



VIOLACIONES
Y OTRAS VIOLENCIAS
SAQUEN MI CUERPO DE LA GUERRA

Stop hunting children!

Report on sexual violence
committed against children
and adolescents in the armed
conflict in Colombia



Campaign – Rape and other Violence: Leave my Body Out of the War

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2014

*The title of the current report is based on the response of a child during an activity carried out by Pastoral Social association in the department of Sucre. During the activity the children were asked ‘What would you like to change about how things are?’ and the child responded ‘that they stop hunting girls!’.

Campaign – Rape and other Violence: Leave my Body Out of the War

STOP HUNTING CHILDREN!:

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Gender Justice for the Rights in Crisis of Colombian Women and Children affected by the Armed Conflict (Phase III)

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Stop hunting children!:

Report on sexual violence committed against children and adolescents in the armed conflict in Colombia

Executive Summary

This report is the result of a research process developed by the Campaign: “Rape and other Violence: Leave my Body Out of the War” with the purpose of making visible the particular affects on children and adolescent victims of sexual violence committed in the context of the Colombian armed conflict. This research has been developed based on two complementary methodological approaches. The first had the goal to quantify the number of children and adolescent victims of sexual violence in Colombia in the framework of the armed conflict and based on this process to identify and evaluate the available information systems, records and statistics that exist regarding this phenomenon. The second was a qualitative-situational methodological approach used to analyze the dynamics of sexual violence committed against children and adolescents in the framework of the armed conflict in various regions of Colombia.

Based on the existing information systems, the research study carried out a review of the records and databases available related to sexual violence in armed conflicts for the period from 2008 to 2012 and has conducted a series of interviews in the field that provide an insight into the problem of sexual violence committed against children and adolescents under the age of 18 years within the context of the armed conflict. With the results that were obtained, the study also aims to: generate a tool that can be

used for advocacy and discussion purposes to increase the visibility of this phenomenon; demand progress in the articulation of the existing information collection systems; and provide a warning regarding the way in which information is being collected by these systems.

Main Findings

- In accordance with the quantification made by this study¹, between 2008 and 2012 there are records of **at least 48,915 victims of sexual violence under 18 years of age** committed in the framework of the armed conflict, with 41,313 girls and female adolescents and 7,602 boys and male adolescents that were victims in 1,070 municipalities of the 1,130² that exist in the country. This means that **around 27³ children and adolescents were sexually assaulted on a daily basis in the country in the context of the armed conflict during this period**. This represents 365 more reports of sexual violence than the records contained in the National Victims’ Registry⁴.

¹ Conducted using the methodology of contrasting sources, which is detailed in Chapter 1.

² Number corresponding to the administrative-political division of Colombia according to the National Administrative Department of Statistics (DANE) 2013.

³ In 2012, the daily average was 36 children and adolescents.

⁴ According to the information published by the National Informa-

- In 2012⁵ at least 13,230 children and adolescents were victims of sexual violence in which the assailant was an armed actor and the victim had access to at least one registry system from the official information systems.

Of these, 2,412 were boys and male adolescents and 10,818 were girls and female adolescents.

- In the period covered by the study, and according to the data collected, the most affected departments were: Antioquia; Valle del Cauca; Nariño; Santander; and the city of Bogotá (with these departments representing 56% of the total number of recorded children and adolescent victims), with a total of 1,327 male victims and 5,379 female victims.
- **Currently in Colombia there are diverse information systems with operational infrastructure that has been designed – in a coordinated manner – to have a national reach and include specific categories that allow for the characterization of sexual violence.** Despite the existence of this information, **the differences** in the way in which this information is recorded creates **obstacles for obtaining disaggregated information in terms of age group and ethnic population**, which would be fundamental in guaranteeing the provision of appropriate and effective assistance to the victims, in ac-

cordance to their needs and their cultural and traditional visions of reality.

- **The analysis of the underreporting of sexual violence** in the context of the armed conflict in the current report includes two main elements. The first is **the local dynamic** and the configuration of how sexual violence is committed in local territories and the second is **the geographical and social distance** of the communities to **public institutions**. The rural communities are those at greatest risk as they have less information and less access to institutional services.
- In terms of the typology, there is no one main type of sexual violence and for this reason these events are difficult to catalogue and prevent. As a result, policies for prevention and assistance to victims should respond to specific local needs and contexts. **Sexual violence against children in armed conflict scenarios involves both political implications and political interests among the groups and actors that are present in the territory**; often families are alone and defenseless to fulfill their protective role and they don't have the power to mitigate the effects of the war on the lives of their children.
- **Boys and male adolescents that are victims of sexual violence** committed in the framework of the armed conflict **are often less visible** for local organizations and institutions than **girls and female adolescents** victims due to the difficulty of cataloguing/reporting this phenomenon along with the existing cultural patterns.
- On the other hand, **the expressions of sexual violence vary in terms of armed actors that are present in each territory**. This includes the level of territorial control and the dynamic of the armed confrontation at the local level, which makes it difficult for victims to access registration mechanisms and subsequently limits the knowledge available regarding the magnitude of the problem. Furthermore, in each territory there are different realities and different armed actors. This evidences the need to generate intervention strategies that can be adapted to the different territorial realities.

tion Network up to the 21st of January 2014, between 2008 and 2012 there were 134 child and adolescent victims of sexual violence that had been included in the Register. Similarly, according to the data provided by the Victims' Assistance and Integrated Reparation Unit (UARIV), the Register shows that the period with the highest number of records of sexual violence against children and adolescents is between 2000 and 2003, a time period in which 33.1% of the records are from. However, in terms of the overall number of victims (before the evaluation process has begun), 35.1% of acts of sexual violence occurred in the period 2008 to 2012.

5 According to the information obtained from the different information systems and the contrasting of information, it is evidenced that in 2011 there was a substantial increase by 44% in the reports of sexual violence against children and adolescents compared to previous years. This could indicate an increase in this type of sexual violence committed against children and adolescents or an increase in the registration of this violence as a result of the dissemination of information systems that include categories which directly refer to the armed conflict. What can be affirmed is that there was a significant increase in the number of reports of sexual violence committed against children and adolescents between 2009 and 2010 as well as a similar increase from 2011 to 2012.

- The report evidences that nowadays many practices have become normalized and that there are certain acts of aggression and situations that are no longer considered to be sexual violence, even though in legal and conceptual terms they are. **The historical impact of the armed conflict in Colombian communities (there are now adults that were born directly into a context of armed conflict) has generated high levels of normalization and acceptance of sexual violence.** In the context of sexual violence this has resulted in socially held concepts of certain acts of sexual violence as being “more and/or less serious”. These concepts have defined what types of sexual violence require registering, declaration or legal or administrative action and which ones don’t. In the first group of what acts do need to be registered are the acts of violence that leave direct physical consequences on the victim, while in the second are the psychosocial impacts that are perceived as effects *“that you get over with time because they aren’t that serious”*.
- In a complicated and high risk social framework, **there are two types of obstacles that victims face in reporting this violence:**
 - **Temporary obstacles:** Associated with factors caused by the presence of armed actors in local scenarios that generate fear and insecurity, including: i) Absence of intimacy, security and protection for reporting this violence; ii) Impunity and absence of concrete actions once the violence has been registered, and; iii) Social control, institutional cooptation and/or armed and illegal administration of local justice.
 - **Structural obstacles:** Refers to cultural, social and institutional process that make the registration process difficult, including: i) excessive bureaucracy in the assistance and registration processes; ii) dehumanization through the assistance provided to victims by public officials that are often not aware of the particularities of the local context; iii) an insufficient, inexistent and/or inefficient institutional presence, and; iv) the

normalization of practices of social control and aggression.

- The exercise of establishing an approximation of the number of children and adolescent victims of sexual violence in armed conflict scenarios in Colombia is open for discussion and needs to be complemented by information from other civil society and academic organizations and public institutions. For this reason, this is not a finished exercise that has produced final figures or data that accurately defines the magnitude of the problem. On the contrary, this is an initial approach that aims to open a discussion on sexual violence against children and adolescents in the framework of the armed conflict.
- Finally, it is important to recognize the historical moment of the information systems that exist in the country, particularly those that collect information related to the armed conflict in the scenario of the implementation of Law 1448/2011 (Victims’ Law).

Main Recommendations

Taking into account the results from this investigation, it is necessary to establish a mechanism that facilitates the collection of accurate, quantitative and qualitative data. As a result, it is recommended that policies and interventions are designed and implemented that favor the registering of these acts of violence in a specific manner to accurately understand the extent of this phenomenon, ensure children’s safety in the registration process and prevent future victimizations.

To the responsible government institutions

- For these institutions it is necessary that they engage in **systematic data collection that avoids revictimization** and allows for a complete and differential medical, legal and administrative diagnostic of the act of violence, in a way that **one single articulated record can effectively illustrate the violation of the rights of a**

child or adolescent by armed actors, but can also highlight the current psychosocial assistance, reparation and especially recovery services provided to the victim.

- It is fundamental to generate **local strategies that raise awareness of ALL forms of sexual violence**, given that all of these are unacceptable, reportable and require medical and psychosocial assistance. This isn't just to be done with communities, but also with public officials at a local level that have some type of responsibility in any part of the process for preventing and providing assistance to children and adolescents that have been victims of sexual violence.
- In addition to feelings of fear and **defenselessness and the victims' own processes that they have to follow in order to report the sexual violence**, this process often ends in **abandoning the reporting of the sexual violence**, because the victim has no privacy, their safety is not guaranteed or the registration process is guided by officials that haven't been specifically trained to attend to these issues so they can't offer the assistance and safety that the victim requires given the delicate nature of the incident. Subsequently, the provision of training and information to local officials is fundamental.
- Finally, it is recommended that **an exhaustive characterization of sexual violence committed in the context of the armed conflict is undertaken**, in order to inform proposals for coherent prevention and attention mechanisms for each of the types of violence that occur in the territories. Beyond identifying general categories, it is fundamental to be able to identify the main types of sexual violence that are committed against children by armed actors including where and when they most frequently occur.

To the social organizations, human rights defenders and academic institutions

- During the development and elaboration of this report, it was evident that a large quantity of qualitative and contextual information

has been compiled and processed by organizations during various years related to this issue. As a result, **this research study should only be an introduction to exercises that complement existing information and analysis of the local dynamics of sexual violence committed against children and adolescents in the context of the armed conflict**. Similarly, **academics should complement the methodological proposal** present in this document using their own expertise.

- All of these factors have the goal of **continuing to highlight the situation of children in the current armed conflict scenario, especially when they are victims of any type of sexual violence**. There should also be specific work carried out to counteract the **absence of information** in official records of the **ethnicity of child victims of sexual violence**.

To the international community

- Establish partnerships and areas for cooperation with the Colombian government, focused on the strengthening of the institutional response regarding the impact on children affected by sexual violence in the context of the armed conflict, especially in the areas of registration, justice and restitution of rights.
- Remain in the Colombian territory to support and guarantee the safety of the civilian population, especially the children that have been affected by sexual violence in the context of the armed conflict, as well as the social organizations that accompany populations, monitor progress and carry out actions in this area.
- Maintain and strengthen support for programs and initiatives from the United Nations agencies and NGOs that support the improvement of protection conditions for children, especially those that have been victims of sexual violence committed in the context of the armed conflict, with the goal of increasing the efficiency of the oversight and promotion activities of the rights of this population.

INTRODUCTION:

The (in)visible side of sexual violence in Colombia

Background and Legal Framework

The recognition of sexual violence as a weapon of war in the Colombian armed conflict, and not just as a collateral effect of the conflict, has been an important achievement of the human rights movement in Colombia, and especially the platforms and organizations that work with, for or are run by women.⁶ These platforms and organizations have monitored concrete cases, presented reports on special cases and undertaken analysis of qualitative trends and specific actions for local, national and international advocacy efforts. This work has positioned this issue on the public agendas of media outlets and political parties. A result of these efforts was the Universal Periodical Review (UPR) that Colombia presented in April 2013 to the Human Rights Council, which collected a large number of recommendations issued by the international community related to sexual violence in general and particularly on sexual violence associated with armed conflict.

Similarly, this advocacy work has highlighted the particular effects of sexual violence committed against women and girls as part of the armed conflict, a consequence of the socio-political structure of power relationships between men and women. The advocacy efforts have also focused on how this sexual violence generates relationships of subordination and oppression, which have been intensified in scenarios where there is territorial control by armed groups or disputes between armed actors. These events have been recognized internationally and by the Constitutional Court, representing a fundamental milestone in demanding the rights of victims and particularly highlighting the risks associated with sexual violence.⁷

Despite this progress, which assumes that there is an “open doors” approach to debate as well as improved tools for demanding the rights of women victims of the armed conflict, there are still at least two major concerns. The first is that boys and male adolescents that are victims of sexual violence in the context of the Colombian armed conflict are invisible to the organizations and local institutions that work to support victims. This invisibility also occurs in the registration of this violence, and as a result these victims are not included as specific beneficiaries of public

⁶ Including the organizations that are part of the Rape and other violence “Leave my Body Out of the War” campaign (Asociación de Mujeres y Madres Abriendo Caminos; Asociación Santa Rita para la Educación y Promoción – FUNSA REP; Centro de Promoción y Cultura CPC – FASOL; Coalición contra la vinculación de niños, niñas y jóvenes al conflicto armado en Colombia- COALICO; Colectivo de Abogados José Alvear Restrepo; Comisión Colombiana de Juristas; Corporación Casa de la Mujer; Corporación Vamos Mujer; Humanidad Vigente Corporación Jurídica; Ruta Pacífica de las Mujeres; Sisma Mujer, the Human Rights and Displacement Consultancy CODHES and the Working Committee for Women and the Armed Conflict as well as many other individuals and organizations that have contributed to this recognition.)

⁷ The Constitutional Court has identified ten (10) risks related to gender equality in the framework of the Colombian armed conflict... ‘that when grouped together provide an explanation of the disproportionate impact of forced displacement on women. These risks are: (i) the risk of sexual violence, sexual exploitation or sexual abuse in the framework of the armed conflict’ (Constitutional Court, 2008).

policies and concrete and differential attention mechanisms at a local level. The second refers to the absence of complete quantitative information that is available to the public at a national level.

In terms of the invisibility of boys and male adolescents, it is important to highlight that the United Nations Security Council has made two statements specifically on sexual violence committed against women and/or children:

The first specifically refers to the effects on women and girls in Resolution 1820 of 2008:

Noting that civilians account for the vast majority of those adversely affected by armed conflict; **that women and girls are particularly targeted by the use of sexual violence**, including as a tactic of war to humiliate, dominate, instill fear in, disperse and/or forcibly relocate civilian members of a community or ethnic group; and that sexual violence perpetrated in this manner may in some instances persist after the cessation of hostilities (UN Security Council, 2008). *Not highlighted in the original text.*

The second, detailed in a more concrete manner in Resolution 1690 of 2010, refers to children in general:

[...] profoundly concerned by the slowness of the progress achieved in relation to the question of **sexual violence in situations of armed conflict, particularly against women and children**, and observing that, in accordance with what has been documented in the report from the Secretary General, sexual violence occurs in armed conflicts around the world (UN Security Council, 2008). *Not highlighted in the original text.*

Meanwhile, at a national level, all of the studies found on sexual violence in contexts of armed conflict that investigate the types, impact and frequency of the acts of sexual violence concentrate on the effects on women and in some concrete cases specifically on girls, but none cover sexual violence committed against boys and male adolescents.

In terms of the second concern, which refers to the absence of complete quantitative informa-

tion available to the public at a national level. It can be affirmed that despite all of the actions to make this type of violence visible in the context of the armed conflict, there is no quantitative diagnostic in Colombia for estimating the magnitude of this phenomenon at a national and/or local level, which would allow for the identification of places or time periods with the highest levels of this type of violence. This means that there are no figures available to the public, or even an approximation, of the number of children and adolescents that have been victims of sexual violence in the context of the armed conflict and associated socio-political violence.

For this reason, the Campaign is conscious that the quantifiable information regarding incidents of sexual violence in contexts of armed conflict is fundamental for the definition of concrete institutional actions, especially when it involves children that are subjects of special protection by the State and society⁸. This demonstrates the importance of quantitative measurements for informing adequate, relevant and timely responses in terms of the prevention and/or mitigation of sexual violence.

Objectives of the Research

Based on these concerns, the campaign “Rape and other Violence: Leave my Body out of the War” has conducted this research process with the objectives:

1. To identify, understand and compare the existing information systems that should provide an accurate measurement of incidents of sexual violence committed in armed conflict scenarios.
2. To identify, through a quantifiable methodology based on contrasting sources, the number of children and adolescents that are victims of this type of violence in Colombia.

⁸ Article 44, the Political Constitution of Colombia (1991), which establishes the prevalence of the rights of children above all others' rights.

3. To provide an initial approximation of the information available and validate its capacity to describe the situation of children and adolescents affected by sexual violence in relation to the armed conflict.
4. To propose local contexts as frameworks for a results-based analysis and an exploration of the data that has been produced.
5. To demand the effective application of concrete response, impact evaluation and citizenship oversight mechanisms.

It is important to highlight that this study isn't designed to obtain data from censuses, is not the product of a statistical review of the entire population of children and adolescents that are victims of sexual violence in the conflict nor does it contribute to the process of characterizing sexual violence against children and adolescents. The NGO Corporación Punto de Vista (CPV, 2011) has already warned of the danger of using available quantitative information to develop an analysis on the magnitude and frequency of sexual violence in Colombia, especially when it is related to the armed conflict.

Taking this information into account it is necessary to recognize the historical moment of the information systems in the country, particularly those associated with information from the armed conflict in the context of the implementation of Law 1448 of 2011 (Victims' Law). As a result it is important to encourage the generation of purposeful actions that support the strengthening of these official information systems and other alternatives and the diffusion of non-sensitive information.

Through its results, this research also aims to open a space for discussion and to facilitate the interaction of official and alternative information systems that provide public information to members and organizations from civil society regarding the current situation of this phenomenon, and consequently, provide an accurate depiction of the current situation for children that are victims of sexual violence committed in the context of the armed conflict in Colombia. Finally, this study has the goal of bringing to light the true stories and memories of the child and adolescent victims of sexual violence that have remained in the shadows.

Chapter I.

What we can count, and what we can't?

Methodological Approximations

The exercising of formulating an approximation of the number of children and adolescents that have been victims of sexual violence in armed conflict scenarios in Colombia is open to discussion and is to be complemented by civil society organizations, academics and government institutions.

Conceptual Framework:

For the purpose of the methodological development of this research study, and particularly the identification of the number of child and adolescent victims of sexual violence committed in the context of the armed conflict, it is fundamental to define three concepts⁹ which are derived from the monitoring mechanism of the United Nations Security Council's Resolution 1612 and other relevant academic and legal instruments. The use of these mechanisms has the goal of providing the necessary elements that will contribute to an analysis of the results of this study:

Sexual Violence: The general definition of sexual violence is taken from Law 1146 of 2007, which is directed at the prevention of sexual violence against children in Colombia and the provision of assistance to victims of this form of violence¹⁰. In

this scenario we have incorporated the definition of *sexual violence* as the occurrence of at least one of the multiple forms of sexual violence¹¹, with the goal of providing a more in-depth understanding of the concepts held by communities and organizations regarding this violence.

Events that have occurred in the framework of the Colombian armed conflict: For the purposes of this study, the definition established by the Constitutional Court in Ruling T-781/2012¹² will be used. This definition understands *in the framework of the armed conflict* as all of the acts of sexual aggression allegedly committed by legal and illegal armed actors, independent of the dynamic of the armed conflict in the region. This means that territorial control or disputes through armed clashes are just some of the scenarios where the armed conflict occurs, and therefore it is not necessary that armed clashes to gain territorial control occur for there to be violations of

a boy, girl or adolescent, using force or any form of physical, psychological or emotional coercion, taking advantage of their condition of defenselessness, of inequality or the power dynamic that exists between the victim and the assailant' (Congress of the Republic of Colombia, 2007, Article 2).

11 The categories of sexual violence include: Rape/Attempted Rape; Sexual Abuse; Sexual Slavery, Sexual Exploitation and Trafficking for the means of Sexual Exploitation; Forced Pregnancy; Forced Sterilization; and other forms of sexual violence. For greater information regarding the conceptualization of the proposed subcategories see: Categories of Analysis of COALICO's Observatory for Children and Armed Conflict.

12 '[The Constitutional Court] has recognized these events as happening in the framework of the armed conflict...the threats come from: demobilized armed actors; (vi) the legitimate actions of the State; (vii) the illegitimate actions of the State; (viii) the actions attributable to criminal groups; (ix) the actions attributable to unidentified armed groups; and (x) the actions attributable to private security groups (Constitutional Court, 2012)'

9 According to the methodological guidelines of COALICO's Observatory for Children and Armed Conflict.

10 '[...] sexual violence against children and adolescents is understood as all acts or behavior of a sexual nature committed against

human rights in the context of the conflict, such as the committing of sexual violence.

Approximate estimation from sources contrasted with consolidated data: This refers to a process of numerically expressing the result of an exercise realized using statistical data obtained from previously reviewed records contained in the multiple information systems mentioned. This data is contrasted with other information available and leads to the identification of the number of victims for each municipality in accordance with specific criteria for each of the years selected for the purposes of this study.

Temporary Framework

For the concrete exercise of quantification a certain time period was defined, which for this study is understood as between 2008 to 2012. The decision to use this time period as a reference point was made due to operational reasons. In 2007, the National Institute of Forensic Medicine, an institution that provide public information in this area, incorporated ‘armed actors’ within its categories of alleged perpetrator. Given the objective of highlighting sexual violence against children and adolescents in the context of the armed conflict and the methodological limitations that this study faced – which will be detailed later – the research team opted to define this period because it was when the information systems started to produce complete data, especially in terms of the identification of the alleged assailant. As a result, the choice of the time period doesn’t ignore acts of sexual violence that occurred before 2008 and even less so aims to treat the victims of this sexual violence before this date as invisible or not worthy of study. The time period was selected due to the lack of information regarding the category of armed conflict obtained through the data collection process related to this phenomenon in the years prior to 2008.

Information Management

The information management process had three simultaneous stages of implementation: i) **Requests**

for quantitative information, generally preceded by bilateral meetings with the institutions responsible for this information; ii) **Collection of documented information**, and; iii) **Information management at local levels** through regional trips and interviews with local, national and international NGOs, inter-government organisms, the Ombudsman’s Office and national and territorial institutions such as the Colombian Family Welfare Institute (ICBF) and the Victims’ Assistance and Integrated Reparation Unit (UARIV), among others.

Regarding the situational information or local context

With the goal of collecting information from all of the regions of Colombia, it was proposed to visit each region. The criteria for selecting the regions took into account differences in the territorial dynamics within each area, but prioritized the capital cities and urban centers that were most representative. This representation was based on the institutional presence and the possibility of concentrating information at a departmental level. 14 municipalities were visited to collect situational information at a departmental and/or regional level, including:

- Andes Region: Bogotá (with an interest in obtaining national information), Medellín and Cúcuta.
- Atlantic Region: Montería, Sincelejo and Cartagena
- Pacific Region: Pasto and Popayán¹³, Buenaventura and Cali
- Orinoquía Region: Villavicencio¹⁴ and Arauca

¹³ While both Pasto and Popayán are part of the Andean region, they are categorized as being in the Pacific region due to an interest in emphasizing the dynamic of the armed conflict in the coastal foothills and the Pacific coast, which is evidenced in the monitoring carried out by COALICO’s Observatory for Children and Armed Conflict.

¹⁴ Especially in this region due to the territorial dynamics of the department, despite its geographical proximity to Bogotá.

- Amazon Region: Puerto Asís and Mocoa.

Municipalities were prioritized in each of the regions as a strategy to increase the coverage of the regional trips in order to obtain information (that is still partial) for a large section of the national territory.

In terms of the interviews, these were bilateral and semi-structured with four main themes:

1. Situational context: zones in the department with the highest levels of armed conflict or an increased presence/exercising of control by armed actors.
2. Sexual violence: Types, recurring victims and additional victimization derived from sexual assaults.
3. Registration of acts of violence: Existence and condition of local registries, difficulties with the registration process.
4. Response: Attention and protection mechanisms and organizations or institutions that work with victims of sexual violence in the region. Understanding the diversity of the information that is needed to be collected, those interviewed came from social organizations that work directly with children or victims of sexual violence, local institutions such as the Centre of Integrated Attention for Victims of Sexual Violence (CAIVAS), ICBF, Departmental and Municipal Secretariats of Health, Ombudsman's Offices, Public Ministries and international organizations that have a presence in the field, among others.

Regarding the quantitative information

In Colombia at least three methodologies have been applied to identify the number of violations of human rights in the framework of the armed conflict. The first is defined as an Estimation through Multiple Systems, proposed by Lum

et.al (2010), that doesn't just use unbiased estimates of the number of victims (in this case) but also includes an estimate of the levels of underreporting associated with victims not registering the crimes committed against them.¹⁵

The second corresponds to a method of contrasting of sources with micro-data, which means that through precise information regarding the method used and time and place where the act of sexual violence took place, an accurate estimation of the number of victims can be achieved. This particular methodology has been used by the company Cifras y Conceptos in the measurement of kidnapping in Colombia.

Finally, the method of making an approximated quantification of data sources contrasted with consolidated data was selected based on the information available. This involves statistical data taken from the multiple data systems being contrasted, classified and selected for each municipality in each one of the years covered by the study.

This methodology is based on the existence of multiple incomplete and different records that cover the same event and require the consolidation of data in homogenous categories for analysis (disaggregated by population demographic, geographical area, when it happened and type of sexual violence in each concrete case) so that finally, and in accordance with the conceptual framework of each one of the sources included, data can be validated and duplicate records can be eliminated from the figures.

Approximated quantification through the contrasting of sources

For the recollection of statistical information, various institutions were consulted that process the three different types of records related to

¹⁵ In the Colombian case, the use of this methodology would support access to lists with the individual identity numbers of the victims (identity card numbers of the Unique Personal Identification Number – NUIP), which is information that due to its sensitive character is protected, making its use impossible for this research study.

Table 1. Management of Information

REQUESTED INFORMATION	
Data	Number of victims of sexual violence under the age of 18 years in the armed conflict
Sources:	Office of the Attorney General CAIVAS ICBF Regional Ombudsman's Office Sectional Ombudsman's Office Superior Judicial Council International Council of the Red Cross National Institute of Public Health (National and Departmental) Pan-American Health Organization Public Ministry Offices at the municipal level National Institute of Forensic Medicine Ministry of Health Ministry of Defense Departmental Secretariats of Health or their equivalent Local Public Health Observatories Unit for Integrated Assistance and Reparation to Victims
Period:	2008 to 2012
Break down:	By age By gender Ethnic group Municipality where it happened Year that it happened Alleged perpetrator
Application:	152 applications in total

victims of sexual violence committed in the context of the armed conflict.. Administrative records (Colombian Family Welfare Institute and the Victims' Assistance and Integrated Reparation Unit); medical records (National Institute of Health and the Ministry of Health); and legal records (Superior Council of the Judiciary, Attorney General's Office and the National Institute of Forensic Medicine). 152 formal requests for information were made to 15 types of institutions that attend to processes related to victims of sexual violence or children and armed conflict. The instruments used to make the information request depended on the source that was consulted. Given the diversity of the sources and the information systems, the categories and variables assigned to each type of violence differ. The following table provides a summary of the minimum information requested and the sources that were consulted.

During the process of requesting, monitoring and receiving information, 90 responses were received, which means that 59.8% of the institutions that were consulted actually provided the requested information. At the national level, all of the sources provided the requested information except the National Institute of Public Health, with their information being provided through their regional offices and the Departmental Secretariats of Health. This is because according to delegated staff, all of the statistical information from the National Institute of Public Health is public, with the exception of the information that corresponds to the new categories of violence, in particular violence associated with the armed conflict.

Once the information was received, a quantification process was carried out that included four steps:

1. **Filtering and control of the information:** this required sorting the information into categories and levels of comparable disaggregation. Consolidated data was disaggregated into the minimum common units that were available in all of the information provided, including: year that the violence occurred, gender of the victim and municipality where the sexual violence was committed.
2. **Organizing the sources into a hierarchy:** the national level information was given greater weight than the information from local sources. The local sources were only used when there was no consolidated data for a particular municipality at the national level but the data did exist at territorial levels (departmental and municipal).
3. **Selection of the highest number of victims from each municipality:** when at the end of the process of organizing the information into a hierarchy there was data for each municipality from more than one source, the highest figure was selected for each gender (boys and girls). This exercise was carried out for each year selected by the study.
4. **Departmental and national data:** at the end of the exercise there was disaggregated data on victims according to their gender in each municipality, in such a way that it combined the municipal data into an overall number of victims for each department, and the figures for the departments were together to create the national total of victims disaggregated by gender and year.

The results of this process produced the following information:

1. **Geographical coverage:** information was obtained from 94% of the municipalities of the country (1,070 of the 1,130 that exist).
2. **Sources consulted** with some type of response: Attorney General's Office, CAIVAS, Regional Ombudsman's Offices, Municipal Ombudsman's Offices, Superior Council of

the Judiciary, National Institute of Health (departmental offices), Municipal Public Ministries, National Institute of Forensic Medicine, Ministry of Health, Departmental Secretariats of Health or their equivalent and Local Public Health Observatories.

3. **Periods with information:** 2008, 2009, 2010, 2011 and 2012. Due to the fact that there are differences in categories between the information collected from 2008 – 2010 and 2011 – 2012 it wasn't possible to compare the data from the two time periods to identify trends over time.
4. **Disaggregation of information:**
 - The information was broken down at a municipal level, which allows the methodology to start with information from this political-administrative unit and then move upwards to the departmental and national country level.
 - The collected information was disaggregated according to the year that the event occurred.
 - Regarding the alleged perpetrator, the variable *proxy*¹⁶ is what determined if the event can be characterized as being committed in the context of the armed conflict. This mechanism isn't necessarily accurate, but is the most feasible alternative in regards to the available information. The records are categorized individually by type of group or by a general denomination of armed actors or support networks for these armed actors, depending on the available information.
 - The demographic disaggregation was the most incomplete category and what res-

¹⁶ A variable proxy is that which is used to represent another variable that can't be measured or identified. In this case, the armed actor isn't defined by the presence of the 'armed conflict' but it does allow for the identification of the armed actor through their involvement in the act of violence.

stricted the scope of the results of the approximation in terms of specific characteristics of the affected population.

- The collected information isn't disaggregated by **age** beyond "under 18 years of age" because the categories within the records are all different. There are records that include data on age group, others have the specified age in years, others have – under 14 years of age and between 15 and 17 years – and others only state that the victim was less than 18 years of age. To be able to compare and contrast the sources available it was necessary to analyze data using the minimum possible common unit of disaggregation for all sources, which in this case was the characteristic of *less than 18 years of age*.
- The majority of the records are disaggregated by sex, for this reasons the final results distinguished between men and women victims.
- Regarding which ethnic group the victims belonged to, only 3 out of 90 responses included information related to the victim's ethnic group.

Filtering and control

For the application of the stated method it was necessary to filter the records that didn't meet the minimum conditions required. This information couldn't guarantee that the children that were victims of sexual violence and registered in one or more of the consulted information systems had in fact been victims of sexual violence in the context of the armed conflict during the selected period. For this purpose, the following controls were applied:

Regarding the time period when the violence occurred, in the requests made to all of the institutions the information requirement "period when the event happened" was clearly expressed. As a mechanism of control a "period when the act

was registered with appropriate authorities" was also requested. To complete the medical record the exact date of the event was requested (day, month, year). Due to the nature of the health system and because access to this system is usually immediate when there are physical consequences of the aggression, there weren't many doubts regarding when the acts of violence were committed.

Regarding the place where the violence occurred, this was determined in the same way as when the violence occurred. However, no records were eliminated in which the place where the violence occurred and where it was reported were the same. This is because the stating of the place where the violence was committed doesn't have as many restrictions as stating when the act occurred as part of completing the administrative and judicial records.

Regarding the armed conflict, as previously mentioned, the definition of the armed conflict comes from Ruling T-781 of 2013. In terms of the acts of sexual violence allegedly committed by legal and illegal armed actors, identified or not, in those records where it wasn't evident that the alleged assailant was an armed actor were eliminated.

Regarding the risk of duplication, given that this is a process of contrasting and not of addition, the highest value was selected for each municipality and the other values were omitted, which reduced the risk of duplication. However, there was a possibility that a child has been a victim of sexual violence during the same period more than once, and they have registered the different acts of violence each time that they were a victim.

Regarding the risk of underreporting, while the highest value is taken from an important number of sources, in the majority of the municipalities the measures to prevent duplication can lead to underreporting, and for this reason the result can only be referred to as "at least 48,915 children and adolescents were victims of sexual violence in the framework of the armed conflict that had access to at least one type of registration process".

Benefits of the method and its results

1. Allows for an approximate figure of the number of children and adolescent victims of sexual violence that had access to at least one official registration mechanism.
2. Ostensibly reduces the risk of duplication given that it selects the most appropriate figure from a group of statistics according to various parameters.
3. Supports the progress made by national information systems in terms of defining some minimum fundamental categories.
4. Evidences that there are multiple problems associated with the registration process and information does exist, even if it is partial and dispersed.

Limitations of the method and its results

1. Incentives the sub-estimation of the phenomenon of sexual violence given that it doesn't allow for an estimation of under-reporting and as a result doesn't include the number of victims that didn't have access to medical attention, legal advice or administrative attention and assistance. In a similar manner, it ignores the population that could be in one registry (unprioritized) but not in others, with the goal of avoiding duplicity.
2. It isn't a probabilistic approximation and therefore doesn't use estimators.
3. It includes all of the weaknesses of a process for quantifying violations of human rights in armed conflict scenarios, particularly in relation to the pressure placed by adults on children to not report the violation, which represents a structural and cultural barrier for the registration mechanism.

Chapter II.

How many victims?

Before analyzing the statistics, it is fundamental to take into account that each unit is a numerical representation of a child or adolescent that has been a victim of sexual violence committed by legal or illegal armed actors, that these are events that someone was able to register, and finally that behind each record there is the story of that child or adolescent, which ideally shouldn't be a part of this list. Finally, it is important to remember all of those victims whose stories remain in silence .

From committing the act of violence to reporting the act of violence

One of the concerns in the methodological development of approximated quantification through the contrasting of data sources, especially in relation to the data available for this study, is that the occurrence of an act of violence doesn't necessarily guarantee that it is registered. In fact, the existence of under-reporting, and the levels of registration don't necessarily reflect the frequency of the occurrence of an event in a determined place.

Map 1 presents quantified victims/events according to the place that the violence occurred and the relationship between the geographical concentration of events with capital cities¹⁷

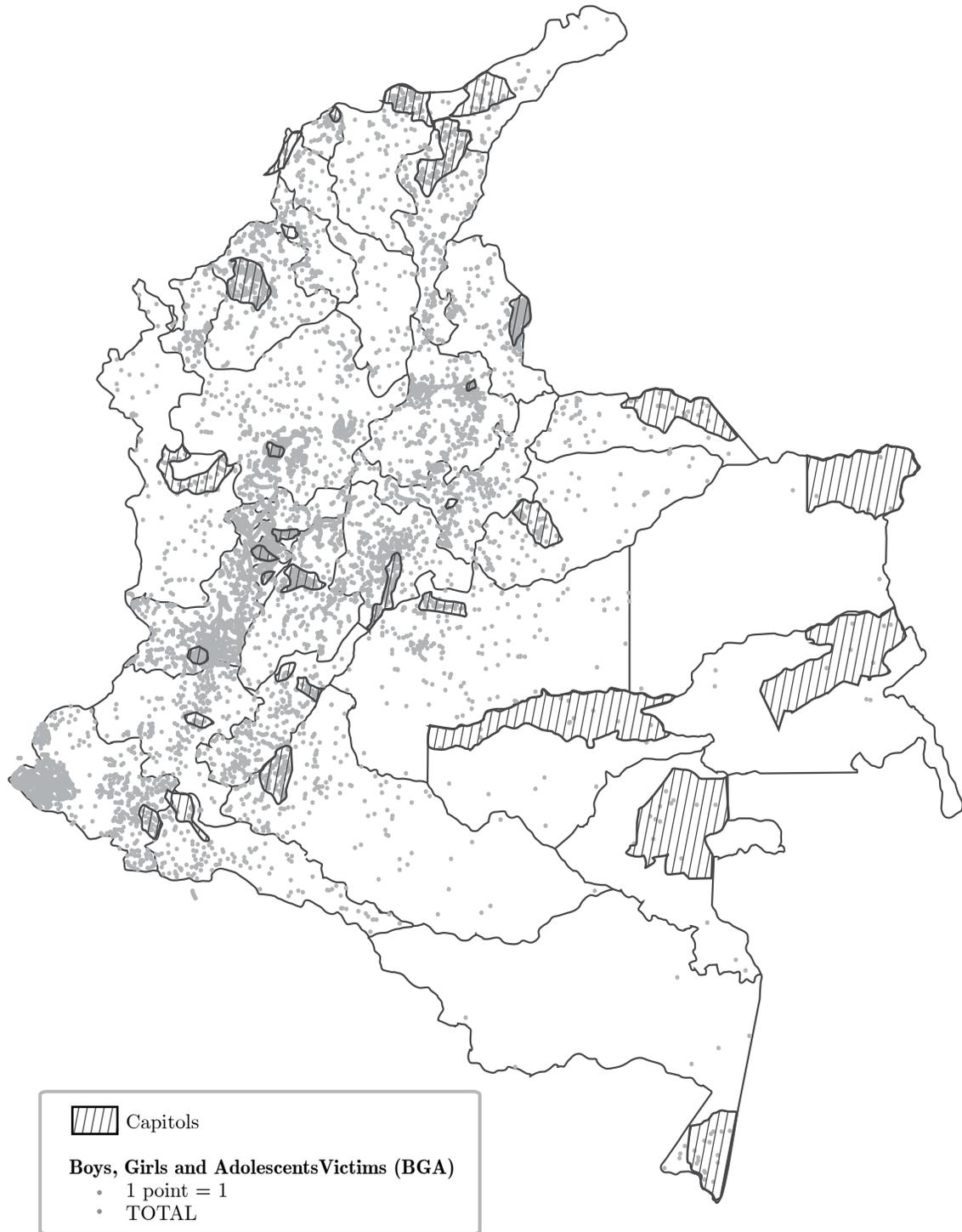
included in some records. This allows for an inference of a particular situation with two visions:

1. The greatest quantity of data at the departmental level is concentrated around departmental capitals (with the exception of Tumaco, Buenaventura and Barrancabermeja), which suggests that the probability of registering sexual violence committed in armed conflict contexts is higher in the capital cities.
2. Underreporting is concentrated in the most remote departmental areas that have a lower presence of institutions and organizations.

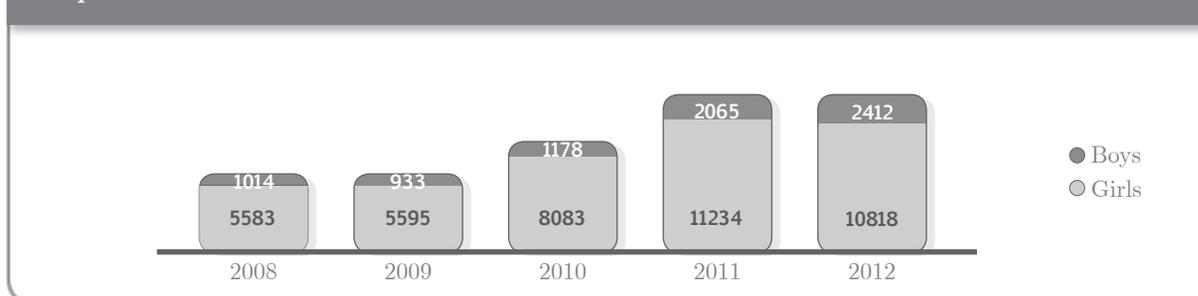
Additionally, given that the types of sexual violence in the territory vary in terms of the armed actors that are present, the territorial control that is exercised by these armed actors, the dynamic of the armed confrontation at a local level and the normalization of certain types of sexual violence as well as other factors, these represent another form of under-reporting that is associated with the territory where these acts occur. This isn't to say that the occurrence of violence in the reporting zones isn't statistically significant, it is more a method to determine the identification of possible geographic zones where there is under-reporting and evidences that there are restrictions on the reach of information – even though they have been reduced as much as possible within the methodology used – and these restrictions can be considered considerable based on the principle of reality.

¹⁷ The capital cities are assumed as a parameter for comparisons, taking into account that the institutional presence in these cities should, in principle, guarantee greater access to records, as well as there being higher levels of literacy among the general population.

Map 1. Event/registration of sexual violence against children and adolescents in contexts of armed conflict in relation to the distance from where the event to the departmental capitals



Graphic 1. Children and adolescent victims of sexual violence in Colombia in armed conflict scenarios



Figures from the territorial contexts¹⁸

As will be evidenced later, in the current reality of the conflict many practices have been normalized that are no longer considered to be a form of sexual violence, even though in legal and conceptual terms they are. In addition, there is a group of children and adolescent victims that have witnessed sexual assaults on their mothers or have been forced to watch sexual assaults committed against the women from their families. Despite the fact that they aren't direct victims, they are victims of this type of sexual violence and are not registered as victims.

According to the information processed, between 2008 and 2012 there were at least 48,915¹⁹ victims of sexual violence under the age of 18 that occurred in 1,070 municipalities of the total number of 1,130²⁰ municipalities that exist in Colombia; 41,313 girls and female adolescents and 7,602 boys and male adolescents were victims of sexual violence in which the alleged assailant was an armed actor. In 2012²¹ there

were at least 13,230 children and adolescents that were victims of sexual violence in which the assailant was an armed actor with these victims having access to at least some type of registry system; of these victims, 2,412 were boys and male adolescents and 10,818 were girls and female adolescents. This implies that between 2008 and 2012 around 27²² children were victims of sexual violence each day in the context of the armed conflict in Colombia.

During this period, according to the data the departments most affected by sexual violence committed against children and adolescents in the context of the armed conflict were: Antioquia, Valle del Cauca, Nariño, Santander and the city of Bogotá, (with 56% of the total amount of reported sexual violence against child and adolescent), with the number of victims being at least 1,327 boys and male adolescents and 5,379 girls and female adolescents that had access to a registration mechanism. Graphic 2 evidences the little information available in the Amazon region. This is due to the militarization of the territory, the presence of illicit crops and illegal armed actors and the articulation of networks of forced prostitution. This situation has worsened as a result of the presence

¹⁸ Annex 3 contains the tables with the departmental and municipal results from the years that were analyzed as part of the study.

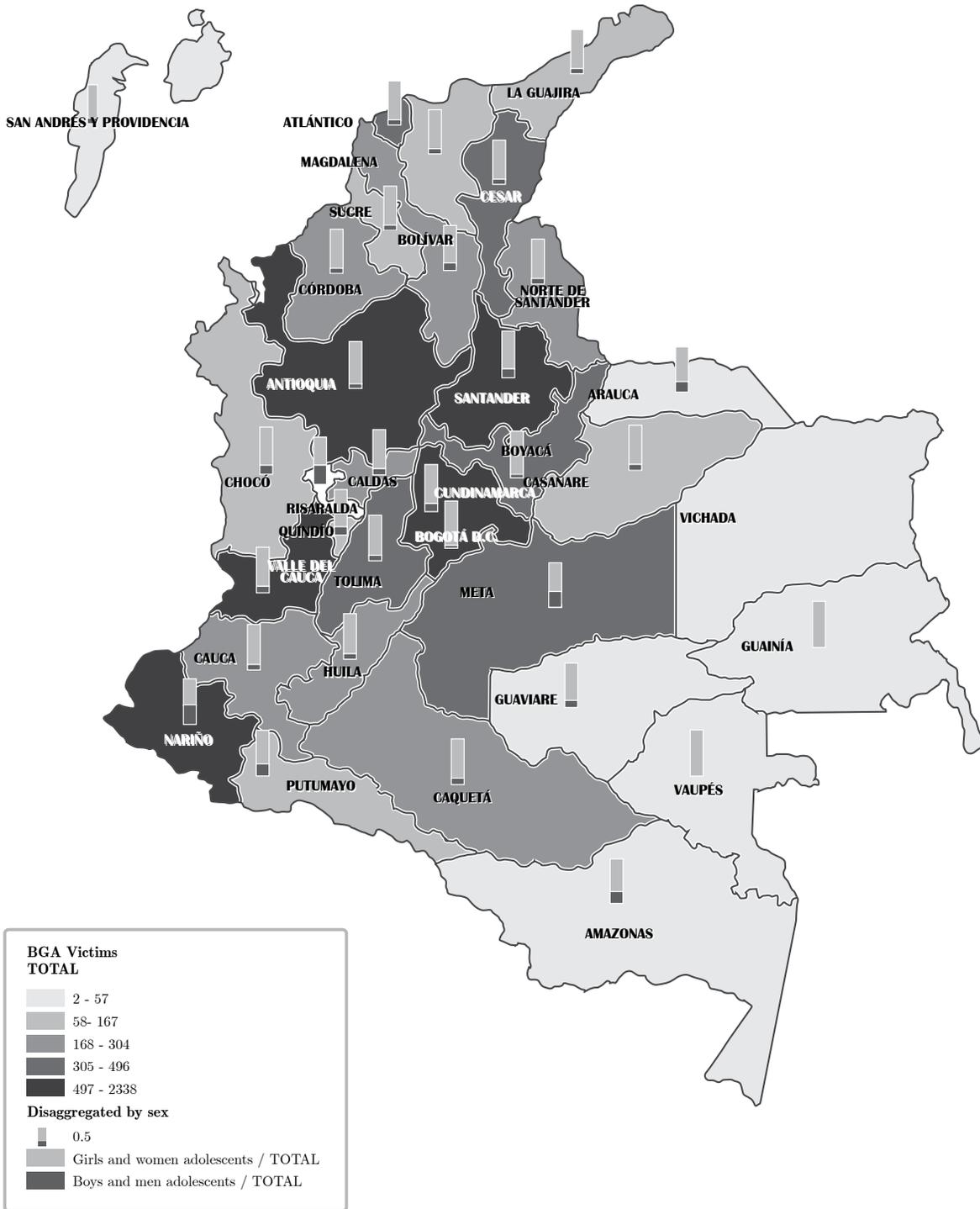
¹⁹ See Annex 3.

²⁰ Number corresponding to the administrative-political division of Colombia according to the National Administrative Department of Statistics (DANE) 2013.

²¹ According to the information obtained from the different information systems and the exercise of contrasting this information, it is evidenced that in 2011 there was a substantial increase of 44% in the reports compared to previous years. This could indicate an increase in this type of sexual violence committed against children and adolescents or an increase in the registration of this

violence due to the dissemination of information systems with categories that refer to the armed conflict. What can be affirmed is that there was a significant increase in the number of reports of sexual violence committed against children and adolescents between 2009 and 2010 and a similar increase from 2011 to 2012. ²² 48,915 children and adolescents divided by 365 days x 5 years provides a figure of 26.8 acts of sexual violence committed against children and adolescents daily. Due to a desire to have a whole number for this figure, this was rounded up to approximately 27.

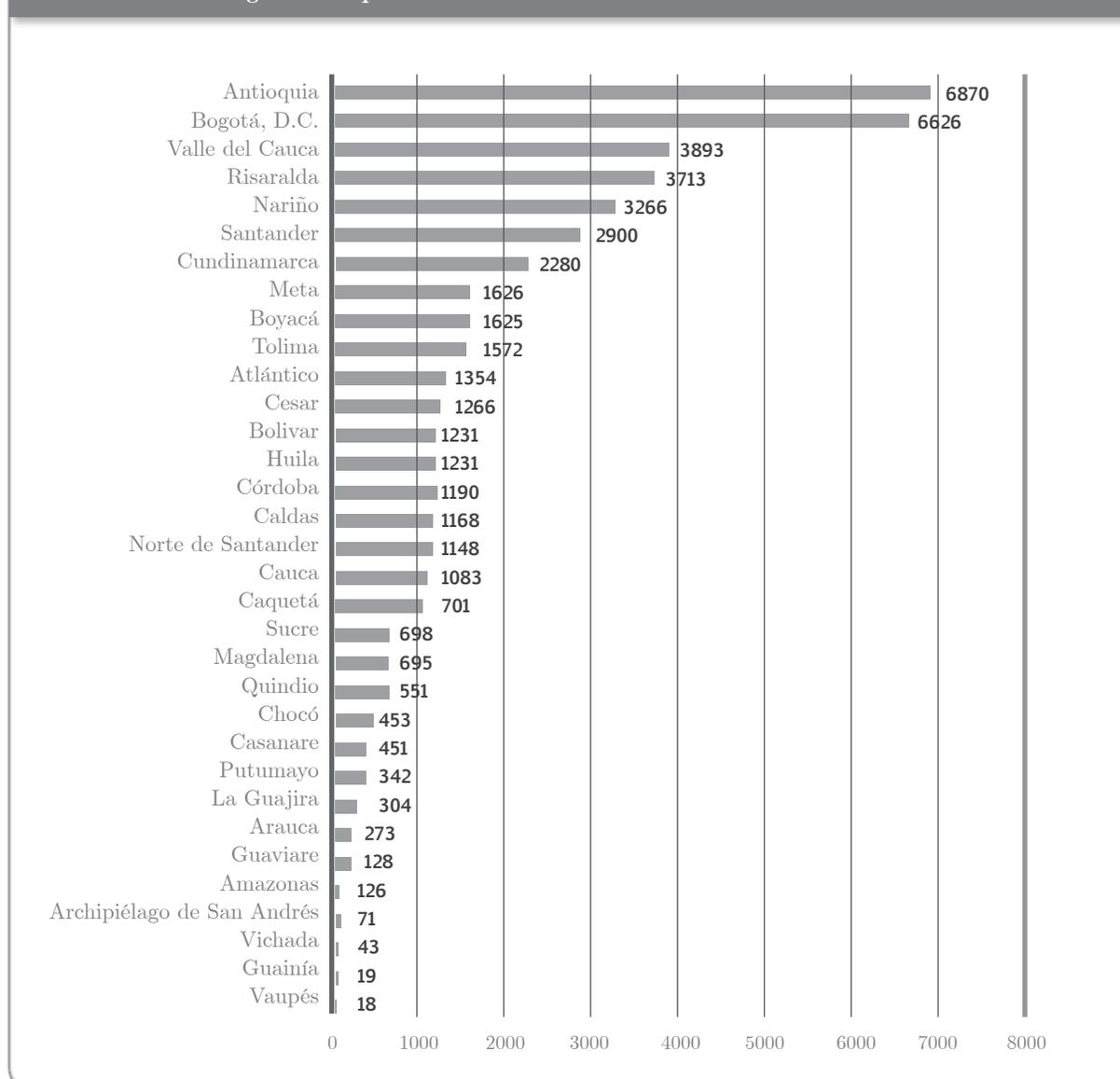
Map 2. Child and adolescent victims of sexual violence in 2012 according to the department where the sexual violence occurred



of foreign contractors in the petroleum industry and those that work in the fumigation of illicit crops. All of these factors have contributed to recurrent practices of sexual violence, that despite being reported to civil society organizations and international agencies (Gender Equality Committee of the Local Humanitarian Team, 2011) aren't registered in the government's information systems for victims of sexual violence.

In regards to the geographic trend of 2012, the same departments have the highest levels of registrations of sexual violence against children and adolescents committed in the context of the armed conflict (Map 2). The municipalities with the most reports of victims in 2012 were Bogotá, Medellín, Cali, Tumaco, Pasto, Pereira and Barrancabermeja.

Graphic 2. Number of child and adolescents victims of sexual violence between 2008 and 2012 according to the department where the sexual violence occurred



Map 3. Children and adolescent victims of sexual violence in 2012 according to the municipality where the sexual violence occurred



Table 2. Approximate estimation at a departmental level of child and adolescent victims of sexual violence in Colombia.

DEPARTAMENT	2008		2009		2010		2011		2012	
	Girls	Boys								
Antioquia	742	137	796	117	1144	168	1225	203	2075	263
Atlántico	170	32	183	27	266	36	280	47	274	39
Bogotá, D.C.	847	141	914	107	1308	164	1389	235	1366	155
Bolívar	149	29	162	25	232	36	254	49	247	48
Boyacá	181	35	188	25	289	39	432	60	342	34
Caldas	133	33	147	37	194	35	242	54	242	51
Caquetá	73	15	82	11	114	17	126	25	204	34
Cauca	128	20	135	16	201	28	226	40	248	41
Cesar	145	20	178	19	219	27	278	38	300	42
Córdoba	148	26	153	22	227	36	246	49	238	45
Cundinamarca	317	82	284	53	418	84	437	102	428	75
Chocó	52	5	56	7	82	10	93	21	102	25
Huila	156	40	156	21	234	33	242	45	257	47
La Guajira	37	6	39	7	60	12	64	10	60	9
Magdalena	95	24	92	15	132	22	137	23	134	21
Meta	523	62	154	32	209	36	183	59	240	128
Nariño	116	20	253	131	396	23	590	529	698	510
Norte de Santander	151	24	163	25	233	31	213	28	241	39
Quindío	82	17	85	15	125	21	42	8	130	26
Risaralda	163	24	180	23	256	53	2455	63	280	216
Santander	291	57	304	49	451	65	687	115	701	180
Sucre	89	14	91	11	136	19	149	24	142	23
Tolima	201	44	197	34	296	48	325	60	311	56
Valle del Cauca	419	77	448	64	647	93	585	101	1240	219
Arauca	27	5	24	7	39	12	86	16	45	12
Casanare	54	11	54	11	78	14	102	24	87	16
Putumayo	24	3	21	6	31	5	67	18	125	42
Archipelago of San Andrés, Providencia y Santa Catalina	17	2	8	1	18	4	5	1	13	2
Amazonas	24	4	17	4	21	3	17	7	21	8
Guainía	2	0	2	0	4	0	6	2	3	0
Guaviare	24	5	19	10	14	2	31	3	16	4
Vaupés	1	0	1	0	2	0	10	2	2	0
Vichada	2	0	9	1	7	2	10	4	6	2
TOTAL	5583	1014	5595	933	8083	1178	11234	2065	10818	2412

Map 3 also evidences an important absence of registrations in the south-eastern zone. During this year, the data was concentrated around the mountainous region of the country and the Pacific coast in the south-east of the country, specifically in Buenaventura and Tumaco. Meanwhile, the rest of the country has high levels of documentation of acts of sexual violence committed against children by local organizations but these aren't registered with the official government mechanisms.

This phenomenon is also evidenced in the zone made up of the departments of Córdoba, Sucre and Bolívar, where in 2012 there were 5.6% (743 children and adolescents) of the national total of victims of this form of violence. While within the departments there are differences between the territories and it isn't possible to compare the rest of the department with the south of Córdoba or Montes de María in terms of how these areas have been affected by the conflict,

there are recurring practices that are possibly associated with the type of armed actors that are present in the region.

Information by Region

The information that is presented below is an analysis of the results of an approximate quantification carried out in the framework of local situational contexts, identified during visits to the field and interviews conducted with the already mentioned sources.

Atlantic Region

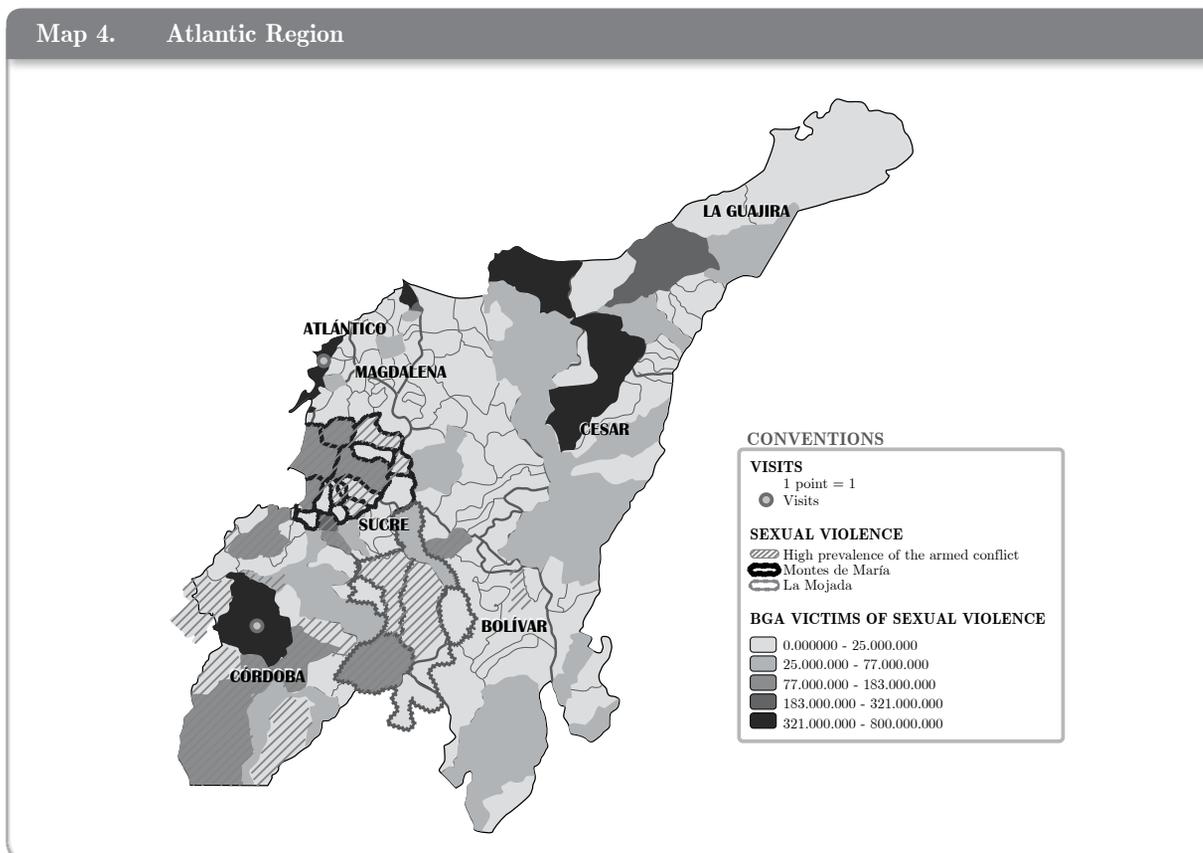
The map below evidences that in this region, the majority of the records are concentrated in Montería, Sincelejo and Cartagena, possibly due to the dynamic of the armed conflict in the urban centers that respond to other scenarios and these

cities being the location of strategic possibilities that are exploited by armed actors.

According to the results of the interviews, it was clear that the regions identified by the organizations and institutions that work with communities are where there is the highest perception of incidents of sexual violence committed in the context of the armed conflict. In addition, these are often the same zones identified as having the highest levels of armed conflict. These levels of armed conflict are compared with the results of the quantification of the levels of registration of child and adolescent victims of sexual violence in order to make an analysis of the relationship between perception, occurrence and registration in the zone.

This shows that the zones that have the highest levels of armed conflict, according to those interviewed, are concentrated in the three departments that were visited. Using the same criteria, these

Map 4. Atlantic Region

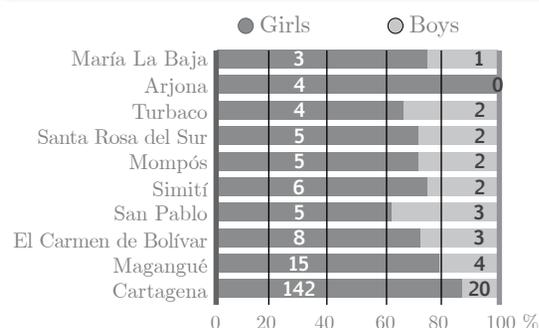


are reflected in the two zones in the region that have the highest levels of conflict as well as sexual violence committed against children and adolescents, Montes de María and La Mojana. In the interviews that were carried out with local staff, two municipalities in Antioquia (Arboletes and Nechí) were considered by participants as being part of the region. This demonstrates the extent of the regionalization of the armed conflict and that the perception of territory goes beyond political and administrative borders.

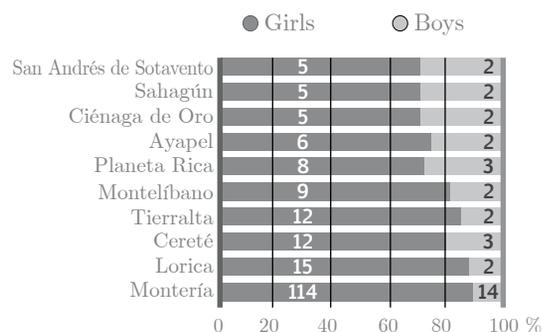
In this region it was possible to identify at least four types of recurring sexual violence committed against children and adolescents. These are different to the concepts that communities have regarding sexual violence and for this reason, there is a greater possibility that they become an ‘invisible’ part of the phenomenon and are not included in the official records for this type of violence.

The first is “falling in love”, in which the armed actor seduces and romances a young girl. The second is sexual slavery, in which members of the armed groups take girls to be the temporary “companions” (sexual slaves) of the commanders of these groups. In the third type of sexual violence, armed actors enter the houses of people that live in a certain zone and stay there, with or without the consent of the families. These families have to feed them, maintain them and protect them from other armed groups. In this scenario they have sexually assaulted the women and children in the house, which is why families often choose the option of being forcibly displaced to avoid these situations. The fourth is associated with the administration of the trafficking networks of girls and boys with the goal of commercial sexual exploitation by armed actors. This is particularly the case in Cartagena where the dynamic involves tourism and conditions of misery and extreme vulnerability among the forcibly displaced population. In contrast, in Córdoba and Sucre this trafficking is directly related to sexual slavery and occurs mainly in the mining areas in the south Córdoba and the Bajo Cauca Antioquia region. It also occurs in jails where they take girls and some boys and force them to engage in practices of sexual exploitation.

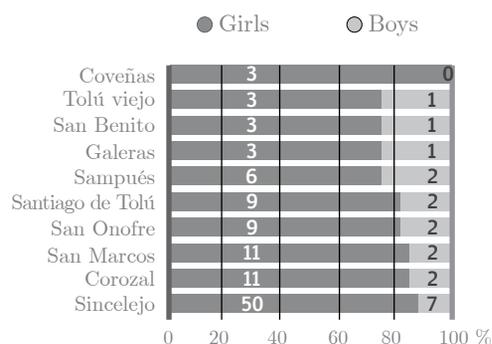
Graphic 3. Municipalities with the highest figures of child and adolescent victims in Bolívar



Graphic 4. Municipalities with the highest figures of child and adolescent victims in Córdoba



Graphic 5. Municipalities with the highest figures of child and adolescent victims in Sucre



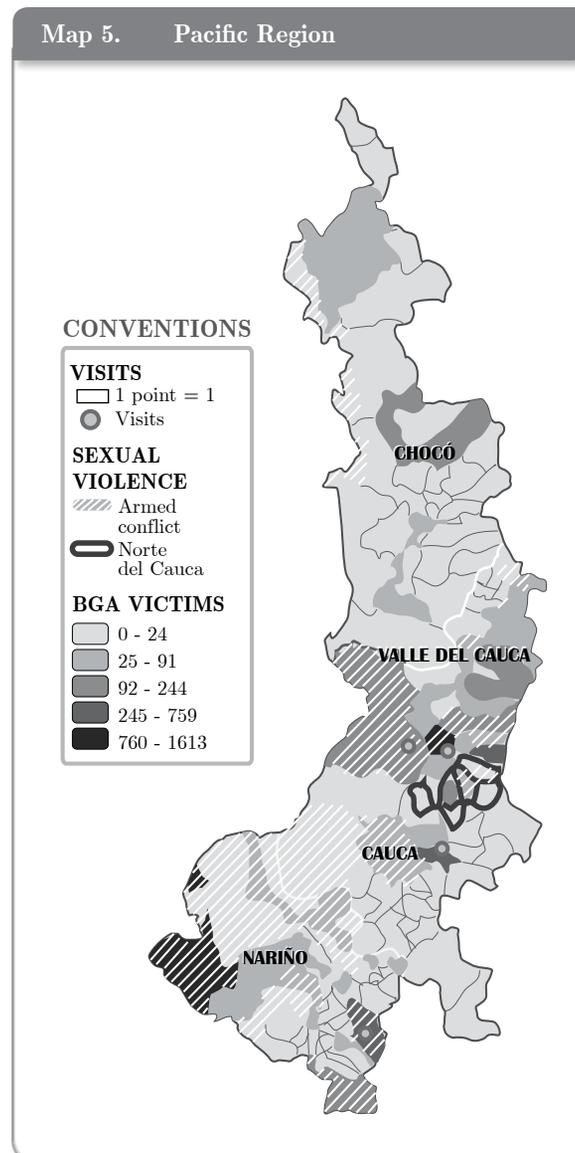
Particularly in Sucre it was possible to identify that sexual violence committed against young people was used as a mechanism of control through punishment, humiliation and extortion. Supported by the myths that associate sexual abuse perpetrated by armed actors against boys and male adolescents with the homosexuality of the victim, the patriarchal contexts of rural zones create social implications that increase the feelings of guilt and stigmatization of the victims of this type of violence.

In addition to these forms of violence, that don't necessarily have higher levels of registration, there is a particular situation in which armed actors have become administrators of justice, and even in some cases where they aren't the alleged assailants but civilians are. Registration of this violence doesn't occur because the armed actors have taken on the role of deciding on punishments for people who commit acts of sexual violence.

In Córdoba the municipalities with the highest levels of armed conflict and sexual violence²³, according to the qualitative information are: Planeta Rica, Montelíbano, Puerto Libertador, Tierralta, Ayapel, Alto Sinú, Montería, San Antero, León Medio, San José de Uré, Valencia and Versalles. Respondents also mentioned the coastal zone including Lorica, Moñitos, Canaletes, Los Córdoba and Arboletes. In Sucre and Bolívar the highest levels of conflict and sexual violence occurred in the Montes de María zone (Los Palmitos, San Onofre, Ovejas, Colosó, Chalan, Sincelajo, El Carmen de Bolívar, María la Baja and San Juan Nepomuceno) in addition to Sampues, Majaguan, San Benito, La Mojana, Corozal, Zambrano and Cartagena. This is also evidenced through quantitative data, as illustrated in graphics 4, 5 and 6, which show that the named municipalities coincide with the 10 municipalities with the highest number of registrations of sexual violence committed against children and adolescents for each department.

Pacific Region

The western region, especially towards the south of the country, has been one of the most visible epicenters of the armed confrontation in the last two years. The presence of ethnic population, both afro-descendent and indigenous communities, in this zone and the diversity of the rural and urban scenarios (depending on where they are located - along the coast or in the mountains) mean that there are similar trends in this area that can be found in other regions of the west and north of the country.



23 See Map 3

The visits made to Nariño and Cauca, were to the capital cities of these departments that are located in the Andean region of the country. Even though the Pacific coast shared by these two departments is where there are higher levels of armed conflict and sexual violence occurs more often, the patterns of victimization and social control exercised by armed actors are more similar to those used in the Pacific region of Colombia than in the Andean zone. As a result, Pasto and Popayán have been included in this region and not in the Andean region for the purposes of this study.

The zones with the highest number of victims of sexual violence, according to the quantification achieved by the study, coincide with the zones that were identified in the interviews. These are the municipalities located along the Pacific coast and some of the municipalities in Nariño that are on the international border with Ecuador.

Similarly, other zones were identified with lower levels of registration of sexual violence against children and adolescents that were mainly concentrated in the coastal areas. In the urban scenarios, for example in the department of Valle del Cauca and specifically Buenaventura and Cali, violence is structured through the presence of post-demobilization groups in the cities

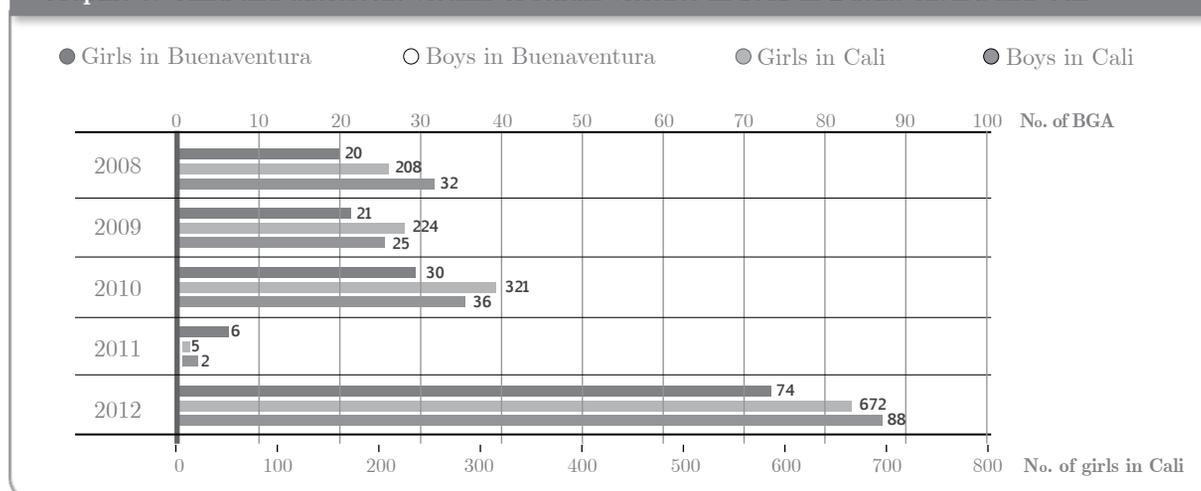
and their articulation with local gangs. In these areas, “falling in love” is also one of the most visible forms (in daily life) of sexual violence, but it is also used as a strategy to facilitate illegal recruitment. The girls considered the most “beautiful” are selected and recruited to serve as “bait” by the armed groups and commit other types of crimes such as thefts, kidnapping and extortion, among others.

In addition, the sexual orientation of adolescents has been declared a military objective. Adolescents who are not heterosexual have to leave the city or face the risk of being victims of general violence and there is a specific risk that they face, which is the use of sexual violence as a form of humiliating them, especially directed at boys and male adolescents.

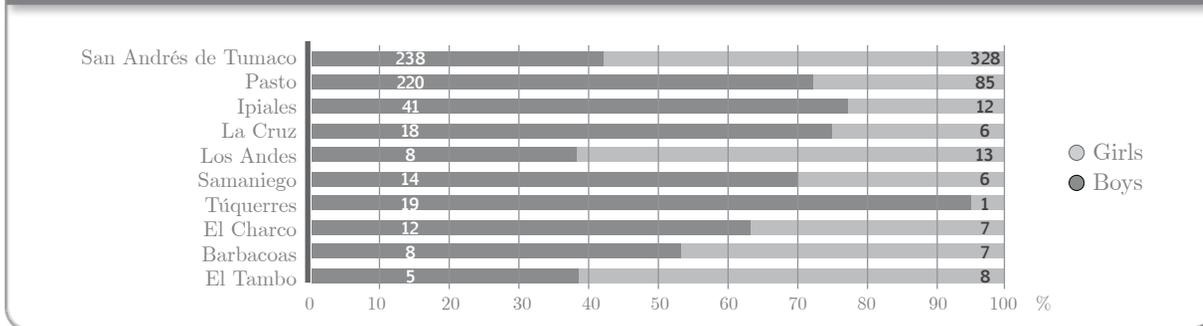
Girls and female adolescents are sexually assaulted as a form of revenge carried out by armed groups from other neighborhoods. This is a mechanism of social control, but also a method that an armed group uses to demonstrate its strength.

Buenaventura and Tumaco are the municipalities that have the highest number of records of sexual violence in armed conflict scenarios (according to the quantification process), followed by the capi-

Graphic 6. Child and adolescent victims of sexual violence in 2012 in Buenaventura and Cali



Graphic 7. Children that are victims of sexual violence in Nariño in 2012
(Including the gender of the victim)



tal cities. As can be observed in Map 2, in Tumaco, especially the urban center, the situation is similar to that of Buenaventura in terms of levels of sexual violence committed in the context of the armed conflict.

In Tumaco the extent of forced prostitution and the commercial sexual exploitation of children and adolescents through networks administered by armed actors, is alarming. In the rural zone there is a mode of exploitation known as “chongos móviles”, which consists of taking girls from settlement to settlement where they are sexually exploited by legal and illegal armed actors in each place. What is most concerning is the presence of the port in Tumaco and foreign workers – which also occurs in other municipalities – and the precarious socio-economic situation faced by inhabitants of the zone, which has normalized these practices among both girls and boys.

In Nariño sexual violence committed against children in the context of the armed conflict is more associated with scenarios of forced recruitment and guerrilla groups because post-mobilization groups are more likely to be involved with networks of forced prostitution and the sexual exploitation of children.

Similarly, the “falling in love” mechanism is identified across the entire department as a strategy used by all of the armed groups that are present in the territory, with the goal of obtaining information from their victims related to the dynamic of

the conflict in the zone. This also happens in the north of the department of Cauca, for example.

The most complicated municipalities are located across the three different zones: the mountainous zone, the foothills and the Pacific coast of the department. These include: Taminango, Santacruz de Guachavez, Bocas de Satinga, Mosquera, Francisco Pizarro, Policarpa, Leiva, Rosario, Tumaco, Ricaurte, el Charco, Samaniego, Barbacoas, Roberto Payan, Magüi Payan, Cumbitara, Altaquer, Olaya, Santa Barbara de Iscuandé, Ipiales and La Tola. This classification is supported by the data collected in the quantification process, especially in the cases of Tumaco and Ipiales.

The figures from Nariño indicate that there are more similarities between the number of boys and girls that are victims of sexual violence committed in the context of the armed conflict than previously identified, as evidenced in the following graphic.

The dynamic of sexual violence committed against children and adolescents in the context of the armed conflict in Nariño are very similar (in the mountain and coastal zones) as to what happens in Cauca and in the mountain region of Putumayo.

Amazon Region

This region is notable for having multiple national borders and the resistance shown by the different indigenous groups in the territory. Added to the

problems faced with being a border region, there are the effects of the abandonment by the national government due to the geographical distances and access difficulties. Due to the strategic position of this region, with its proximity to the Pacific (from Putumayo to Nariño) and the international borders shared with Ecuador, Peru and Brazil, the region has been affected by the permanent presence of armed actors (settled in the territory) that have engaged in armed social control and engaged in the forced recruitment of children and adolescents, people trafficking and forced displacement (into another country), among others.

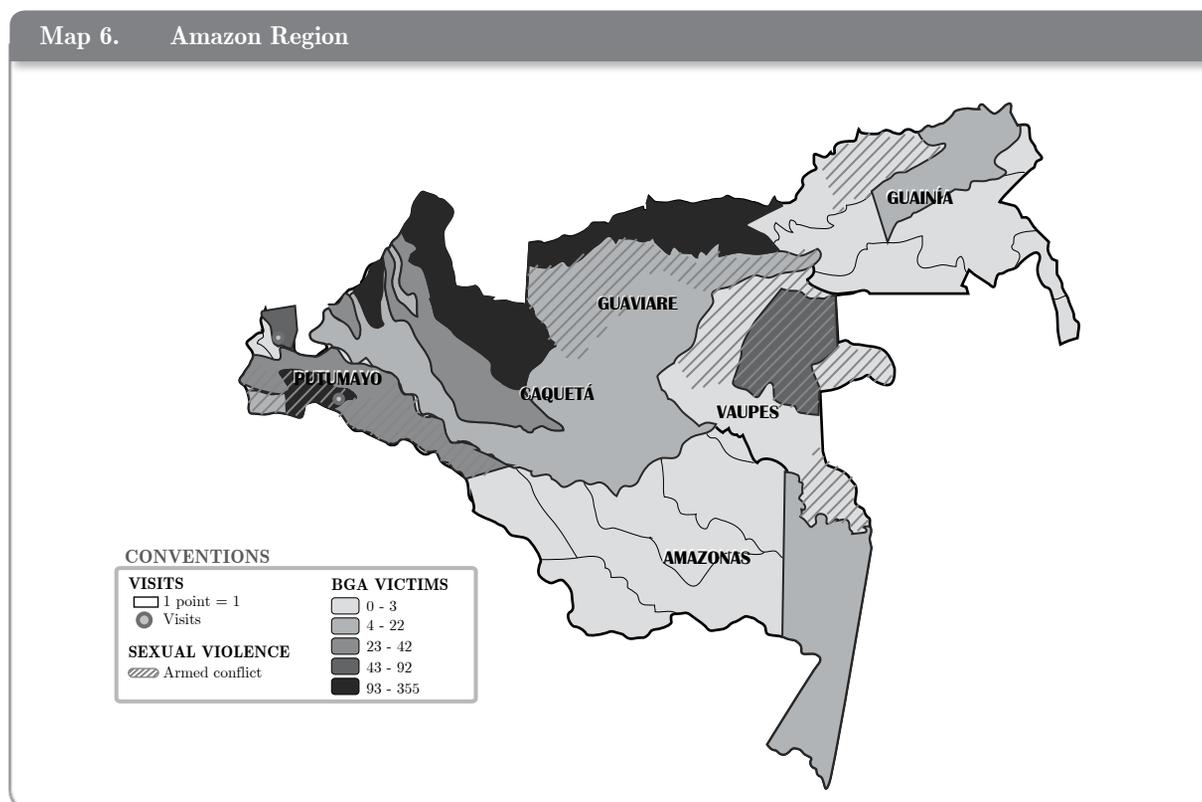
In this region, only one department was visited (visiting only two municipalities). For the purposes of this study both the qualitative and quantitative information from the zone have been complemented with information on levels of sexual violence committed against children and young people in the context of the armed conflict obtained from the municipalities, as

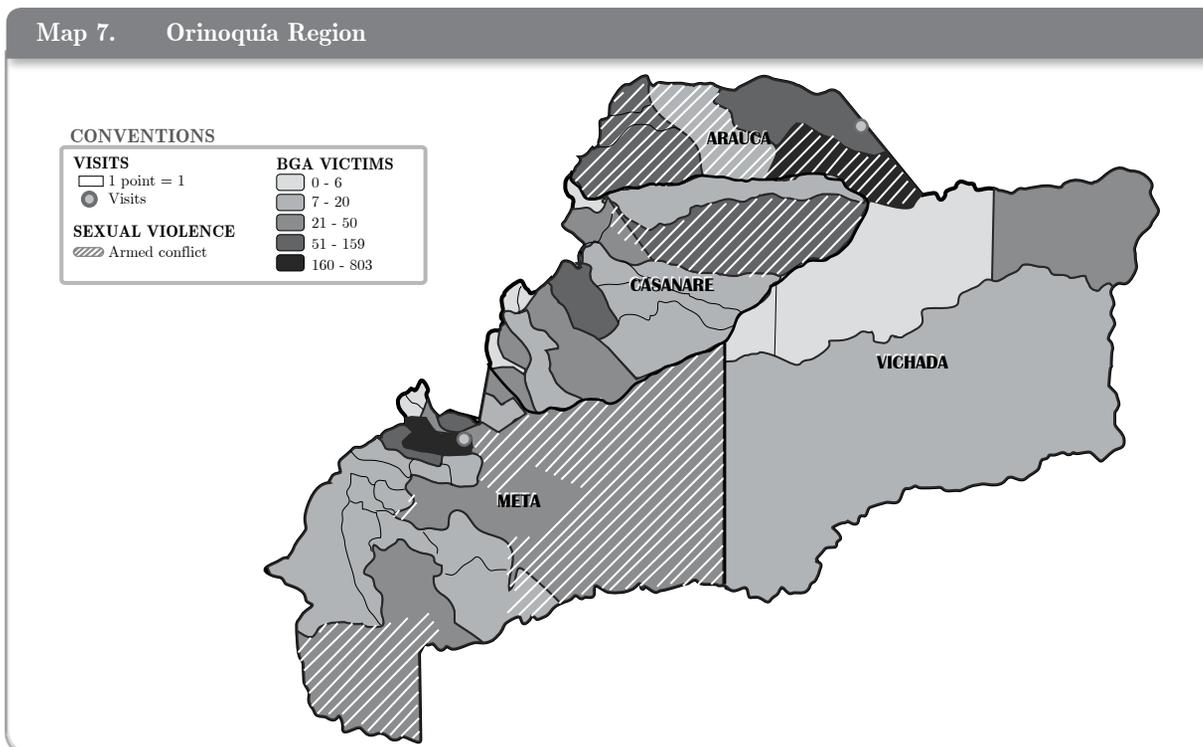
well as reports provided by the Ombudsman's Office's Early Warning System (SAT) that cover sexual violence.

In this region, as can be seen in Map 7, it is necessary to complement the quantitative information with scenarios from the context. In the zones where there was situational information, there is evidence that municipalities with the lowest levels of reporting being identified have the highest risk of sexual violence in armed conflict scenarios.

Similarly, the situation in San José del Guaviare isn't perceived as requiring special assistance, while in Vaupés almost all of the municipalities have low levels of registration, even though the qualitative information collected by this study highlights scenarios of high levels of risk or acts of sexual violence committed against children and adolescents in the context of the armed conflict.

Map 6. Amazon Region





In Putumayo, the level of forced recruitment of children and adolescents is much higher or more visible than in nearby zones such as Nariño. In this sense, the general pattern is that children are recruited and enter into sexual relationships with superior ranking members of the armed group as a means of protection to not become a victim of other armed actors. In addition, children and adolescent are victims of commercial sexual exploitation or are forced to work for the armed groups (cooking, cleaning, etc.) in this scenario.

According to the information collected during the interviews, the petroleum companies and military bases are also areas where the commercial sexual exploitation of children occurs, with situations of sexual slavery and consequently adolescent pregnancies at an early age.

The municipalities where this situation is most common consist of practically the entire department: Puerto Caicedo, La Hormiga, Puerto Asis, Puerto Leguizamo, Orito, San Miguel and

Sibundoy. In Putumayo 167 cases were registered in 2012, almost double that of 2011 in which there were 85 children registered as victims of sexual violence committed by armed groups.

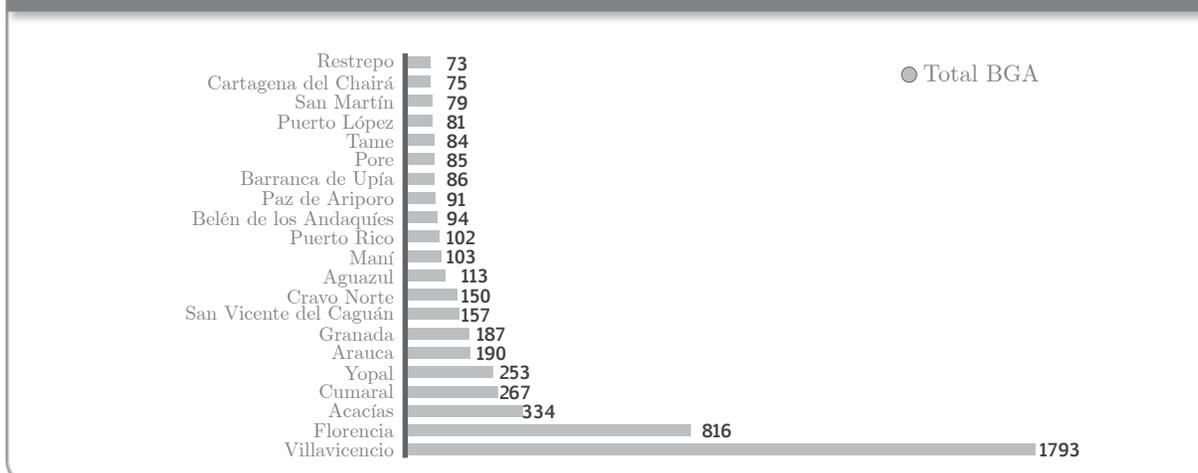
Orinoquía Region

In the east of the country sexual violence is directly related with forced recruitment, which is similar to the trends evident in Putumayo and part of Nariño, despite this region's geographic distance from these two departments.

In Arauca girls are recruited more than boys²⁴. Staff interviewed from the organizations and institutions that work in this region stated that when girls are recruited they are sexually assaulted and when they forcibly recruit boys and discover that they are homosexuals, they are

²⁴ An example of this is the operation carried out on the 23rd of June 2013 which aimed to capture alias "The Fisherman" who had four or five girls as his bodyguards (information varied depending on the source).

Graphic 8. Total child and adolescent victims of sexual violence in the armed conflict between 2008 and 2012 in the municipalities of the Orinoquía region (First 20)



tortured. This doesn't just occur with the illegal armed groups, but also with members of the armed forces.

Similarly, the relationship between sexual slavery administered by armed actors and the presence of the extractive industries, mainly petrol companies, has generate perverse situations in the zones close to the petroleum fields, notably in Arauca, but also in an invisible way in the department of Meta.

According to the data collected by the study, registrations of sexual violence committed against children and adolescents is much more reduced than in the rest of the country due to the factors associated with under-reporting by victims of sexual violence. When sexual violence happens in the context of recruitment, generally the only data available is official. In very few cases information is also obtained once children and adolescents have disengaged from the groups, have been captured or have been injured in combat and the appropriate public institutions or organizations have access to the victims.

Between 2008 and 2012, in these 3 departments there were at least 6,962 children and adolescent victims of sexual violence committed by the armed actors present in this region.

Andean Region

The Andean region, in the context of this analysis, is an extremely diverse zone with different economic, political and social dynamics. However, it is possible to evidence that the qualitative data collected from this region is information that corresponds to urban areas, in particular from the cities visited by the research team. This demonstrates a separation between the capitals and the remote municipalities, despite the regional policies that have been implemented to support the cities' growth and development.

Medellín²⁵, Bogotá and Cúcuta were visited, which are all cities where the urbanization of the armed conflict has occurred in different stages. In all three cities the post-demobilization armed groups are those fighting for territorial control of these urban areas. There are common elements in the region that can be identified through a national, or at least regional, analysis. One of the most common forms of sexual violence is the "voluntary" sentimental relationships between girls from the age of 12 years and older and armed actors. These relationships can be caused by intima-

²⁵ While this visit aimed to cover all of the department of Antioquia, the contextual information collected in Medellín only detailed the situation in the municipality.

tion or as a mechanism to improve the girls' *social status*. The parents lose all control over their daughters. For example, the armed actors are those who decide whether the girls go or not parties (the girls don't get to express their opinion about whether they want to go or not). When the "authority" of the armed actor is challenged by the girl or someone from her family it usually results in homicide or displacement.

Similarly, the girls are considered to be the "prizes" of war. In the territorial disputes between armed groups, a mechanism to demonstrate control in a zone is through controlling the girls and young women in the area. Armed actors regulate their behavior, their clothes, their schedules, the vocabulary they use and even administer justice when they are involved in disputes. The so called "justicieros" (law enforcers) are those who address what they consider to be signs of aggression. This aggression shown by the girls and young women towards their friends or family threatens the armed actors' own territorial power.

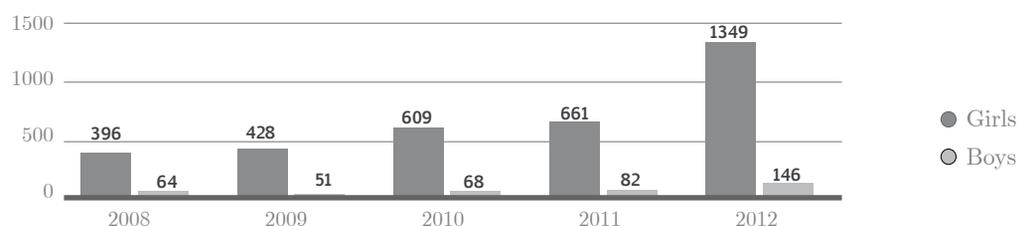
The articulation of networks in the neighborhoods and the Comunas (large groups of neighborhoods) for the sexual exploitation of girls through recruitment, which can involve selling their virginity, is very much linked to the consumption of drugs and the dependency created by the providers of these drugs (the armed actors). There are some cases of forced disappearances that have been attributed to these types of scenarios, in which it isn't clear if the victim was assassinated or fell victim to people trafficking networks.

There is clear evidence that the boys and male adolescents that don't join the armed groups have to be forcibly displaced or face suffering torture, public humiliation, homicides and / or theft. There is no clear evidence of sexual violence against boys by armed actors, but there is evidence of the threats against their families or their girlfriends.

The normalization of practices such as "falling in love" and the minimization of violence as something "not so serious" when it consists of harassment has meant that girls in this region are "walking dead", stricken by fear, and as a result they generate self-protection mechanisms to not appear attractive and reduce the risk of catching the eye of an armed actor. For example, they don't want to have a big 15th birthday party, which is a tradition for girls in Colombia, because they don't want the armed actors to know how old they are, even though it is complicated when the young males in the armed group are from the same neighborhood and have lived there all their lives. In these situations, falling pregnant is a way to feel protected against the armed actors, and girls also adopt behavior such as the masculinization of attitudes, clothes, ways of speaking, etc., as a form of self-protection.

Analyzing the information shown in this graphic, the results evidence a permanent and marginally growing increase in the data on child and adolescent victims of sexual violence in the framework of the armed conflict. 11% of all of the cases at the national level in 2012 were registered in Medellín, which represents 1,495 child and adolescent victims. According to this data at least 4

Graphic 9. Children and adolescents that are victims of sexual violence in the framework of the armed conflict in Medellín



Map 8. Zones with the highest perception of sexual violence in Medellín (Armed Conflict)



children and adolescents were victims of sexual violence perpetrated by armed actors each day in Medellín. Despite this concerning situation, and concerted efforts by public institutions, the overall normalization of the conflict has permeated institutions and their staff, who even though they have the best intentions make comments such as the following: *“In a clash between armed groups, if it’s a stray bullet that kills someone, then it’s not considered to be violence that occurred in the context of the conflict”*²⁶. With the same criteria these public officials evaluate and classify whether cases of sexual violence occurred in the context of the armed conflict in the city.

Maps 8 and 9 highlight the Comunas and localities of Medellín and Bogotá that present the highest risk of children and adolescents being victims of sexual violence in armed conflict sce-

Map 9. Zones with the highest perception of sexual violence in Bogotá (Armed Conflict)



narios. This is according to the perception of organizations and institutions and the Early Warning System (SAT) report.

In Bogotá, many institutions and organizations are often national, and there is a public conception in which Bogotá is considered a territory of peace that is isolated from the armed conflict and only receives victims of other regions of the country. However, the Ombudsman’s Office Early Warning System issued two SAT reports for Bogotá during 2013, describing the situation

26 Statement from a public official responsible for information systems on violence during an interview in Medellín.

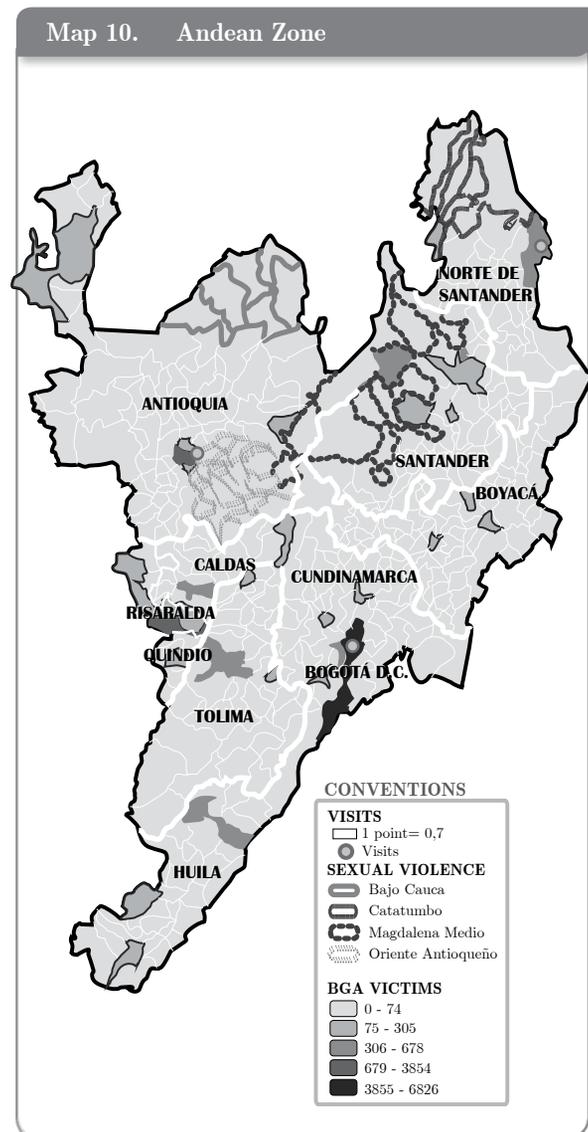
of vulnerability that communities on the periphery of the city were facing in relation to the presence of armed groups. Similarly, due to the phenomenon of the city spreading into the neighboring municipality of Soacha, the urban armed conflict has extended its reach and children and adolescents are the group that are at the highest risk according to the SAT reports.

In Norte de Santander there are two different scenarios related to this issue.

The first, due to the urban nature of Cúcuta in areas such as Villa del Rosario, the dynamic is more similar to what happens in Medellín, Cali or Bogotá with the permanent territorial control exercised by the armed groups affecting the lives of children and adolescents. However, the condition of being on the border with Venezuela makes Cúcuta a strategic territory for drug trafficking, contraband and control of profits (as happens in Orinoquía). The regular crossing of the border by inhabitants makes the identification of victims difficult.

The second scenario is in the rural zone of Cata-tumbo where the situation is similar to Arauca, even though the presence of a range of armed groups (three guerrilla groups and at least three post-mobilization groups) creates scenarios that are more complex and reflect the dynamic of the western zone of Meta. The intense militarization of the area through a process of territorial consolidation (Catatumbo region) and the presence of three guerrilla groups and other post-demobilization groups have resulted in permanent situations of risk for communities.

In regional terms, zones were identified (especially in the corridor between Urabá in Antioquia, part of the Medio Magdalena and Catatumbo regions) which are subject to territorial control from armed actors and also have a strong presence of extractive industries. This has led to the commercial sexual exploitation of children. People trafficking, from Córdoba towards the Bajo Cauca Antioqueño region is frequent. The girls that are rescued from the people traffickers are found to be in terrible health.



Chapter III.

Why don't they count?

Complete records and information (documentary, qualitative and quantitative) in scenarios of armed conflict are not just a form of public truth, but also represent the possibility of supporting exercises that preserve and/or recover the historical memory of communities that have been victims of human rights violations or international humanitarian law infractions and have individually or collectively suffered as a result of the armed conflict. Greenhill (2010) states that: *truth is the first casualty of war due to the recognized power of information and the policies of persuasion used during periods of conflict*; this quote illustrates the impact of war on the availability of precise information.

The official records of acts of violence committed against civilian populations, especially in human rights situations, act as:

1. An instrument for situational monitoring
2. A part of historical memory
3. Evidence in judicial processes
4. The possibility of providing a voice to those that have been silenced by and with violence
5. A fundamental foundation for individuals and collectives to implement concrete actions that contribute to the formation of public policy.

For this reason, carefully, periodically, uniformly and transparently recording acts of violence is vi-

tal to overcome the situation of vulnerability that the civilian population faces during this period.

Paradigm on the reporting of sexual violence in the armed conflict in Colombia.

The perception from civil society and the international community, according to the reports that were reviewed,²⁷ is that the invisibility of sexual violence caused by armed conflicts in Colombia and around the world, whether carried out as a weapon of war or is a result of the militarization of civilian life, is a consequence in part of high levels of under-reporting. In Colombia, according to civil society organizations²⁸ there is a level of under-reporting of violence committed in the context of the armed conflict that is generally considered to be between 80% and 87%.

An accurate measurement of the extent of under-reporting would help overcome barriers regarding information on the total number of victims. However, due to the difficulties that this implies, this can only be ascertained through case based studies and surveys on the prevalence of sexual violence, as occurred in the campaign “Rape and other violence: Leave my Body Out of the War” in 2010, which evidenced that 82.15% of women didn't register as being a victim of sexual vio-

²⁷ See bibliography.

²⁸ Including the organizations part of the Campaign, Sisma Mujer and the organizations that are part of the Working Group on Women and Armed Conflict.

lence when it occurred, which demonstrates the high level of under-reporting. For this reason, due to the multi-causality of social phenomena, the focus of this component of the research centered on identifying the potential reasons at local and national levels for underreporting. Elements that contribute to this reason can be identified in every stage of the reporting process and there are both temporary and structural obstacles to the registration of victims.

Barriers to accessing the reporting process

Through regional visits, the research team conducted a review of reports by institutions and responses to the writ demands sent to the mentioned institutions. It was identified that there are at least two groups of obstacles faced by victims in accessing the reporting process: temporary and structural.

Temporary: In this first group the restrictions are associated with factors related to the presence of armed actors in local scenarios, such as: the absence of intimacy, security and protection; the levels of impunity and absence of concrete actions, and; social control, institutional cooptation and/or the armed and illegal administration of local justice.

Structural: This second group refers to cultural, social and institutional processes. These include the excessive bureaucracy in the processes of assistance and reporting, the dehumanization in the attention provided to victims by officials, the insufficient, inexistent and/or inefficient institutional presence and the normalization of practices of social control and/or aggression.

In terms of the **Temporary Restrictions** these can be described in the following manner:

a. Absence of intimacy, security and protection:

Not registering the act of sexual violence or avoiding certain parts of the process, such as going to see the doctor, is a definite fear

among victims²⁹. In all of the interviews carried out, the fear of reprisals by the armed actors was stated as the main cause of under-reporting. This fear, that has been recognized for many years as a factor that limits the reporting of sexual violence, is directly linked to the armed actors and the threat of possible reprisals against the victim and their families. Beyond this, through the regional trips and interviews with staff from organizations that directly work with local populations, the study established that silence becomes a mechanism of self-protection from the profound psycho-social effects that sexual violence has on the lives of victims, their families and their communities.

Similarly, the analysis of the causes associated with fear, according to those interviewed, contributes information that allows for the identification of other problems: the victims are afraid due to local experiences, known or reproduced orally in the communities that have indicated that there is no protection of the intimacy of the victims in the moment of registering or declaring as a victim of sexual violence or during the subsequent medical consultation. Due to the infrastructure available where the registration process occurs, there is doubt over the confidentiality exercised by the professional that takes the declaration (or report or conducts the medical consultation) and the involvement of local institutions with armed groups; **the confidential character of the information that the victims trusts the public official with can “escape” during the systematization of the information.** The consequences are extremely dangerous, in that the community becomes aware of the incident of sexual violence and subsequently stigmatizes the victim and accuses them of being a collaborator, as well as the threat of being a victim of other violence

29 It is of vital importance to understand that the questions here only refer to fear or apprehension exclusively as “fear/apprehension of making a report”. Naturally the one fear mentioned can’t encapsulate all of the different types of fear or apprehension that victims of sexual violence feel, especially child and adolescent victims.

committed by armed groups (as a reprisal) such as homicides, forced displacements, torture, sexual violence, forced disappearances, persecutions or kidnapping, as well as others.

b. Impunity and absence of concrete actions:

“Impunity is a message of authorization for those who commit violence”³⁰

The general perception³¹ regarding the impunity of perpetrators that commit sexual violence is that it extends to almost all of them. In fact it wasn't possible to identify a single case of successful legal action brought by a victim. During the study it was identified that victims didn't receive any type of incentive to register as victims of sexual violence and there are no concrete measures of protection for special cases of extreme vulnerability or risk after registering as a victim. The response from these institutions during the registration process is slow, both at local as well as at national levels. In addition, the burden of proof basically falls on the shoulders of the victims, whether during the administrative registration and specifically with the Victims' Register (RUV), during the medical registration processed by the National Public Health Oversight System (SIVIGILA) or in the legal registration.

There are serious concerns over the process of “validation” or “verification” of cases associated with the armed conflict during the medical registration, given that if it can't be verified that the act was committed by an armed actor then the incident taken out of the “armed conflict” category³². In various institutions the study identified the need for an improved validation process, as the current application of this process raises con-

cerns regarding the intimacy of the victim and their protection, especially given their particular security conditions. The validation process, when it is logistically possible, is realized through a visit to the victim's house, and of course in the case of rural victims this is even more complicated. Generally these processes result in the victim's case being excluded from the “armed conflict” category.

Regarding this process, it would be necessary to take into account that the principle of good faith is a constitutional right, and that home visits for the verification of information provided can put victims at risk when they are living in territories controlled by armed actors. In addition, two concerns have arisen: What is the type of question that leads to a victim denying that the suspected assailant committed the act of sexual violence? What impact does this process have on the victim?

In terms of administrative records, the delays by staff in taking the victim's declaration and evaluation of the victim's story don't provide any incentives for them to participate in this process. Another concern is the lack of a systematic inclusion of victims of the post-mobilization groups³³, which doesn't just restrict access to reporting, but also limits their access to comprehensive reparation and the recognition of their condition as victims.

The Sub-department for Reporting and Evaluation from the UARIC cites Article 3 of the Victims' Law to define their classification of who is a victim of the armed conflict, which states that:

“For the effects of the definition contained in the pre-

30 Statement from a woman human rights defender during an interview in Medellín.

31 According to the organizations and institutions interviewed in the regions.

32 According to the information obtained through interviews with officials responsible for the information provided by SIVIGILA at a departmental level.

33 These are considered post-demobilization groups and include those paramilitary groups that demobilized and reformed, those that never demobilized and the paramilitary groups that were created after the demobilization process. The word post-demobilization is only a reference to a time period and doesn't only imply the groups created after this time period.

sent article, those individuals who have suffered damage to their rights as a consequence of acts of **common delinquency** will not be considered as victims. (Congress of the Republic, 2011. Art. 3, Paragraph 3). **Not highlighted in the original.**"

This article has been sufficient for this Sub-department to not include victims of the post-mobilization groups and have generated complex effects on the registration process for victims, who now lie in order to have a better possibility of being included in the Register, without recognizing the profound damage that they create through not telling the truth the areas of justice and historical memory.³⁴

In this area, and due to the insistence of civil society³⁵, the Constitutional Court ordered an inspection of the UARIV, specifically in the Registry Department through its Ruling 052 of 2013. The Court found that the exclusion of the victims of post-demobilization groups continued, despite its previous ruling to address this issue.

- c. Social control, institutional cooptation and/or armed and illegal administration of local justice:

The territorial control of determined armed groups in specific zones of the country is one of the main factors that contributes to the fear felt by the population, as mentioned in the first point. The cooptation of institutions by these groups, and in some cases by the armed forces, has resulted in high levels of distrust of public institutions among

the general population. Similarly, there are areas of the country in which the abandonment by the State has led to armed actors having such a level of control that they directly administer justice, which impedes access to protection from public institutions for victims.

Structural Obstacles, these refer to cultural, social and institutional processes:

- a. Excessive bureaucracy in the assistance and reporting processes:

Given the absence of inter-institutional articulation in the municipalities and departments, the victims have to undertake a different process for each type of registration, which implies three different but equally important assistance mechanisms. The paperwork and reporting process are long and repetitive and the absence of clear and concrete information regarding the assistance mechanisms (that in the majority of municipalities are formulated and published with interesting designs, yet these still haven't reached the community) generate confusion, re-victimization and don't provide incentives for victims to report the sexual violence committed against them.

- b. Dehumanization of the assistance provided to victims:

The processes within the institutions aren't designed to facilitate access for victims, especially for children that are victims of sexual violence. As they begin the process, the person responsible for their safety doesn't allow the victim access to rest of the process if they or their mother doesn't tell the entire story, a moment in which intimacy is reduced to "operational security needs". From then on the victim has to repeat their story at least three times to effectively receive adequate assistance (if they get that far in the process). The public officials don't recognize the human drama behind the statistics, the "data" or the forms that they

³⁴ In relation to this area, the Constitutional Court has handed down at least three rulings between 2012 and 2013. The most direct and general concerning acts of violence in the framework of the armed conflict is Ruling T-781/12, which states that: 'these are events that happened in the framework of the armed conflict and these threats come from: demobilized armed actors; the actions of the State; the actions attributable to criminal groups; the actions attributable to unidentified armed groups; and those actions attributable to private security groups.'

³⁵ Especially those dedicated to working with the population in a situation of displacement and monitoring of the implementation of the public policy that covers this area. See the ruling for more information.

have to fill out on a daily basis.

The restoring of the rights for victims of the armed conflict should begin through the protection of victims from new actions that can generate other violence.

- c. Insufficient existent and/or inefficient presence:

The main factor in this category is the high rotation of staff in the entities that provide health services. This occurs in institutions such as the Childhood and Adolescence Police and in the Attorney General's Office or CAIVAS. This implies that knowledge isn't transferred between departing and arriving staff members. According to workers from the organizations that were interviewed, institutional staff change on average every three months in the regions and those who are new to the area need to receive context-specific training. For this reason the departmental institutions that should carry out these exercises face a range of limitations, while staff don't have the necessary information to provide adequate assistance register the victims of sexual violence.

The remotest municipalities, which are generally those with the highest presence of armed groups, don't generally have a sufficient institutional presence to build trust with communities. In some municipalities the Family Commissions end up assuming all of the functions of the ICBF, the Attorney General's Office, the Victims' Unit or the Secretariats of Health (reports), as well as other public institutions.

- d. Normalization of practices of social control and aggression:

Sexual violence expressed through different types of aggression is not generally recognized. There are practices of sexual violence that have been normalized through the dynamic of social control exercised by armed actors, including harassment, "falling in love",

or other forms of violence such as obliging boys and girls to witness consensual and forced sexual relations. These, among others, are violent actions yet in the community there is a conception that "they aren't that serious". This is compounded by the refusal of law enforcement authorities to tackle this violence. Some forms of violence, such as "falling in love", are socially accepted as a protection mechanism against third parties and in some regions are considered to be adequate forms of survival.

As a result, sexual violence has been limited to rape and other categories that depend on the particular regional context. For example, in Cartagena there have been strong efforts to raise awareness regarding the commercial sexual exploitation of children, but other types of sexual violence that occur in daily life remain unnoticed by communities.

Among the risk factors identified in the previous chapter through the regional analysis, the involvement of children and adolescents with illegal armed groups constitutes, according to the information available, the greatest area of under-reporting covered by this study³⁶. Additionally, according to organizations that have directly worked with children, adolescents and young people that have left the armed groups, sexual violence in the ranks is permanent and in the case of the girls it is extremely severe. According to their life stories that detail their time in the armed groups, they weren't in the group for any longer than 2 weeks when they started to be victims of some type of sexual violence.³⁷

36 According to information ICBF from the "Program of Specialized Assistance to Children and Adolescents Demobilized from Illegal Armed Groups" as of May 2013 they had attended to 5,156 children and adolescents that had left the armed groups but there were only 47 cases of sexual violence reported by these children and adolescents (ICBF, 2013. a y b).

37 According to the Attorney General's Office in 2008, the girls recruited by armed groups are obliged to provide sexual services, and if they fall pregnant they are punished and obliged to abort the pregnancy. In 2008 the Attorney General's Office studied the cases of 183 females and girls that were victims of sexual violence. Of those, 31.2% had fallen pregnant and aborted the pregnancy due to their involvement with armed groups and 40%

The organizations that work with demobilized children have identified that the girls and female adolescents more easily recognize that they have been victims of sexual violence, even when the assailants have been boys and male adolescents that have also been recruited. In contrast there are less boys and male adolescents that acknowledge that they have been victims, even though some of them have carried it out themselves, and refer to the use of sexual violence as punishment or torture. Additionally, in the ICBF program, they either aren't asked or conditions aren't available (given that in some cases the "perpetrators" were present in the program as they were also recruited as children or adolescents) to be able to share their experience.

Limitations of the records

Added to the restrictions or difficulties mentioned, the study also identified elements of concern in the official registration systems, and as a result of the diagnostic, the different approaches and coordination mechanisms used at local and national levels.

In terms of the diagnostic, the existing records don't highlight the specific needs of the victims or the provision of mitigation, assistance and / or reparation mechanisms for those that have been "beneficiaries". As for the differential approach, a large part of the information systems don't include a differential ethnic approach, which makes it difficult to identify the particular assistance needs of victims. The categories for the disaggregation of the records³⁸ in the information systems are excessively diverse. For example, in the area of age group, some records require that the exact age of the victim is stated, others only require the gene-

ral age group, others simply require the victim to state whether they are an adult or under the age of 18. This implies difficulties in the characterization, diagnostic and inter-institutional coordination that guide program-based actions.

Finally, the local scenarios provide permanent data for the information systems administered at a national level, but don't receive the feedback that would allow them to make decisions and carry out comparative diagnostics at the departmental, municipal and even regional levels.

Alternative records

In this area the role of civil society and the international community in terms of providing alternative records is fundamental. Two types of alternative records were identified during the study, **qualitative and quantitative**.

Qualitative studies are much richer in contextual and documentary information and they have the capacity to identify regional and national trends and concrete forms of violence, but despite being cases or events that are very well documented they are not statistically representative, nor comparable with the official information systems.³⁹ However, in many cases it can be identified if these are present or not in some type of records.

Qualitative monitoring exists at the national level, carried out by the following organizations: The Centre for Investigation and Popular Education (CINEP) with their Human Rights and Political Violence Database, Humanidad Vigente and Coalico's Observatory for Children and Armed Conflict. At the regional level there is also a good supply of qualitative information, including: Obsar (Observatorio and Solidarity) from

of these victims had suffered the sexual violence when they were between the ages of 11 and 14 years of age (Corresponsal de Paz, 2010).

38 Particularly referred to in this study as those categories that highlight the specific conditions of the population, which allow for the identification of victims from specific population groups, for example age range, gender, race and others.

39 These aren't considered statistically representative for the reduced sample size. Given that the data is case based, they are considerably in-depth in terms of the completeness of the qualitative information but the number of records collected by these organizations is less than the number of records from any official system. Similarly, the official systems are predominantly positivist and the qualitative characterizations are lost in this process. For this reason the data isn't comparable..

Pastoral Social in Arauca, Terres des Hommes (TDH) in Córdoba, Pastoral Social in Sincelejo, Vamos Mujer in Medellín, the Network for Life and Human Rights in Cauca and the MADEJA system of the Association of Indigenous Councils in Norte del Cauca (ACIN);

In terms of alternative quantitative records, there are formal identification systems that aim to quantify the interventions of organizations. The organizations, both international as well as from civil society, have difficulties in sharing statistical information from their records, especially those that have information systems with a permanent monitoring capacity, access to direct sources and engage in the monitoring of cases and producing quantitative reports.

Among these organized and qualified records is the RUT from the National Secretariat of Pastoral Social. This organization doesn't focus on sexual violence, but being a victim of sexual violence is one of the categories that is included in their information system covering the displaced population that they attend to. Another source of data, are the records from the International Committee of the Red Cross. As a result of their humanitarian interventions and provision of assistance through local providers (for example, Profamilia⁴⁰), they have records relating to the concrete attention provided to victims of the armed conflict. Finally, the Data Management System for Sexual and Gender-Based Violence (SGBV), administered by UNHCR and UNFPA, is another sources of quantitative information to take into account.

The Data Management System on SGBV (GBVIMS), known as the 'System', is an inter-agency initiative from UNHCR, UNFPA, UNICEF, WHO and IRC⁴¹...It is important to highlight that the overall objective is to design mechanisms that prevent SGBV based on the statistics produced by the system, in addition to guaranteeing that the victims/survivors of this violence receive comprehensive and quality assistance. The GBVIMS is being applied in fourteen countries around the world, including Colombia, where it is being implemented in seven pilot municipalities. Since October 2011 it has been implemented in Barrancabermeja (Santander), Medellín and Apartado (Antioquia) and since June 2012 in Arauca (Arauca), Buenaventura (Valle del Cauca), Tumaco (Nariño) and Villavicencio (Meta). (ACNUR, UNFPA, 2012.)

One of the concrete concerns regarding this initiative, as stated by the institutions responsible for transferring the SIVIGILA reports from the departmental level to the national level, is that the entities that provide health services at the municipal level, with the exception of the capital cities, don't have the capacity to fill out the two forms that include the same information. The SIVIGILA report is almost 5 pages long and to create the record in both systems means that doctors, as well as attending to patients, have to fill out forms that are almost 28 pages long. Additionally, taking into account the addition of the category of "Violence" in the SIVIGILA report, the parallel existence of these systems could imply duplication of information and result in greater complexity for the report.

40 According to the latest activities report (International Committee of the Red Cross, 2012), in 2012 the Red Cross' humanitarian assistance programs attended to 117 cases of sexual violence using their own staff or Profamilia staff, and of these cases only 27 victims decided to voluntarily report the act of sexual violence that was committed against them.

41 UNHCR: United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees, UNFPA: United Nations Population Fund, UNICEF: United Nations Children's Fund, WHO: World Health Organization, and IRC: International Rescue Committee.

Chapter IV.

Conclusions

Regarding the situations of sexual violence against children

According to the data that has been produced by this research, between 2008 and 2012 in the framework of the armed conflict there were at least 48,915 registrations of victims of sexual violence that were under the age of 18 years, including 41,313 girls and 7,606 boys in 1,070 of the 1,130⁴² municipalities in Colombia. This implies that around 27 children and adolescents were sexually assaulted each day across the country in the context of the armed conflict during this period. To arrive to these figures, interviews and analysis were undertaken that has led to the following conclusions:

- All of the legal and illegal armed groups have participated in different moments in committing sexual violence against the civilian population, especially against girls and female adolescents but also against boys and male adolescents, despite the invisibility of the violence against the males due to cultural patterns. The militarization of territories, where the armed groups administer justice, whether due to an absence of official structures or control of these structures, has constituted a clear risk factors. As a result, the strategies for the territorial consolidation zones assume that there will be dangerous conditions instead of generating security conditions⁴³.

- There is no one type of sexual violence, and for this reason these events are difficult to catalogue and prevent. The expressions of sexual violence vary in terms of which armed actors are present in each territory, as well as the level of territorial control exercised by armed actors and the dynamics of armed clashes at the local level. In addition, in each territory there are different realities and armed actors. For this reason the prevention and assistance policies should respond to specific territorial needs. Sexual violence against children and adolescents committed in the context of the armed conflict represents both political implications and political interests for the groups and actors that are present in the territory; often the families are alone and defenseless and unable to fulfill their protective role as they don't have the means to mitigate the effects of the war on the lives of their children.
- In reality, many practices have been normalized that aren't considered sexual violence in the community, even though in legal and conceptual terms they are. **The historical impact of the armed conflict in Colombian communities (there are now adults that were born into a context of armed conflict) has generated the normalization and acceptance of sexual violence.** This, in the context of sexual violence, has resulted in social classifications of "more or less serious" that have categorized what types of violence require registration, declaration or

⁴² Number corresponding to the administrative-political division of Colombia according to the National Administrative Department of Statistics (DANE) 2013.

⁴³ Security is understood as human security, according to the definition by Armiño (2006): "Security of people in their daily lives, that isn't achieved through the military defense of the borders of

a country, but through achieving human development, guarantees the capacity of each person to earn an income, satisfy their basic needs, value themselves and freely and safely participate in the community..."

legal or administrative action and which ones don't. In the first group of what requires reporting are the acts of violence that leave direct physical consequences on the victim, and in the second are the psychosocial impacts, which are perceived as things *"that you get over with time, they aren't that serious"*⁴⁴. The most recurring forms of sexual violence in the territories associated with armed conflict are those that, due to how they are viewed by the community, aren't going to be registered. Among these are the practices of "falling in love" and sexual violence in the context of forced recruitment. Even though these two phenomena have different characteristics at the local level, they are both directly related with the militarization of territories, the presence of illegal armed groups in the territories and sexual slavery in the context of recruitment. When the girls that have disappeared leave the armed groups they have problems identifying where the events took place.

Regarding the Information Systems and the available information

Currently in Colombia, there are a range of information systems with operational infrastructure (and are coordinated with each other) that enable them to adopt a national perspective and include specific categories, resulting in the characterization of sexual violence. The health sector is the richest source of information, even though in quantitative terms the most (statistically) significant portion of annual municipal information is obtained from the legal records. This highlights that the information available from the legal registration process isn't as limited as the initial hypotheses suggested.

There is duplication by the information systems at the national level. This process of disarticulation has meant that the current scenario contains incomplete information. It also has information

systems collecting data that is too different to compare between institutions and sectors, even though they use the same Victims' Assistance and Integrated Reparation System (SNARIV)

Despite the existence of the information, due to the different categories used in each system the data can't be used to provide differential diagnostics based on age group (due to the differences in the records and the parameters used for information collection in each one) or of the ethnic groups of victims. This information would be fundamental in guaranteeing the adequate and effective assistance provided to victims according to their needs and cultural identity.

Regarding the registration of sexual violence in armed conflict contexts

There are still methodologies that allow for the identification of under-reporting or the probability of an act of sexual violence not being included in any registry (Estimation Method by Multiple Systems). The information available doesn't allow for the quantification of this probability, given that there is no identification of the security risk of victims' records due to the disarticulation of the information systems and the confidentiality of the victims' identity.

The under-reporting of sexual violence in contexts of armed conflict responds to two factors. The first are the local dynamic and configuration of the main types of sexual violence in a territory, which according to the results of the study can have higher or lower levels of reporting depending on the nature of the sexual violence. The second factor is the geographical and social distance between communities and institutions. The rural communities face a greater risk but have less information and less access to services from institutions.

⁴⁴ Interview with a staff member from a local organization, Medellín, 2013.

Chapter V.

Recommendations

Regarding the available Information Systems and available information

In light of the results obtained, this research study proposes the following recommendations in order to understand and mitigate the problem:

- The necessary strengthening of those that receive information, specifically those who provide initial attention to victims, such as doctors and others. This is related to the provision of stable working conditions that allow for the articulation of processes related to the monitoring and evaluation of the implementation of protocols. It should specifically include an analysis of the lessons learnt and the implementation of permanent improvement plans, both at a local level as well as at a national level that includes a territorial approach.
- The systemic articulation of information systems that avoid revictimization and allow for complete and differential medical, legal and administrative diagnostics of a case. This would result in just one articulated record that would effectively provide information of the violation of rights of children and adolescents by armed actors and the assistance provided, reparation and psychosocial recovery of the victim.
- The alternative records provided by humanitarian organizations should be a fundamental element in conducting public diagnostics of the situation of children and adolescents in local areas, at least while the implementation stage of this process for the health sector is finalized. These systems should be articulated with official systems in order to strengthen local response capacities.
- All situational or personal diagnostics should be designed and implemented with a differential approach that takes into account the ethnic group, gender, age and geographical location of the victim. If this doesn't occur then the diagnostic will not identify the particular effects on the victim and the concrete response that they need. In addition, if the implemented actions do not have a differential approach they will not have the desired impact on the communities, especially in the recuperation of children that have had their rights violated.
- It is fundamental to carry out psychosocial work with children. The future consequences of a generation that has had their rights violated and has grown up amidst violence is catastrophic for our country. These events will have an impact on the society in which the child and adolescent victims live, as they have had their intimate and most essential aspects affected with consequences for their development as subjects of rights and their right to lead a dignified life.
- It is recommended that homogenous analysis categories are established (for example, those included in the criminal code) in the different information systems. This would facilitate the use of these categories and allow for a specific diagnostic regarding the type of violence occurring and the characteristics of victims. For example, the Victims' Registry should detail the type and extent of the damage caused to the victim for the purposes of reparation. This is directly associated with the type of sexual violence and the impact of these events on the victim's life, which depend on their ethnic identity, age group, sexuality, etc.

Regarding the reporting of sexual violence in armed conflict contexts

In areas to reduce the levels of under-reporting and how results are interpreted, the following is proposed:

- It is necessary to conduct an in-depth study of the under-reporting of sexual violence, identify the main restrictions in this area at an institutional level and implement mechanisms to eliminate these bureaucratic and operational barriers. Similarly, it is necessary to identify the zones with the highest levels of under-reporting or with the highest probability of under-reporting and to target concrete actions that allow for the generation of opportunities for victims to register, declare and receive assistance in an impartial and neutral manner. It would be extremely useful if the experiences of international organizations with this issue could be used to support the reporting process.
- It is necessary to generate local strategies that raise awareness regarding the different forms of sexual violence, declaring that all of these are unacceptable, reportable and require medical and psychosocial assistance. These efforts should be directed not just at communities but also to public officials at a local level.
- Furthermore, there is also a need to train and raise awareness among public officials regarding Ruling T-781/12 of the Constitutional Court, and in all cases, establish verification mechanisms of secondary sources or with institutions such as the Ombudsman's Office, with the goals of: i) avoiding that public officials question the veracity of the claims of the victims; ii) avoiding that local officials make their own classifications of sexual violence without extensive knowledge of which events occur in the framework of the armed conflict and which don't, and; iii) avoiding that local officials classify the seriousness of acts of sexual violence, given that they consider some acts of sexual violence as not sufficiently serious to report.

Regarding the sexual violence committed against children

- It is necessary to carry out an exhaustive characterization of sexual violence that occurs in the framework of the armed conflict, in order to propose prevention and assistance mechanisms that are coherent with the forms of violence that occur in the territories. Beyond identifying general categories, it is important to be able to identify where and when the main forms of sexual violence are being committed against children.
- It is necessary to generate national and local processes that include a local awareness raising approach regarding the seriousness of all sexual violence committed against children and adolescents, with the goal of transforming the concepts held by the community regarding the normalization of determined practices.
- It is recommended that special monitoring occurs of the sexual exploitation and slavery networks administered by armed actors and associates in the framework of the armed conflict, which are associated in some way with extractive industries in areas that have extremely high levels of under-reporting.
- Finally, during the development and preparation of this report, there was evidence of a large quantity of qualitative and contextual information that the organizations have compiled and processed over various years. Taking this into account, this research study should only be an introduction to exercises that complement and facilitate territorial analyses of the local dynamics of sexual violence against children. The research team also extends an invitation to academics that they further develop the methodology used in this research study through their knowledge and expertise in this area.

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