

**Security Council**

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Letter dated 2 February 2023 from the Permanent Representative of Malta to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General

I have the honour to inform you that, under the presidency of Malta, the Security Council plans to hold a briefing on 13 February 2023 on prevention, in connection with the item entitled “Children and armed conflict”.

In this regard, Malta has prepared the attached concept paper (see annex). I should be grateful if the present letter and its annex could be circulated as a document of the Security Council.

(Signed) Vanessa **Frazier**
Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary
Permanent Representative of Malta to the United Nations



Annex to the letter dated 2 February 2023 from the Permanent Representative of Malta to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General

Concept note for the Security Council briefing on the theme “Children and armed conflict: prevention of grave violations”, to be held at 10 a.m. on 13 February 2023

I. Background

Since 1999, the Security Council has recognized the situation of children affected by armed conflict as a matter of international peace and security, including through the adoption of 13 thematic resolutions on children and armed conflict. Despite progress, grave violations against children continue to be committed on an alarming scale, and prevention efforts remain essential.

In its twenty-fifth anniversary report, the Office of the Special Representative of the Secretary-General for Children and Armed Conflict identified prevention as an area to be strengthened within the children and armed conflict mandate. The annual reporting by the Secretary-General on children and armed conflict has continued to show high numbers of grave violations over time. July 2023 will mark five years since the adoption of Council resolution [2427 \(2018\)](#), in which the Council highlighted the need to incorporate child protection in efforts to prevent and end conflicts.

The briefing offers an opportunity to discuss concrete ideas for further strengthening prevention within the children and armed conflict agenda, including how to fully leverage the existing tools to prevent grave violations against children in situations of armed conflict.

By its resolution [51/77](#), adopted in 1996, the General Assembly facilitated the establishment of the children and armed conflict mandate, underscored the importance of preventive measures, such as early warning systems, preventive diplomacy and education for peace, in preventing conflicts and their negative impact on children’s enjoyment of their rights. Furthering the implementation of the resolution entails strengthening the mandate’s proactive engagements with the parties to a conflict and relying on the monitoring and reporting of United Nations country task forces, whose role on the ground is essential to proactive engagement with such parties on time-bound, concrete action plans to end and prevent grave violations. In addition, it is also vital to ensure that emerging crises are identified promptly as situations of concern to allow the children and armed conflict agenda to act as an early warning tool.

Council resolution [2427 \(2018\)](#) has enjoyed the highest number of co-sponsors to date. In the resolution, the Council laid out a framework for the children and armed conflict agenda, including elements pertaining to the prevention of violations and abuses against children, to be integrated into any strategy for resolving conflicts and sustaining peace. Such elements might relate to early warning, trafficking, cross-border issues, deprivation of liberty and the development of national prevention and protection policies, among others.

In the resolution, the Council stressed the importance of complementarity and partnerships, including across the United Nations system, and between States Members of the United Nations, United Nations entities and regional bodies, for the prevention of violations and abuses against children. It called for preventive action to be taken at the national and regional levels, as well as for a coordinated approach to actions across the continuum of violence – from prevention to protection, reintegration

and post-conflict reconstruction and peacebuilding. It is critical to understand the dangers that children face when they are uprooted from their places of origin as a result of armed conflict.

Effective prevention of violence requires a strategic and proactive approach at the community, national, subregional, regional and global levels that addresses all the risks and stresses the factors that provide protection against the continuum of violence, with a view to effectively protecting every conflict-affected child. It also requires the full and systematic use of the existing tools to address grave violations against children, hold perpetrators accountable and spur concrete actions to end and prevent violations and abuses.

The adoption of resolution [2427 \(2018\)](#) led to progress in efforts to prevent violations against children, such as the 2020 report entitled “Practical guidance for mediators to protect children in situations of armed conflict”, which highlighted the way in which child protection language should be incorporated early on in peace processes. Prevention still requires addressing the continuum of violence in a comprehensive manner, using all the tools at the disposal of the international community, including best practices and international initiatives, such as the Safe Schools Declaration, the Paris Principles and the Vancouver Principles. Prevention strategies should make use of these instruments in a systematic manner. Equally important is strengthening the implementation of the Convention on the Rights of the Child, including with regard to the age-based definition of a child and the rights of children to identity and statehood, which can act as preventive measures to deter violations against children.

In sum, with the adoption of resolution [2427 \(2018\)](#), the Council provided a foundational environment for effective protection and prevention, and sustainable peace. It is critical for the Council to further provide guidance to facilitate the resolution’s immediate and full implementation.

II. Objectives

In resolution [2427 \(2018\)](#), the Council identified the need to prioritize prevention practices but did not provide extensive guidelines on how prevention might be operationalized to obtain this goal. It further underscored the need to work in a coordinated manner for prevention at the global, regional, national and community levels. The briefing will provide Council members with the opportunity:

(a) To take stock of where stronger linkages could be made across the United Nations system to strengthen age-appropriate and gender-responsive efforts to prevent and respond to violations and to address risk factors to children, such as trafficking, deprivation of liberty and cross-border recruitment and use of children, across the continuum of violence;

(b) To examine how the United Nations can assist national Governments and regional and subregional organizations in strengthening their capacity to protect children and to prevent violations and abuses against children, including to address their reintegration needs;

(c) To examine how best practices and international initiatives led by Member States can assist in the prevention of grave violations against children in armed conflict;

(d) To propose concrete solutions for ensuring more systematic reporting on early warning indicators of an emerging or sudden escalation of violence against children, and how such escalations affect international peace and stability, as well as propose ways to keep the Council seized of this matter;

(e) To recommend the strengthening of capacities to protect children and build expertise across the various dimensions of the pre-conflict, conflict and post-conflict environments.

III. Format and briefers

A three-hour briefing will be held under the presidency of Malta in the Security Council. The following will be invited to brief the Council:

- The Special Representative of the Secretary-General for Children and Armed Conflict, Virginia Gamba
- The Special Representative of the Secretary-General for Violence against Children, Najat Maalla M'jid
- A civil society speaker (to be confirmed).

A summary of the meeting will be distributed as the outcome of the session.
