



## Security Council

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### Statement by the President of the Security Council

At the 8756th meeting of the Security Council, held on 10 September 2020, in connection with the Council's consideration of the item entitled "Children and armed conflict", the President of the Security Council made the following statement on behalf of the Council:

"The Security Council *reaffirms* its resolutions [1261 \(1999\)](#), [1314 \(2000\)](#), [1379 \(2001\)](#), [1460 \(2003\)](#), [1539 \(2004\)](#), [1612 \(2005\)](#), [1882 \(2009\)](#), [1998 \(2011\)](#), [2068 \(2012\)](#), [2143 \(2014\)](#), [2225 \(2015\)](#), and [2427 \(2018\)](#), and all relevant Statements of its President, which contribute to a comprehensive framework for addressing the protection of children affected by armed conflict.

"The Security Council *reiterates* its primary responsibility for the maintenance of international peace and security in accordance with the Charter of the United Nations, and, in this connection, its commitment to address the widespread impact of armed conflict on children, and the long-term consequences this has for durable peace, security and development.

"The Security Council *stresses* the primary role of Governments in providing protection and relief to all children affected by armed conflict and *recognizes* the importance of strengthening national capacities in this regard.

"The Security Council recalls that all parties to armed conflict must comply strictly with the obligations applicable to them under international law for the protection of children in armed conflict, including those contained in the Geneva Conventions of 12th August 1949 and the Additional Protocols of 1977 as well as in the Convention on the Rights of the Child and its Optional Protocol on the involvement of Children in armed conflict, and welcomes the steps taken by a number of Member States to make commitments to protect children affected by armed conflict, including through the ratification of the Optional Protocol to the Convention on the Rights of the Child on the involvement of children in armed conflict and through ongoing international and regional initiatives on Children and Armed Conflict, including the international conference held in Paris in 2007 on protecting children from unlawful recruitment or use by armed forces or armed groups and the follow-up conference held in Paris in 2017, and the commitments during the conferences.

"The Security Council *reiterates* its strong condemnation of all violations of applicable international law involving the recruitment and use of children by parties to armed conflict as well as their re-recruitment, killing and maiming, rape and other forms of sexual violence, abductions, attacks against schools and hospitals as well as denial of humanitarian access by parties to armed conflict



and all other violations of international law, including international humanitarian law, human rights law and refugee law, committed against children in situations of armed conflict and *demands* that all relevant parties immediately put an end to such practices and take special measures to protect children.

“The Security Council *reaffirms* the right to education and its contribution to the achievement of peace and security and *expresses grave concern* about the significant increase of attacks on schools in recent years and the resulting alarming number of children denied access to quality education, as well as about attacks on schools and their infrastructure included in the latest Secretary-General’s report of 9 June 2020 on children and armed conflict ([A/74/845-S/2020/525](#)), the severity and frequency of threats of attacks and attacks against schools, children, teachers and other persons entitled to protection who are connected to schools, the use of schools for military purposes, as well as the significant implications of such attacks on the safety of students and their ability to enjoy their right to education.

“The Security Council *reiterates* its strong condemnation of attacks as well as threats of attacks in contravention of applicable international humanitarian law against schools, children, teachers and other persons entitled to protection who are connected to schools, *reiterates* its deep concern at the closure of schools in situations of armed conflict as a result of attacks and threats of attacks and *urges* all parties to armed conflict to immediately cease such attacks and threats and to refrain from actions that impede children’s access to education.

“The Security Council *expresses deep concern* at the military use of schools in contravention of applicable international humanitarian law, recognizing that such use may render schools legitimate targets of attack, thus endangering children’s and teachers’ safety as well as children’s education, and in this regard, *encourages* Member States to take concrete measures to deter the use of schools in contravention of applicable international law by armed forces and non-State armed groups, and to facilitate the continuation of education in situations of armed conflict and *urges* all parties to armed conflict to respect the civilian character of schools in accordance with international humanitarian law.

“The Security Council *expresses particular concern* that many children in armed conflict, in particular girls, lack access to education owing to attacks against schools, damaged or destroyed school buildings, mines and explosive remnants of war, insecurity, the prevalence of violence, including sexual and gender-based violence against children, in and around schools and loss or lack of civil documentation.

“The Security Council *remains deeply* concerned that girls and women may be the intended victims of attacks targeting schools, and *expresses concern* about the specific consequences of such attacks including but not limited to incidents of rape and other forms of sexual violence, threats of attacks, at school and on the way to and from school, abductions, forced marriage, sexual slavery, human trafficking, and any resulting stigma and grave consequences on their health, all of which may further impede the continuation of their education.

“The Security Council *condemns* the lack of accountability for violations committed against children, teachers and other persons entitled to protection who are connected to schools in armed conflict as well as attacks and threats of attacks against schools in contravention of international humanitarian law, which in turn may contribute to the recurrence of these acts and *urges* Member States to ensure that attacks on persons entitled to protection who are connected to schools and on schools in contravention of international humanitarian law, are investigated and those responsible duly prosecuted.

“The Security Council *requests* the Secretary-General to continue to monitor and report, inter alia, on the military use of schools in contravention of international humanitarian law, as well as on attacks against, and/or kidnapping of children, teachers and other persons entitled to protection who are connected to schools and *calls upon* United Nations country-level task forces to enhance the monitoring and reporting on the military use of schools.

“The Security Council *encourages* the Secretary General, together with his Special Representative for Children and Armed Conflict and relevant UN bodies and child protection actors, to carry out and include in his relevant reporting lessons learned and best practices on the children and armed conflict mandate, including the protection of schools from attacks in armed conflict in contravention of international humanitarian law, building on Security Council Resolution 1998.

“The Security Council *urges* Member States to develop effective measures to prevent and address attacks and threats of attacks against schools, including, as appropriate, through the development of domestic legal frameworks to ensure respect for their relevant international legal obligations as applicable to them, and *encourages* Member States to ensure that national strategic frameworks include, as appropriate, comprehensive measures to prevent attacks against schools in contravention of international humanitarian law, children, teachers and other persons entitled to protection who are connected to schools during armed conflict as well as in post-conflict phases, with the support of relevant United Nations entities.

“The Security Council *calls upon* Members States to ensure that their armed forces and security forces, within their respective competencies under domestic law, integrate or continue to integrate practical measures for the protection of schools, children, teachers and other persons entitled to protection who are connected to schools into the planning and conduct of their operations, including through refraining from using schools for military purposes in contravention of international humanitarian law.

“The Security Council *underlines* the importance of providing military, police and civilian peacekeepers with adequate pre-deployment and in-mission training on mission specific child protection issues, including on attacks on schools, and on appropriate comprehensive prevention and protection responses.

“The Security Council *encourages* Member States affected by armed conflict that have not already done so to conduct a mapping of schools that have been subject to attacks and of schools where children, teachers and other persons entitled to protection who are connected to schools have been subject to threats of attacks.

“The Security Council *calls on* Member States to provide necessary assistance to children including those in vulnerable situations such as internally displaced persons (IDPs), refugees and children with disabilities, teachers and other persons entitled to protection who are connected to schools affected by attacks on schools or military use of schools in contravention of international law and to take immediate measures to rehabilitate, repair, or replace schools that have been subject to attack and restore children’s safe access to schools, emphasizing the importance of protecting and supporting teachers, who play an important role in this regard, and calls for the continued support of UNICEF and other relevant United Nations entities, as well as international and regional bodies, in assisting Member States, upon request.

“The Security Council *emphasizes* the need for Member States to facilitate continuation of education during armed conflict, including through distance learning and digital technology, and in this regard *calls upon* Member States to promote such education programmes, and *encourages* international support of distance learning facilities.

“The Security Council *reiterates* its call on parties to armed conflict listed in the annexes of the Secretary-General’s report on children and armed conflict that have not already done so to prepare and implement, with support of the United Nations, without further delay, action plans to prevent and halt attacks or threats of attacks on persons entitled to protection who are connected to schools as well as on schools in contravention of international humanitarian law.

“The Security Council *expresses* concern at regional and cross-border violations and abuses against children affected by armed conflict and *calls on* Member States, United Nations peacekeeping, peacebuilding and political missions and United Nations country teams, regional and subregional bodies, within their respective mandates and in close cooperation with the Governments of the countries concerned, to continue efforts to establish and implement appropriate strategies and coordination mechanisms for information exchange and cooperation on child protection concerns, in particular on cross-border issues, and work to ensure child protection is included in already existing cross-border strategies and coordination mechanisms, bearing in mind relevant conclusions by the Security Council Working Group on Children and Armed Conflict and paragraph 2 (d) of its resolution [1612 \(2005\)](#).

“The Security Council *expresses concern* about the continued deterioration of the security and humanitarian situation and increased number of acts of terrorism in the Sahel region, which have caused the loss of numerous civilian lives as well as numerous IDPs, and children without access to education due to school closures.

“The Security Council *welcomes* enhanced monitoring and reporting on the impact of regional and subregional dynamics of armed conflict on children in the Lake Chad Basin and *encourages* a similar approach be adopted for monitoring and reporting in relevant regions including in the Sahel region.

“The Security Council *takes note* of ongoing international and regional initiatives on Children and Armed Conflict and further *notes* efforts aimed at facilitating continuation of education in armed conflict, including the efforts of Member States that are signatories to the Safe Schools Declaration.

“The Security Council *notes* General Assembly Resolution [74/275](#), which established the International Day to Protect Education from Attack, *emphasizes* the importance of access to quality education for all girls and boys in armed conflict, including those undergoing reintegration programmes, noting that schools can provide life-saving safe spaces, psychosocial and other support services, skills development, a foundation for lifelong learning and can contribute to stability and poverty reduction, and in this regard *acknowledges* the importance of education in preventing violent conflict and sustaining peace.

“The Security Council *calls upon* Member States to protect schools as spaces free from all forms of violence, and to ensure that they are accessible to all children, including children in vulnerable situations, and take steps to address girls’ and boys’ equal enjoyment of their right to education.

“The Security Council *reaffirms* the calls for a global ceasefire made by the Secretary General as supported in UNSCR 2532, and, further reaffirmed by the Special Representative of the Secretary-General (SRSG) for Children and

Armed Conflict in light of the COVID19 pandemic, and the SRSG's appeal to preserve and respect the civilian character of schools, as necessary for the protection of children in armed conflict.

“The Security Council *acknowledges* the disproportionate negative impact of the COVID19 pandemic, notably the socio-economic impact, and the adverse effects on children in armed conflict and children separated from armed groups and armed forces who are undergoing reintegration assistance and *notes* the heightened risk for children in armed conflict, of not resuming their education following school closures, particularly girls, making them more vulnerable to child labor, child recruitment as well as forced marriage, and in this regard *urges* Member States to ensure access to quality education for all.

“The Security Council reiterates its determination to ensure respect for and the implementation of its resolutions and presidential statements on children and armed conflict to date, as well as respect for other international commitments and obligations for the protection of children affected by armed conflict.”

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