

# LIMUN

LICEO'S MODEL UNITED NATIONS

## Security Council



*Topic A: "Defending and protecting the rights of children in armed conflict."*

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### I. COMMITTEE BACKGROUND

The security council is one of the six main organs of the United Nations that were established by The United Nations Charter. Its first session was held on 17 January 1946 at Church House, Westminster, London. Since then, the Security Council has taken permanent residence at the United Nations Headquarters in New York City. This council has the main responsibility of maintaining international peace and security whenever peace is threatened. When threats to peace occur, the Council's first action is to try to reach an agreement in a peaceful manner. This manner may include setting principles, making investigations, creating missions, bringing hostilities to an end, and opting for enforcement measures that will minimize the impact on set countries.

## II. HISTORY OF THE TOPIC

### A. Introduction to the Topic

According to the United Nations, in the last ten years, 2 million children have been killed, more than 1 million have been orphaned, and over 6 million have been seriously injured or permanently disabled. All thanks to deliberate targets of military forces, in other words: armed conflict.

In technical terms, armed conflict is defined as “any organized dispute that involves the use of weapons, violence, or force, whether within national borders or beyond them, and whether involving state actors or non government entities.” That is international wars, civil wars, and conflicts between other kinds of groups, such as ethnic conflicts and violence associated.

While at war, not only are the soldiers and adults being affected, but anyone who participates in it, either by their own will or by accident, has to face unimaginable challenges. One of these people is the children of the families who are being threatened. These children are forced to participate in conflict or to try and make it out as best as they can. They need to fight for food, water, shelter, for their lives. Children are taught to survive, not to live. They do not have primary resources.

No one should be alone, but thanks to war, they are. No children in armed conflict should endure pain and suffering because of the violent actions of others. Children are having direct and indirect effects on their lives because of the country's problems, which aren't their fault. The direct effects of conflict can include death, physical and psychological trauma, and being forced to be taken away from their families. The indirect effects are terrible and unsafe living conditions, environmental hazards, caregiver mental health, separation from family, displacement-related health risks, loss of health, public health, education, and economic structure. Also

sadly, there are children who are being recruited or forced to be a part of combat in many ways.

Throughout the years, there have been several grave violations against children who were in situations of armed conflict. The impact that this type of conflict has had on children is unimaginable. More than 1 in 10 children worldwide is affected by it and the long-term effects they can have on children are irreversible. This is a very important topic because our future generations are being targeted by armed conflict, they are taking their basic rights away and these children have no way of protecting themselves, but we do.

## B. Evolution of the Topic

This topic has always had relevance in our society, that is because there is a global trend of grave violations committed against children. In 1996, the Special Representative of the Secretary-General for Children and Armed Conflict (SRSG CAAC) mandate was established by the General Assembly. The mandate implements the decisions of the General Assembly, including the 13 Security Council resolutions on children and armed conflict. Since 1999, the Security Council, through a resolution, has given attention to the protection, welfare, and rights of children. In the same way, they always aimed at promoting peace and security. In this resolution, the Security Council focused on the six grave violations against children in armed conflict settings. Those are: "recruitment and use, killing and maiming, rape and other forms of sexual violence, abduction, attacks on schools and hospitals, and the denial of humanitarian access for children."

Over the next twenty years, through similar resolutions, the Security Council little by little included all of these violations in the annual reports of the Secretary-General on children and armed conflict and put a clear emphasis on the need to prevent violations against children in armed conflict from occurring in the first place. One of the reasons why this type

of mandate was implemented was because, over time, children became the primary targets of violence. Others were taking their childhood away and having an enormous impact on international peace and stability.

This year, the children and armed conflict mandate had its 25th anniversary. Also, there was a study that stated that since the establishment of the mandate, over 170,000 children have been released from armed forces and armed groups and taken into society and hundreds of thousands of children have benefited from the improvement of protection.

### C. Relevant Events

In 2015, there were 223 violent conflicts, of which 43 were limited- or full-scale wars. Those numbers are large, which means that the casualties are larger. This just tells us that war is constantly changing, combat zones spreading and bigger weapons are being created. This constant evolution facilitates the participation of children in armed conflict. Also, the rules of war have changed. Schools, which were normally safe places, are being targeted, and children are being attacked while they go to school.

In the same way, more and more government and nongovernmental health facilities have been attacked. For example, there are reports from Syria, Yemen, Afghanistan, Nigeria, and Pakistan. In 2014, 603 health workers were killed, and additionally, 958 were injured in attacks in 32 countries. These types of attacks occurred so much that the World Health Organization has developed a monitoring system to track these attacks and their effects.

These attacks violate the Geneva Conventions, which are protocols that manage the conduct of armed conflict and seek to minimize its effects. They protect people, specifically children, in this case, not taking

part in the conflict and those who are no longer doing so. There was a report made in 2005 of the World's Children, "Childhood Under Threat," that stated that 90% of conflict-related deaths from 1990 to 2005 were civilians, many of whom were children.

### III. CURRENT ISSUES

#### A. Panorama

There are a variety of countries that are neglecting the problems and effects of children in armed conflict. This issue has the utmost importance in a country's welfare, even more so, just by helping children have better life conditions we can improve generations globally. Another key issue is that the children and armed conflict agenda are not being fully implemented and there needs to be a widespread solution so that countries can unite in the best interest of children in vulnerable situations. Another issue is that this topic is not being taken into account as many times as it should. The Council as a whole and the UN membership tend to address the issue only once a year, which is not enough to fully change the effects that armed conflict has on different countries and their people.

#### A. Points of View

##### Ukraine

Ever since the Taliban's takeover of Afghanistan in August 2021 and Russia's invasion of Ukraine in late February, children's situations there have been taken to another level. On 27 June, the Office of the UN High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR) declared that at least 330 children have been killed and 489 injured since Russia invaded the country. Also, UNICEF stated that almost two out of every three children had been displaced by fighting in Ukraine. There is a need for humanitarian assistance for more than 2 million children in Ukraine, who have fled to

neighboring countries. Council members seek to stay on top of the situation there, even if Ukraine is not on the children and armed conflict agenda. That includes underlining the vulnerability of children in war, including the risks of sexual violence and human trafficking. Also taking into consideration the effects of attacks on schools and hospitals, places on which children mostly depend on.

### Afghanistan

On March 23, there was an announcement made by the Taliban that girls' high schools would be closed. This would prevent girls above the sixth grade from attending school. The announcement was the complete opposite of the Taliban's 21 March decision to reopen all schools at the beginning of the spring semester. On 27 March, Council members held a press statement that expressed deep concern regarding this decision and called on the Taliban to "respect the right to education and adhere to their commitments to reopen schools for all female students without further delay". Still, the Taliban has not reversed its decision.

### Niger

According to Amnesty International, at Niger's borders with Mali and Burkina Faso, there is an increasing rate of children being killed and targeted for recruitment by armed groups in conflicts. This involves armed groups of Islamic State in the Greater Sahara (ISGS) and the al-Qaida-affiliated Jama'at Nusrat al-Islam wal-Muslimin (JNIM). Both of these groups have made war crimes and other abuses in the conflict, this includes targeting schools and murders of civilians. This has the grave consequence of making the children there, witnesses of attacks on their villages, their homes. Also, in some areas, women and girls have been forced to always stay at home, and risk abduction or forced marriage to fighters. In this case, the Nigerian authorities have had a failure in protecting civilians. Witnesses said that even when they made urgent calls

to Niger's Defense and Security Forces (FDS), they always arrived after the tragedies had already happened.

### Nigeria

The Special Representative of the Secretary-General for Children and Armed Conflict, Virginia Gamba stated "The children of Nigeria and of the Lake Chad Basin region have to live under the constant fear and threat of grave violations against them, especially gruesome violations at the hands of Boko Haram-affiliated and splinter groups." They also urged them to abide by their obligations under international humanitarian law and international human rights law, to defend children's rights. Another great concern is the abduction of children. In 2021, the highest number of children was verified as abducted since 2014. Overall, 212 children were verified killed or maimed mainly by gunshots during crossfire, which represented 90 percent of all child casualties. 70 children were verified as recruited and used. Violating all of the basic human rights.

## I. UN & EXTERNAL ACTIONS

### A. UN actions

The UN has done plenty of action toward aiding children in armed conflict. The most important ones include the Geneva Conventions (1949), the United Nations (UN) Refugee Convention (1951) and 1967 Protocol, and the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC) (1989) with its accompanying Optional Protocol on the Involvement of Children in Armed Conflict (2000). Also, there was a Working Group on Children and Armed Conflict that the Security council established in 2005 that would be sent regularly to meet and discuss country-specific issues, regarding the protection of children in armed conflict. This group has been a great help in defending the rights of children by reviewing and issuing observations on over 50 country-specific reports. Another important event is the legally binding treaty made by the UNCRC in which 40 substantive rights for

children are outlined and grouped into 3 categories: protection, promotion, and participation.

#### - External actions

The EU has established as a priority the protection of child soldiers. This was proven in November 2020 when the EU's Action Plan on Human Rights and Democracy (2020-2024) was adopted. This plan was supported by many countries such as Colombia, Myanmar, Nigeria, Pakistan, Somalia, South Sudan, Syria, and Yemen. Also, because the EU recognizes the importance of education, they donate 10% of its humanitarian aid budget to education in emergencies across the world.

Also, on February 21, 2017, Canada promoted the protection of children's rights by endorsing the "Safe Schools Declaration and the associated Guidelines for Protecting Schools and Universities from Military Use during Armed Conflict."

## II. CONCLUSION

Our main priority should be protecting the children that are in dangerous situations because of armed conflict. The very first thing that should be done is to quickly get them out of harm's way. Then they should be provided with shelter and the basic resources they need in order to have a good quality of life. When they are away from danger, we should focus on ways of improving the conflicts that made them be in danger in the first place. We must establish a concrete and effective agenda to combat the issues that cause war.

### III. IMPORTANT QUESTIONS

- Is the current method or agenda for protecting children working or should it be improved?
- What can we do about the children being taken away from their families?
- Should we focus on taking the children away from armed conflict or taking the armed conflict away from the children?
- How can we focus more on stopping the attacks on health facilities?
- How can we as a committee promote the fight for children's rights in countries that are not on the agenda?
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