



UNSC

Preventing the Recruitment and Use of Child Soldiers

I. Committee Background

The United Nations Security Council had its first conference on January 17th, 1946, in London before permanently moving to the UN headquarters in New York. The objective of UNSC is to deploy and fight for international peace and security by reinforcing human rights and discussing military forces in humanitarian crises. Uniquely, it is the only committee which has the right to create a legally binding act on all UN member states making the committee's influence very impactful.

In 2015, there was an increased focus on the intersection of sustainability, peace and security, with a core objective of maintaining both peace and security and taking action when these are threatened. This echoes the very essence of the UN as a global mediator and collaborative forum where nations can resolve conflicts peacefully, protect human rights, and tackle world-wide challenges.

II. Introduction to topic

In 1989, the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child was adopted, and about a decade later, a protocol against recruiting child soldiers was introduced, which was accepted by 173 countries. However, child soldier recruitment has continued and increased, with children abducted from schools, raped, sold by their families because of extreme poverty in rural areas, and trafficked. This deprives them of their education and childhood and has irreversible psychological impacts. Nearly 80% of conflicts involving child soldiers include fighters under 15, and some are as young as 7 or 8. In 2005, an estimated 300,000 children were fighting in wars, with nearly half a million more in armies not at war, although exact numbers are difficult to determine. Between 2005 and 2022, more than 105,000 children were recruited, and 7,402 in 2024 alone. Girls are found in about 30% of armed groups that use children, and a 2015 UN estimate found that 40% of child soldiers were girls. Many suffer sexual abuse by commanders, and some are forced into battle while carrying their own babies.

Despite measures such as the 2008 Child Soldiers Prevention Act, children are still used by government-supported militias and paramilitaries, as well as by rebel, religious and self-defense groups. Child soldiers appear frequently in guerrilla and terrorist conflicts, with examples including the Houthi movement, the Taliban and Boko Haram. Children are used because they are

easily manipulated, especially when they are given drugs. They are made to fear for their lives until they obey, and are sometimes forced to kill other children or their own relatives, which permanently cuts them off from their families and communities. They are also used to cause confusion on the battlefield and slow down opposing forces, and as spies, messengers, suicide bombers and minesweepers because of their perceived innocence. Between 2007 and 2017, at least 65,000 children were released from armed forces and groups, according to UNICEF, the UN children's agency.

III. Essential Questions/Key issues

Protection of children in conflict zones Rehabilitation and reintegration of child soldiers

What is the impact on the children's lives after release?

What is the emotional and physical impact of being a child soldier?

Why child soldiers? What factors make them vulnerable and desirable for armed groups?

Why can the recruitment continued and increased, and how it can be prevented?

How the delegation's country is actively participating or preventing the use of child soldiers

Accountability

How should the UN hold states and armed groups responsible?

How can the UN stop groups that never signed any treaty, like Al-Shabaab, Boko Haram and the Houthis?

Should children linked to armed groups be treated as victims or criminals?

IV. Countries list

United States
Russia
France
China
United Kingdom
Democratic Republic of the Congo
Afghanistan
Somalia
Ukraine
Sudan
Nigeria
Iraq
Qatar
Haiti
Cuba
Sierra Leone
Canada
Mexico
Malta
Iran
Colombia
Yemen
Japan
Chad
Myanmar

V. Sources

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