

Review of the October 2017 Security Council Open Debate on Children and Armed Conflict

On October 31, 2017, the UN Security Council held an Open Debate on Children and Armed Conflict (CAC) under France's Presidency. At the Debate, the Secretary-General (SG) presented his annual report on CAC ([A/72/361-S/2017/821](#)) pursuant to SCR 2225 (2015), covering the period from January 1 to December 31, 2016. France took the opportunity of the Debate to encourage more endorsements and follow up to the Paris Principles and the Paris Commitments ten years since their launch, and the Council adopted a Presidential Statement ([S/PRST/2017/21](#)) as the outcome document.

At the Open Debate, **77 delegations intervened, representing 100 countries**. The tone of the debate was largely positive. Nearly a third of the intervening delegations stressed the importance of preserving standalone capacity for child protection in UN peacekeeping missions and the need for adequate resources for the delivery of the Council's CAC mandate. Most prominently, the following themes were discussed in the delegations' statements: 1) calls for better accountability for all perpetrators of child rights violations, including for recruitment and use and attacks on schools, 2) calls for more effective monitoring, reporting, and response on the ground, including on detention of children for their association with armed forces and armed groups, 3) calls for ensuring accurate and credible listing of perpetrators of the six grave violations, based on impartial evidence-based reporting, and 4) calls for effective implementation and signing of more UN action plans with armed forces and groups listed in the annexes of the SG's annual reports on CAC.

Firstly, **30 delegations articulated their commitment to ending military recruitment and use of children through their signing of the Optional Protocol to the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child on the involvement of children in armed conflict (OPAC)**. Six of those delegations specifically encouraged those States that have not yet signed or ratified the OPAC to do so without delay. Four delegations expressed support for the Straight-18 standard, setting the minimum age for recruitment and deployment to 18 years. **29 delegations called for the protection of schools from deliberate targeting and military use through their endorsement of the Safe Schools Declaration**, including calls on Member States who have not yet done so to consider endorsing.

25 delegations called for preservation of standalone capacity of UN peacekeeping and political missions to monitor, report, and respond to grave violations in order to enable the UN to effectively deliver on the Security Council's CAC Agenda. **11 of those delegations specifically mentioned the crucial role of the Child Protection Advisers** to implement the CAC mandate at the field level.

19 delegations specifically urged Member States to treat children associated with armed groups, including those engaged in violent extremism, as victims entitled to full protection of their human rights, and urgently put in place alternatives to detention and prosecution of children. Out of those, **six delegations expressed concern over detention of children on the basis of security charges** which deprives children of their basic rights and safeguards, and **two specifically called upon all parties to allow child protection actors regular and unhindered access to all detention facilities** in order to facilitate continued monitoring and reporting on detention of children for their association with armed forces or groups.

Eight delegations called for integration of child protection into peace processes from the outset of any negotiation, in order to support release and sustainable reintegration of children in response to their recruitment and use and other violations.

17 delegations welcomed the SG's 2017 annual report, reiterating support for his impartiality with respect to the decisions for listing all perpetrators responsible for committing grave violations, based on evidence-based reporting through the UN-led Monitoring and Reporting Mechanism (MRM). **Eight delegations called upon the SG to ensure a complete, accurate, and credible listing** of perpetrators of the grave violations in the annexes of his annual reports in

exercise of his impartiality. **Five delegations specifically took note of the reformatting of this year's annexes**, urging that the SG **publicly document and carefully monitor measures** listed parties have taken to improve the protection of children, including through UN-agreed action plans.

Lastly, **15 delegations emphasized the responsibility of all listed parties to enter into and fully implement a concrete and time-bound action plans with the UN** to end all violations.

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

Analytical Summary of the October 2017 Security Council Open Debate on Children and Armed Conflict

Debate format

- 2 UN officials (Secretary-General, Under-Secretary-General for Children and Armed Conflict) and 1 civil society speaker briefed the Council. Uncharacteristically, UNICEF did not brief at this Debate.
- 77 delegations¹ participated, including the European Union and the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO). Denmark delivered a statement on behalf of the Nordic Countries, Canada on behalf of the Group of Friends on Children and Armed Conflict, and Norway on behalf of 38 countries that have endorsed the Safe Schools Declaration. Together these delegations represented 100 countries.
- 19 new delegations² participated as compared to the previous debate.
- 5 out of 10 governments³ listed for grave violations against children made statements. From the listed Saudi Arabia-led coalition, a number of members intervened, including Saudi Arabia, Kuwait, Bahrain, and Morocco, among others.

Overall Tone: Generally Positive

- 69 out of 77 delegations made generally positive remarks.
 - Eight delegations were critical of some aspects of the agenda, namely Egypt, Iraq, Iran, Israel, Pakistan, Saudi Arabia, Morocco, and Yemen.
- Factors contributing to this tone include:
 - Consensus among UN Security Council and other Member States that the CAC agenda as a global response mechanism is needed now more than ever to deal with the multiple ongoing crises impacting millions of children in most severe ways, including through extreme violence.
 - Those speakers who shared negative impressions of the Secretary-General's 2017 annual report were displeased with the listing of the Saudi Arabia-led coalition for killing and maiming children and attacks on schools and hospitals in Yemen.

Themes in Delegation Statements:

¹ In speaking order: France, Sweden, Ukraine, UK, Ethiopia, Italy, USA, Uruguay, Japan, Bolivia, Senegal, China, Russia, Kazakhstan, Egypt, Belgium, Peru, Germany, Brazil, Colombia, Canada (individual and Group of Friends on CAC), Turkey, Liechtenstein, Slovakia, Palestine, Iran, Hungary, Chile, EU, Austria, Luxembourg, Norway (on behalf of 38 countries endorsing the Safe Schools Declaration), El Salvador, Saudi Arabia, NATO, Holy See, Slovenia, Indonesia, Argentina, Netherlands, Afghanistan, Iraq, Switzerland, Ireland, Philippines, Mexico, Nigeria, Qatar, Estonia (also on behalf of Latvia and Lithuania), United Arab Emirates, Georgia, Sudan, Morocco, Bangladesh, Israel, Panama (on behalf of Human Security Network), South Africa, Kuwait, Costa Rica, Malaysia, Pakistan, Portugal, Denmark (Nordic Countries), Venezuela, Maldives, Paraguay, Greece, Andorra, Thailand, Botswana, Australia, Ecuador, Bahrain, Azerbaijan, Yemen, Spain, Armenia.

² Ethiopia, Bolivia, Peru, Slovakia, Hungary, Norway (on behalf of 38 countries endorsing the Safe Schools Declaration), El Salvador, NATO, Afghanistan, Ireland, Estonia (also on behalf of Latvia and Lithuania), Georgia, South Africa, Costa Rica, Maldives, Paraguay, Andorra, Ecuador, Armenia.

³ Afghanistan, Iraq, Nigeria, Sudan, and Yemen. Democratic Republic of the Congo, Myanmar, Syria, Somalia, and South Sudan did not deliver a statement.

Call for better accountability for all perpetrators of child rights violations

- 30 delegations⁴ articulated their commitment to ending military recruitment and use of children through their signing of the Optional Protocol to the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child on the involvement of children in armed conflict (OPAC);
 - 6 delegations⁵ specifically encouraged those States that have not yet signed or ratified the OPAC to do so without delay;
 - 4 delegations⁶ expressed support for the Straight-18 standard, setting the minimum age for recruitment and deployment to 18 years;
- 29 delegations⁷ called for the protection of schools from deliberate targeting and military use through their endorsement of the Safe Schools Declaration, including calls on Member States who have not yet done so to consider endorsing.

Call for more effective monitoring, reporting, and response to child rights violations on the ground

- 25 delegations⁸ called for preservation of standalone capacity of UN peacekeeping and political missions to monitor, report, and respond to grave violations in order to enable the UN to effectively deliver on the Security Council's CAC Agenda;
 - 11 delegations⁹ specifically mentioned the crucial role of the Child Protection Advisers to implement the CAC mandate at the field level;
- 19 delegations¹⁰ specifically urged Member States to treat children associated with armed groups, including those engaged in violent extremism, as victims entitled to full protection of their human rights, and urgently put in place alternatives to detention and prosecution of children;
 - 6 delegations¹¹ expressed concern over detention of children on the basis of security charges which deprives children of their basic rights and safeguards;
 - 2 delegations¹² specifically called upon all parties to allow child protection actors regular and unhindered access to all detention facilities in order to facilitate continued monitoring and reporting on detention of children for their association with armed forces or groups;
- 8 delegations¹³ called for integration of child protection into peace processes from the outset of any negotiation, in order to support release and sustainable reintegration of children in response to their recruitment and use and other violations.

⁴ Ukraine, Uruguay, Bolivia, Senegal, Kazakhstan, Slovakia, Palestine, Hungary, Chile, EU, Luxembourg, El Salvador, Holy See, Indonesia, Argentina, Netherlands, Afghanistan, Iraq, Nigeria, Georgia, Sudan, Morocco, Panama (Human Security Network), Pakistan, Portugal, Paraguay, Andorra, Thailand, Azerbaijan, Spain.

⁵ Ukraine, Uruguay, Bolivia, Slovakia, Palestine, Netherlands.

⁶ Kazakhstan, Uruguay, Colombia, Slovakia.

⁷ France, Sweden, Italy, Uruguay, Kazakhstan, Belgium, Canada, Liechtenstein, Palestine, Chile, Austria, Luxembourg, Norway (on behalf of 37 countries endorsing the Safe Schools Declaration), Slovenia, Argentina, Netherlands, Nigeria, Qatar, Panama (Human Security Network), Costa Rica, Portugal, Paraguay, Greece, Andorra, Botswana, Ecuador, Yemen, Spain, Armenia.

⁸ France, Ethiopia, Italy, US, Uruguay, Japan, Kazakhstan, Belgium, Canada (Group of Friends), Chile, Austria, Luxembourg, El Salvador, Indonesia, Argentina, Netherlands, Switzerland, Panama (Human Security Network), South Africa, Costa Rica, Denmark (Nordic countries), Paraguay, Australia, Ecuador, Spain.

⁹ France, Ethiopia, Italy, US, Japan, Belgium, Canada (Group of Friends), Austria, Luxembourg, Botswana, Australia.

¹⁰ UK, Ethiopia, Uruguay, Kazakhstan, Brazil, Canada (Group of Friends), Slovakia, Hungary, Austria, Luxembourg, Holy See, Slovenia, Switzerland, Mexico, Estonia, Costa Rica, Portugal, Denmark (Nordic countries), Spain.

¹¹ UK, Brazil, Canada (Group of Friends), Slovakia, Austria, Luxembourg.

¹² Austria, Costa Rica.

¹³ Uruguay, Kazakhstan, Luxembourg, El Salvador, South Africa, Malaysia, Portugal, Botswana.

Call for an accurate and credible listing of perpetrators of the six grave violations, based on impartial evidence-based reporting

- 17 delegations¹⁴ welcomed the SG's 2017 annual report, reiterating support for his impartiality with respect to the decisions for listing all perpetrators responsible for committing grave violations, based on evidence-based reporting through the UN-led Monitoring and Reporting Mechanism (MRM);
- 8 delegations¹⁵ called upon the SG to ensure a complete, accurate, and credible listing of perpetrators of the grave violations in the annexes of his annual reports in exercise of his impartiality, and 5 delegations¹⁶ specifically took note of the reformatting of this year's annexes, urging that the SG publicly document and carefully monitor measures listed parties have taken to improve the protection of children, including through UN-agreed action plans.

Call for effective implementation and signing of more UN action plans with armed forces and groups listed in the annexes of the SG's annual reports on CAC

- 15 delegations¹⁷ emphasized the responsibility of all listed parties to enter into and fully implement a concrete and time-bound action plans with the UN to end all violations.

Other notable themes:

The Paris Principles and the Paris Commitments

- 31 delegations¹⁸ acknowledged the importance of the role the Paris Principles and the Paris Commitments play in ensuring the protection of children in situations of armed conflict, and 25 delegations¹⁹ specifically called upon Member States who have not yet done so to endorse the Paris Principles and the Paris Commitments.

Reintegration and Rehabilitation

- 26 delegations²⁰ stressed the need for reintegration and rehabilitation programs for children, with 8 delegations²¹ highlighting the specific needs of girls in these programs, 6 delegations²² expressing concern about stigmatization of children associated with armed forces or groups, and 6 delegations²³ calling for adequate funding for reintegration and rehabilitation.

Role of Civil Society

- 13 delegations²⁴ acknowledged the importance of civil society for the international community's efforts towards addressing grave violations of children's rights in situations of armed conflict.

International Criminal Court (ICC)

- 7 delegations²⁵ stressed the important role the ICC plays in combating impunity and ensuring accountability for the grave violations of children's rights in conflict.

¹⁴ France, Uruguay, Russia, Canada (Group of Friends), EU, Austria, Luxembourg, Slovenia, Netherlands, Switzerland, Panama (Human Security Network), South Africa, Costa Rica, Portugal, Thailand, Australia, Spain.

¹⁵ Italy, Uruguay, Russia, Canada (Group of Friends), Chile, Netherlands, Switzerland, Spain.

¹⁶ Italy, Russia, Chile, Netherlands, Switzerland.

¹⁷ UK, Ethiopia, Italy, US, Uruguay, Senegal, Germany, Canada (Group of Friends), Slovakia, Chile, Austria, Indonesia, Sudan, Andorra, Australia.

¹⁸ France, Sweden, Ukraine, Italy, Japan, Senegal, Peru, Canada (individual, Group of Friends), Liechtenstein, Slovakia, Hungary, Chile, Austria, Luxembourg, Argentina, Netherlands, Mexico, Georgia, Sudan, Morocco, Panama (Human Security Network), South Africa, Kuwait, Malaysia, Portugal, Denmark (Nordic countries), Paraguay, Greece, Andorra, Thailand, Australia.

¹⁹ France, Sweden, Ukraine, Italy, Japan, Kazakhstan, Belgium, Peru, Germany, Canada (individual, Group of Friends), Hungary, Austria, Luxembourg, Indonesia, Netherlands, Mexico, Georgia, Sudan, Morocco, Panama (Human Security Network), South Africa, Portugal, Paraguay, Australia, Spain.

²⁰ Bolivia, China, Ethiopia, France, Sweden, UK, Belgium, Colombia, Canada (Group of Friends), Liechtenstein, Slovakia, Hungary, EU, Luxembourg, Holy See, Indonesia, Mexico, Estonia (on behalf of Latvia and Lithuania), Malaysia, Portugal, Denmark (Nordic countries), Paraguay, Greece, Thailand, Australia, Spain.

²¹ France, Hungary, EU, Estonia (on behalf of Latvia and Lithuania), Malaysia, Andorra, Spain.

²² Bolivia, Japan, Hungary, Estonia (on behalf of Latvia and Lithuania), Panama (Human Security Network), Andorra.

²³ Egypt, Ethiopia, Japan, Kazakhstan, US, Portugal.

²⁴ France, Italy, Uruguay, Senegal, Kazakhstan, Germany, Chile, Austria, Netherlands, Ireland, Nigeria, Denmark (Nordic countries), Thailand.

²⁵ France, Italy, Uruguay, Palestine, Chile, Estonia.

Annex 1: Overview of statements in comparison to Watchlist and its partners' messages:

P= positive mention; N=negative mention.

* Denmark spoke on behalf of the Nordic Countries, including Finland, Iceland, Norway, Sweden, and Denmark.

**Panama spoke on behalf of the Human Security Network (HSN) comprised of Austria, Chile, Costa Rica, Greece, Ireland, Jordan, Mali, Norway, Panama, Switzerland, Thailand, Slovenia, and South Africa.

*** Canada spoke on behalf of the Group of Friends of Children and Armed Conflict including Andorra, Australia, Austria, Belgium, Benin, Canada, Chile, Costa Rica, Croatia, Czech Republic, Denmark, Estonia, Finland, Germany, Ghana, Guatemala, Hungary, Italy, Japan, Jordan, Liechtenstein, Luxembourg, Mali, Mexico, Namibia, Netherlands, New Zealand, Norway, Peru, Poland, Portugal, San Marino, Slovenia, Slovakia, South Africa, Republic of Korea, Sweden, Switzerland, Tanzania, and Uruguay.

**** Norway spoke on behalf of 38 countries endorsing the Safe Schools Declaration including Andorra, Argentina, Armenia, Austria, Belgium, Brazil, Bulgaria, Chile, Costa Rica, Cyprus, Czech Republic, Denmark, Ecuador, Finland, Greece, Iceland, Italy, Jordan, Luxembourg, Montenegro, Mozambique, New Zealand, The Netherlands, Nigeria, Norway, Panama, Paraguay, Poland, Portugal, Romania, Slovakia, Slovenia, Spain, Sweden, Switzerland, Uruguay, Yemen and Zambia.

Speaker:	Support for the mandate/SRSG	Support for MRM	Credible, accurate, impartial listing, not politics	Transparency of measures, action plans instead	UN Mission capacity and resources to monitor and verify abuses	Child protection in peace processes	SG to monitor and report on detention of children	Children as victims first, legitimate accountability processes to rehabilitate	More and effective implementation of action plans with listed parties	Call for parties (state, non-state) to negotiate action plans	Call for donors to fund action plans	Call for better accountability for perpetrators	Call for SRSG-CAAC to brief the Council on healthcare and humanitarian access in country-specific work	Attacks on schools/Safe Schools Declaration	Global standard against rec/use, OPAC
Sweden	P											P		P	
Ethiopia	P				P			P	P						
France	P	P	P		P							P		P	
Italy	P			P	P				P			P		P	
China		P													
UK	P	P						P	P	P		P			

Speaker:	Support for the mandate/SRSG	Support for MIRM	Credible, accurate, impartial listing, not politics	Transparency of measures, action plans instead	UN Mission capacity and resources to monitor and verify abuses	Child protection in peace processes	SG to monitor and report on detention of children	Children as victims first, legitimate accountability processes to rehabilitate	More and effective implementation of action plans with listed parties	Call for parties (state, non-state) to negotiate action plans	Call for donors to fund action plans	Call for better accountability for perpetrators	Call for SRSG-CAAC to brief the Council on healthcare and humanitarian access in country-specific work	Attacks on schools/Safe Schools Declaration	Global standard against rec/use, OPAC
Russian Federation	P		P	P											
Japan	P	P			P										
Bolivia												P			P
US	P				P				P			P			
Ukraine												P			P
Egypt				N											
Kazakhstan					P	P		P						P	P
Senegal									P						P
Uruguay	P	P	P	P	P	P		P	P			P		P	P
Afghanistan	P														P
Andorra	P								P					P	P
Argentina					P									P	P
Armenia														P	
Australia	P		P		P				P	P					
Austria	P		P		P		P	P	P	P				P	
Azerbaijan															P
Bahrain															
Bangladesh															
Belgium	P				P									P	
Brazil	P							P							
Botswana	P	P				P								P	
Canada***	P	P	P	P	P			P	P						
Canada														P	

Speaker:	Support for the mandate/SRSG	Support for MIRM	Credible, accurate, impartial listing, not politics	Transparency of measures, action plans instead	UN Mission capacity and resources to monitor and verify abuses	Child protection in peace processes	SG to monitor and report on detention of children	Children as victims first, legitimate accountability processes to rehabilitate	More and effective implementation of action plans with listed parties	Call for parties (state, non-state) to negotiate action plans	Call for donors to fund action plans	Call for better accountability for perpetrators	Call for SRSB-CAAC to brief the Council on healthcare and humanitarian access in country-specific work	Attacks on schools/Safe Schools Declaration	Global standard against rec/use, OPAC
Chile	P	P		P	P				P			P		P	P
Colombia	P														
Costa Rica			P		P		P	P						P	
Denmark*					P			P							
Ecuador					P									P	
El Salvador					P	P									P
Estonia (also on behalf of Latvia and Lithuania)								P							
Georgia	P														P
Germany	P	P							P						
Greece	P													P	
Hungary								P							P
Holy See								P							P
Indonesia					P				P						P
Iraq		N	N												P
Iran			N												
Ireland															
Israel		N	N												
Kuwait															
Liechtenstein	P	P												P	
Luxembourg	P	P	P		P	P		P						P	P
Malaysia	P					P									

Speaker:	Support for the mandate/SRSG	Support for MIRM	Credible, accurate, impartial listing, not politics	Transparency of measures, action plans instead	UN Mission capacity and resources to monitor and verify abuses	Child protection in peace processes	SG to monitor and report on detention of children	Children as victims first, legitimate accountability processes to rehabilitate	More and effective implementation of action plans with listed parties	Call for parties (state, non-state) to negotiate action plans	Call for donors to fund action plans	Call for better accountability for perpetrators	Call for SRSR-CAAC to brief the Council on healthcare and humanitarian access in country-specific work	Attacks on schools/Safe Schools Declaration	Global standard against rec/use, OPAC
Maldives															
Mexico								P							
Nigeria														P	P
Morocco		N	N												P
Netherlands	P	P	P		P									P	P
Norway****	P													P	
Pakistan	P		N												P
Palestine														P	P
Panama**	P	P	P		P									P	P
Paraguay					P									P	P
Peru	P														
Philippines															
Poland															
Portugal		P	P			P		P						P	P
Qatar														P	
Saudi Arabia			N												
Slovakia	P							P	P						P
Slovenia	P	P	P					P						P	
South Africa		P	P		P	P									
Spain	P	P	P	P	P			P						P	P
Sudan	P								P						P
Switzerland	P	P	P	P	P			P							
Thailand	P		P												P
Turkey															

Speaker:	Support for the mandate/SRSG	Support for MIRM	Credible, accurate, impartial listing, not politics	Transparency of measures, action plans instead	UN Mission capacity and resources to monitor and verify abuses	Child protection in peace processes	SG to monitor and report on detention of children	Children as victims first, legitimate accountability processes to rehabilitate	More and effective implementation of action plans with listed parties	Call for parties (state, non-state) to negotiate action plans	Call for donors to fund action plans	Call for better accountability for perpetrators	Call for SRSG-CAAC to brief the Council on healthcare and humanitarian access in country-specific work	Attacks on schools/Safe Schools Declaration	Global standard against rec/use, OPAC
United Arab Emirates															
Venezuela															
Yemen	N	N	N											P	
European Union	P		P									P			P
NATO	P	P													
Total Positive mentioning	38	19	17	5	25	8	2	19	15	3	0	10	0	29	30
Total Negative Mentioning	1	3	4	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0