

# BACKGROUND GUIDE

**REDEFINING THE NARRATIVE:  
VOICING THE SILENCED**



**UNITED  
NATIONS  
SECURITY  
COUNCIL**

**IGNITE • UNITE • EMPOWER**

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# **LETTER FROM THE EXECUTIVE BOARD**

Greeting Delegates!

As your Executive Board in the UNSC, we welcome you into one of the most exciting committees in all MUNs. In this conference, we expect the delegates to simply give their best and not worry about the results, have your facts straight and be confident about your approach.

As your executive board, we look forward to seeing all of the opinions and arguments you can think of.

In a committee like UNSC, where each country has a diverse role and standing, we strongly urge the delegates to declare their opinion beforehand through the means of a position paper.

As for the advice on the agenda, we would suggest diving in various news articles, blogs, any sources of information about major military conflicts pertaining mostly to terrorism, as that is the no.1 source of the presence of minors in military forces, then you simply find out how your delegation has handles it before and their current views. As the representing delegate you have full power over the decisions you make in the present but be wary of the consequences it may have in the future.

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# **INTRODUCTION**

The presence of minors in military forces is a grave issue that impacts numerous countries and conflicts around the world. Despite international laws and conventions aimed at protecting children, thousands of minors are recruited and used in armed conflicts every year. Delegates are advised to explore the complex realities and implications of this phenomenon, examining the causes, effects, and ongoing efforts to combat the recruitment of child soldiers.

**Definition:** Minors, often referred to as child soldiers, are individuals under the age of 18 who are used in any capacity by armed forces or groups.

**Scope:** The involvement of minors in military activities includes combat roles, as well as roles such as cooks, porters, spies, and for sexual exploitation.

The main aim of the United Nations Security Council as a committee is to provide valuable insight and come up with means to reduce the presence of minors in military forces. Let us take an example, the various terrorists groups that have been and still are trying to take action in distant parts of Kashmir have many young minors in their military forces. These young children follow ideals much more vividly as compared to rationality.

As a delegate of your country, you must research into your countries resources and see how exactly you can contribute towards reducing the amount of minors in military forces

**Key Agreements:**

United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC) Optional Protocol to the CRC on the involvement of children in armed conflict (OPAC) Geneva Conventions Prohibitions: These agreements prohibit the recruitment and use of children under the age of 18 in hostilities.

# **ORIGIN**

The involvement of minors in military forces is a practice that has historical roots stretching back to ancient civilizations. Throughout history, children have been recruited and used in various capacities in armed conflicts across different cultures and time periods. Understanding the origin and evolution of this practice provides valuable insights into the complex interplay of social, economic, and political factors that have perpetuated the involvement of minors in military forces.

In ancient civilizations, the use of child soldiers was not uncommon. Historical records from ancient Greece and Rome reveal instances where young boys were trained for combat from a very early age. For instance, in Sparta, a city-state in ancient Greece, boys were enrolled in a rigorous military training program called the Agoge at the age of seven. This training was designed to prepare them for a lifetime of military service, emphasizing discipline, endurance, and combat skills.

Similarly, during the Roman Empire, young boys often served as auxiliaries in the legions, performing support roles such as messengers and lookouts, gradually transitioning into more active combat roles as they matured. The use of child soldiers in ancient times was largely driven by the societal norms and militaristic cultures that prioritized military prowess and expansion.

The medieval period continued the trend of involving minors in military activities. During this era, the concept of knighthood and feudalism played a significant role in the militarization of young boys. Boys from noble families were often sent to serve as pages and squires to knights, beginning their training in combat and chivalry at a very young age. This training was seen as an essential part of their education and preparation for future roles as knights and lords.

In addition to formal training, many children were also swept up into the conflicts and wars that were prevalent during the Middle Ages. The lack of formalized state armies meant that local lords and kings relied heavily on levies and conscripts, including minors, to bolster their forces during times of war.

The early modern period saw the continuation and evolution of child soldiering practices. With the rise of nation-states and the professionalization of armies, the use of minors became more organized. In Europe, during the 17th and 18th centuries, young boys were often recruited as drummer boys and cabin boys in naval forces. These roles, while seemingly non-combatant, often placed children in dangerous situations on the front lines.

In colonial contexts, European powers frequently used child soldiers in their colonial armies. Indigenous children, as well as children of settlers, were recruited or coerced into service. The expansion of European empires into Africa, Asia, and the Americas brought with it the militarization of local populations, including minors.

The 19th and 20th centuries saw significant changes in the nature of warfare and the role of children in conflicts. The industrialization of warfare and the advent of total war during the World Wars led to the involvement of entire societies, including children, in the war effort. During World War I and World War II, children were used in various capacities, from working in factories to serving as partisans and resistance fighters.

One of the most notorious examples of child soldiering during this period was the use of Hitler Youth by Nazi Germany. Boys as young as 12 were indoctrinated and trained for military service, and many were sent to fight on the front lines in the closing stages of World War II.

In the latter half of the 20th century and into the 21st century, the phenomenon of child soldiers has been most prevalent in conflicts in Africa, Asia, and the Middle East. Civil wars, insurgencies, and guerrilla warfare have seen the widespread recruitment and use of children by state and non-state actors alike. Factors such as poverty, lack of education, and the breakdown of social structures in war-torn regions have contributed to the vulnerability of children to recruitment.

International efforts to combat the use of child soldiers have led to the establishment of legal frameworks and conventions aimed at protecting children from military exploitation. The United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (1989) and its Optional Protocol on the involvement of children in armed conflict (2000) are significant milestones in this regard. However, despite these efforts, the practice continues in various parts of the world.

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In addition to formal training, many children were also swept up into the conflicts and wars that were prevalent during the Middle Ages. The lack of formalized state armies meant that local lords and kings relied heavily on levies and conscripts, including minors, to bolster their forces during times of war.

The early modern period saw the continuation and evolution of child soldiering practices. With the rise of nation-states and the professionalization of armies, the use of minors became more organized. In Europe, during the 17th and 18th centuries, young boys were often recruited as drummer boys and cabin boys in naval forces. These roles, while seemingly non-combatant, often placed children in dangerous situations on the front lines.

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## **CONCLUSION**

The origin and persistence of minors in military forces are deeply rooted in historical, cultural, and socio-economic contexts. From ancient civilizations to modern conflicts, children have been drawn into military roles due to a complex interplay of factors. Understanding this history is crucial for addressing the underlying causes and finding effective solutions to end the use of child soldiers globally. Efforts must continue at international, national, and local levels to protect children and ensure their right to a safe and nurturing environment, free from the horrors of armed conflict.

# **CONTENT**

The involvement of minors in military forces remains a pressing issue in contemporary conflicts. Despite international legal frameworks designed to protect children, ongoing conflicts in various parts of the world continue to see the recruitment and use of child soldiers. This essay explores recent events and the current state of minors in military forces, highlighting the regions most affected, the factors contributing to this phenomenon, and the ongoing efforts to address and mitigate the problem. Delegates are to again, dive into research about their respective country's involvement in recent events and find a connection to the given agenda, by doing so you replicate your county's wishes and their future decisions in the committee and as the conference flows, adapt according to how your country would adapt.

A few cases of counties and their involvement with the given agenda as well as recent events and the current state of minors in military forces, highlighting the regions most affected, the factors contributing to this phenomenon, and the ongoing efforts to address and mitigate the problem.

## **AFRICA**

### **1. Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC)**

The DRC has long been plagued by armed conflict, with various rebel groups and militias operating in different parts of the country. The recruitment of child soldiers is rampant, with both state and non-state actors implicated. Children are often forcibly recruited or join armed groups for protection or survival. Despite some progress in demobilizing child soldiers, ongoing instability continues to put children at risk.

### **2. Central African Republic (CAR)**

The CAR has experienced severe conflict and political instability, leading to widespread human rights abuses, including the use of child soldiers. Armed groups, such as the Seleka and anti-Balaka militias, have recruited and used children in combat and support roles. Efforts by international organizations to demobilize and reintegrate child soldiers have faced significant challenges due to the persistent violence.



## **MIDDLE EAST**

### **1. Yemen**

The civil war in Yemen has resulted in one of the world's most severe humanitarian crises, with children bearing the brunt of the conflict. Both the Houthi rebels and the Yemeni government forces have been accused of recruiting child soldiers. The United Nations has documented numerous cases of children being used in front-line combat, as well as in logistical and support roles.

### **2. Syria**

The protracted conflict in Syria has seen the involvement of various state and non-state actors, many of whom have recruited children into their ranks. ISIS, in particular, has been notorious for using children in combat and as propaganda tools. Other groups, including Kurdish forces and various rebel factions, have also been implicated in the recruitment of minors. Efforts to address this issue are complicated by the fragmented and ongoing nature of the conflict.

## **ASIA**

### **1. Myanmar**

The ongoing conflict in Myanmar, particularly in the Rakhine, Kachin, and Shan states, has involved the recruitment of child soldiers by both the Myanmar military (Tatmadaw) and ethnic armed groups. Despite some reforms and commitments by the Myanmar government to end the use of child soldiers, significant challenges remain. The Rohingya crisis has exacerbated the situation, with displaced children being particularly vulnerable to recruitment.

### **2. Afghanistan**

The conflict in Afghanistan has seen various armed groups, including the Taliban and ISIS.

# **MODERATED CAUCUS**

## **TOPICS**

### **HERE ARE SOME MODERATED CAUCUS TOPICS TO DELIBERATE UPON IN THE COMMITTEE:**

- Should international military intervention be justified to prevent the use of child soldiers?
- Is the current international legal framework sufficient to protect children from being recruited as soldiers?
- Can rehabilitation programs effectively reintegrate former child soldiers into society?
- Are non-state actors the primary culprits in the recruitment of child soldiers, or do state actors play an equally significant role?
- Should countries with child soldiers face harsher international sanctions?
- Can economic development and education in conflict zones significantly reduce the recruitment of child soldiers?
- Should media coverage of child soldiers focus more on the perpetrators or on the children themselves to raise awareness?
- Is military intervention justified to liberate areas where children are being used as soldiers?
- How effective are current disarmament, demobilization, and reintegration (DDR) programs in preventing former child soldiers from being re-recruited?
- Can the use of technology, such as social media and mobile apps, help in identifying and rescuing child soldiers?
- Are rehabilitation and reintegration programs for former child soldiers adequately funded and supported by the international community?
- Is the use of child soldiers a violation of international human rights, or is it a cultural practice that needs to be understood within context?

# **ADVICE FROM THE EXECUTIVE BOARD**

A word of advice would be to properly organize the information you have gathered and above all, confirm the validity of the source through which you are getting the information. Have faith in the work you have done, frame it properly and simply execute it in a proper way. Best of luck!!!!

## **LINKS TO RESEARCH FROM**

<https://www.cfr.org/backgrounder/child-soldiers-around-world>

<https://childrenandarmedconflict.un.org/2024/02/to-mark-the-international-day-against-the-use-of-child-soldiers-the-special-representative-is-launching-the-children-and-armed-conflict-primer/>

<https://www.psychologytoday.com/intl/blog/time-out/202301/the-state-of-child-soldiers-in-2023>

<https://childrenandarmedconflict.un.org/2024/02/to-mark-the-international-day-against-the-use-of-child-soldiers-the-special-representative-is-launching-the-children-and-armed-conflict-primer/>

<https://childrenandarmedconflict.un.org/2023/02/marketing-international-day-against-the-use-of-child-soldiers-2023/>

All the best!!!

# **CREDIBLE SOURCES**

## → **NEWS SOURCES:**

- **Reuters:** Any Reuters' article which mentions the fact stated or is in contradiction of the fact being stated by another delegate in the council can be used to substantiate arguments in the committee.

<https://www.reuters.com/>

- **State Operated News Agencies:** These reports can be used in support of or against the State that owns the News Agency. These reports, if credible or substantial enough, can be used in support of or against any country. Some examples are:

- PTI (India) <https://www.ptinews.com/>
- RIA Novosti (Russia) <http://en.rian.ru>
- Xinhua News Agency (PR China) <http://www.xinhuanet.com/english/china/>
- Al Jazeera(Qatar) <http://www.aljazeera.com>

## → **GOVERNMENT REPORTS:**

These reports can be used in a similar way as the State Operated News Agencies report and can, in all circumstances, be denied by another country. However, a nuance is that a report that is being denied by a certain country can still be accepted by the Executive Board as credible information. Some examples are:

- **State Department of the United States of America**  
<http://www.state.gov/>
- **Ministry of Defence of the Russian Federation**  
<http://www.eng.mil.ru/en/index.htm>
- **Ministry of Foreign Affairs of various nations like India**  
<http://www.mea.gov.in/>
- **People's Republic of China**  
<http://www.fmprc.gov.cn/eng/>
- **Permanent Representatives to the United Nations Reports**  
<http://www.un.org/en/members/>

# **CREDIBLE SOURCES**

## → **MULTILATERAL ORGANISATIONS**

- NATO <http://www.nato.int/cps/en/natolive/index.htm>
- ASEAN <http://www.aseansec.org/>
- OPEC [https://www.opec.org/opec\\_web/en/](https://www.opec.org/opec_web/en/)

## → **UNITED NATIONS REPORTS:**

All UN Reports are considered credible information or evidence for the Executive Board of the UNHRC such as:

- UN Bodies like the UNSC/UNHRC/UNW <http://www.un.org/Docs/sc/> or UNGA <http://www.un.org/en/ga>
- UN Affiliated Bodies like the International Atomic Energy Agency <http://www.iaea.org/>
- World Bank <http://www.worldbank.org/>
- International Monetary Fund <http://www.imf.org/external/index.htm>
- International Committee of the Red Cross <http://www.icrc.org/eng/index.jsp>

## → **TREATY BASED BODIES:**

- Antarctic Treaty System <http://www.ats.aq/e/ats.htm>
- International Criminal Court <http://www.icccpi.int/Menu/ICC>

## → **OTHER ONLINE RESOURCES:**

- The United Nations Website <http://www.un.org>
- The UN Development Programme <http://www.undp.org/>
- The UN Economic and Social Committee <http://www.un.org/docs/ecosoc/>
- The UN Environment Programme <http://www.unep.org/>
- The UN General Assembly <http://www.un.org/ga/59/>
- The UN International Court of Justice <http://www.icj-cij.org/>
- The UN International Law <http://www.un.org/law/>
- The UN Refugee Agency <http://www.unhcr.ch/cgi-bin/taxis/vtx/home>
- The UN Security Council <http://www.un.org/Docs/sc/>
- UNICEF - <http://www.unicef.org/>

# **IMPORTANT NOTE**

Sources or Newspapers like the following are not typically accepted as proof/evidence:

- Wikipedia
- Amnesty International
- Human Rights Watch
- The Guardian
- Times of India

However, they can be used for a better understanding of any issue or on rare occasions, be brought up in debate if the information given in such sources is in line with the beliefs of a Government. Further, the information submitted as evidence citing reportage from sources such as specified in this note may be at best, treated as having significance in terms of persuasive value – for example: to cement one's assertions, but never as binding, indisputable facts.