



United Nations General Assembly

Working towards political stability

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Topic: Creating Policies to prevent Children from being exploited in the form of child Soldiers.

Chair: Adria Molina

II. Introduction

Committee:

The Security Council is one of the main six organs of the United Nations established under the UN Charter. Its primary responsibility is maintaining international peace and security. The Council has 15 members (5 permanent and 10 non-permanent members). Each member has one vote. Under The Charter, all Member States are obligated to comply with the Council's decisions. The Security Council takes the lead in determining the existence of a threat to the peace or act of aggression. It calls upon the parties to a dispute to settle it by peaceful means and recommends methods of adjustment or terms of settlement. In some cases, the security council can restore to imposing sanctions or even authorize the use of force to maintain or restore international peace and security. The Security Council has a presidency, which rotates, and changes, every month.

Topic:

Thousands of children are recruited and used in armed conflict across the world. Between 2005 and 2022 more than 105,000 children were verified as recruited and used by parties to conflict, although the number of cases is believed to be much higher.

In most cases referred to as child soldiers, these children, both boys and girls, are put through unmeasured forms of abuse and exploitation, which really isn't englobed in its name. These children are not only used as fighters, they are also used as scouts, cooks, porters, guards, messengers and more. A problem specific to the female gender would be the gender based violence.

Kids go into being child soldiers for many different reasons. Many are taken, obligated, threatened and manipulated by armed men. However many others find themselves taking this route for different reasons such as poverty, making them want to earn an income to support their families. Still other children go into this life to for survival or for the protection of their community. No matter the reason that compels a child to join these armed groups, the recruitment and use of children falls outside the scope of international humanitarian law as well as basic children rights.

Whilst these child soldiers are living amongst groups of armed men they experience unmeasurable forms of violence. They may be obligated to take place in intense training or brutal initiation ceremonies, to work treacherous labor or to fight in armed combat whilst taking the risk of injury and disability. They may also take part in the torturing and killing of other men or children.

These children are often deprived of basic human needs such as healthy living conditions and deprived nutritional needs, this takes a big toll on these children's wellbeing as well as their growth development.

As these children have to live such difficult experiences at such a young age their friendships and relationships with their community tend to become very difficult. As young as children of 8-9 are seen associated with armed groups. No matter what each of these children's part in armed conflict is, as they are experiencing acute levels of violence as witnesses, direct victims and as forced participants. Some of these children will be injured and will have to live with malfunctions for the rest of their lives.

Girls also find themselves in the position of being dragged into armed groups. However due to their gender they have unique vulnerabilities, such as but not limiting to: rape, pregnancy complications, stigma and even the rejection by their own families and communities.

No matter the way that a child soldier is recruited or induced into taking this role, it is a victim, whose participation in any type of armed conflict could take serious implications into their own wellbeing and physical health. Children are subject to witnessing deaths, murders and sexual violence. Most are obliged to commit such horrific acts so they end up suffering mentally from their experiences. Reintegrating these children is a critical role of the job to help these victims to start and rebuild their lives. Inside the UN, UNICEF takes the role of reintegrating former child soldiers as the main priority is giving them the opportunity to develop a normal civilian life. These children are in need of psychological help as well as education. Since these children have suffered great trauma sensitization and reconciliation efforts are greatly needed.

The reintegration of a former child soldier is a long process and help from the international community is greatly needed. By helping children deeply affected by conflict, we contribute to building a peaceful future

III. Definition of Key Terms

LEDC

Less economically developed country.

MEDC

More economically developed country.

Sensitization (of a Child soldier)

The process for a former child soldier to be brought back to normal standards of thinking that don't include the violence that the Child has suffered during its years of exploitation.

Reintegration

The process of a former Child Soldier being brought back into society so it can become a fully functioning member of it.

Gender Based Violence

Violence inflicted particularly on women because of being women for example, rape.

IV. History of the Topic

Throughout history and in many cultures, children have been involved in armed conflict and military campaigns. As an example thousands of innocent children were used for the first and second world wars. Children may be prepared and trained for conflict, given support roles such as messaging and porting, even used as human shields for a tactical advantage in propaganda.

Pre 20th Century

As far back as history has been recorded, minors have been seen to be involved in wars. It was customary for youngsters in the Mediterranean to begin working as aids, charioteers and armour bearers to fellow adult warriors.

Examples of this practice date back to the Bible, where David serviced King Saul, in Hittite and ancient Egyptian art, also in Ancient Greek mythology, philosophy and literature. In practices that date back to antiquity, children were often brought to military campaigns, together with the rest of the soldiers.

The Roman Empire made use of children in its military. Even though it was understood as a cruel measure, using children in war, and it is imposed that regulations stated that children should be minimum the age of 16 before attending war. Several Roman legions were known to have had enlisted children at the age of 14.

In medieval Europe children were used as squires since 12 years old, this consisted of military aides and their role in combat was supposedly limited. However during the children's crusade during 1212 it is known that thousands of children were recruited to go on war under the assumption that divine power would enable them to beat the enemy. In the end none of these children were used for war, they were however sold as slaves. Young boys also took part in battles during early modern warfare. When Napoleon faced a massive invasion from a great allied force in 1814 many children were enlisted and sent to armed combat. Many orphans of the Imperial Guard fought in the Netherlands with Marshall MacDonald and ranged from the ages of 14 to 17. Many of these children who were reported to work for France's military ranks were known as "The enfants of the emperor". They were in their mid teens and of their most popular and known roles was being a drummer boy.

During the age of the great British empire young boys were a part of the crew and formed a vital role on British naval ships. They were responsible for essential tasks such

as bringing powder for the cannons from the ships galley to the cannons, such kids were described as powder monkeys.

At the time of the American civil war a young boy by the name of Bugler John Cook, served in the US army whilst being as young as 15 years old, during his service he received the Medal of Honor for his acts during the battle of Antietam, the bloodiest battle in the whole of American history. There are record of several other minors that served for the military of the USA including a boy as young as 11.

A law signed by the tsar Nicholas I of Russia in 1827, led to the fact that many young Jew boys were forced into military training establishments and later on serve in the army. Officially these boys as to be 18 years old before being recruited, however to fullfil the quota, boys as young as 8 were taken.

WWI

The youngest known soldier was Momcilo Gavric, who joined the 6th Artillery Division of the Serbian army at the age of 8, after Austro-Hungarian troops in August 1914 killed his parents, grandmother and seven of his siblings. In the West boys as young as 12 were caught up in the overwhelming tide of patriotism and in huge numbers enlisted for active service. Others enlisted to avoid harsh and dreary lives.

WWII

In WWII, children under the age of 18 were widely used by all sides in formal and informal military roles. Children were readily indoctrinated into the prevailing ideology of the warring parties, quickly trained and often sent to the front line; many were wounded or killed. The lack of legal definition of a child combined with the absence of a system for verifying the ages of prospective child recruits contributed to an extensive use of children in the war.

V. Previous attempts to solve the Issue

United Nations Security Council resolution 1261, adopted unanimously on 25 august 1999, in the first resolution to address the topic, the Council condemned the targeting of children in armed conflict including the recruitment and use of child soldiers, the preamble of the resolution noted recent efforts to bring to an end the use of child soldiers in violation of international law, including the Worst forms of labour convention and the Rome Statute of the International Criminal court which prohibits forced conscription of Children under the age of fifteen in armed forces and or the participation in war crimes.

VI. Major Countries Involved

Democratic Republic of Congo

As the Democratic Republic of Congo faces an increasing amount of conflicts, Children are increasingly becoming victims of violence, and of violations of their rights.

UNICEF is particularly preoccupied by the significant number of children who are used as combatants, transports, spies, chefs or sexual slaves within armed groups and militias, at the center to the east of the country. On the occasion of international Day against the use of child soldiers UNICEF calls on all armed groups and militias to put an end to the use of these children in these conflicts.

No precise data on the number of Child soldiers being used in the DRC. However, UNICEF and its partners estimate that in the Kasai region alone, between 5,000-10,000 children have been associated with the militias. The use of children is not limited to the Kasai region. UNICEF estimates that, in the Tangayika and South-Kivu provinces more than 3000 children have been used to date.

Somalia

Children in Somalia are recruited and used, killed or maimed, abducted, and subjected to rape and other forms of sexual violence at staggering levels, making Somalia one of the direst situations on the children and armed conflict agenda. The sixth report of the Secretary General on children and armed Children in Somalia shows that a total of 8,042 grave violations against 6,501 (5,108 boys and 1,393 girls) were verified between October 2019 and September 2021. A worrisome trend involves children experiencing more than one grave violation, with at least 1,370 children affected by multiple violations, especially recruitment and use and abductions which are often perpetuated in conjunction.

Grave violations spiked in 2020, in part due to the Covid-19 response measures affecting the closures of schools, which worsened children's exposure to violence and grave violations.

With 2,852 Children affected, the recruitment and use of children continued to be one of the most prevalent violations, with Al-Shabaab, the main perpetrator. Abductions followed with a troubling number of 2,502 children affected. Almost all abductions were attributed to Al-Shabaab, 80 percent of them for the purpose of recruitment and use. At least 1,857 children were killed or maimed, a significant increase mainly due to the intensification of conflict, armed confrontations between parties, a surge in IED attacks. Most child casualties resulted from crossfire, explosive devices, mines, gunshots, physical assaults, and indiscriminate shootings.

A high number of cases, 701 children of rape and other forms of sexual violence was verified, with accountability remaining low.

Syria

The Syrian Democratic forces has a long story as a critical perpetrator of recruiting child soldiers. In 2019 the SDF signed a United Nations Action Plan intending to prevent the use of child soldiers, making it appear as though the SDF was attempting to

adhere to international law. Under this plan, anyone younger than the age of 18 would be unable to join the SDF.

However, the Syrian Justice Accountability center reported that the SDF continues to recruit young boys and girls, some as young as 11. Additionally, a UN report in April 2021 explains that the SDF and its branches are responsible for about 35 percent of the recruitment of child soldiers in northern Syria.

Due to the United Nations action plan and international pressure, the SDF is increasingly reuniting recruited children with their families, but only after those specific families put constant pressure on the SDF. Since the creation of the SDF's Child Protection Office, families have complained about the issue of child soldier recruitment 150 times. However as of March 2021, the SDF has only demobilized 50 Children. In December 2020 the SDF held a press conference, reuniting 16-year-old S. Jam Harran and 15-year-old G. Muhyiddin with their families.

On August 15, 2021, Syrian President Bashar al-Assad presented Law number 21 to regulate child rights and welfare throughout the country. The law prohibits the practices but does not mention specifics in this regard. While this legislation seems like a significant step in the right direction, many groups, such as the Syrian Accountability and Justice Center, are skeptical about the law's true ability to end the militant groups.

Yemen

Recruitment of children as actual or auxiliary soldiers in Yemen's war is one of the most dire developments in the conflict since its initial eruption in 2014. Driven to the frontline by the machinations of invested leaders, financial need, tribal solidarity, and other reasons, children have paid a heavy price, one that will continue to accrue for years to come. Aside from it being a war crime under international law, using Yemen's children as fuel for a seemingly endless war will deprive them and their country of the chance to build both a modern economy that can guarantee a decent standard of living and a sovereign state that can safeguard the rights of its people.

Walking down any street of Yemen's capital city, Sanaa, which is controlled by the Houthi insurgent group, officially known as Ansar Allah, one quickly notices posters and photos pasted on the walls that show the group's child soldiers who were killed in conflict.

The Houthi armed group has recruited and utilized thousands of children in the fighting, and indeed, all parties in the conflict in Yemen have recruited and used Child Soldiers. According to the annual report of the UN secretary-general on children in armed conflict released in July 2022, children in Yemen have been recruited by the internationally recognized government of Yemen (IRGY), pro-government militias, the Houthis, unidentified perpetrators, the Security Belt Forces, and the so-called Islamic State. UNICEF reported that 3,955 children (both boys and, to a lesser extent girls) have been recruited since 2015. Although the report admits that the real number is probably much higher.

The Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR) reported in 2017 that the majority of the reports it has received of child recruitment were committed by the Popular Committees affiliated with the Houthis. Local Yemeni human rights group, Sam for Rights and Liberties, together with Euro-Med Human

Rights Monitor, reported in 2021 that data it had gathered shows that only the Houthy group had recruited alone 10,333 children since 2014. Despite the decline in active fighting following a series of truces last year, and despite the Houthis pledge to the UN to end recruitment, the group continues to recruit children.

VII. Questions a resolution must answer

Is any more funding needed to help countries put a halt to these Child Soldiers?
Where should this funding come from?

Can these countries be trusted with the funding and/or with the issue as a whole?

Should these countries stopped being trusted and a trusted elected country should swoop in to put a halt to these problems?

Should there be any measures taken against countries that go against the Resolution?

What types of care should a ex-child soldier receive before being reintroduced back into society?

What measures should be taken with Child Soldiers that don't have anywhere to go back to?

VIII. Possible considerations for the future

Creating a Society Worldwide in which Child Soldiers don't exist, also taking into account the indirect ways in which Child Soldiers come into existence, for example Countries that are not poor and go into war and they don't have the need for Child Soldiers (ex. Russia and Ukraine conflict), making Child Soldiers illegal will not prevent them from existing, however if communities are educates, aren't impoverished the number of Child Soldiers would also drop drastically.

Moving forward education should be heavily implemented as education is the escape from poverty, thus creating communities with no need of conflict or no children with the urge to support their families also.

IX. Conclusion

In conclusion Child Soldiers have been their throughout most or even the whole of human history, this fact however does not make them acceptable. Living in the 21st century as we are Child Soldiers shouldn't even be a term. With the help of you

delegates the Chair sincerely hopes that a resolution will pass which would make the world a better place to live in. These Children are deprived from their Childhoods, instead of going to sleep with their favorite teddy bear, they go to sleep with an AK-47 to have nightmares about what they have witnessed that day, or worse they don't get to sleep at all because they are continuously raped by adult soldiers. It is time for a definitive halt to these types of practices and Diplomacy is always the peaceful way to find solutions.

Hope seeing all of you delegates prepared at DSBMUN!

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