need for DDR programmes to be **based on gender equality and be underpinned by gender-sensitive assessments**. This will require both female and male staff on the programme teams and the need for regular gender training for all staff.

- DDR personnel should **always assume that girls are present in armed forces and groups, even if they are not visible** and that no distinction should be made between combatants and non-combatants (where most girls are likely to be found) when eligibility criteria are determined. For girls it is also doubly important to make sure that handing in a weapon is not a pre-condition for accessing the DDR services as girls are less likely to carry a weapon.

- **Women's groups should be involved in raising awareness** of the DDR processes and respected members of the community (including women) should be involved in mediation to release girls, from armed groups and forces.

- **Supporting girls to access the programme through alternative mechanisms** and supporting girls' involvement outside of cantonment sites, which may be deemed unsafe for girls. Where girls need to stay in cantonment sites these should be specifically designed for girls and the duration should be minimised.

- **Interim care arrangements for girls need to be appropriate** and foster families adequately vetted so as not to put girls at risk of further violence and exploitation.

- The need for specific attention to be directed towards **girls' health and psychological needs**, as they are far more likely than boys to have been subjected to sexual violence, sometimes over long periods of time.

- **Reintegration support to girls need to be tailored to specifically deal with gender inequality issues** such as increased stigma they may face when they return to their communities, and the perception and shame of being sexually abused, including when they return pregnant or with a child. It notes that families need to be carefully supported to take the girl back in a non-judgemental way, but that in many cases this may be difficult despite mediation and that girls may be better off moving to larger towns or cities where reintegration might be easier.

- **Girls should be consulted about realistic reintegration options** including schooling and vocational training and livelihoods support (bearing in mind many community restrictions placed on girls in the communities where they reintegrate).

- **Girl mothers need a particularly tailored support package that also includes careful analysis of the welfare of the child** and the increased livelihood burden of a girl mother in order to support both herself and the child. In situations of forced marriage, girls and young women should remain secure and separated from their partner, to give them time both to be reunited with family members and to think about whether or not to re-join their partner. In addition to prevent cycles of violence, girl mothers should be enabled to learn positive parenting skills so their children grow up in a nurturing household that is free of violence and abuse.

3) GBViE Resource Pack, UNICEF

https://www.dropbox.com/sh/uxi676ezp5j426o/AADkEdligIqp7b87n_tnDMHoa?dl=0

This resource pack includes a specific section on how GBV can be addressed through DDR processes. **The document clearly outlines how gender and GBV should be included within the DDR process including through planning, implementation and monitoring**

and evaluation. It highlights a number of best practices that are included in a more limited or implicit way in other key resources such as the integration of:

- **Safety assessments for women and girls in order to identify those girls and women who have immediate safety concerns**. This might include for example, an individual who does not wish to remain in a forced marriage or other relationship with a commander requires immediate protection.

- **Safe transportation to and from demobilization sites for females and their children** in order to help to reduce risks associated with re-abduction, trafficking and other forms of GBV.

- **Early identification of community-level factors that may negatively affect reintegration of GBV survivors, or make girls and women vulnerable to GBV once they return home**. This is important for both short- and longer-term social and economic reintegration strategies for survivors and other at-risk girls and women.

The document also includes a section on **evaluation and suggested indicators** to use to support the development of structured assessment and learning around gender integration and the inclusion of GBV within DDR programmes.

4) *Practical Guide to foster community acceptance of girls associated with armed groups in DR Congo, Child Soldiers International, 2017*

https://www.child-soldiers.org/Handlers/Download.ashx?IDMF=d0adf1d9-fdbc-487d-8a8a-346b11571369

This guidance document focuses specifically on helping DDR actors respond to the needs of girls formerly associated with armed groups in eastern DRC, and to overcome the many obstacles to their release and reintegration. The guide is based on the findings from the report *What the Girls Say: Improving Practices to Reintegrate Girls in DRC* which was also conducted by Child Soldiers International and based on qualitative data collected from girls formerly associated with any of the armed groups in eastern DRC.

The guide focuses on interventions that are inexpensive and can be carried out by community members - building on existing community resources, noting the difficulty of funding for DDR actors in the DRC. The guidance offers practical suggestions for how to engage community members through different mediums to support the reintegration of girls, how girls can regain the 'value' they lost by being associated with an armed force or group and how to support girls with psychosocial support.

5) *DDR and Children: Operational Guideline, African Union Commission, 2014*

http://www.peaceau.org/uploads/au-operational-guidance-note-on-children-in-ddr.pdf

This guidance document aims to support African stakeholders, particularly AU member states with operational guidelines to assist in designing and building institutional frameworks for a national DDR programme. The document provides an outline of how, from a national perspective, African governments could best design and implement a DDR program that respond to the needs of children. While the document does not mention GBV it has mainstreamed specific concerns for girls associated with armed forces and groups across the document, this includes into the entry of DDR programmes as well as during demobilisation and reintegration. It highlights key issues particularly relevant to girls including how to handle issues of forced marriages, pregnancy and the need to ensure that CAAFAG (especially girls) who do not go through a formal DDR process are still supported to reintegrate.

6) Field Manual: Monitoring and Reporting Mechanism (MRM) on Grave Violations Against Children in situations of Armed Conflict

https://childrenandarmedconflict.un.org/wp-content/uploads/2016/04/MRM_Field_5_June_2014.pdf

This toolkit provides an overview of the MRM and how it should be implemented. It offers some but limited guidance in relation to gender. In particular it notes that data should be disaggregated by sex and that certain violations of children's rights may constitute gender-based violence if the violation is particularly directed against children due to her/his sex or identity. It suggests that MRM practitioners should be sensitive to the specific needs and coping mechanism of girls and boys, when dealing with all violations against children, but particularly those that may relate to a child's sexuality or self-image.

The guide also offers good practice on interviewing children including reiterating the need for the best interest of the child to always take precedence. It suggests that girls and women may feel more comfortable speaking to a female interviewer and that the interviewer will need to be aware of cultural taboos and risks for the survivor of telling his/her story.[lxxxiii]

7) The 1612 Monitoring and Reporting Mechanism: A Resource Pack for NGOs, Watchlist on Children and Armed Conflict 2015

http://watchlist.org/wp-content/uploads/2127-Watchlist-MRM_finalcomplete.pdf

This guide is targeted at NGOs to support their participation in the MRM at country level. While it makes reference to gender and programmes and reporting to be gender sensitive, the guide offers limited support to encourage NGOs to understand the links between GBV and engagement on CAAFAG and the MRM more widely.

8) Seymour, Claudia (2018). Cradled by Conflict: Implications for Programming. United Nations University.

http://collections.unu.edu/view/UNU:6575

This Technical Note aims to help guide programming intended to prevent and address the recruitment and use of children by armed groups in today's conflicts. It is an output of the United Nations University's Children and Extreme Violence Project, which sought to fill key knowledge gaps about how and why children become associated with, are used by, and leave armed groups in contemporary conflicts, particularly those groups deemed "terrorist" or "violent extremist". The project was a collaboration of UNU, UNICEF, DPKO, and the Governments of Luxembourg and Switzerland. This note is based on the research findings in UNU's Cradled by Conflict: Child Involvement with Armed Groups in Contemporary Conflict (2018) and extensive consultations with practitioners and children to determine how existing programming and practice might be strengthened to respond to the particular challenges facing child protection practitioners in contemporary conflicts. The aim of this technical note is to supplement existing programming tools and literature for child protection practitioners and partners working on the prevention of child recruitment and use, and the release, and reintegration of children associated with armed forces or armed groups (CAAFAG) in contemporary conflict settings.

9) Handbook on Children Recruited and Exploited by Terrorist and Violent Extremist Groups: The Role of the Justice System (UNODC, 2017)

https://www.unodc.org/documents/justice-and-prison-reform/Child-Victims/Handbook_on_Children_Recruited_and_Exploited_by_Terrorist_and_Violent_Extremist_Groups_the_Role_of_the_Justice_System.E.pdf

This Handbook was developed with a view to providing coherent and consistent guidance to national authorities on the treatment of children recruited and exploited by terrorist and violent extremist groups, with emphasis on the role of the justice system. It recognizes girls' particular risks in child recruitment, and addresses the issue of reparations for sexual violence as well as other forms of GBV.

In addition to these girl-specific resources above, UNICEF has led or otherwise supported the development of a number of seminal inter-agency global, regional and country-level GBV resources. Some of these global-level GBV resources particularly relevant to CAAFAG include:

- IASC GBV Guidelines (particularly the CP Thematic Area Guide)
- IASC Caring for Survivors of Sexual Violence in Emergencies
- IRC and UNICEF, Caring for Child Survivors of Sexual Abuse: Guidelines for health and psychosocial service providers in humanitarian settings
- Interagency Gender-Based Violence Case Management Guidelines: Providing Care and Case Management to GBV Survivors in Humanitarian Settings
- Empowered and Safe: Economic Strengthening for Girls in Emergencies
- Adolescent Girls Toolkit

Annex C: Bibliography

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xxix Islamic State, "Women in the Islamic State", January 2015, p. 30. Available from https://therinjfoundation.files.wordpress.com/2015/01/women-of-the-islamic-state3.pdf

xxx United Nations Human Rights Council. (2016) *"They came to destroy": ISIS Crimes Against the Yazidis* A/HRC/32/CRP.2 https://www.ohchr.org/Documents/HRBodies/HRCouncil/CoISyria/A_HRC_32_CRP.2_en.pdf

xxxi "UNICEF is committed to ensuring special protection for the most disadvantaged children - victims of war, disasters, extreme poverty, all forms of violence and exploitation and those with disabilities… UNICEF aims, through its country programmes, to promote the equal rights of women and girls and to support their full participation in the political, social, and economic development of their communities." See http://www.unicef.org/about/who/index_mission.html

xxxii See https://www.unicef.org/gender/gender_57854.html

xxxiii See https://www.unicef.org/gender/gender_57856.html   Although there is no specific mention of affected girls, UNICEF's Gender Action Plan identifies prevention of and response to GBV as one of 5 priority areas under the 'Adolescent girls' well-being and empowerment' programmatic tracks. In line with that priority, UNICEF developed an Operational Guide and GBV Theory of Change that outline UNICEF's vision for addressing GBV against girls and women in humanitarian settings, and although the Operational Guide does not specifically reference affected girls, it emphasizes the importance of innovation and capacity building in GBV work – which would include the relatively under-addressed area of girls affected by armed forces and groups.

xxxiv UNICEF Gender Equality Policy, p 5.

xxxv UNICEF Gender Equality Policy, p 4.

xxxvi UNICEF (2010a) *Core Commitments for Children in Humanitarian Action,* New York: UNICEF, https://www.unicef.org/emergencies/index_68710.html

xxxvii Child Protection Working Group (CPWG) (2012) *Minimum Standards for Child Protection in Humanitarian Action.* UNICEF led the development of these Minimum Standards through its leadership of the CPWG. See http://cpwg.net/minimum-standards/

xxxviii Available at https://www.dropbox.com/sh/ki7ifqckshaq0r9/AABR2BAwGLB4c1OFkNh6KY_sa?dl=0

xxxix UNICEF is mandated to support the needs of children in DDR processes – and especially the needs of girls related to GBV. At times, this includes supporting the rights and needs of young women who were recruited into armed groups before the age of 18. This mandate also does not exclude UNICEF from advocating and engaging where relevant on issues also affecting adult women, especially in settings where no one else is and where UNICEF has expertise in country (e.g., a GBV specialist).

xl See United Nations Inter-Agency Working Group on Disarmament, Demobilization and Reintegration (IAWG), (2014) *Operational Guide to the Integrated Disarmament, Demobilization and Reintegration Standards (IDDRS)* http://www.unddr.org/uploads/documents/Operational%20Guide.pdf

xli A retrospective cohort study, analysing how well girls formerly associated with armed groups had reintegrated into their communities in Sierra Leone found that traditional cleansing ceremonies appeared to have had positive impact on their mental health (termed a 'steady head') (Ager et al, 2010). However, others note that the appropriateness of using these must be carefully considered in a particular community as they may have the effect of reinforcing traditional gender inequalities (DPI, 2016).

xlii UNICEF Annual Results Report 2017: Child Protection https://www.unicef.org/publicpartnerships/files/Child_Protection_2017_Annual_Results_Report.pdf

xliii UNICEF Interview, August 2018

xliv The more widely known name of the group know as JAS - *Jama'atu Izalat al-Bid'a wa iqamat al-Sunna* – which spread Salafism in Nigeria in the early 1970s.

xlv Donali P. et al, (2017), *Perceptions and Experiences of Children Associated with Armed Groups in Northeast Nigeria,* NSRP and UNICEF, http://www.nsrp-nigeria.org/wp-content/uploads/2017/03/Research-Report-Children-Associated-with-Armed-Groups.pdf

xlvi *Boko Haram Militants Raped Hundreds of Female Captives in Nigeria.* The New York Times. 18th May 2015. https://www.nytimes.com/2015/05/19/world/africa/boko-haram-militants-raped-hundreds-of-female-captives-in-nigeria.html?_r=0

xlvii Zenn, J & Pearson, E., (2014), *Women, gender and the evolving tactics of Boko Haram.* Journal of Terrorism Research, Volume 5, Issue 1,

xlviii *Boko Haram Strapped Suicide Bombs to Them. Somehow These Teenage Girls Survived.* The New York Times.25th October 2017. https://www.nytimes.com/interactive/2017/10/25/world/africa/nigeria-boko-haram-suicide-bomb.html

xlix Three quarters of suicide bombers are girls according to UNICEF. 2016. *Beyond Chibok.* http://files.unicef.org/media/files/Beyond_Chibok.pdf

l Toogood, K. (2016). *Bad Blood.* International Alert and UNICEF https://www.international-alert.org/sites/default/files/Nigeria_BadBlood_EN_2016.pdf

li UNICEF. 2016. *Beyond Chibok.* http://files.unicef.org/media/files/Beyond_Chibok.pdf

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[lii] Toogood, K. (2016). *Bad Blood.* International Alert and UNICEF https://www.international-alert.org/sites/default/files/Nigeria_BadBlood_EN_2016.pdf

[liii] Toogood, K. (2016). *Bad Blood.* International Alert and UNICEF https://www.international-alert.org/sites/default/files/Nigeria_BadBlood_EN_2016.pdf

[liv] Toogood, K. (2016). *Bad Blood.* International Alert and UNICEF https://www.international-alert.org/sites/default/files/Nigeria_BadBlood_EN_2016.pdf

[lv] Interview with UNICEF staff, August 2018

[lvi] UNICEF GBViE Helpdesk (2018) 'Resource List: Children Born of Rape', http://www.sddirect.org.uk/media/1564/unicef-helpdesk-rapid-programme-support-children-born-of-rape-v2.pdf

[lvii] *They Fled Boko Haram, Only to Be Raped by Nigeria's Security Forces.* The New York Times. 8th December 2017 https://www.nytimes.com/2017/12/08/world/africa/boko-haram-nigeria-security-forces-rape.html

[lviii] Morna, J. (2014), *"Who Will Care For Us?"* Watchlist

[lix] Paris Principles, Section 4.0, Addressing the Specific Situation of Girls.

[lx] See http://www.unddr.org/key-topics/children/girls_3.aspx

[lxi] MONUSCO (2015) Invisible Survivors: Girls in Armed Groups in the Democratic Republic of Congo From 2009 to 2015, MONUSCO, https://childrenandarmedconflict.un.org/wp-content/uploads/2015/11/151123-Girls-in-Armed-Groups-2009-2015-Final.pdf

[lxii] Democratic Progress Institute (DPI) (2016), *DDR and Former Female Combatants*, DPI, http://www.democraticprogress.org/wp-content/uploads/2016/03/DDR-and-female-combatants-paper.pdf

[lxiii] Interview with UNICEF representative, July 2018

[lxiv] Interview with UNICEF representative, July 2018

[lxv] Human Rights Watch. 2017. *"We Can Die Too": Recruitment and Use of Child Soldiers in South Sudan.* https://www.hrw.org/sites/default/files/report_pdf/southsudan1215_4.pdf

[lxvi] Stone, L. 2011. *"We Were All Soldiers: Female Combatants in South Sudan's Civil War".* In *Hope, Pain and Patience: The Lives of Women in South Sudan.* Eds. Stern, O. and Bubenzer, F.

[lxvii] Glinski, S. 2018. *Analysis: A who's who in South Sudan's splintering civil war.* IRIN https://www.irinnews.org/analysis/2018/04/12/who-s-who-south-sudan-s-splintering-civil-war

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[lxxiii] Care. 2014. '*The Girl Has No Rights': Gender-Based Violence in South Sudan* https://insights.careinternational.org.uk/media/k2/attachments/CARE_The_Girl_Has_No_Rights_GBV_in_South_Sudan.pdf

[lxxiv] UNICEF. *Evaluation Report: UNICEF programmes to protect children in emergencies.* https://www.unicef.org/evaldatabase/files/CPiE_Evaluation_South_Sudan_country_case_study_final.pdf

[lxxv] See United Nations Inter-Agency Working Group on Disarmament, Demobilization and Reintegration (IAWG), (2014) *Operational Guide to the Integrated Disarmament, Demobilization and Reintegration Standards (IDDRS)* http://www.unddr.org/uploads/documents/Operational%20Guide.pdf

[lxxvi] See https://treaties.un.org/pages/ViewDetails.aspx?src=IND&mtdsg_no=IV-11&chapter=4&lang=en

[lxxvii] Optional Protocol to the Convention on the Rights of the Child on the involvement of children in armed conflict, https://www.ohchr.org/EN/ProfessionalInterest/Pages/OPACCRC.aspx

[lxxviii] See https://childrenandarmedconflict.un.org/six-grave-violations/

[lxxix] See https://www.unicef.org/protection/57929_57997.html

lxxx When the United States took over leadership of the Call to Action in 2014, UNICEF and other partners were asked to contribute to the development of the Call to Action Roadmap. At the technical level, UNICEF has been instrumental in the development of this document to reflect the agency-level commitments that UNICEF and all other key humanitarian agencies have put forward to prioritize GBViE within the humanitarian architecture and to address gaps and challenges in prevention and response. See Annex 5 for specific UNICEF commitments.

lxxxiSee https://interagencystandingcommittee.org/focal-points/documents-public/real-time-accountability-partnership-gbv-emergencies

lxxxii This partnership includes UN agencies, INGOs and governments. It was launched in September 2015 to target 16.2 of the Sustainable Development Goals: End abuse, exploitation, trafficking and all forms of violence against and torture of children. (http://www.unicef.org/endviolence/partners.html)

lxxxiii it is important to note the limitations of MRM data. As the mechanism has been set up to specifically generate UN verified evidence for the Secretary General, there is a high burden of proof of any violations that are reported. This means that this is not an appropriate mechanism to use to understand prevalence of these violations in a given context. In addition, the MRM is set up only to gather evidence on the six grave child rights violations and therefore while much data in the process of verification, specific GBV issues may not be recorded. For example a girl that was abducted by an armed group and forced into 'marriage' with a Commander where she was also regularly beaten by him and where she was occasionally asked to take part in combat, would not have the concern around intimate partner violence recorded as a violation unless she ended up being maimed.