

Review of the 2012 Security Council Open Debate on Children and Armed Conflict

On 19 September 2012, the United Nations Security Council held its annual Open Debate on Children and Armed Conflict. The debate followed the adoption of [Security Council resolution 2068](#), the first resolution of the Council on Children and Armed Conflict not universally supported by Council members ([Watchlist press release](#)).

47 delegations participated in the debate, similar participation to as in 2011(49), but a substantial decrease from 2010(56).

After the vote and the Council members' explanations, the tone of the Open Debate was generally very positive with 35 delegations (speaking on behalf of over 70 States) offering broad, unequivocal support for the United Nations' Children and Armed Conflict agenda. Echoing the divisions in the Council over resolution 2068, 12 States, eight of whom had been mentioned in the Secretary-General's 11th annual report, criticized the report. However, 17 speakers actively defended the report, the Secretary-General's mandate under article 99 of the United Nations Charter and prior Security Council resolutions and the work of the Special Representative on Children and Armed Conflict.

In line with the Chair's Concept Note, the main theme of delegations' remarks was accountability for grave violations against children. Broad support was expressed for national and international courts, the use of targeted measures by the Security Council and the conclusion of action plans by parties to conflicts as ways to ensure accountability for and put an end to further violations. Many speakers called for increased engagement or leadership by the Council and for the Council to ensure it makes the best use of its available tools. Four speakers expressed (unopposed) support for expanding the list of "trigger violations" to include all six grave violations.

Other issues attracting broad support included the mainstreaming of child protection in all of the Council's activities and more briefings of the Special Representative to the Council or its Working Group. Opinions were more divided on allowing direct access by the United Nations to non-State actors for the purpose of concluding action plans and the idea of exploring the possibility of some form of thematic sanctions mechanism.

In sum, the Open Debate reflected the clear commitment of the majority of United Nations Member States to the Children and Armed Conflict agenda and a desire to move forward in ensuring accountability for and preventing grave violations against children (even among States critical of the Secretary-General's report). However, the criticisms of a minority of delegations of the Secretary-General's report and the lack of unanimity behind resolution 2068 send a warning message of the need to remain vigilant against efforts to roll back the gains achieved under this important initiative.

The attached analytical summary and overview of country statements provide further detail on the issues raised during the Open Debate including the extent to which they were raised (positively or negatively) and by whom. It is hoped that this information may be useful in helping to shape targeted follow-up to the 2012 Security Council's Open Debate on Children and Armed Conflict.

Analytical Summary of the Open Debate

Participation

- 47 delegations participated in the 2012 Open Debate in addition to the Special Representative of the Secretary-General, Under-Secretary-General for Peacekeeping, UNICEF Executive Director, and President of the International Center for Transitional Justice¹
- The 47 delegations was a decrease from 49 in 2011 and 56 in 2010
 - o 32 speakers had participated in both 2011 and 2010²
 - o 6 speakers had participated in either 2011 or 2010³
 - o 9 speakers participated for the first time in three years⁴
 - o 26 speakers from 2011 or 2010 did not participate in 2012⁵

Support for the Children and Armed Conflict agenda, report of the Secretary-General and Mandate of the Special Representative of the Secretary-General

- All 47 participants reaffirmed their commitment to protecting children in armed conflict
- 17 speakers defended the mandates of the Secretary-General and his Special Representative and their compliance with these mandates⁶
 - o 12 speakers questioned the Secretary-General's authority under article 99 of the United Nations Charter and prior Security Council resolutions to report on situations or expressed concern with the scope of the Secretary-General's reports⁷
 - o Of those 12 raising concerns or criticisms, 8 had been mentioned in the Secretary-General's Report⁸

¹ Statements were made by the European Union delegation on behalf of EU Member States and supported by various associated States (Croatia, the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, Montenegro, Serbia, Albania and Bosnia and Herzegovina, Ukraine, the Republic of Moldova, Armenia and Georgia), by Finland on behalf of the Nordic States, by Switzerland on behalf of the Human Security Network and by Canada on behalf of the Group of Friends

² Afghanistan, Australia, Azerbaijan, Belgium, Bosnia, Brazil, Canada/Friends, Chile, China, Colombia, EU, Finland (Nordic), France, Germany, India, Iraq, Israel, Italy, Japan, Liechtenstein, Mexico, New Zealand, Nigeria, Pakistan, Rep. of Korea, Russian Federation, Slovenia, South Africa, Switzerland/HSN, , Thailand, United Kingdom, United States

³ Argentina, Kenya, Luxembourg, Philippines, Portugal, Viet Nam

⁴ DRC, Estonia, Guatemala, Malaysia, Morocco, Sudan, Syria, Togo, Uruguay

⁵ Armenia, Austria, Bangladesh, Gabon, Hungary, Lebanon, Myanmar, Peru, Sri Lanka, Yemen, Benin, Costa Rica, Croatia, Georgia, Indonesia, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Nepal, Netherlands, Palestine, Papua New Guinea, Qatar, Sierra Leone, Turkey, Uganda, Ukraine

⁶ Togo, United Kingdom, France, Germany, Canada (on behalf of Friends), Italy, Switzerland (on behalf of Human Security Network), Finland (on behalf of Nordic States), Estonia, Chile, Liechtenstein, Australia, Slovenia, Belgium, Kenya, New Zealand, Uruguay

⁷ Azerbaijan, Brazil, China, Colombia, India, Iraq, Pakistan, Philippines, Sudan, Russia, Syria, Thailand

⁸ Colombia, India, Iraq, Pakistan, Philippines, Sudan, Syria, Thailand

- 27 speakers positively mentioned the role of action plans in bringing an end to violations against children⁹
- 4 speakers (unopposed) supported expanding the “triggers” to include all 6 violations¹⁰
- 14 speakers called on the Security Council to mainstream child protection in all its activities¹¹

Support for accountability for grave violations against children

- 35 speakers emphasized the importance of accountability for grave violations against children¹²
- 30 speakers highlighted the roles of national and international courts in ensuring accountability¹³
- 13 speakers called on the Council to review or to maximize the use of tools at its disposal for ensuring accountability and putting pressure on perpetrators¹⁴
 - o 10 speakers noted the recommendations of Ambassador de La Sablière in this regard¹⁵
- 2 speakers mentioned the importance of reparations¹⁶

Support for targeted measures against perpetrators of violations

- 22 speakers supported targeted measures against perpetrators or called upon the Security Council to ensure sanctions committees included violations against children as sanctionable offences¹⁷
 - o 7 speakers supported exploring some form of thematic approach to sanctions¹⁸
 - o 5 speakers opposed thematic sanctions¹⁹

⁹ United States, Morocco, France, Portugal, South Africa, United Kingdom, Japan, EU, Canada (on behalf of Friends), Argentina, Italy, Luxembourg, Switzerland (on behalf of Human Security Network), Finland (on behalf of Nordic States), Estonia, Republic of Korea, Chile, DRC, Liechtenstein, Australia, Bosnia & Herzegovina, Slovenia, Belgium, Kenya, Nigeria, Sudan, Malaysia

¹⁰ Switzerland, Liechtenstein, Slovenia, South Africa

¹¹ Morocco, Togo, Germany, Israel, Italy, Mexico, Republic of Korea, Bosnia & Herzegovina, Slovenia, Nigeria, New Zealand, Malaysia, Liechtenstein, Australia

¹² Azerbaijan, United States, Morocco, Russian Federation, France, Portugal, Pakistan, South Africa, United Kingdom, Guatemala, Germany, Japan, Brazil, EU, Canada (on behalf of Friends), Argentina, Italy, Mexico, Luxembourg, Switzerland, Finland (on behalf of Nordic States), Estonia, Republic of Korea, Chile, DRC, Liechtenstein, Australia, Bosnia & Herzegovina, Slovenia, Belgium, Nigeria, New Zealand, Uruguay, Malaysia

¹³ Azerbaijan, Russian Federation, France, Portugal, South Africa, Togo, United Kingdom, Pakistan, Guatemala, Germany, Japan, Brazil, EU, Argentina, Italy, Mexico, Luxembourg, Switzerland (on behalf of Human Security Network), Finland (on behalf of Nordic States), Estonia, DRC, Liechtenstein, Australia, Bosnia & Herzegovina, Slovenia, Belgium, Nigeria, New Zealand, Uruguay, Malaysia

¹⁴ United States, France, South Africa, United Kingdom, Guatemala, Germany, Japan, EU, Argentina, Mexico, Finland (on behalf of the Nordic States), Liechtenstein, Slovenia

¹⁵ France, Germany, Japan, EU, Argentina, Luxembourg, Estonia, Australia, Slovenia, Belgium

¹⁶ Nigeria and DRC

¹⁷ France, Portugal, South Africa, Guatemala, Germany, Japan, Brazil, EU, Canada, Argentina, Italy, Mexico, Luxembourg, Finland (on behalf of Nordic States), Republic of Korea, Chile, Liechtenstein, Australia, Bosnia & Herzegovina, Slovenia, Belgium, New Zealand

¹⁸ France, Portugal, South Africa, Argentina, Liechtenstein, New Zealand

¹⁹ China, Colombia, United States, Brazil

Summary of Statements made in the Open Debate

P= positive mention; N=negative mention. Blue shading indicates statement on behalf of other States

Speaker:	Affirmed commitment to protect children	Called for Council leadership	Defended SG and SRSG	Called for briefings of SRSG to SC or WG	Called to add remaining two trigger violations	Supported action plans	Called on States to allow access to NSAs	Called for accountability of perpetrators	Noted de La Sabliere recommendations	Urged including child violations in existing sanctions committees	Supported exploring thematic sanctions	Endorsed national and international courts	Mentioned need to review use of tools	Mainstream child protection in SC work	Emphasized Reparations
China	P		N				N			N	N				
Azerbaijan	P		N					P				P			
Colombia	P		N				N				N		N		
United States	P					P	N	P			N		P		
Morocco	P					P								P	
Russian Fed.	P		N			N	N	P				P			
France	P		P			P		P	P	P	P	P	P		
Portugal	P	P				P		P		P	P	P			
South Africa	P	P			P	P		P		P	P	P	P		
Togo	P		P					P				P		P	
United Kingdom	P	P	P			P		P				P	P		
Pakistan	P		N				N	P				P			
India	P		N				N								
Guatemala	P	P						P		P	N	P	P		
Germany	P	P	P					P	P	P		P	P	P	
Japan	P	P				P		P	P	P	P	P	P		
Brazil	P		N				N	P		P	N	P			
EU	P			P		P		P	P	P		P	P		

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Israel	P													P	
Canada/Friends	P	P	P	P		P		P		P					
Argentina	P	P				P		P	P	P	P	P	P		
Italy	P	P	P	P		P		P		P		P		P	
Mexico	P							P		P		P	P	P	
Luxembourg	P	P				P		P	P	P		P			
Switzerland/HS N	P		P	P	P	P	P	P				P			
Finland/Nordic	P	P	P	P		P		P		P		P	P		
Estonia	P		P			P	P	P	P			P			
Rep. of Korea	P					P		P		P				P	
Chile	P		P			P		P		P					
DRC	P					P		P				P			P
Liechtenstein	P	P	P	P	P	P	P	P		P	P	P	P	P	
Australia	P		P	P		P		P	P	P		P		P	
Bosnia	P	P		P		P	P	P		P		P		P	
Slovenia	P	P	P	P	P	P	P	P	P	P		P	P	P	
Thailand	P		N				N	N							
Belgium	P		P			P	P	P	P	P	P				
Syria	P		N												
Iraq	P		N												
Kenya	P		P			P									

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Nigeria	P	P				P	P	P				P		P	P
New Zealand	P		P					P		P	P	P		P	
Uruguay	P		P					P				P			
Philippines	P		N				N								
Viet Nam	P						N								
Sudan	P		N			P									
Afghanistan	P														
Malaysia	P					P		P				P		P	
Total mentioning	47	15	28	9	4	28	17	35	10	23	12	30	14	14	2
Total Positive	47	15	17	9	4	27	7	34	10	22	7	30	13	14	2
Total Negative	0	0	11	0	0	1	10	1	0	1	5	0	1	0	0