

Review of the 2015 June Security Council Open Debate on Children and Armed Conflict

On 18 June 2015, the UN Security Council (UNSC) held an Open Debate on Children and Armed Conflict (CAAC) under the Presidency of Malaysia, Chair of the UNSC Working Group on Children and Armed Conflict. This was the second open debate on CAAC in 2015, the first one having been hosted in March under the Presidency of France. The June open debate followed publication of the [14th annual report on children and armed conflict by the Secretary-General](#) (SG), covering the period from 1 January to 31 December 2014. In addition to the discussion of the report, Malaysia highlighted the abduction of children in situations of armed conflict, and to that end, introduced as an outcome document [Resolution 2225 \(2015\)](#), which expanded the UNSC's children and armed conflict agenda by adding abductions as the fifth "trigger" for inclusion of parties into the annexes of the SG's annual report.

At the open debate, **73 delegations intervened, representing 167 countries**. The overall tone of the debate was positive, with Member States voicing overwhelming support for Malaysia's initiative to shine a spotlight on abductions. Most prominently, the following themes were discussed in the delegations' statements: 1) the Secretary-General's inclusion of parties to armed conflict that engage in abductions of children as criteria for listings in the annexes to his reports on CAAC; 2) preventing attacks on education and ending military use of schools; 3) a call on all parties to ensure that children associated with armed groups or forces are treated as victims first; and 4) ensuring accountability for the security sector actors for effectively protecting children's rights while deployed in the field.

Firstly, **48 delegations welcomed the UNSC's expansion of the 'triggers' for listing parties to a conflict to include the grave violation of abductions. Seven delegations condemned abductions of children, with 5 calling for their immediate release.**

Twenty-four delegations voiced concerns regarding attacks and threats of attacks on schools. Further to the topic of attacks on education, **15 delegations spoke on the issue of the military use of schools, with 10 specific mentions of the Safe Schools Declaration** launched in Oslo on 28-29 May that endorses the Guidelines for Protecting Schools and Universities from Military Use During Armed Conflict.

Twelve delegations emphasized the importance of making sure that children associated with armed groups or forces are 'victims first' and should be treated as such, and furthermore, **eight delegations paid particular attention to the issue of detention of children for their association with armed groups or forces.** On this theme, one delegation specifically called for the SG's monitoring and reporting on detention of children on the grounds of their association with armed groups or forces, while another made a specific call for concerned parties to develop protocols for the handover of children associated with armed groups or forces to child protection actors.

Lastly at this open debate, **eleven intervening delegations spoke about accountability for peacekeepers** while serving in the field to effectively protect children's rights. **Two delegations called for the Secretary-General to develop a policy prohibiting government armed forces listed in the annexes to his CAAC reports to contribute troops** until they have adopted and fully implemented action plans.

Watchlist on Children and Armed Conflict's analytical summary provides more detail on the above themes featured in the debate, and a more detailed overview of delegation statements related to Watchlist's [key recommendations to the UNSC](#), among other themes featured in this debate.



Analytical Summary of the June 2015 Security Council Open Debate on Children and Armed Conflict

Debate Format

- 3 UN officials (Secretary-General, SRSG-CAAC, and Deputy Executive Director UNICEF), and 1 civil society organization (Facilitation for Peace and Development) briefed the Council.
- 73 delegations¹ participated, including the European Union, League of Arab States, Nordic Countries, ASEAN, Organization of Islamic States (OIS), Arab Group, and Southern African Development Community (SADC), representing 167 countries.
- 7 new States or intergovernmental bodies² participated as compared to the previous debate.

Overall Tone: Positive

- 66 of 73 overall participants made generally favorable remarks;
 - 7 delegations were critical of some aspects of the agenda, namely Colombia, India, Israel, Syria, Myanmar, Sudan, and Thailand.
- Factors contributing to a positive tone include:
 - Consensus over addressing the issue of mass abductions of children through expansion of triggers for listing in the Secretary-General's 'list of shame' that was raised as a growing trend in this year's annual report;
 - Attainment of consensus on resolution 2225 through Malaysia's constructive leadership of negotiations.

Prominent Themes in Country Statements:

Requesting the Secretary-General to include in the annexes to his CAAC reports those parties to armed conflict that engage in abductions of children

- 48 delegations³ welcomed the Council's expansion of the "triggers" for listing parties to a conflict to include abductions.
 - 7 delegations⁴ specifically condemned abductions of children, in contravention of applicable international law, by parties to armed conflict.
 - 6 delegations⁵ specifically mentioned the importance of accountability for parties who commit abductions.

¹ Angola, Chad, Chile, China, France, Jordan, Lithuania, Malaysia, New Zealand, Nigeria, Russia, Spain, UK, USA, Venezuela, Algeria (The Arab Group), Argentina, Australia, Austria, Azerbaijan, Belgium, Botswana, Brazil, Cambodia, Canada, Colombia, Croatia, Estonia, Egypt, Georgia, Germany, Greece, Guatemala, Holy See, India, Indonesia, Italy, Iraq, Iran, Israel, Japan, Kazakhstan, Kenya, Kuwait (Organization of Islamic Cooperation), Liechtenstein, Luxembourg, Mexico, Montenegro, Morocco, Myanmar, Netherlands, Pakistan, Palestine, Panama, Philippines, Poland, Portugal, Qatar, Republic of Korea, Slovenia, Slovakia, Sudan, Sweden (Nordic Countries), Switzerland, Syria, Thailand, Turkey, Ukraine, Uruguay, Zimbabwe (Southern African Development Community), Vietnam (ASEAN), EU, League of Arab States.

² Botswana, Georgia, Greece, Kenya, Kuwait (Organization of Islamic Cooperation), Zimbabwe (Southern African Development Community), League of Arab States.

³ France, Malaysia, New Zealand, China, Russia, Venezuela, USA, Angola, Lithuania, Chad, UK, Spain, Algeria (The Arab Group), Argentina, Austria, Brazil, Cambodia, Canada, Croatia, Estonia, Germany, Greece, Guatemala, Holy See, India, Indonesia, Italy, Japan, Kazakhstan, Kuwait (OIS), Luxembourg, Mexico, Montenegro, Morocco, Netherlands, Panama, Poland, Portugal, Republic of Korea, Slovenia, Sweden (Nordic Countries), Switzerland, Syria, Thailand, Turkey, Uruguay, ASEAN, EU.

⁴ Venezuela, Angola, EU, Canada, Indonesia, Cambodia, Portugal.

⁵ Malaysia, Chile, New Zealand, China, UK, Angola.

- 5 delegations⁶ called on all parties to immediately release all abducted children.

Prevent attacks on education and end the military use of schools

- 24 delegations⁷ expressed concerns over attacks and threats of attacks against schools.
 - 10 delegations⁸ mentioned their endorsement of the Safe Schools Declaration, made public on the occasion of the Oslo Conference on Safe Schools: Protecting Education from Attack on 28-29 May, with 5 delegations⁹ specifically calling on other Member States to endorse the Declaration; 7 delegations¹⁰ made other favorable mentions of the Declaration.
 - 5 delegations¹¹ called on all parties to armed conflict to adopt concrete measures to deter military use of schools during armed conflict, particularly noting the Guidelines for Protecting Schools and Universities from Military Use During Armed Conflict.

Urge all parties to ensure that children associated with armed groups or forces are treated as victims first

- 12 delegations¹² stressed that children associated with armed groups or forces are victims first and should be treated as such.
- 8 delegations¹³ voiced concerns regarding detention of children for their association with armed groups or forces, with 1 delegation¹⁴ specifically requesting the Secretary-General to continue to monitor and report, inter alia, on the detention of children for their association with armed forces or groups.
 - 3 delegations¹⁵ urged Member States to explore non-judicial measures as an alternative to criminal procedures for children who may have participated in violations of international humanitarian law, taking into account the best interests of the child and conforming to international principles on juvenile justice.
 - 1 delegation¹⁶ encouraged concerned parties to develop protocols regarding handover of children associated with armed groups or forces to child protection actors.

Hold security sector actors to account for effectively protecting children's rights when deployed in the field

- 11 delegations¹⁷ spoke about accountability of peacekeepers while serving in the field to protect children's rights.
 - 2 delegations¹⁸ called for the Secretary-General to develop a policy prohibiting government armed forces listed in the annexes to his reports on Children and Armed Conflict from contributing troops to peacekeeping operations until they have adopted, and fully implemented, action plans to end violations against children.
- 4 delegations¹⁹ called for a mandatory pre-deployment requirement for child protection training, to be complemented with mandatory in-theatre training, for all troop-contributing countries.

Other notable themes:

Accountability

- 29 delegations²⁰ expressed concerns regarding the Secretary-General's listing and delisting process in his 'list of shame' for holding parties to conflict accountable for committing grave violations against children, including failure to list parties named for violations against children in successive annual reports in this list.

⁶ Guatemala, EU, Canada, Indonesia, Portugal.

⁷ Chile, Nigeria, New Zealand, Angola, Argentina, Austria, Brazil, Canada, Greece, Holy See, Japan, Kazakhstan, Luxembourg, Mexico, Montenegro, Morocco, Netherlands, Pakistan, Portugal, Qatar, Slovenia, Sweden (Nordic Countries), Switzerland, Zimbabwe (SADC).

⁸ Malaysia, Spain, Brazil, Luxembourg, Poland, Austria, Greece, Uruguay, Panama, Qatar.

⁹ New Zealand, Luxembourg, Austria, Argentina, Panama.

¹⁰ Guatemala, Sweden, Liechtenstein, Switzerland, Indonesia, Netherlands, Kazakhstan.

¹¹ France, Chad, Guatemala, Japan, Austria.

¹² Spain, Chile, Lithuania, Angola, Argentina, Croatia, Guatemala, Indonesia, Kazakhstan, Morocco, Portugal, Switzerland.

¹³ Chile, Angola, Croatia, Indonesia, Montenegro, Switzerland, Uruguay, ASEAN.

¹⁴ Chile.

¹⁵ Chile, Guatemala, Indonesia.

¹⁶ Lithuania.

¹⁷ France, USA, Sweden (Nordic Countries), Liechtenstein, Estonia, Germany, Canada, Argentina, Panama, Turkey, Botswana.

¹⁸ Spain, Panama.

¹⁹ Indonesia, Portugal, Sweden (Nordic Countries), Slovakia.

²⁰ Malaysia, France, New Zealand, Chad, Jordan, Venezuela, USA, Guatemala, Brazil, Colombia, India, Algeria (Arab Group), Palestine, Iran, Liechtenstein, Israel, Luxembourg, Thailand, Syria, Canada, Vietnam (ASEAN), Iraq, Qatar, Sudan, Pakistan, Kuwait (OIC), Turkey, Egypt, League of Arab States.

- 18 delegations²¹ made explicit mentions of the International Criminal Court (ICC) as an important tool for fighting impunity for the grave violations against children, and 12 delegations²² specifically referred to sanctions as another important accountability tool.

Prevention

- 10 delegations²³ spoke about tackling root causes to prevent the involvement of, and violence against, children in armed conflict.
- 6 delegations²⁴ spoke generally about the importance of conflict prevention for tackling the rise of extremism and child recruitment.

Reintegration

- 5 Member States²⁵ mentioned community-based reintegration programming, with emphasis on education and training programs, for effective rehabilitation of children after they have been released from armed groups.
- 2 Member States²⁶ spoke about adequate resourcing for rehabilitation programs, with 1 Member State²⁷ stressing the need for a comprehensive approach to successful reintegration, and 1 Member State²⁸ pointing out the importance of reintegration as a measure to prevent future recruitment.

²¹ Spain, UK, Lithuania, Venezuela, Guatemala, Brazil, Sweden (Nordic Countries), EU, Mexico, Luxembourg, Poland, Estonia, Austria, Switzerland, Argentina, Greece, Croatia, Montenegro.

²² Chile, Jordan, Lithuania, Guatemala, Estonia, Belgium, Germany, Republic of Korea, Argentina, Uruguay, Sudan, Australia.

²³ China, Chad, Venezuela, Brazil, Cambodia, Italy, Kenya, Poland, Sudan, Pakistan.

²⁴ Guatemala, Indonesia, Republic of Korea, Switzerland, Zimbabwe (SADC), Netherlands.

²⁵ Malaysia, Lithuania, Spain, Guatemala, Italy.

²⁶ Luxembourg, Morocco.

²⁷ Liechtenstein.

²⁸ Chad.

Speaker:	DPKO policy banning listed states from contributing troops	Mandatory Pre-Deployment Training	Abductions as a trigger for listing in the annexes	Monitoring and reporting of children in detention	Children as victims first	SOPs for children in detention	Mentions of detention generally	Safe Schools Declaration	Take concrete measures to stop military use of schools	Prevent attacks on education	Accountability	Prevention /addressing root causes of conflict	SCR1612 Anniversary	“Children, Not Soldiers”
Group Statement***														P
Argentina			P		P			P	P	P	P		P	P
Australia											P		P	
Austria			P					P	P	P	P			P
Azerbaijan											P			P
Belgium											P			
Brazil			P					P	P	P		P		
Botswana											P		P	P
Cambodia			P									P		
Canada			P						P	P	P			
Colombia														
Croatia			P		P		P				P		P	P
Estonia			P								P			
Egypt														P
Germany			P								P			
Georgia														
Greece			P					P	P	P	P			
Guatemala			P		P			P	P		P	P		P
Holy See			P						P	P	P			P
India			P											P
Indonesia		P	P		P		P	P	P		P	P		
Italy			P								P	P		
Iraq														
Iran											P			
Israel														
Japan			P						P	P			P	P
Kazakhstan			P		P			P	P	P	P			P
Kenya												P		P
Kuwait/ Organization of Islamic States Statement****			P											P
Liechtenstein								P	P		P	P		
Luxembourg			P					P	P	P	P			P
Mexico			P							P	P			
Montenegro			P				P		P	P	P			P
Morocco			P		P				P	P	P		P	P

