

28 Nov 2017,
at 15:30
(GVA)

Gender-Based Violence Area of Responsibility (GBV AoR)

GBV AoR Monthly Call - November



Chair: Jennifer Chase (Coordinator, GBV AoR)

Participants: Erin Patrick (GBV Guidelines Coordinator, IRC), Liz Pender (OFDA), Suzanne Quinn (OHCHR, Colombia), Catalina Buitrago, Dana Baron (OHCHR, Colombia), Cecilia Bertolini (NRC, Colombia), Alejandro Sanchez (UN Women), Seona (Irish Consortium on GBV), Felipe Roldan (IOM, Colombia), Jessica Izquierdo (GBV Guidelines, IOM), Veronica Arias (UNFPA, Colombia), Karanja Ephraim (UNFPA Sudan), Judith (UN Women, Colombia), Iune Baravalle (UNFPA – GBV Sub-Cluster, Colombia), Tania Nino (UN Women – GBV Sub-Cluster, Colombia), Elisabeth Langdal (Health and Human Rights Info, Oslo), Hannah Jay (GBV AoR Strategy Consultant), Silvia Gurrola, Rosalie Fournier (UNHCR – Protection Cluster, Colombia), Kate Rougvie (GBVIMS), Ingvill Tveite (NRC), Sunita (UNICEF), Erin Kenny (UNFPA), Astrid Haaland and Pranidhi Sawhney (GBV AoR).

Agenda:

1. GBV Coordinators Meeting in Portugal/Strategy Update, by Jennifer Chase
 2. Presentation on Colombian Post-Agreement's GBV situation, by Iune Baravalle and Tania Nino
 3. GBV IMS 16 Days of Activism, by Kate Rougvie
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Minutes of Meeting:

1. GBV Coordinators Meeting Portugal/Strategy Update by Jennifer Chase

We had our first Global Coordinators Meeting this month, and it is our goal to hold annual meetings from now on. Sixteen countries were represented at the meeting, including 20 coordinators, mainly national but also from sub-national levels. We had coordinators from UNFPA, IMC, IRC, UNHCR, UNICEF and UN Women. In addition, participants included three donor representatives (ECHO sent two delegates, Switzerland), NRC, the REGA team, the Geneva Coordination Team, the CP AoR Global Coordinator, and the Head of the GPC Operations Cell.

The agenda on Day 1 focused on operational topics, such as the HNO and HRP processes, GBV data collection and management. These are important topics for our coordinators. Day 1 also included a session on how we are working with Protection and Child Protection Coordinators at field level, including entry points and challenges.

Day 2 focused on thematic areas. Switzerland provided an engaging presentation with practical tips on how to engage donors at the field level, so there is global, regional and country level interaction. ECHO also provided their perspective, and there was good discussion. Then, we had a presentation on the Call to Action by WRC, highlighting how the global initiative is being applied to the field, with a pilot Call to Action Road Map for Northeast Nigeria. Additionally, we had presentations from the Whole of Syria and South Sudan. Furthermore, we had two simultaneous sessions on preparedness and mobile services, and open discussions to get a sense of key issues, highlighting what is going on now as well as the challenges we face.

Day 3 was dedicated to consultations on strategy. Hannah Jay, an independent consultant from Australia, is responsible for developing the GBV AoR strategy (2018-2020). We had four sessions in small groups, and discussed the mission, sub-cluster field needs, opportunities, challenges, and how to best approach these. The field coordinators led these discussions among peers, and there was time for active discussion.

It was an extremely exciting and interesting meeting as coordinators had a chance to finally meet in person and interact. The meeting took place in a lovely museum by the sea, a beautiful and free venue that the UNFPA Director of Geneva was able to procure and organise for us, through the major of Cascais.

Update on the GBV AoR Strategy Process

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The strategy consultations started in Portugal, under Hannah's leadership, with the coordinators. We are pleased that we were able to start with the field, before moving to global consultations. Hannah is preparing a consultation package similar to the one for the Global Minimum Standards, for core members, REGA and coordinators to conduct consultations (Focus Group Discussions) themselves. The package includes a presentation and the reporting template. A number of GBV coordinators have volunteered to read the first draft of the Strategy to give their inputs, and others were interested in joining the Strategy Reference Group.

In January, at the Core Member Meeting in Geneva, members will discuss strategy based on the advanced strategy document and agree on a two-year costed work plan. The strategy will be finalised by the end of February. We will shortly share the structure of the document with the Strategy Reference Group. This group is made up of core members and some coordinators from the field. Eva will also join this group as an observer to the process.

Tania (Colombia): It was a very interesting experience, we had an opportunity to get together and share our inputs for the global strategy. This shows how we want to be part of something bigger and how we believe that this strategy can support our work. I want to highlight the importance of having a strategy.

2. Presentation on Colombian Post-Agreement's GBV Situation, by Iune and Tania

Please find the PPT attached [here](#).

We have divided our presentation into three parts, introducing the situation before the agreement, then the post-agreement situation, and finally presenting the actions that the sub-cluster are planning to adapt and respond to the new situation. The situation in Colombia is very fragile with an important humanitarian impact. It is not really a peaceful country yet.

In terms of figures,

- 8'048'252 victims of the conflict (registered) until Feb. 2017. This figure includes many types of crimes in addition to GBV, with the number of men and women suffering from the conflict being almost the same.
- 21'399 medical exams were registered for sexual violence (in 2016), out of which 85 percent are girls. In Colombian society, there is still social stigma linked to sexual violence, and lack of access to services (health, protection, shelter, psychosocial support) in many parts of the country. Further, 90% of GBV cases remain within impunity.
- Moreover, out of 15'076 victims of conflict related sexual violence in 2016, 13'810 are women.
- The major conflict-related GBV crimes committed are rape, forced prostitution, sexual assault, sexual exploitation of women and girls and forced abortion.

Three main characteristics of the situation before the Peace Agreement:

- **Intensity of the Armed Conflict** including armed dispute among several groups and against the Army (Displacement, confinement, GBV as a weapon of war, massacres, kidnappings, targeted killings, enforced disappearances).
- A society characterized by **gender inequality and widespread GBV**.
- issues with underreporting, **high impunity (90%) despite progressive laws** (not implemented) and negative cultural norms leading to **invisibility of GBV**.

In 2012, the Government of Colombia and the FARC (the oldest guerrilla in Latin America, with more than 50 years of existence) began peace negotiations. The negotiations' process included a Gender Sub-Commission

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promoted by women's social movements, and with the participation of the LGBTI movement. A first Peace Agreement to end the conflict was signed in the city of Cartagena (September 2016). It was then submitted for ratification by the Colombian people through a referendum, but was surprisingly rejected in October. This led to its revision and the approval of a new version (the Final Peace Agreement) in November 2016.

The demobilisation process then started, FARC ex-combatants moved to different demobilisation sites, creating a power vacuum in the areas previously controlled by the guerrilla. With the expansion of new and old armed groups (AG) in those areas, came the increase of sexual violence against women and girls. In addition, other guerrilla groups, such as ELN/EPL, continue to use child recruitment. Furthermore, the massive influx of people arriving from Venezuela via official and unofficial entry points compounded the situation and is resulting in high vulnerability of women and girls, who are being sexually exploited. Furthermore, armed disputes between the different armed groups led to massive displacements in 2016 and 2017, affecting principally indigenous and Afro-Colombian communities.

Colombia is a complex emergency scenario, as it suffers from both conflicts and natural disasters. The post-agreement situation has resulted in an increase of sexual violence against women and girls, due to the power vacuum left in many areas, weak state institutions in remote and conflict affected regions, drug trafficking, illegal mining, targeted killings of community leaders, and the expansion of new and old organised armed groups.

The GBV sub-cluster was created in 2015 and is co-led by UNFPA and UN Women. The group comprises UN agencies and missions, INGOs, local NGOs and State Institutions. To deal with the current crises, in 2017 it has been focusing on:

- a. Constant analysis of the GBV situation with members' support
- b. Technical assistance to humanitarian coordination mechanisms and the Humanitarian Programme Cycle to mainstream GBV
- c. Capacity building (of members and external actors)
- d. Strengthening the Local Coordination Teams (LCT) to better prevent and respond to GBV
- e. Rapid response to sudden emergencies like Mocoa (avalanche), followed by a lessons learned exercise
- f. Inter-agency (GBV Sub-Cluster and Interagency Border Group) profiling of the situation for women and girls at the border with Venezuela, especially as it relates to sexual exploitation and abuse. Recommendations will be drafted for the Government
- g. Annual Report on UNSCR 1820
- h. Support the implementation of the HCT's Gender Strategy

Kate Rougvie: To what extent does the Peace Agreement take GBV into account, and did the Sub-Cluster have any role in that process?

Tania (GBV Sub-Cluster, Colombia): Yes. The Peace Agreement included a lot of analysis on the impact of the conflict in women's lives, and the importance of ensuring they have an active role in the peace process. Some of the provisions recognise the difficult GBV situation, even if they do not address it explicitly. We are expecting that through Transitional Justice, victims will come to know the truth, thanks to the Special Commission for Gender created as part of the Agreement. It has been a hard time for women, with many changes in institutions and laws. We are currently trying to roll out everything that was agreed.

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The GBV Sub-Cluster did not have a role in the Peace Agreement, but the different agencies that form it did within the general negotiations. We were not in any position to push for any changes or provisions, thus the importance of the Gender Sub-Commission.

Silvia Gurrola: In what way is GBV invisible in Colombia? Please elaborate.

Iune (GBV Sub-Cluster, Colombia): We have some official numbers regarding GBV, but in reality, we face many challenges to get a real estimation of what the impact of GBV really is. Part of the problem is that many people do not identify some types of GBV as violence or a crime. For example, with regard to transactional sex between girls and men (what we would call sexual exploitation), many consider normal that women and girls pay with sex if they do not have money. Therefore, this violence is part of normality, and thus becomes invisible. In addition, the numbers we have only represent a very small proportion of the real GBV situation. Sexual violence against men and boys is also happening, but the number of reported cases is ridiculously low. The high social stigma also prevents all genders from reporting and denouncing a GBV situation. Nonetheless, if compared with my experiences in countries in Africa or in the Middle East, in Colombia there is an important and growing movement of women survivors of sexual violence, who are speaking out, support each other and demand protection and assistance.

Jennifer Chase (GBV AoR): Colombia has much more comprehensive data than in most other countries, which is a very different situation from most other contexts. We usually think that sub-clusters need more data for funding to improve. However, in Colombia, despite having some numbers, access to funding remains a big challenge.

Alejandro Sanchez (UN Women, HQ): Has the HCT's Gender Strategy brought greater attention to GBV concerns? If so, has this translated into specific funding to prevent / respond to GBV in crises, or other concrete actions?

Tania (GBV Sub-Cluster, Colombia): Yes, gender and GBV issues are now a central point on the agenda. The agencies had to commit to support interventions and to include special funding for this. The main achievement is that we have put this topic back in the centre of the agenda after the Peace Agreement. For next year, we are planning to have a special session to get NGOs to talk about GBV.

Catalina: Are you using the Gender Based Violence Information Management System (GBVIMS)?

Iune (GBV Sub-Cluster, Colombia): The GBVIMS was first implemented under the leadership of both UNFPA & UNHCR. However, as the government, and in particular the Ministry of Health, was already utilising other information management systems, there was no interest in implementing a new one. The GBV IMS's in country implementation had to be dropped. Nonetheless, UNHCR was able to the GBV IMS's work by focusing on its implementation by local women organisations.

Rosalie and Emese (UNHCR Colombia): We started the rollout in 2011 together, and we are now working on a handover strategy, to adapt the GBVIMS to complement the state's information management systems. We will nevertheless have to change the name soon, because of the sensitivity of using the name of a system the Government didn't want to implement. As known, the GBV IMS is also a case management system, which is not included in the Government's information management systems. We are implementing this with local NGOs, mainly women organisations who requested us to adjust it to their needs, and well as with some local government institutions as service providers.

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Karanja: In the context of Sudan, the situation is very different from Colombia, and I am impressed at the level of data availability. We discussed the possibility of data collection with partners as part of our 2018 GBV Strategy and agreement is that this is not possible due to sensitivity.

3. GBV IMS 16 Days of Activism, by Kate

We have recently launched the GBVIMS Podcast Series on 16 days of Activism, in which currently we have 20 episodes on case management, data management and other topics.

You can subscribe to our podcast series on different channels such as iTunes (<https://itunes.apple.com/us/podcast/gbvims/id1121802132?mt=2>), Google Play (<https://player.fm/series/gbvims>), Stitcher (<https://www.stitcher.com/podcast/kristy-crabtree/gbvims>) or Sound Cloud (<http://www.gbvims.com/learn-more/podcast/>), and share these with your friends and team members.

We are releasing one podcast per day during the 16 days. We would like to thank the AoR for collaborating with us on getting the information out.

Jennifer Chase: We would love to make a Special Edition of the Monthly Update displaying GBV sub-clusters' activities for the 16 days of Activism, including links. I spoke to the Director of Raising Voices in Uganda at the SVRI meeting about how we can together come up with an advocacy angle for the 16 days next year. The official theme has been on education for a couple of years. Next year, we can come up with a new theme together with Raising Voices.