

OSRSG CAAC Contribution to the Universal Periodic Review on the Philippines,

September 2016

1. Background

In the period under review, since May 2012, the United Nations Country Task Force on Monitoring and Reporting has documented grave violations against children committed by all parties to conflict.

In the 2015 annual report of the Secretary-General on children and armed conflict, the following parties are listed for the recruitment and use of children in conflict:

- Abu Sayyaf Group;
- Bangsamoro Islamic Freedom Fighters;
- Moro Islamic Liberation Front;
- New People's Army.

The Moro Islamic Liberation Front has entered into an action plan with the United Nations to end and prevent the recruitment and use of children. The United Nations continues to support the implementation of this action plan.

The Armed Forces of the Philippines (AFP) are not listed in the annual report of the Secretary-General. However, the United Nations has recently documented violations committed by the AFP and paramilitary groups allegedly associated with the Armed Forces of the Philippines, including the killing and maiming of children and attacks on schools and education personnel.

The United Nations has been working with the AFP on a strategic plan on prevention and response to grave child rights violations in situations of armed conflict.

2. Recommendations

- Welcome the Government's creation of the Monitoring, Reporting and Response System for children affected by conflict in August 2013 as well as the signing of a Memorandum of Agreement in July 2014 further defining the roles and responsibilities of Government agencies in monitoring and responding to grave violations. Urge the Government to ensure that victims of grave violations receive timely, effective and appropriate services.
- Express concern regarding incidents of killing and maiming of children during AFP military operations, particularly in indigenous communities in Mindanao. Call on the Government to take all necessary measures to prevent the killing and injury of children and other civilians, including by undertaking investigations of such incidents and ensuring accountability for perpetrators.
- Express concern with regards to attacks on schools and education personnel, particularly on schools and teachers with alleged links to the Communist Party of the Philippines. Call upon the Government to ensure the protection of schools and education personnel in areas of conflict, to

promote safe access to education for children. Encourage the Government to sign the Safe Schools Declaration.

- Express concern regarding the continued detention of children for their alleged association with armed groups, as well as the release of personal information on these children in the media for publicity purposes. Urge the Government to treat these children primarily as victims, explore alternatives to detention, and ensure their protection.
- Urge the Government to prioritise the passage of the draft law on Children in Situations of Armed Conflict to ensure better protection of children against grave violations in the context of armed conflict.
- Take note that the conclusion of the Comprehensive Agreement on the Bangsamoro was a catalyst for the accelerated implementation of the Moro Islamic Liberation Front action plan to end the recruitment and use of children. Urge the Government to use ongoing peace negotiations to seek commitments by all parties to strengthen the protection of children affected by conflict.