

tool 20

NGO Participation in the MRM Task Force in Colombia

Case study

Colombia has a vibrant civil society and a number of NGOs had been monitoring, reporting, responding to and advocating on issues of children and armed conflict long before the MRM started, at both the national and international level. This is the case of COALICO, a national civil society platform established in 1999 with the mission to promote and protect the rights of boys and girls affected by the armed conflict in Colombia.

In 2003, several Colombian armed groups were listed in the annex of the Secretary-General's annual report for use and recruitment of children. As soon as Security Council Resolution 1612 (2005) was adopted, COALICO analyzed it and tried to determine its implications for a context like Colombia. It proactively reached out to the UN in this process, including by preparing a situation report on children and armed conflict in Colombia and sending it directly to the Special Representative of the Secretary-General for Children and Armed Conflict (SRSG-CAAC) in 2007.




When discussions on the establishment of a Country Task Force on Monitoring and Reporting (CTFMR) started, COALICO advocated actively with the UN to be included in this forum. For a network like COALICO, membership of the CTFMR meant the opportunity to further strengthen the impact of their existing monitoring and advocacy work. The composition of the CTFMR was eventually decided after a process of consultation and discussion, which culminated with a visit of the SRSG-CAAC to Colombia. In addition to various UN entities and the Office of the Ombudsman, one permanent and two rotational spots were allocated for national NGOs. COALICO became the permanent NGO member of the CTFMR.

Once membership was secured, COALICO engaged in internal discussions on how to incorporate membership in the CTFMR into the network's strategic and work plans. Among the issues discussed was the need to maintain space for advocacy on children and armed conflict outside the realm of the CTFMR. This issue was in turn discussed with the UN when the Terms of Reference of the CTFMR were being drafted. A mutually acceptable solution was found, whereby advocacy could be conducted unilaterally and without prior

coordination, provided that it was based on information already made public and that positions were clearly attributed to the organization, not the CTFMR.

Since the CTFMR started working in Colombia, COALICO has conducted numerous advocacy initiatives and campaigns for the protection of children in armed conflict in Colombia, including on politically sensitive issues. COALICO has also made frequent public statements on MRM-related documents and events, such as the Secretary-General's reports to the Security Council on the situation of children and armed conflict in Colombia, the Secretary-General's annual reports on children and armed conflict and the Security Council's open debates on children and armed conflict.

related tools

-  [tool 19 – Guiding questions 'Participation in a MRM Country Task Force?'](#)
-  [tool 15 – Matrix 'Options for NGO participation in the MRM'](#)
-  [tool 17 – Guiding questions 'Clarifying goals and expectations before engaging in the MRM'](#)