


# CHILD PROTECTION AND PEACE PROCESSES


## WHY SHOULD CHILD PROTECTION ISSUES BE ADDRESSED IN PEACE PROCESSES?


Children in situations of armed conflict are extremely vulnerable and are very often **victims of grave violations**<sup>1</sup>. If left unaddressed, these violations can have lasting negative consequences for children, and for sustainable peace.


Mediation strategies that systematically tackle and try to prevent grave violations against children and other children's rights and protection concerns can contribute to long-lasting and more **sustainable peace**. Children are instrumental for reconstruction and economic development in post-conflict countries.


## HOW TO ENSURE THAT CHILDREN'S RIGHTS & NEEDS ARE AT THE CENTER OF PEACE PROCESSES?

 **Conflict analysis should include a focus on the protection of children** to identify the causes and dynamics of grave violations against children in the given context and ensure that child protection elements are included in the peace agreements<sup>2</sup>.

 **Child protection experts** and practitioners should be consulted to effectively identify main child protection issues to be addressed throughout the peace negotiations.

 **Preparing the parties** to engage on child protection issues is essential to ensure meaningful discussions and the informed participation of all stakeholders.

 **Coordination** of the various entities involved in the peace process can ensure more effective and tailored child protection interventions in the specific contexts

 **Children have the right to be heard** and their views should be given due weight in accordance with their age and maturity.

## INCLUSION OF CHILD PROTECTION ISSUES IN PEACE PROCESSES: A FEW EXAMPLES

**As confidence-building measures** – In **Colombia**, the recruitment and use of children by the Revolutionary Armed Forces of Colombia—People's Army (FARC-EP) was framed as a confidence-building measure. Parties agreed upon the release of children from the FARC-EP camps at the early stage of the negotiations which helped move the peace process forward.

**In areas of security arrangements** – In **Sudan**, the chapter on security arrangements of the 2005 Comprehensive Peace Agreement included specific child protection provisions. It identified the recruitment and use of children as a violation of the ceasefire agreement and included operational modalities to identify, separate and demobilize children associated with parties to the conflict.

**As issues of governance** – In **Sierra Leone**, the Special Court treated all children separated from armed forces and groups as victims of the conflict and in accordance with international standards of child justice. No child was tried. Instead, children above 15 were called as witnesses before the court.

**In transitional justice mechanisms** – Truth commissions in **Guatemala, Peru, Sierra Leone, South Africa** and **Timor Leste** covered crimes against children and involved children as victims and witnesses.

**During the implementation of peace agreements** – In **Burundi**, child protection issues were successfully included on the agenda of the Joint Verification and Monitoring Mechanism following advocacy efforts from the UN, which led to the release of children from the ranks from the National Liberation Forces (FNL).

*Read the entire [Practical guidance for mediators to protect children in situations of armed conflict](#).*



Office of the Special Representative of the Secretary-General for  
**CHILDREN AND ARMED CONFLICT**



<sup>1</sup> Recruitment and use, killing and maiming, rape and other forms of sexual violence, abductions, attacks on schools and hospitals and denial of humanitarian access.

<sup>2</sup> Questions for the conduct of a child protection-focused conflict analysis are outlined in Annex II of the guidance.