

Abstract

I WISH NO ONE WHAT I LIVED THROUGH

Report on forced recruitment
of children and adolescents
with diverse sexual
orientations, gender identities,
and gender expressions in the
armed conflict in Colombia

I wish no one what I lived through: Report on forced recruitment of children and adolescents with diverse sexual orientations, gender identities, and gender expressions in the armed conflict in Colombia



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www.caribeafirmativo.lgbt
info@caribeafirmativo.lgbt / (605) 385 5780
Barranquilla, Colombia.



Caribe Afirmativo, with the support of Fundación Triángulo and the Agencia Extremeña de Cooperación Internacional para el Desarrollo - AEXCID, presents to the Special Jurisdiction for Peace (from now on "JEP") this report on the recruitment and use of children and adolescents (from now on "CA") with diverse sexual orientations, identities, and gender expressions (from now on "OSIGEG") in the context of the armed conflict.

This report, submitted to the JEP, presents: (i) a context of gender-based violence in the framework of the recruitment of children and adolescents by the FARC-EP; (ii) an analysis of cases and the context of the recruitment and use of children and adolescents with diverse OISEG as systematic conduct, in the framework of the Colombian armed conflict, contemplating dif-

ferentiated violence from an intersectional perspective; (iii) sexual violence and gender-based violence committed in the framework of this crime; (iv) the command responsibilities for this conduct; and (v) the psychosocial, socioeconomic, physical, and collective impacts.

In an illustrative manner, the report presents the cases of five people -from four different regions of the country- with diverse OSIGEG. Being under 18 years, these people suffered recruitment attempts, recruitment threats, and recruitments in the context of other patterns of criminality that affected LGBT people in a differentiated and systematic way. In some cases, it is evident that prejudice was a determining factor in how other violence was perpetrated during recruitment.

The conditions that make possible the recruitment and use of children and adolescents with diverse OSIGEG in the armed conflict are intertwined to generate continuous and widespread violence in different scenarios of socialization and development of children and adolescents. All the above causes conditions of vulnerability that are common to all persons for the cases analyzed here. Thus, the following factors combine to give rise to recruitment: (i) the absence of a protective family environment for CA with diverse OSIGEG and a hostile community environment; (ii) the development of CA in contexts of armed conflict; and (iii) the military presence of the State against the absence or precarious response of the State to the conditions that make recruitment possible and sustain its impacts.

Although the CA were generally not selected for recruitment because of their diverse OSIGEG - but rather to provide their services to the armed actor - in the context of their permanence in the groups, they suffered differentiated violence due to prejudices related to their OSIGEG, including *“the forced concealment of*



their OSIGEG as a form of torture”¹. This limitation to freely construct identity was influenced by the discourses circulated within the armed group, such as the threat of shooting people who were part of the groups and the violence committed against LGBT persons of the civilian population.

The roles assigned to girls, boys, cisgender and transgender women, and men with female gender expressions included forced labor related to domestic activities and intelligence and combat activities. Children participated in intelligence activities to obtain strategic information on the position or actions of the armed forces, carried

1 Caribe Afirmativo. (2019a). *¡Nosotras resistimos! Informe sobre violencias contra personas LGBTI en el marco del conflicto armado en Colombia*. Pág. 72

out messaging activities, and were militarily prepared to participate in hostilities. In this context, children and adolescents were victims of sexual violence in other spaces or at different times, such as at night in the camps, being reduced to using their bodies for sexual purposes, and having the condition of objects.

As shown, the FARC-EP also committed sexual violence against children and adolescents with diverse OSIGEG due to its significant impact on the "correction," "sanction," and "sexualization" of their bodies², taking advantage of the conditions of vulnerability in which they found themselves to select victims according to prejudices related to diverse OSIGEG. In this way, sexual slavery, rape, and reproductive violence were documented. Such is the case of a child with mixed sexual orientation subjected to sexual slavery for two years by a hierarchical superior. Despite having made the commander aware of what had happened, the conduct was only sanctioned with an apology. Still,

the person responsible was not expelled of the armed group. The situation was kept secret, generating conditions of the permissiveness of sexual violence against CA in the ranks of the armed group.

On the other hand, sexual violence against an afro-descendant and bisexual woman seriously impacted her sexual and reproductive freedom. This woman was deprived of the right to decide freely on the number of children she wanted to have, the time to have them, access to information and the means to do so, and the right to make decisions concerning reproduction free of discrimination and coercion and violence³. Although, in this case, a prejudicial motive is not explicitly identified, sexual violence carries an expressive language that marks hierarchies, sending a message of the discipline of women's bodies that extends throughout their stay in the armed group.

2 Caribe Afirmativo (2020). *Juguemos en el bosque mientras el lobo no está*.

3 United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA), "Report of the International Conference on Population and Development," 18 October 1994, / COMF.171/13, principle. 8.

Additionally, there was a context that prevented this woman from developing and freely expressing her sexual orientation within the armed group during the time she was forced to participate as a combatant and member, due to the risk that represented to express her sexual orientation because of the evident prejudice and fear of reprisals that the armed group would take.



The armed groups have been able to exercise greater control, surveillance, and violence over the bodies of children and adolescents given their stage in the life cycle and their diverse OSIGEG, which places them in places of extreme social, economic, and political vulnerability before the authorities of the armed groups themselves. For the socioeconomic and psychosocial impacts to be of such magnitude, a structural platform of inequalities and oppressions on which the war builds its discourse has been necessary.

As explained, forced recruitment frames differentiated forms of violence against people with diverse OSIGEG, based on the instrumentalization and elimination of those ways of inhabiting the world that escape from the cisheteronorm. Thus, the impacts of the recruitment and use of CA with diverse OSIGEG are also differentiated, since the context of possibility is marked by a *continuum of violence* that materializes in different spaces of socialization in which cis- hetero norm, poverty, and militarization of the territories determine the occurrence of recruitment.

Finally, with the presentation of this report, Caribe Afirmativo, the Fundación Caquetá Diversa, the LGBT Association Saravena Diversa - ALSADI, the Asociación LGBT Saravena Diversa - ALSADI, La Paz Diversa y Afirmativa, and Voces Diversas de Barrancabermeja, want to send a strong message to the JEP about the need to implement a sexual and gender diversity approach, as well as an intersectional perspective to analyze the violence committed during forced recruitment and thus build a judicial truth that contributes to the non-repetition of these events, as well as to the comprehensive reparation of the victims.

Additionally, this report has the purpose of redefining the violence suffered by LGBT children and adolescents during forced recruitment, promoting the denaturalization of prejudices, identifying the impacts suffered, and recognizing the differentiated violence from sexual and gender dissidence.

