



Security Council Open Debate on Children and Armed Conflict: 'How to advance our collective norms towards protecting children and ending all grave violations', 26 June 2024

Malta Statement delivered by Mr Adam Kuymizakis

Deputy Permanent Representative of Malta to the United Nations, New York

President

I begin by thanking you for organising this important open debate. I also thank SRSG Gamba, former Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon, and Deputy Executive Director Chaiban, for their briefings, as well as Janvier for sharing his experiences with us.

President

Malta is deeply concerned that grave violations against children continue to escalate. As stated in the Secretary-General's report, the number of children killed, maimed, and violated against reached unmatched numbers. The use of explosive weapons in populated areas has led to an alarming rise in grave violations.



The continued increase of incidents of the denial of humanitarian access is equally troubling. As outlined at the briefing held during Malta's Presidency in April, such denial often increases vulnerability to other violations of children's rights.

Malta calls on all parties to allow and facilitate unimpeded, safe and timely humanitarian access. We look forward to the development of the Guidance Note by the Office of the Special Representative for Children and Armed Conflict for monitors on this violation.

We remain fully committed to the UN's and Office of the SRSG-CAAC's critical work. As Chair of the CAAC Working Group, we underline the importance of continued objectivity, impartiality, and transparency in the Secretary-General's annual report on CAAC.

The annexed list of perpetrators is a critical tool to end violations and protect children in situations of armed conflict. It is important to apply the same standards of scrutiny to all parties in all situations. Malta therefore welcomes the latest SG report and recalls that States have the primary responsibility to protect their populations, and that international law must be respected by all parties to conflict.



In Israel and the occupied Palestinian territory, Malta is deeply concerned that violations against children have reached an unprecedented scale, including during the attacks of 7 October and subsequent escalations in Gaza and the Occupied West Bank. Reports of attacks on schools and hospitals, the use of explosive weapons in populated areas, abduction, detention, and ill-treatment of children, are alarming.

In Sudan, the increase in killing and maiming, reports of widespread conflict-related sexual violence, recruitment, as well as continued hindrance to humanitarian access have created an untenable situation. Mitigating measures are urgently needed to address these violations.

We are also strongly concerned by the deterioration in many other conflicts, such as in Haiti, Myanmar, Somalia, and Ukraine. In Ukraine, we urge the Russian Federation to enhance prevention measures and develop a joint action plan to end and prevent grave violations against children.



The SG report points to 26 conflict situations, some of which have been longstanding. Malta welcomes the continued engagement by some parties to conflict with the United Nations and urges all others to immediately engage and put in measures to better protect children.

President

Children's exposure to grave violations are also shaped by gender norms, with different risks for girls and boys. We urge better gender analysis to strengthen survivor-centred approaches to improve gender-responsive child protection.

We take this opportunity to remind Member States of our collective responsibility to protect civilians from harm, especially children. We call on countries to endorse the Paris Principles and Commitments, the Safe Schools Declaration, the Vancouver Principles, and the Political Declaration on the Protection of Civilians from the Use of Explosive Weapons in Populated Area.

President



We are concerned about the loss of child protection capacity during withdrawals of peacekeeping missions. In the Democratic Republic of Congo, the withdrawal of MONUSCO from South-Kivu is negatively impacting the ability of child protection advisers to monitor and report, and to conduct advocacy. This Council must continue to consider the impact of withdrawals on child protection capacity, ensure sufficient resources, and strive so that gains made over years are not lost during the transition period.

In closing, President, Malta urges for the continued support towards the CAAC mandate and the monitoring and reporting mechanism on grave violations against children. Malta will continue to prioritise the protection of children and engage with Council members to achieve more progress in the Working Group on Children and Armed Conflict.

I thank you.