



SECURITY COUNCIL REPORT

PROFILE: CHILDREN AND ARMED CONFLICT 12 JULY 2006

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Key Facts

Almost all conflicts are now fought by armed groups within national boundaries and almost 90 percent of the casualties are civilians, mainly women and children. In the last decade an estimated twenty million children worldwide have been forced to flee their homes because of conflict and more than two million children have died as a direct result of armed conflict. At least six million children have been permanently disabled or seriously injured. Between 8,000 and 10,000 children are killed or maimed by landmines every year. The recruitment of children into armies and militias has become a new phenomenon. There are reportedly 300,000 child soldiers in more than thirty countries around the world.

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By the end of the 1990s the impact of children caught up in armed conflict and the associated peace and security implications prompted the Security Council to hold an open debate and to issue a [presidential statement](#) on children and armed conflict on 29 June 1998. This issue became a regular item on the Council agenda and is one of the most developed thematic issues with six resolutions adopted since 1999, a working group set up and regular Council debates taking place.

The protection of war-affected children was first brought under the UN spotlight at the World Summit for Children in 1990. In the follow-up to the World Summit, the General Assembly debates on children and armed conflict continued to draw international attention to the fate of children in war-torn areas.

In 1993, following a recommendation by the United Nations Committee on the Rights of the Child, the General Assembly adopted resolution [A/RES/48/157](#) of 20 December 1993 requesting the Secretary-General to appoint an expert to undertake a comprehensive study on the impact of armed conflict on children. Graça Machel, former Minister of Education of Mozambique, was appointed and in 1996, after intensive research and field work Machel submitted her report, entitled [Impact of Armed Conflict on Children \(A/51/306 and Add.1\)](#), to the General Assembly. This seminal report laid the foundation for the children and armed conflict agenda. In her report Machel proposed a comprehensive agenda for action for the protection of children in conflict situations and revealed the extent of suffering of child victims of armed conflicts globally.

In response to the Machel report, the General Assembly adopted a [resolution](#), recommending that the Secretary-General appoint a Special Representative of the Secretary-General on the impact of armed conflict on children for a period of three years. In 1997 Olara Otunnu was appointed as the first Secretary-General's Special Representative for children and armed conflict.

Convinced that the issue had serious implications for international peace and security, Portugal, at the time an elected member of the Council, suggested that the Council allow Otunnu to informally brief the Council on 11 June 1998. His description of the impact of present-day conflicts on children convinced the Council to hold its first debate on children and armed conflict later that year.

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Council Involvement

The Council began to pay sustained attention to the issue of children and armed conflict once it realised that the use of children in armed conflict had grave consequences for peace and stability. Internal conflicts give rise to displaced families and communities, refugee flows across borders and the use of child soldiers creating the conditions for long-term regional and international instability. Today half the total population of refugees and internally displaced people are children.

In the late 1990s a number of UN Security Council resolutions highlighted the security issues arising from refugee movements. These resolutions acknowledged that massive population displacement could be a threat to regional and international peace and possibly represent a deliberate strategy of war. Large numbers of refugees flowing into neighbouring countries could result in an expansion of the conflict and tense relations between neighbouring states.

The Council was also mindful of the fact that children are also now being used as instruments of war. Displaced children often end up spending their childhoods in camps where they are vulnerable to exploitation and may get involved in the illegal trade of small arms or find themselves forcibly recruited by armed groups. The Council also gave attention to the disarmament, demobilisation and reintegration (DDR) of child soldiers.

A related issue was the concern that, in the longer term, children caught up in armed conflict who are not properly reintegrated into society may affect prospects for peace and security in the future. A child who has known nothing else but violence may continue to embrace a violent lifestyle and re-recruitment is highly likely. Ensuring proper demobilisation of child soldiers and reintegration into normal civilian life was seen as important in order to prevent future conflicts and help maintain international stability in years to come.

Since 1999, the Council has been actively seized with this issue. While the early resolutions contained mainly generic and normative statements relating to how children should be treated in conflict situations, from 2001 the resolutions began to contain more concrete requests that addressed the practical reality of children involved in situations of armed conflict.

In 1999 the first resolution, [1261](#), clearly identified the issue of children and armed conflict as a global priority, to be addressed by the Security Council rather than by regional or national entities only. It also contained three main recommendations which have continued to be developed throughout the entire series of resolutions: protecting children from sexual abuse during armed conflict; acknowledging the linkages between small arms proliferation and the continuation of armed conflict and including children in disarmament, demobilization, and reintegration (DDR) programmes and peace processes.

[Resolution 1314](#) of 11 August 2000 highlighted the need to pay special attention to the protection of refugees and displaced persons and introduced provisions for children's protection into UN peacekeeping mandates. It also urged member states to sign and ratify the Optional Protocol to the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child on the involvement of children and armed conflict which had just been adopted on 25 May 2000.

While building on the first two resolutions, [resolution 1379](#) of 20 November 2001 took the significant step of requesting the Secretary-General to attach to his report a list of parties to armed conflict that recruit or use children in violation of the international obligations in situations already on the Council's agenda or which could be brought to its attention in accordance with Article 99. This "naming and shaming" initiative was ground-breaking as it was the first time the Council had named specific parties and its aim was to make violators accountable for their actions. The lists which have been included in all subsequent reports have been a source of great controversy as some members feel that it provides an opening for the Council to consider situations that are not on its formal agenda.

By 2003 in spite of having more international norms and standards for the protection of children it was clear that there was very limited impact in the field. Accordingly the Council shifted to implementation of these standards.

[Resolution 1460](#) of 30 January 2003 supported the Secretary-General's call for an "era of application" of the international norms and requested the Secretary-General to report on the progress made by parties in stopping recruitment or use of children in armed conflict and to develop specific proposals for more effective monitoring and reporting on the application and adherence of international norms on children and armed conflict. This resolution also requested the Secretary-General to include the protection of children in armed conflict in his country-specific reports.

Concerned about slow progress in creating a better monitoring and reporting process, [resolution 1539](#) of 22 April 2004 requested the Secretary-General to "devise urgently" an action plan for a comprehensive and systematic monitoring and reporting mechanism which would put in place a procedure for the systematic collection and channelling of information from the field through the relevant bodies in the UN system. It also called upon parties mentioned in the Secretary-General's report that recruit or use children in situations of armed conflict to prepare concrete action plans to stop the recruitment and use of children in wars.

The latest resolution, [1612](#), was adopted on 26 July 2005 after a lengthy period of complex negotiations. Some members of the Council were frustrated with the lack of compliance in a number of areas in previous resolutions and wanted this new resolution to lead to more systematic enforcement of past resolutions and other international standards on children and armed conflict. However, they faced opposition by some members who were not keen to see the Council become further involved in the details of this issue. The resolution created two important structures: a monitoring and reporting mechanism and a Working Group of the Council on children and armed conflict.

The monitoring and reporting mechanism is a formal procedure for collecting, organising and verifying the information that goes to the Working Group on children and armed conflict. It was a response to the problems in the past with obtaining accurate information about groups involved in recruiting and using children in armed conflict. There had also been little progress on the action plans asked for in resolution 1539. Now with resolution 1612 a more comprehensive and structured system for the collection and transmission of information has been put in place and the Council is better positioned to take more concrete action against groups in violation of international children and armed conflict norms.

The Working Group of the Security Council on children and armed conflict is expected to review the reports of the mechanism and progress of the action plans every two months.

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Impact

In parallel with the work of the Council a comprehensive body of children and armed conflict norms was being put in place in the UN system. High-level attention on the issue of children and armed conflict helped create the environment for the strengthening and expansion of significant legal instruments on children in armed conflict. Among the most significant were:

- [The Rome Statute](#) for the International Criminal Court, which classifies the conscription, enlistment or use in hostilities of children under the age of 15 as a war crime, was adopted in July 1998 by 120 governments;
- [The Worst Forms of Child Labour Convention](#) (Convention 182) of the International Labour Organisation (ILO), which prohibits the forced recruitment of children under 18 for use in armed conflict, was adopted in June 1999; and
- [The Optional Protocol to the Convention on the Rights of the Child](#), which establishes eighteen as the minimum age for participation in armed conflict, for compulsory or forced recruitment, and for any recruitment by nongovernmental armed groups was adopted in May 2000.

The Council's focus on children and armed conflict has also encouraged policy makers in regional organisations like ECOWAS, Organisation of American States, the African Union and the Commonwealth, the Organisation for Security and Cooperation in Europe and the European Union (EU) to incorporate children and armed conflict concerns into their own agendas. ECOWAS has been particularly active in this area adopting a peer review framework on the protection of children as well as establishing a Child Protection Unit in its Secretariat. The EU has adopted "Guidelines on Children and Armed Conflict". The initiatives of some of these organisations were acknowledged by the Council in [resolution 1539](#).

Before the Security Council began to focus on this issue, provisions for children affected by armed conflict were not included in any Council resolutions. Council involvement has helped uncover the security dimensions of an issue that had been tackled largely as a humanitarian issue. Defining the issue of children and armed conflict in this way has led to a realisation that stamping out the use of children in armed conflict requires an understanding of the roots of a conflict and its impact on the larger security situation. As a result in the last seven years the issue has been steadily incorporated into the mainstream of the Council's work in peace and security. It is now included in Council fact-finding missions and in many country-specific reports. Child protection is also now part of the mandate of peacekeeping missions and peacekeeping personnel are trained to be sensitive to the needs of children in situations of armed conflict.

The last three resolutions on children and armed conflict, 1460, 1379 and 1612 asked for the Secretary-General to pay special attention to the security of children when looking at specific conflict situations. As a result the Council's country resolutions have begun to include specific references to children in situations of armed conflict. For example [resolution 1493](#) of 23 July 2003 on the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC) condemned the continued recruitment and use of children in the hostilities in the DRC and requested all ten parties to conflict named in the Secretary-General's 2002 list to provide information on the measures taken to end the recruitment and use of children in armed conflict. The NGO coalition, [Watchlist on Children and Armed Conflict](#) reported in April 2006 that since 2003 thousands of children have been demobilised from armed groups and the number of displaced people has dropped significantly. However, the violations against children in all the major categories identified by the Council in resolution 1612 have continued.

The combination of pressure from NGOs like the [Coalition to Stop the Use of Child Soldiers](#) combined with the Council's constant focus on this issue has resulted in some armed groups making public commitments to end the use of child soldiers. In 2004 the Myanmar government set up the high-level Committee for Prevention of Recruitment of Child Soldiers and adopted an outline plan of action to address the issues of under-age recruitment and child soldiers. In spite of these efforts, Myanmar still has more child soldiers than any other country in the world. In 2003, the Government of Sri Lanka and the Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam formally agreed to an [Action Plan for Children Affected by War](#) that included a pledge by the LTTE to end all recruitment of children. The Action Plan addresses the needs of children affected by war with a particular focus on child soldiers and how to reintegrate and rehabilitate them back into the community. However, while recruitment has fallen and some children have been released, the LTTE has in no way stopped using children in armed conflict.

By calling for the DDR of children used as soldiers from the first resolution in 1999, the Council has helped spotlight the need for concerns about children in armed conflict to be included in peace negotiations, peace accords and post-conflict programmes for rehabilitation and rebuilding. Among the recent accords that included specific clauses on children are the [1999 Lome Peace Accord](#) on Sierra Leone, the [2000 Arusha Accords](#) on Burundi, the [ACCRA Peace Agreement](#) on Liberia and the [2005 Comprehensive Peace Agreement](#) on Sudan. In Sudan the Comprehensive Peace Agreement required the Sudan People's Liberation Movement/Army-SPLM/A and the then Government of Sudan to commit to child demobilisation throughout the country. Since 2001, 20,000 children from the Sudan People's Liberation Army (SPLA) have been disarmed, demobilised and returned to their homes. In post-conflict situations the protection of war-affected children is being given much higher priority and more resources both by UN bodies and other groups involved in post-conflict reconstruction.

While the Council's initiatives have had some impact in areas like the demobilisation and reintegration of children, many of the groups named in the Secretary-General's list of shame appear impervious to the level of international pressure put on them so far. One reason may be because until recently, the "naming and shaming" lists were not widely used as an advocacy tool in the field. By putting in place a system that ensures better coordination between UN country teams on the ground and UN headquarters and more effective monitoring, the Council is now in a better position to put pressure on groups that use children in armed conflict. Real change is only likely to happen when the benefits of not recruiting child soldiers outweigh the military advantages of having them or when the costs of continuing to use children in armed conflict become too high.

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Secretary-General's Reports to the Council

Over the years the Secretary-General's reports have sparked lively discussions in the Council. While the early reports simply documented situations where children were affected by armed conflict, beginning in 2002 the reports of the Secretary-General began to call for a strengthened framework and a move towards an "era of application". The main problem was that although there was now an international framework in place for the protection of children caught in conflict situations, there wasn't enough real progress being made in stopping groups from recruiting and using children in armed conflict. In 2003, the Secretary-General's call for an "era of application" was endorsed by the Council in [resolution 1460](#). This was the first step

towards a system that could better deny impunity for those committing crimes against children.

The most controversial aspect of the Secretary-General's recent reports has been the inclusion of "naming and shaming" annexes containing a list of parties to armed conflict that recruit or use children in violation of the international obligations applicable to them. In 2001 [resolution 1379](#) requested the Secretary-General to create lists for situations on the Council's agenda as well as for those that could be brought to the attention of the Security Council by the Secretary-General in accordance with [Article 99](#) of the UN Charter, which allows the Secretary-General to refer to the Council a situation that may threaten international peace and security. Having a list endorsed by the Secretary-General and the Council which named parties was seen as a significant step in making these parties accountable and moving this issue beyond words on paper to the possibility of action.

In 2002 the Secretary-General came up with the first report that included a list of parties involved in recruiting and using children in armed conflict. He chose a conservative list and attached only an annex of parties involved in conflict situations that were already on the agenda of the Security Council. However, in his next three reports he included two separate annexes with parties that recruit or use children in situations of armed conflict: Annex 1 listed parties on the agenda of the Council and Annex II listed the parties that were not on the Council agenda. Annex II has been a source of contention among member states since it first appeared in the Secretary-General's report in 2003. States listed in Annex II are concerned that this will lead the Council to look at situations of armed conflict in their countries. There is a fear that once a situation is considered by the Council under a thematic issue it is a short step away from being placed on the formal agenda of the Council. The views of various Council members are discussed in the section on [Council Dynamics](#) below.

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Monitoring and Reporting Mechanism

[Resolution 1612](#) requested the Secretary-General to implement a monitoring and reporting mechanism that would provide a more systematic and coherent process for gathering objective, specific and reliable information on grave violations committed against children in situations of armed conflict. In his [2005 report](#) the Secretary-General suggested that six especially egregious violations against children should receive priority in monitoring operations: recruiting and use of child soldiers; killing and maiming of children; rape and other grave sexual violence against children; illicit exploitation of natural resources; abduction of children; and denial of humanitarian access to children.

Over the years different UN bodies and NGOs have been monitoring abuses against children in situations of armed conflict but no one organisation had been responsible for coordinating the collection of information on the ground and ensuring that it goes through the UN system to the Council. As part of the monitoring and reporting mechanism the Secretary-General has designated a focal point at the country level who is accountable for the information that goes into the country reports on groups listed in the Secretary-General's lists.

Having in place a proper system to monitor the actions of groups known to be involved in using children in armed conflict puts pressure on these groups to provide information on progress made in complying with international children and armed conflict norms and provides the Council with the evidence needed in order to take appropriate action. While the last two resolutions have indicated that the Council will consider imposing targeted and graduated measures through country-specific resolutions it has not had accurate enough information to be able to follow through on this intention.

Taking into account the concerns of countries that had groups listed in Annex II, resolution 1612 made it clear that the monitoring and reporting mechanism would be set up with the cooperation of national governments and the activities of groups involved would be designed to support any work already being done by national governments. Also any discussions with groups involved in using children in armed conflict would be conducted within the context of peace processes already taking place.

In practice the monitoring and reporting mechanism works as follows:

- In the field, the primary responsibility for follow-up, coordination and monitoring belongs to the United Nations field teams. Special Representatives of the Secretary-General and Resident Coordinators are the focal points at the country level.
- In each country where children and armed conflict is an issue, a country task force on monitoring and reporting is to be formed made up of UN actors (Department of Peacekeeping Operations (DPKO), United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF), the Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA), United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR), Office of the High Commissioner on Human Rights (UNHCHR), United Nations Development Programme (UNDP)) and NGO and civil society actors. They gather, vet and integrate field-level information and provide reports to the Special Representatives of the Secretary-General or Resident Coordinators, who then send the reports to the Special Representative of the Secretary-General on children and armed conflict. They also produce bimonthly reports focused on the six egregious violations which will be issued as an informal information report from the Secretary-General on situations where children are being used and violated in situations of armed conflict.
- The office of the Special Representative of the Secretary-General for children and armed conflict vets, verifies and consolidates the information into a report from the Secretary-General. A Task Force on children and armed conflict is convened when necessary by the Office of the Special Representative of the Secretary-General on children and armed conflict. Other members of the Task Force are: UNICEF, DPKO, the Department of Political Affairs (DPA), the Office of Legal Affairs, UNHCHR, OCHA, the United Nations Development Fund for Women (UNIFEM), the Department of Disarmament Affairs, the Office of the Special Advisor on Africa, the Office of the Special Advisor on Gender Issues and Advancement of Women, UNHCR, UNDP and the International Labour Organisation (ILO).
- A steering committee of the Task Force on children and armed conflict co-chaired by the Office of the SRSG/CAA meets monthly to review the overall progress in monitoring and reporting. The other members of the steering

committee are the OCHA, DPKO, UNHCR and UNHCHR. The two chairs also have informal monthly consultations with NGOs. In addition the Special Representative of the Secretary-General on children and armed conflict has agreed to meet with NGOs every two months.

- The reports then go to the Secretary-General's office. The country report is issued as an official report of the Secretary-General and is published as a Security Council document. It is then made available to all interested members. The report on egregious violations on children in situations of armed conflict becomes an informal information report from the Secretary-General.
- The two types of reports will be considered by the Working Group on children and armed conflict and any recommendations on action to be taken will be considered at the latest at the next meeting of the Working Group.
- The Chairman of the Working Group is expected to take the recommendations for action to be taken against a party involved in using children in a situation of armed conflict to the Security Council for formal endorsement.

[Resolution 1612](#) also asked for an independent review of the implementation of the monitoring and reporting mechanism by 31st July 2006. The independent review is expected to assess the overall effectiveness of the monitoring and reporting mechanism as well as how well it is linked to the work of Council and other bodies of the UN. It is also expected to provide information on possible budget and resource implications and make recommendations for the full implementation of the monitoring and reporting mechanism.

This review was first proposed by the US and had strong support from China and Russia who felt that situations in Annex II of the Secretary-General's 2005 report should not be considered until after the independent review. However, the Working Group on children and armed conflict has accepted a wider interpretation of its mandate which allows it to consider Annex II situations before the independent review takes place. At this point it is unlikely that the independent review will be completed by the end of July. The Secretary-General has yet to appoint an independent reviewer and delays both in the establishment of the Working Group and in appointing the current Special Representative of the Secretary-General on children and armed conflict, meant that the process did not become fully operational until 2006.

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Working Group of the Security Council on Children and Armed Conflict

[Resolution 1612](#) established a working group of the Security Council on children and armed conflict to review the reports of the monitoring and reporting mechanism and the progress in the development and implementation of the action plans on steps taken by groups named in the Secretary-General's lists to stop recruitment and use of children in armed conflict. In addition the Working Group on children and armed conflict is also expected to make recommendations on measures to promote the protection of children affected by armed conflict and bring in other bodies in the UN system, if necessary, in order to support the implementation of resolution 1612.

France is the Chair of the Working Group on children and armed conflict which was established on 16 November 2005, four months after the adoption of resolution 1612 on 26 July 2005. The slow start has been attributed to various factors such as the lack of clarity over the mandate of the Working Group and the search for an appropriate chair.

A second meeting was held on 21 February 2006. The group was briefed by Hedi Annabi, Assistant Secretary-General for Peacekeeping Operations on the implementation of 1612 and Rima Salah, Deputy Executive Director of the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF) on her trip to Uganda and Burundi in February with the French foreign minister. The Working Group on children and armed conflict also discussed its terms of reference but did not adopt any documents. On 2 May at its third meeting the Working Group adopted its [terms of reference](#), the 2006 work-programme and guidelines for reports that will be submitted to the Working Group by the Secretary-General.

At future meetings the Working Group will consider specific country reports as well as an informal information paper containing a general overview from the Secretary-General on situations of armed conflict where children are severely affected. Recommendations on actions that could be used to persuade groups using children in armed conflict to comply with international norms may be considered at the latest at the following Working Group meeting to be held two months later. The Working Group has agreed to operate by consensus and will need some time to come to an agreement on the recommendations that will go to the Council.

At its fourth meeting on 26 June, the Working Group on children and armed conflict was briefed by Radhika Coomaraswamy, Special Representative of the Secretary-General on children and armed conflict and Ms Rima Salah, Deputy Executive Director of UNICEF. The Ambassador of the Republic of Congo also attended the meeting. The group exchanged views on the first country report on the Democratic Republic of Congo and agreed to negotiate draft recommendations to the Council as a follow-up to the report. The Working Group also discussed the Secretary-General's overview which drew attention to situations in Chad, Sri Lanka and Somalia. The Working Group also considered what is being referred to as a Toolkit. This document is meant to provide the range of possible tools for dealing with groups that have not stopped recruiting and using children in armed conflict. The recommendations cover demarches, technical assistance, enhanced monitoring, working visits for the Working Group on children and armed conflict as well as the Council and also includes targeted sanctions as a possibility.

The Working Group will meet three more times this year: in August and October and December. The work programme agreed upon is as follows:

- August - Sudan, Sri Lanka
- October - Cote d'Ivoire, Burundi
- December - Somalia, (Annex II situation, possibly Nepal)

The Working Group has agreed that the permanent representative of the country whose situation is being discussed will be invited to attend.

The initiatives of [resolution 1612](#) such as the monitoring and reporting mechanism and the formation of the Working Group on children and armed conflict have resulted in children and armed conflict being looked at far more regularly than any other thematic issue. While it is too early to assess its real impact some Members feel that the formation of the Working Group has already put pressure on countries to work with the UN in implementing resolution 1612. They cite as an example the fact that both the Sri Lankan and Uganda governments have invited the UN to assess the situation in their countries. During the Special Representative of the Secretary-General on children and armed conflict's visit to Uganda in June, the government of Uganda and UNICEF agreed to work out an action plan for the prevention, removal and integration of any child soldiers found in the government-allied militia and the Uganda People's Defence Forces. Now that there is a more structured system in place to collect and verify information, the possibility of the Council taking stronger action against groups in violation of children and armed conflict international norms is perhaps being viewed as more than an empty threat.

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Next Steps

Children and armed conflict will be on the agenda of the Council in July during France's presidency of the Council. The French foreign minister will lead a ministerial debate on this thematic issue. The Chairman of the Working Group on children and armed conflict will present a [report](#) on the work done by the Working Group since the adoption of [resolution 1612](#). A Special Representative of the Secretary-General on children and armed conflict and a representative from UNICEF are expected to brief the Council during this debate. The World Bank, UNDP and some regional organisations are also expected to take part in the discussions.

On 31st July the independent review of the implementation of the monitoring and reporting mechanism is due. However, given the slow progress in appointing an independent reviewer, the general feeling is that the review is unlikely to take place on schedule. Some members have expressed a preference for the review to take place at the end of the year as there should be more substantive progress made by the Working Group by then.

The Secretary-General's regular report on children and armed conflict is due at the end of November. The Council is likely to schedule a debate on children and armed conflict based on this report for the end of the year or early next year.

The Chair of the Working Group on children and armed conflict is expected to take the recommendations of the Working Group to the Council. It is therefore likely that the Council will consider this issue at least once before the end of 2006.

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Council Dynamics

The thematic issue of children and armed conflict has led to some deep divisions in the Council. France has led on this issue but it has struggled to get full support from the other permanent members. This is an issue where the other four permanent members have been reluctant to push the envelope. Many of the concerns can be traced to the fact that Annex II listed situations were not currently being considered by the Council. China and Russia have expressed concern that thematic issues like children and armed conflict provide a back-door possibility for situations that are not on the Council's agenda to be pushed onto the Council's formal agenda. While for China this concern stems from a wider policy concern about escalating the number of situations on the Council's formal agenda, the situations listed in Annex II affected Russia, and the UK, more directly.

In 2003 Northern Ireland and Chechnya were listed in Annex II of the Secretary-General's report as there were groups involved in recruiting and using children in armed conflict. Northern Ireland and Chechnya were also in the body of the Secretary-General's report but the UK and Russia expressed concern about the respective paragraphs on the basis that these were not armed conflict situations. As a result although the Secretary-General's report was issued on 10 November 2003, three months later [Correction 1](#) was issued with the change to Northern Ireland. [Correction 2](#) with the change to Chechnya came out on 10 April 2004. In the Secretary-General's next report in 2005, Northern Ireland and Chechnya were both dropped from the Annex II list. This raised concerns among some of the other Council members and with various countries remaining on the Annex II list.

The US position on this issue, as with all thematic issues, is that the Security Council is a venue for action and needs to react to specific situations. While not against the theme of children and armed conflict being discussed in the UN, the US feels that there are venues, other than the Council, that might be better for dealing with such issues in the future. The US, together with Japan, has also expressed a desire to see progress and clear results before expanding the mandate. This goes to the heart of the US and Japan's reluctance to support initiatives that would require extra resources. At the moment resolution 1612 is being implemented using existing resources but if the independent review or the Secretary-General's report in November suggests that more resources are needed for the full implementation of the monitoring and reporting mechanism this concern may lead to a split in the Council over how to proceed.

Pressure from countries on the Annex II list has affected the behaviour of Council members in the past. South American countries like Argentina and Brazil, who were in the Council during the negotiations for [resolution 1612](#), were strongly lobbied by Colombia who is regularly listed in Annex II. As a result they were not very supportive of initiatives involving situations listed in Annex II of the Secretary-General's 2005 report on children and armed conflict. However, Argentina and Peru appear open to the need to consider all situations where children are being used in armed conflict. Japan has indicated it is sensitive to the concerns of countries in Annex II. It is convinced that a good relationship with the governments of countries listed in Annex II is necessary as the UN needs their cooperation in order to work with the groups recruiting children

for armed conflict.

The African member countries have generally been supportive of initiatives that could force greater compliance from groups in violation of children and armed conflict international norms. However, countries like Tanzania and Benin (who as President of the Security Council during the debate leading up to 1612 played a key role in getting the resolution adopted) have expressed unhappiness with the fact that almost all of the countries on Annex 1 are from Africa. While African countries in Annex 1 have not complained about being on the list, some countries, like Uganda have resisted being in Annex II. This has sometimes put some of the African countries on the Council in a difficult position.

The issue of whether there should be one or two annexes will continue to divide the Council. While members like France and Denmark would like to eventually have just one annex which includes all situations where children are affected by armed conflict this is unlikely to find favour with China and Russia.

The idea of using targeted sanctions will continue to be a difficult issue to resolve. China and Russia are against their use. They generally favour humanitarian measures rather than punitive sanctions and are likely to prefer sending warning letters to groups involved in recruiting and using children in armed conflict. Others, in particular France, United Kingdom, Denmark and Peru are supportive of using targeted sanctions and would like to see stronger action from the Council.

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Underlying Problems

Given the reluctance of some members to use more targeted and concrete measures like sanctions, there will be procedural obstacles to getting agreement on a list of substantive recommendations. Unlike the Council, where voting is possible, the Working Group operates by consensus and therefore needs all members to agree to the recommendations.

Another issue is that for the monitoring and reporting mechanism to work it must be seen as objective and accurate. This can be difficult as collecting information particularly in situations where the UN is not already actively involved is complicated. Problems verifying information provided by groups or even governments at times may lead to some members arguing that it is not possible to take stronger action based on information that may not be accurate. On the part of the Working Group there is a time and capacity problem as the Working Group can really only deal with 4 - 8 reports a year which means that there are situations that will not be covered before the review of monitoring and reporting mechanism.

A related issue is the effectiveness of the monitoring and reporting mechanism. It can only be assessed once after Working Group has produced more substantive work and after the independent review is completed. Some members have expressed frustration at the slowness of the implementation of 1612 caused by a lack of clarity over the procedure and scope of the Working Group as well as the delay in the appointment of the current Special Representative of the Secretary-General on children and armed conflict and are now hoping that the Working Group will be able to swiftly produce some concrete work by the end of the year.

While the issue of sovereignty was largely addressed through careful wording of resolution 1612 it is still a concern for some governments. The Philippines for example was in the Council when resolution 1612 was being negotiated and made it clear that there needed to be "close consultation" with national governments if the UN were to initiate measures against any parties listed in the annexes. Depending on how the Council handles any future recommendations, this issue may re-surface.

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UN Documents

Security Council Resolutions

- [S/RES/1612](#) (26 July 2005) requested the Secretary-General to implement a monitoring and reporting mechanism and set up a working group on children and armed conflict.
- [S/RES/1539](#) (22 April 2004) asked for an action plan for a systematic and comprehensive monitoring and reporting mechanism.
- [S/RES/1460](#) (30 January 2003) requested specific proposals to ensure more efficient and effective monitoring and reporting. It also asked the Secretary-General to include this issue in his country-specific reports.
- [S/RES/1379](#) (20 November 2001) requested the Secretary-General to attach to his report a list of parties to armed conflict that recruit or use children.
- [S/RES/1314](#) (11 August 2000) urged member states to sign and ratify the Optional Protocol on the Rights of the Child on the Involvement of Children in Armed Conflict.
- [S/RES/1261](#) (30 August 1999) condemned the targeting of children in situations of armed conflict, urged parties to armed conflict to take into consideration protection of children and requested states to facilitate DDR.

Selected Presidential Statements

- [S/PRST/2005/8](#) (23 February 2005)
- [S/PRST/2002/12](#) (7 May 2002)
- [S/PRST/1998/18](#) (29 June 1998) The first Presidential Statement on children and armed conflict by the Council.

Secretary-General's Reports

- [S/2006/389](#) (13 June 2006) was the first country-specific report on children and armed conflict in the DRC.
- [S/2005/72](#) was the latest report.
- [S/2003/1053](#) (10 November 2003), [S/2003/1053Corr.1](#) (20 February 2004) and [S/2003/1053/Corr.2](#) (19 April 2004) suggested that 6 egregious violations against children should receive priority in monitoring operations. It also

attached for the first time a list of other parties to armed conflict that recruit or use children in Annex II.

- [S/2002/1299](#) (26 November 2002) called for a move towards an "era of application" and included a list of parties to armed conflict that recruit or use children in situations on the Council's agenda.
- [S/2001/852](#) (9 September 2001) reported on the implementation of resolution 1314 and covered the measures needed to protect children during and after armed conflict.
- [S/2000/712](#) (19 July 2000) was the first report of the Secretary-General on children and armed conflict to the Council.

Security Council Debates

- [S/PV.5129](#) (23 February 2005) and [resumption 1](#)
- [S/PV.4948](#) (22 April 2004)
- [S/PV.4898](#) (20 January 2004) and [resumption 1](#)
- [S/PV.4695](#) (30 January 2003)
- [S/PV.4684](#) (14 January 2003)
- [S/PV.4528](#) (7 May 2002)
- [S/PV.4423](#) (20 November 2002)
- [S/PV.4037](#) (24 September 1999) and [resumption 1](#)
- [S/PV.3896](#) (29 June 1998) First Council open debate on children and armed conflict.

Selected General Assembly Documents

- [A/60/335](#) (7 September 2005) and [Corr. 1](#) (23 September 2005) latest report by the Special Representative to the Secretary-General on Children and Armed Conflict.
- [A/59/426](#) (8 October 2005) report by the Special Representative to the Secretary-General on Children and Armed Conflict.
- [A/58/328](#) (29 August 2003) and [Corr. 1](#) (16 January 2004) report by the Special Representative to the Secretary-General on Children and Armed Conflict.
- [A/57/402](#) (25 September 2002) report by the Special Representative to the Secretary-General on Children and Armed Conflict.
- [A/56/453](#) (9 October 2001) report by the Special Representative to the Secretary-General on Children and Armed Conflict.
- [A/55/442](#) (3 October 2000) report by the Special Representative to the Secretary-General on Children and Armed Conflict.
- [A/54/430](#) (1 October 1999) report by the Special Representative to the Secretary-General on Children and Armed Conflict.
- [A/53/482](#) (12 October 1998) report by the Special Representative to the Secretary-General on Children and Armed Conflict.
- [A/RES/51/77](#) (12 December 1996) recommended that the Secretary-General appoint for a period of three years a Special Representative on the impact of armed conflict on children.
- [A/51/306.Add1](#) (6 September 1996) Graça Machel's report on children and armed conflict.
- [A/RES/48/157](#) (20 December 1993) recommended the Secretary-General appoint an independent expert to study the impact of armed conflict on children.
- [A/44/736](#) (17 November 1989) and [Corr. 1](#) (20 November 1989) adopted and opened for signature, ratification and accession the Convention on the Rights of the Child.

Other

- [S/2006/497](#) (10 July 2006) was the report of the activities of the Working Group on Children and Armed Conflict
- [S/2006/494](#) was the concept paper for the July 24 ministerial debate.
- [S/2006/275](#) (3 May 2006) was the terms of reference for the Working Group on children and armed conflict.
- [Rome Statute](#) for the International Criminal Court (1 July 2002)
- [The Worst Forms of Child Labour Convention](#) (Convention 182) (17 June 1999) of the International Labour Convention

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Historical Background

7 February 2006 Radhika Coomaraswamy was appointed as Special Representative of the Secretary-General on children and armed conflict.

31st July 2005 Olara Otunnu's term as Special Representative of the Secretary-General on children and armed conflict expired.

26 July 2005 The Council adopted the sixth resolution (S/RES/1612) on children and armed conflict setting up a monitoring and reporting mechanism and a Working Group on children and armed conflict.

22 April 2004 The Council adopted the fifth resolution on children and armed conflict (S/RES/1593) and requested the Secretary-General to urgently devise an action plan for a systematic and comprehensive monitoring and reporting mechanism that would create a process for providing timely, objective, accurate and reliable information on the recruitment and use of child soldiers and other violations committed against children affected by armed conflict.

12 March 2003 International Criminal Court was established. It classified the enlistment and use of children under age 15 in hostilities, intentional attacks on hospitals and schools, rape and other grave acts of sexual violence against children as war crimes.

30 January 2003 The fourth resolution on children and armed conflict (S/RES/1460) was adopted and asked the Secretary-General to include the protection of children in armed conflict in his country-specific reports.

1 July 2002 Rome Statute of the International Criminal Court entered into force. Anyone who commits any of the crimes under the Statute after this date is liable for prosecution by the Court.

12 February 2002 Optional Protocol to the Convention on the Rights of the Child on the involvement of children in armed conflict entered into force.

20 November 2001 The Council adopted the third resolution (S/RES/1379) on children and armed conflict and requested the Secretary-General to attach to his report a list of parties to armed conflict that recruit or use children in situations that are on the Council's agenda or that may be brought to its attention in accordance with Article 99 of the Charter of the UN.

11 August 2000 The second resolution on children in armed conflict (S/RES/1314) was adopted by the Council.

25 May 2000 General Assembly adopted the Optional Protocol to the Convention on the Rights of the Child on the involvement of children in armed conflict.

17 June 1999 The International Labour Organisation Convention No. 182 was adopted by General Conference of the International Labour Organisation. It declared child soldiering to be one of the worst forms of child labour.

30 August 1999 Council adopted the first resolution (S/RES/1261) on children and armed conflict.

17 July 1998 The Rome Statute of the International Criminal Court was established when 120 States participating in the "United Nations Diplomatic Conference of Plenipotentiaries on the Establishment of an International Criminal Court" adopted the Statute.

29 June 1998 The Issue of children and armed conflict was formally placed on the Council agenda for the first time when the Council held an open debate and issued a Presidential Statement on the issue.

11 June 1998 The Special Representative of the Secretary-General for children and armed conflict, Olaru Otunnu informally briefed the Council.

September 1997 UN Secretary General appointed Mr. Olara A. Otunnu as his Special Representative for Children and Armed Conflict.

20 February 1997 The General Assembly adopted a resolution (A/RES/51/77) recommending the Secretary-General appoint a Special Representative of the Secretary-General on children and armed conflict.

6 September 1996 Graça Machel presented her report on the impact of armed conflict on children to the General Assembly.

30 September 1990 The World Summit for Children established 27 specific goals related to children's survival, health, nutrition, education and protection.

2 September 1990 Convention on the Rights of the Child entered into force.

17 November 1989 Convention on the Rights of the Child was adopted and opened for signature, ratification and accession by the General Assembly (A/44/736).

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Useful Additional Sources

Human Rights Watch, [A Long Way From Home: Child Soldiers in Burundi](#) (June 2006), Living in Fear: Child Soldiers in Liberia (February 2004) and World Report 2004: Human Rights and Armed Conflict

Watchlist on Children and Armed Conflict, [Struggling to Survive: Children in Armed Conflict in the Democratic Republic of the Congo](#)(April 2006)

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