



CHILDREN AND

OFFICE OF THE SPECIAL REPRESENTATIVE OF THE SECRETARY-GENERAL

ARMED CONFLICT



20 YEARS OF THE CHILDREN AND ARMED CONFLICT MANDATE

The Special Representative of the Secretary-General for Children and Armed Conflict serves as the leading UN advocate for the protection and well-being of children affected by armed conflict.

The mandate of the Special Representative was created by the General Assembly (resolution A/RES/51/77) following the 1996 publication of a report by Graça Machel titled “Impact of Armed Conflict on Children”. The report presented a comprehensive picture of child soldiers, highlighted the disproportionate impact of war on children and identified them as the primary victims of armed conflict. The first Special Representative for Children and Armed Conflict was named in 1997 by the Secretary-General to help enhance the protection of children affected by armed conflict, and foster international cooperation to that end. The Special Representative must also raise awareness about the plight of these children, and promote the monitoring and reporting of abuses. In accordance with the mandate, the Special Representative reports annually to the General Assembly and the Human Rights Council.

In 1999, the UN Security Council confirmed the situation of children affected by armed conflict as an issue affecting peace and security and asked the Secretary-General to report on the issue.

The Security Council has provided the Office of the Special Representative with a strong framework of tools to respond to violations against children.

SIX GRAVE VIOLATIONS AFFECTING CHILDREN IN TIMES OF CONFLICT HAVE BEEN IDENTIFIED:

- Recruitment and use of children
- Killing and maiming of children
- Sexual violence against children
- Attacks on schools and hospitals
- Abduction of children
- Denial of humanitarian access

TRIGGERS
FOR LISTING

TIMELINE

- 1996** The Report of Graça Machel: Impact of Armed Conflict on Children highlights the disproportionate impact of war on children and identifies them as the primary victims of armed conflict.
- 1996** The General Assembly creates the mandate of the Special Representative of the Secretary-General for Children and Armed Conflict.
- 1997** The Secretary-General names Olara A. Otunnu as his first Special Representative for Children and Armed Conflict
- 1998** The Security Council holds its first debate on children and armed conflict and “expresses its intention to pay serious attention to the situation of children affected by armed conflicts.”
- 1999** Security Council resolution 1261 places the issue of children affected by armed conflict on the Council agenda, and identifies and condemns grave violations against children.
- 2000** Security Council resolution 1314 reaffirms that the deliberate targeting of civilians, including children, may constitute a threat to peace and security and requests the Secretary-General to continue to report to the Security Council on children and armed conflict.
- 2000** The Optional Protocol to the Convention on the Rights of the Child on the involvement of children in armed conflict is adopted by the General Assembly to protect children under 18 from recruitment and use in hostilities.
- 2001** Security Council resolution 1379 requests the Secretary-General to identify and list parties to conflict that recruit and use children.
- 2002** The Optional Protocol to the Convention on the Rights of the Child on the involvement of children in armed conflict enters into force.

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- 2003** Security Council resolution 1460 calls for dialogue with parties to conflict that recruit or use children to develop clear, time-bound Action Plans to end the practices.
 - 2004** Security Council resolution 1539 requests the Secretary-General to devise a systematic and comprehensive monitoring and reporting mechanism to provide timely, accurate and reliable information on the recruitment and use of children and other violations committed against children affected by armed conflict. It also renews the call for parties to conflict listed by the Secretary-General to prepare concrete, time-bound Action Plans.
 - 2005** Security Council resolution 1612 endorses the Monitoring and Reporting Mechanism proposed by the Secretary-General to collect timely and reliable information on violations committed against children in situations of armed conflict. It also creates the Security Council Working Group on Children and Armed Conflict.
 - 2009** Security Council resolution 1882 establishes “killing and maiming” and “sexual violence against children” as triggers to list parties to armed conflict in the annual report of the Secretary-General on children and armed conflict.
 - 2011** Security Council resolution 1998 establishes “attacks on schools and/or hospitals” and “attacks or threats of attacks against protected persons” as triggers to list parties to armed conflict in the annual report of the Secretary-General on children and armed conflict.
 - 2014** Launch of the “Children, Not Soldiers” campaign aimed at ending child recruitment and use by government armed forces in conflict by the end of 2016.
 - 2014** Security Council resolution 2143 expresses concern about the military use of schools and encourages Member States to consider concrete measures to deter the practice. It also endorses the “Children, Not Soldiers” campaign.
 - 2015** Security Council resolution 2225 establishes “abduction of children” as a trigger to list parties to armed conflict in the annual report of the Secretary-General on children and armed conflict.

CHILDREN, NOT SOLDIERS

Twenty years ago, the world united to condemn and mobilize against the use of children in armed conflict. Since then, over 115,000 children have been released as a result of Action Plans mandated by the UN Security Council and other actions aimed at ending and preventing recruitment and use of children by armed forces and groups.

The “Children, Not Soldiers” campaign, an initiative of the Special Representative and UNICEF, aims to consolidate the global consensus that children do not belong in Government forces in conflict and to galvanize support to end and prevent this practice. At its launch in March 2014, the campaign focused on the eight countries whose Government forces were listed in the annexes of the Secretary-General’s annual report: Afghanistan, Chad, the Democratic Republic of the Congo, Myanmar, Somalia, South Sudan, Sudan and Yemen.

All of those countries have now signed Action Plans with the United Nations to end and prevent the recruitment of children. Chad completed the requirements of its Action Plan, and was delisted from the annexes of the Secretary-General’s annual report in July 2014.

THE SPECIAL REPRESENTATIVE, UNICEF, AND PARTNERS SUPPORT THE EFFORTS OF THE SEVEN REMAINING GOVERNMENTS TO RELEASE AND REINTEGRATE CHILDREN INTO CIVILIAN LIFE, AND TO ENSURE ALL MECHANISMS ARE IN PLACE TO END AND PREVENT THEIR RECRUITMENT AND USE. THE CAMPAIGN WAS WELCOMED BY THE SECURITY COUNCIL AND THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY, WHO BOTH REQUESTED REGULAR UPDATES THROUGH THE SPECIAL REPRESENTATIVE’S REPORTING.

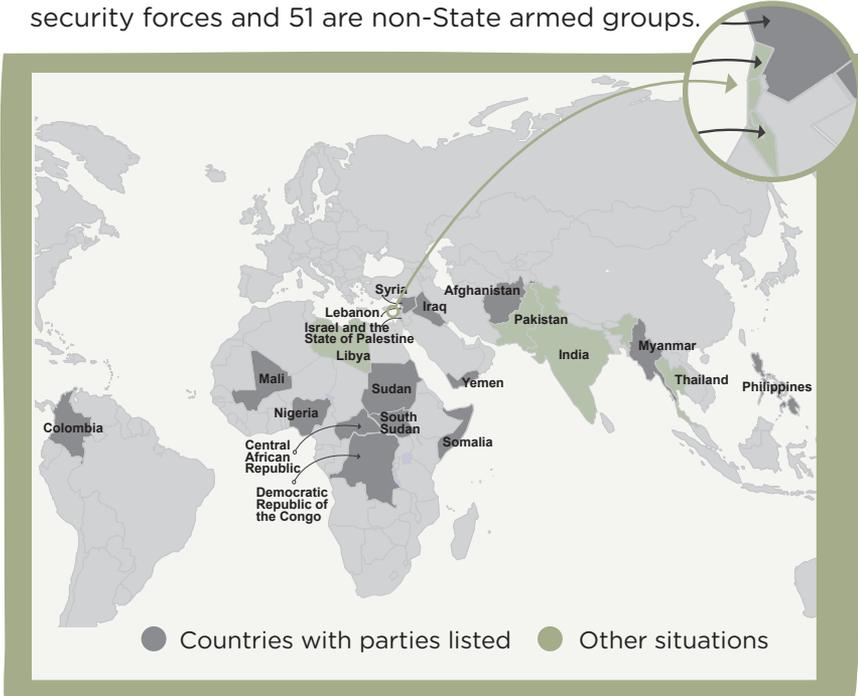


HOW DO WE WORK TO BETTER PROTECT CHILDREN AFFECTED BY CONFLICT?

The Special Representative for Children and Armed Conflict works in close collaboration with the UN system, civil society partners, regional and sub-regional organizations, and Member States. Information on violations is gathered through the Monitoring and Reporting Mechanism, established in 2005. Based on this information, the Secretary-General's annual report on children and armed conflict lists in its annexes parties found to have committed one or more grave violations against children that the Security Council has designated as "trigger" for listing.

The annual report of the Secretary-General on children and armed conflict, covering the year 2015, describes 20 situations of conflict.

Fifty-nine parties to conflict in 14 countries are listed in the report's annexes. Of these, eight are Government security forces and 51 are non-State armed groups.



THE SECURITY COUNCIL ADOPTED RESOLUTIONS TO REQUEST THE UN TO:

- gather and verify information detailing where and how children are affected by armed conflict,
- include this information in the Secretary-General's annual report to the Security Council on children and armed conflict,
- name parties to conflict who commit violations that are triggers for listing,
- engage in dialogue with listed Governments and armed groups to develop Action Plans aimed at halting and preventing violations against children.

WHAT IS AN ACTION PLAN?

An Action Plan is a written, signed commitment between the United Nations and parties to conflict listed in the Secretary-General's annual report on children and armed conflict. Each Action Plan outlines concrete, time-bound measures to end and prevent grave violations against children.

For example, an agreement to end the recruitment and use of children by Government forces might include actions calling on the authorities to:

- criminalize the recruitment and use of children
- issue military command orders prohibiting the recruitment and use of children
- ensure accountability for violations of children's rights
- integrate age-verification mechanisms in recruitment procedures
- release all children identified in the ranks of security forces
- ensure children's reintegration into civilian life

SPECIAL REPRESENTATIVE OF THE SECRETARY-GENERAL FOR CHILDREN AND ARMED CONFLICT



Ms. Leila Zerrougui was appointed Special Representative of the Secretary-General for Children and Armed Conflict in September 2012. Prior to this, she was Deputy Special Representative of the Secretary-General and Deputy Head of the United Nations Stabilization Mission in the Democratic Republic of the Congo (MONUSCO). She has also served as Chairperson-Rapporteur of the United Nations Working Group on Arbitrary Detention. A legal expert in human rights and the administration of justice, Ms. Zerrougui is internationally recognized for her work in strengthening the rule of law and championing actions for the protection of vulnerable groups, especially women and children.



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