

UNICEF





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Letter from the Secretary General

Dearest Delegates, Faculty Advisors, and others,

It is my pleasure and honour to be able to welcome you all into the 21st edition of San Silvestre MUN. To think that after months of work, after observing other conferences over the better part of two years, I can finally say that our own is coming to fruition. For over seven months the Secretariat and I have poured our hearts and efforts into this conference, and hopefully, you may all enjoy the months of work we have put into the two days that are to come, and live SSMUN 2024 to its absolute fullest.

My own ‘first impression’ of MUN was, quite honestly, less than graceful to say the least. Having attended training sessions in 2022 (but having paid attention to nearly none of them), I haphazardly found myself attending SSMUN 2022, this very month two years ago. I did not speak more than once. I was terrified, watching those around me debate with a fervent skill unlike anything I had ever seen before. I had sat in the very back of the room during every session, terrified to raise my placard. After that conference, I honestly did not see the appeal of MUN. My fear of failure and embarrassment overruled my ability to try something new at that moment, and didn’t allow me to enjoy the activity that now, two years later, I have come to cherish so deeply.

Over the next year, I finally got it. I understood why people did MUN. The adrenaline, the energy, the shared passion over what would have elsewhere been a mundane topic. During that year, I found my two ‘specialisations’. Crisis taught me how to love MUN, how to put passion and energy into a speech, how to not fear speaking out. Press taught me what victory felt like, yet it also demonstrated to me firsthand how failure was simply a part of growth. In January HMUN taught me that an award is never the most rewarding part of a conference. I left Boston with a Best Delegate award, yet it was by far not the best part of the experience. The people of that moment are worth more than anything else I could possibly imagine; and the best victories in MUN are those you can cherish with friends, those which you can celebrate with all those who you were in committee with, those which are backed by hours of unforgettable memories and irreplaceable experiences.

For this conference, I hope each and every one of you may find those memories. SSMUN, in my mind, is about the people. It is about diplomacy, argumentation, negotiation and teamwork, yes, but through it all none of this would be able to be accomplished without the willpower and collaboration of people. So I hope you all put in your best effort, both into productive debate and into enjoying every moment you have.

I cannot wait to see you all in September! To get to see how every one of you develops as a delegate through every session, and see the passion and care we’ve placed into the conference pay off in the experience of all those who will get to see our work.

Take advantage of the moment, and most of all, have fun :)

Liyi Xu
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Letter from the Chair

Dear Delegates,

Welcome to the 2024 edition of SSMUN! My name is Camila Unchalo, and I am currently a Form VI student in the IB program. My MUN journey began virtually in 2020, and I officially attended my first conference the following year at my own school, representing El Salvador in the UNWOMEN committee. It is both gratifying and nostalgic to be closing this important chapter of my life in the same place where it started. Although my experience in MUN has not been linear, as it took me over a year to gain the courage to become a delegate, I can confidently say that this activity has provided me with some of the most valuable lessons of my teenage years. Conferences offer knowledge about global issues, the bravery to speak in large crowds, enhanced communication skills for teamwork, and tolerance when dealing with differing perspectives. While I could write an endless list of the benefits of MUN, what will stay with me forever -and what I hope stays with you too- is that MUN is not a competition with others; it is a competition with yourself. Strive to surpass your own expectations at each conference, and always compare yourself to your past self. Aim to grow, learn, and improve continuously.

Due to rising tensions around the world, such as the Ukraine war and the Palestinian genocide, this year the UNICEF committee has chosen to delve into the topic of “The Violation of Children's Rights during War Times.” Growing up in critical conditions within war zones severely hinders children's ability to flourish properly, stripping them of every fundamental right to development. War causes a complete degradation of mental health and sanity in these children, leading to severe PTSD and often forcing them to become participants in the conflict. We highly encourage delegates to propose solutions that acknowledge all the hardships endured by children during wartime. Your proposals should aim to come to a diplomatic consensus among nations to provide holistic support to these children while considering your nation's involvement and standpoint in ongoing conflicts.

With that being said, although I made a brief introduction about myself, I want you to know more about my character and persona. One of the things I am most proud of, which I talk about everytime the opportunity is given (as seen here), is the fact that I was raised in a multicultural household. I was born and raised in Rio de Janeiro, Brazil, and officially became a member of the San Silvestre community in 2018. My mother is Peruvian, and my father is Argentinian, which makes for some interesting soccer match dynamics between my dad and me! These three nationalities have shaped who I am today and have influenced my desire to pursue International Relations in the UK. Besides that, I love music, dancing, criminal documentaries, and anything sweet that has chocolate in it. I am an extrovert who loves talking with people, so if you have any doubts or concerns, or if you just want to chat, feel free to approach me anytime. Finally, I hope you have a wonderful experience at SSMUN 2024! Don't forget to enjoy yourselves and remember the valuable lesson I mentioned at the beginning. . I can't wait to see you delegates engaging with one another in diplomatic manners and bringing this committee to life.

Good luck to all of you!

Sincerely,

Camila Unchalo
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Letter from the Co-Chair

Dear delegates,

My name is Kirsten Werner and I am honoured to be the co-chair for the United Nations Children's Emergency Fund (UNICEF) committee in this year's edition of SSMUN. As of now, I am a second year IBDP student at San Silvestre and an MUN 'veteran'. I feel thrilled to have been given this opportunity as I am always eager for a challenge or an opportunity to continue expanding my perspective of our world.

Although I have stepped aside from debating and conferences, I've had the privilege to experience Model UN in its full glory during the past six years. My journey through this enthralling world of debate began in 2018, when I adopted MUN as a mere time filler. However, as I kept delving deeper into the fields of public speaking and international relations, I discovered a vibrant passion that led me to pursue a greater involvement in MUN. I entered my very first conference in 2021, from which I walked away overwhelmed with pride after being recognized with the Outstanding Delegate award. First time delegates, take note of this; while experience can give you an advantage, at the end of the day, your confidence and dedication will be what sets you apart. Leave any sense of self-doubt at the door, and allow yourself to unleash your full potential – you'll be amazed to discover how far it can take you. In my case, as I continued to participate in conferences I found a thrill in speaking in front of a crowd and an uplifting community that drove me to become the best debater I could be. At the start of 2022, I was granted the privilege of joining the secretariat as the Head of Training, and from there my love for MUN became ever-growing. Last year, I was appointed as the Under Secretary General of San Silvestre MUN, a title that not only reflects my hard work but also my commitment and devotion to this amazing activity.

During our time together, I hope you will repeatedly deliver captivating speeches and engage in fruitful debates that will keep your directors at the edge of their seats. Conferences like these, above all, are an opportunity for growth and development. Every delegate I have ever come across has taught me something that I still carry within me today; I suggest you enter every session with an open mind and a growing desire to learn and improve. Remember to maintain diplomacy at the forefront, as your actions should reflect a desire for change rather than for an award. I expect all of you to perform to the best of your abilities, push your limits, and give your one hundred percent throughout the entire conference. I can't wait to see you all gleaming in the spotlight.

Best wishes,

Kirsten Werner

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Committee Summary

The United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF) is a committee dedicated to promoting and protecting the rights of children worldwide. Addressing "The Violation of Children's Rights during War Times" is of paramount importance, as armed conflicts have a devastating and long-lasting impact on children. These conflicts strip children of their fundamental rights to survival, development, protection, and ultimately, their future. With rising geopolitical tensions and conflicts erupting in various regions, in the 2024 edition of SSMUN, we aim to see delegates come together to devise comprehensive strategies and solutions to safeguard children's rights and well-being, even in the midst of conflict zones, as children's rights are a non-negotiable global priority.



History of the Committee

The United Nations Children's Emergency Fund, formerly known as the United Nations International Children's Emergency Fund, and often abbreviated to UNICEF, is one of the UN's permanent agencies. Its initial version was established on December 11th 1946 under the resolution numbered as A/RES/57(I), which was later reintroduced in October 1953 through resolution A/RES/802 (VIII). Since its formation UNICEF's goal has been to reach children in need, regardless of where they may be, in order to safeguard their rights and allow them prosper.

Due to the ongoing conflict in civilian areas, children were often evacuated to rural settings and thus, separated from their families. This massive removal of children from the care of their parents altered the childcare landscape forever, highlighting the need for an organisation that could bear the responsibility of protecting and supporting children while their parents faced the war. During this time, children were increasingly placed in group homes or institutionalised, as the adults were unable to properly care for them during this time. This neglect was also reflected in the available child assistance and protection





systems, as education programs were few and health and safety precautions from governments were subpar.

To combat this, the UN introduced the United Nations International Children's Emergency Fund. At the time of its creation in 1946, UNICEF mainly functioned as a relief-providing agency. However, in 1953, it became a UN permanent agency which caused a significant drift in its functioning. Now, the



committee moved past solely granting emergency aid and vowed to handle youth welfare as a whole. Greater efforts were put into lowering the prevalence of childhood illness and enhancing sanitation and hygiene practices. UNICEF continued to grow, introducing additional initiatives such as maternal and child welfare centres, nutrition programs, and humanitarian training to ensure long-term well-being for children.

In 1959, the Declaration of Children's Rights was adopted by all 78 Member States of the United Nations General Assembly via Resolution 1386. As of today, UNICEF works in nearly 190 countries and territories to save children's lives, defend their rights, and assist them in reaching their full potential, from infancy to adolescence.

Introduction to the Topic

As made evident beforehand, war, by its very nature, inflicts immense suffering and hardships on those caught in its wake. Among those individuals, one of the most vulnerable populations - children - are found deprived of every fundamental right, stripping their treasured innocence and forcing them to endure into a terrorising world no child should ever come across. The violation of children's rights encompasses multifaceted rages of abuses, including physiological and psychological deprivations. The United Nations' Security Council (UNSC) identified and condemned **six grave violations against children in times of war**, with the purpose to better monitor, prevent, and end these attacks.¹

Children are forcibly **recruited by armed groups and used in combat roles**, not exclusively as soldiers, but also as porters, spies, guards, cooks, messengers, and much more. According to UNICEF, from 2005 to 2022, more than 105,000 children were verified as recruited and used by parties to conflict, however, the actual number is believed to be much higher.² Also, children during the following years have increasingly become specific targets in **killings and maiming**, suffering injuries and killing from shootings, bombing, and landmines. Volker Turk, U.N. human rights chief, stated that the number of children killed during war have tripled in 2023.³ **Sexual violence** also reaches a spiking

¹ "Six Grave Violations against Children in Times of War." *UNICEF*, <https://www.unicef.org/children-under-attack/six-grave-violations-against-children>.

² "Children Recruited by Armed Forces or Armed Groups." *UNICEF*, <https://www.unicef.org/protection/children-recruited-by-armed-forces>.

³ "Number of Children Killed in Global Conflicts Tripled in 2023, U.N. Human Rights Chief Says." *CBS News*, <https://www.cbsnews.com/news/un-women-children-killed-in-war-and-conflict-sharp-rise-in-2023/>.



increment when conflicts occur, specifically placing girls at rampant risk. Sexual exploitation towards young women is not a new form of rights deprivation during war, as for centuries it has been used as a war tactic to weaken opponents through the spread of diseases, such as HIV/AIDS viruses, seen particularly in Rwanda during the 1990s.⁴ **Abduction** is another war measure utilised by armed groups, in which kids are obliged to perform forced labour or are even used as bargaining tools, For example, Ukrainian authorities have verified that over 19,000 children have been abducted since 22 February 2022 and counting.⁵

Educational and sanitary rights for children are also completely hindered in times of despair. Schools and medical facilities are targeted or repurposed for military use, causing their partial or total destruction. In times of war, these facilities are considered protected and safe areas for children, which should have impunity despite conflict occurring. However, the continuous attacks on hospitals and schools underscore the catastrophic impact of armed conflict on children's rights, including rights to education and health, not only placing children's rights at risk but also interfering with their schooling and restricting their access to healthcare, which may have a long-term negative influence on their health, education, and economic opportunities.⁶ Lastly, the deliberate withholding or obstruction of humanitarian aid necessary for children's survival by parties to the conflict, as well as the deliberate blocking of humanitarian organisations' or other pertinent actors' access to and assistance for impacted children in armed conflict, constitutes the **denial of humanitarian access for children**. Conflicting parties frequently restrict access for humanitarian organisations to individuals in need or obstruct aid from getting to civilian populations. When aid workers are singled out and viewed as dangers, civilians are also denied assistance. António Guterres, U.N Secretary General, verified 3,941 instances of the denial of humanitarian access in 2022, which unfortunately continues to grow due to the constant disregard for international humanitarian law.⁷

⁴ "Rape and Sexual Assault during War: How to Stop It?" *Justice & Peace Commission - French-Speaking Belgium*, <https://www.justicepaix.be/en/rape-and-sexual-assault-in-times-of-war-how-to-stop-it-2/>.

⁵ Children of War. <https://childrenofwar.gov.ua/en/>.

⁶ "Six grave violations against children in times of war." *UNICEF*, <https://www.unicef.org/children-under-attack/six-grave-violations-against-children>.

⁷ Miklic, Laura. "Denial of Humanitarian Access to Children Is Prohibited under International Law - Building Trust." *Building Trust*, 3 Apr. 2024, <https://buildingtrust.si/denial-of-humanitarian-access-to-children-is-prohibited-under-international-law/>.



Current Situation

Despite constant efforts from the international community, the violation of children's rights during war times remains an urgent matter. In 2023, the world saw a record number of violations. An article by the United Nations published in June of this year affirms that 32,990 grave violations against 22,557 were recorded in 2023. The Security Council was alerted by senior officials that these activities resulted in the killing of over five thousand children and the injury of another six thousand children, demonstrating a 35 percent increase from previous years⁸. In Israel and the Occupied Palestinian Territory, the DRC, Myanmar, Somalia, Nigeria and Sudan, the number of violations were the highest amongst the globe.

Since the escalation of tensions in Gaza, the killing or maiming of 70 Israeli children and 4,312 Palestinian children has been verified. The killing or maiming of an additional 23,000 children remain to be accounted for due to insecurity and constant evacuations occurring in the Strip. Children in Gaza are in urgent need of humanitarian aid, but are sadly the ones who are denied these resources the most. The denial of emergency relief to children also constitutes a grave violation of their rights, and in the case of Palestinian youths, receiving it could be the difference between life or death. Ted Chaiban, UNICEF's Executive Director of Humanitarian Action and Supply Operations, has requested that the UNSC implement improved measures for monitoring and reporting incidents of grave violations against children for their adequate protection. Furthermore, he calls upon other countries to cooperate with one another and to engage in diplomatic conversations to prevent further conflicts.



Moreover, the devastating attacks on Ukraine have been guilty for the injury of at least 1,389 children and the death of 551. It is estimated that around 20,000 children have been forcefully displaced or deported from their home country of Ukraine and transferred to Russian or Russian-occupied territories, making it harder for Ukrainian authorities to pursue a repatriation process. Because of this, Moscow remains a part of the list of grave violators, primarily for the killing and maiming of children and attacks education and healthcare establishments.

⁸ "Facing Record-High Violations in 2023, Security Council Explores Ways to Bolster Norms to Protect Children in Armed Conflict." *Meetings Coverage and Press Releases*, 26 June 2024, <https://press.un.org/en/2024/sc15745.doc.htm>. Accessed 30 July 2024.



During her presentation of the annual report on Children in Armed Conflict, Virginia Gamba, Special Representative of the Secretary-General for Children in Armed Conflict, highlighted some key issues affecting the security of children in armed conflict in the present time. Firstly, she emphasised the dangerous impact of the use of explosives in densely populated areas, as these weapons kill indiscriminately. Explosives have been found to be responsible for most civilian deaths in the Gaza Strip conflict. Reducing the number of explosive-driven attacks could be beneficial to reduced child casualties during conflict, as these often occur in civilian spaces which poses a great concern for the security of children.

Furthermore, she revealed the world is seeing a rising trend in the number of child abductions and sexual assault in conflict zones, two of the six grave violations established by the UN. Around 4,356 children were kidnapped in 2023 and another 1,470 suffered a form of sexual violence, which amounts to a 25 percent increase from previous years. The abduction of girls for sexual purposes is becoming increasingly common, particularly in areas like DRC, Sudan and Haiti. However, most cases of sexual abuse go unreported due to prejudice, risk of reprisals, lack of safe communication channels and survivor assistance services, poor justice systems and harmful gender norms.



Most recent discussions concerning the safeguarding of children amidst armed conflict have found that strengthened monitoring and reporting systems are of greatest urgency. Due to the constant movement of victims in territories such as the Gaza Strip, tracking down children at risk becomes increasingly difficult. Thus, better channels must be put in place in order to reach those affected. It was recommended that nations partner amongst themselves to execute these plans, as they require extensive funding and peer-review.

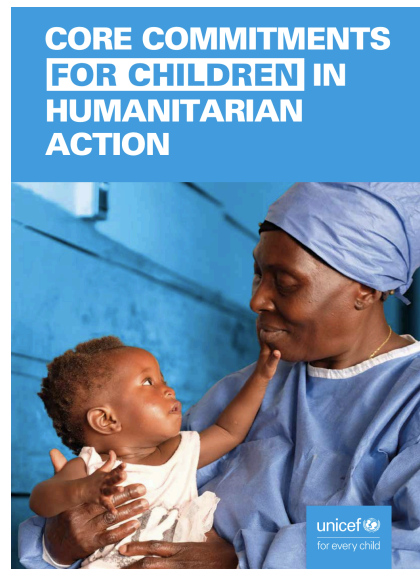
In summary, despite the heightened levels of conflict worldwide the UN has managed to make positive advancements, mainly focusing on child protection measures and legislation. Nonetheless, the issues detailed above should help show you what matters remain unattended and thus, most urgent.



Past Action

The Core Commitments for Children in Humanitarian Action (CCCs)

The United Nations International Children's Emergency Fund has established multiple frameworks in order to safeguard children rights. **The Core Commitments for Children in Humanitarian Action (CCCs)** represent the cornerstone policy document from UNICEF in ensuring children's protection and well-being in humanitarian action. They are standards of action needed to protect the rights of children in emergencies, with the aim of rendering timely and effective responses. Originally developed and adopted in 1998, the CCCs, among other international human rights instruments, are based on the **Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC)**⁹. However, due to the increasing recognition of the specific vulnerabilities and needs of children in crisis situations, the CCCs has been revised and modified twice, once in 2010 and again in 2020, ensuring the protocols established by this framework are adapted to evolving children's basic needs due to the constant state of change our world endures.



The scope of this foundation relies on outlining UNICEF's responsibility and actions during humanitarian emergencies, focusing on essential areas such as health, nutrition (WASH), water, sanitation, hygiene, education, child protection, and social protection. For each of these areas, the CCCs deliver specific commitments and benchmarks that UNICEF strives to achieve in its emergency response efforts. In addition, one of the primary functions of the CCCs is to provide a clear set of priorities for UNICEF staff and partners operating in challenging and often chaotic emergency environments. By outlining concrete commitments, the framework helps humanitarian workers make informed decisions about resource allocation and intervention strategies, ensuring clarity and effectiveness in situations where time is of the essence and the needs are overwhelming. Moreover, by ensuring that UNICEF's approach remains standardised and aligned with its core principles, the **The Core Commitments for Children in Humanitarian Action** promotes consistency in UNICEF's global operations, regardless of the cause for the need for humanitarian aid. Therefore, in practice, the CCCs guide this agency of the United Nations from the moment an emergency occurs, hence, when a crisis strikes UNICEF teams use the framework to rapidly assess the situation and identify the most pressing needs of the affected children, which ultimately allows them to develop and implement response plans that align with the liabilities outlined by the CCCs.

UNICEF builds a diverse alliance around the CCCs, setting up broadly based partnerships with states, national and local authorities, affected populations, civil society organisations, the broader UN system, donors, academic institutions, the private sector, and media in order for solutions to take place. Such extensive collaboration pools considerable expertise and resources to ensure maximum

⁹ "Convention on the Rights of the Child." OHCHR, <https://www.ohchr.org/en/instruments-mechanisms/instruments/convention-rights-child>.



impact. The CCCs are aligned to wider humanitarian coordination mechanisms - for instance, the Inter-Agency Standing Committee (IASC) cluster approach - through which UNICEF can integrate its efforts seamlessly with other UN agencies and international NGOs. UNICEF often leads or co-leads clusters in critical areas like WASH, Nutrition, and Education. For instance, these responses might include setting up emergency feeding centres to address malnutrition, establishing temporary learning spaces to ensure education continuity, and



providing clean water and sanitation facilities to prevent disease outbreaks; where all of these solutions used by UNICEF use the CCCs guiding foundation. In the ongoing Syrian humanitarian crisis, the implementation of the CCCs facilitates coordinated efforts that provide essential services to children in need. As of 2023, UNICEF and partners, including the Ministry of Health (MoH), supported 6.3 million people with health services and supplies, including 840,751 people in the earthquake affected areas, demonstrating the effectiveness that the regularised approach the CCCs provide.¹⁰

Monitoring and Reporting Mechanisms (MRM) on Grave Violations against Children in Situations of Armed Conflict

A critical initiative designed to systematically document and respond to severe violations of children's rights in conflict zones. Following the adoption of the United Nations Security Council Resolution 1612, the **MRM** was established in 2005, marking a significant step in recognizing the crippling impact of armed conflict on children and the need for a structured approach to monitor and address these violations.¹¹ The creation of the **MRM** provided a formal mechanism for the collection, verification, and reporting of data on grave violations, thereby enabling targeted responses and informed policy-making.

As mentioned previously, the UNSC recognises six grave violations against children - recruitment and use of child soldiers, killing and maiming, sexual violence, abduction, attacks on schools and hospitals, and denial of humanitarian access - for which the MRM is responsible to systematic monitor and report. This programme operates through a coordinated network involving various UN agencies, national governments, and local and international NGOs. At the heart of its implementations are the Country Task Forces on Monitoring and Reporting (CTFMR), composed of UNICEF representatives, the Office of the Special Representative of the Secretary-General for Children and Armed Conflict, accompanied by other relevant UN entities and NGOs; all located in conflict-affected countries.¹² The CTFMRs have the responsibility for collecting data on grave violations from various sources, including field observations, reports from humanitarian organisations, and interviews with

¹⁰ "SYRIAN ARAB REPUBLIC CONSOLIDATED EMERGENCY REPORT 2023." UNICEF <https://open.unicef.org/sites/transparency/files/2024-05/Syria%20CER%202023.pdf>

¹¹ Law, Refworld-UNHCR's Global, and Policy Database. "Security Council Resolution 1612 (2005) [on Children in Armed Conflict]." *Refworld*, 28 Oct. 2023, <https://www.refworld.org/legal/resolution/uns/2005/en/14889>.

¹² UNICEF . Monitoring and Reporting Mechanism on Grave Violations against Children in Situations of Armed Conflict. June 2014.



victims and witnesses, with the purpose of gathering the collected data so it can then undergo rigorous verification process to ensure accuracy before being reported to the United Nations Security Council and other relevant bodies.

Since its establishment, the **MRM** has significantly contributed to documenting and addressing abuses committed towards the rights of minors, with its notable achievements being enhancing accountability by providing evidence that has been used to prosecute perpetrators and pressure armed groups and state actors to change their practices. For instance, in the Democratic Republic of Congo, the **MRM**'s documentation efforts led to the conviction of several militia leaders for the recruitment and use of child soldiers.¹³ Similarly, in Colombia, the **MRM** facilitated dialogues that resulted in the release of hundreds of child soldiers and commitment from armed groups to end the

recruitment of minors.¹⁴ Nevertheless, the **MRM** faces several challenges, including difficulties in assessing conflict areas and ensuring the safety of monitors. Political sensitivity and complexity in engaging with state and nonstate actors, as well as resource constraints, also pose significant threats to the effective implementation of the **MRM**. Yet, despite the challenges faced, the **MRM** continues to provide vital data that informs global efforts to protect children in conflict zones, leaving the countries that commit such atrocities exposed within the international community.



¹³ Watchlist. *Strengthening Monitoring and Reporting Activities on Violations of Children's Rights in Colombia*. Jan. 2008.

¹⁴ Watchlist. *Strengthening Monitoring and Reporting Activities on Violations of Children's Rights in Colombia*. Jan. 2008.



Case Studies

Case Study 1: Rohingya crisis

Rohingya, a Muslim ethnic group located in Rakhine, a state found in Myanmar, have been victims of ethnic cleansing since 2017 according to the United Nations.¹⁵ When the first wave of attacks took place, around six years ago, 300,000 refugees were forced to move to the neighbouring country, Bangladesh, with 60% of refugees being children.¹⁶ Nowadays, about half a million Rohingya refugee children are living in exile from their home country, with many of them being born into this limbo.



The Rohingya live in temporary shelters in extremely crowded camp settings and are totally dependent on humanitarian aid for safety, food, water, shelter, and health. Although basic rights are met, children face disease outbreaks, malnutrition, inadequate educational opportunities and the risks related to neglect, exploitation and violence including gender-based violence risks, child marriage and child labour: all of six grave violations against children in times of war.¹⁷ In addition, older generations of teenagers are at risk of suffering the phenomenon of “the lost generation” due to lack of educational opportunities, becoming exceptionally vulnerable for exploitation, for political or sexual means.

Consequently, UNICEF has been supporting Rohingya children in Bangladesh since the crisis began, providing essential services such as clean water, health care, nutritious food, and education.

Reached more than 177,000 children and caregivers with psychosocial support

Helped more than 10,000 out-of-school children sit placement tests

Provided biannual Vitamin A supplementation for 143,000 refugee children under 5

Collaborating with the Government of Bangladesh and partners, UNICEF has established water and sanitation facilities, diarrhoeal treatment centres, and health services for children and pregnant women. They have created learning centres to ensure access to quality education and have enrolled

¹⁵ “Six Years on, Still No Justice for Myanmar’s Rohingya.” *UN News*, 24 Aug. 2023, <https://news.un.org/en/story/2023/08/1140032>.

¹⁶ “Rohingya Crisis.” *UNICEF*, <https://www.unicef.org/emergencies/rohingya-crisis>.

¹⁷ “Rohingya Crisis.” *UNICEF*, <https://www.unicef.org/emergencies/rohingya-crisis>.



over 300,000 children in classes based on the Myanmar curriculum in order to aid the “lost generation”. UNICEF's efforts also focus on protecting children from violence, abuse, and neglect, ensuring their rights and dignity are upheld.

Case Study 2: Sub-Saharan Africa

Sub-Saharan Africa is undoubtedly one of the most affected regions by armed conflict, creating an unsafe environment in which unlawful behaviour thrives. The region's numerous civil wars, insurgencies, and encounters with terrorism have deeply affected the tranquillity and prosperity of many children. Conflicts as such not only pose immediate physical danger to children, but also lead to long-term trauma, disrupted education and healthcare systems, and overall jeopardise the future of young Africans.

In recent years, Sub-Saharan Africa (SSA) has emerged as the global epicentre of terrorism. According to the 2022 Global Terrorism Index, it accounts for 48% of terror-related deaths, and four of the ten countries with the largest increases in deaths from terrorism are located in SSA, these being Niger, Mali, the DRC and Burkina Faso.¹⁸ The rise of terrorist groups inevitably exacerbates issues with the recruitment of child soldiers, one of the six grave violations of children's rights identified by the UN. Governments and insurgency groups alike have become increasingly dependent on children to support their armed forces, as seen in the case of Boko Haram in Nigeria or conflicts in South Sudan. Furthermore, children can additionally be employed as sex slaves for high ranking officers or be sold to serve the same purpose in exchange for weapons and other resources.

Over 300,000 children under the age of 18 are child soldiers with government armed forces and armed opposition groups worldwide, with over 120,000 of them based in Sub-Saharan Africa alone, according to a recent research published by The Coalition to Stop the Use of Child Soldiers.¹⁹ In the battleground, it is not uncommon to find children as young as seven or eight years old engaging in armed conflict. While some choose to voluntarily join the army or insurgency groups due to poverty, others are forcibly recruited through coercion or abduction.



The growing trend in the numbers of child soldiers in Sub-Saharan Africa can be attributed to a number of both domestic and international factors. Firstly, the proliferation of small arms in recent years has resulted in war equipment becoming more accessible to children. Previously, weapons were too heavy for children to carry, and thus resulted in them being assigned other responsibilities that were adjacent to combat. However, as smaller armament increases its presence, even the smallest children can now manipulate machinery and hence, participate in direct combat.

¹⁸“Global Terrorism Index 2022 - World.” *ReliefWeb*, <https://reliefweb.int/report/world/global-terrorism-index-2022>. Accessed 30 July 2024.

¹⁹ Kalis, Martin. “Child Soldiers in Africa” *ACCORD*, 25 June 2002, <https://www.accord.org.za/ajcr-issues/child-soldiers-in-africa/>. Accessed 30 July 2024.



Moreover, the failure of governments to create appropriate frameworks for signals carelessness, which in turn encourages the use of youths for fighting purposes. While most nations take eighteen to be the minimum age for recruitment, this guideline is often ignored. A clear example of this is Sierra Leone, where 30% of government-sponsored are made up of children between the ages of seven and fourteen (2002). Additionally, these laws are further undermined by loopholes that allow children to enlist in such groups with parental consent or if they look over eighteen. Institutional flaws also contribute to this issue, as the inadequate distribution of birth certificates and identification cards aids the violation of this rule. Finally, in cases of countries facing internal conflict, governments may be unable to enforce child protection laws in order to allocate limited resources to more urgent matters.

Children engage in armed conflict either voluntarily or through forced recruitment. While it is unlikely that the majority of child soldiers were initially subjected to coercion, their environments make them susceptible to manipulation from their adult counterparts, making it more difficult to mitigate abuse. There are various reasons for which children choose to become fighters. For some, it is a way to earn additional income to support their families, who often find themselves in situations of poverty. On the other hand, others seek to take justice into their own hands after seeing their friends or family members be murdered by enemy groups. However, in some parts of Africa, involvement in war is not only encouraged, but expected from young men. The Young Lions group in apartheid South Africa is a clear example of this, as they deceived youths into perceiving violence as liberation which motivated them to fight.

Nevertheless, some children are forced to join militia groups against their own will. The forced recruitment of child soldiers can occur through abduction or threatening. In Ethiopia, various instances have been reported in which leaders will surround public spaces and hold attendees hostage to select 'eligible' males for their squads. Once chosen, the children will undergo harsh training and military conditioning which transforms them into ruthless individuals, and causes them irreparable psychological trauma. Children are often given drugs or alcohol by their superiors to cope with the mental stress produced by their cruel surroundings.

Overall, while many African countries continue to suffer greatly due to the use of children in conflict, efforts to eradicate this practice are stronger than ever. In February 2001, 2,500 child soldiers were demobilised by the Sudanese People's Liberation Army, and in May, nearly 600 children were set free from the Revolutionary United Front in Sierra Leone. From there, rescues have continued. However, despite these encouraging advancements, there is still more to be done to guarantee the bright futures of children across Africa. The United States must firmly back any initiatives aimed at reducing the flow of small guns into Africa and preventing the enlistment of minors younger than eighteen for the armed forces. Only then would it be possible to reach an international consensus and implement decisive action to end the use of child soldiers on the African continent.²⁰

²⁰ Kalis, Martin . "Child Soldiers in Africa ." *ACCORD*, 25 June 2002, <https://www.accord.org.za/ajcr-issues/child-soldiers-in-africa/>. Accessed 31 July 2024.



QARMA's

1. What strategies can be developed to ensure the continuity of education for children in war-torn regions, particularly for displaced children?
2. How can the international community address the issue of voluntary child recruitment driven by poverty and cultural expectations?
3. What mechanisms can be put in place to ensure that humanitarian aid reaches children in areas controlled by armed groups?
4. What are long-term impacts of conflict on children's mental health, and how can post-conflict recovery programs be tailored to address these needs?
5. How can accountability mechanisms be strengthened to ensure that solutions include provisions for the prosecution of those who commit grave violations against children?
6. To what extent is international cooperation beneficial in the context of war? How can we ensure it is equitable for all parties involved?
7. What innovative approaches can be taken to provide vocational training and employment opportunities for adolescents in conflict areas to prevent their recruitment by armed groups?
8. How can gender-sensitive approaches be integrated into child protection frameworks to address the specific needs of girls in conflict zones?



Bloc Positions

Similar to most issues presented to the UN, the violation of children's rights during war times is a multifaceted issue that requires immediate action from the international community. Given their vulnerability, conflict can have a disproportionately greater effect on children, highlighting the urgency for the achievement of a resolution. As UNICEF delegates, you are tasked with the responsibility of addressing the complexities of the problem at hand and discussing various perspectives in order to reach a consensus, as comprehensiveness is key to producing an effective global resolution. Hopefully, by the end of this committee, you will have managed to develop strategies to successfully address these violations and which will continue to protect our children for years to come. Below, you will find an overview of the stances taken by different blocs in regards to the chosen topic to aid your negotiations and formation of partnerships during sessions.

Western Countries

Countries in the Western bloc such as the United States, Canada and Western European nations usually seek firm frameworks and sturdy mechanisms to ensure the protection of children. For example, members of this bloc will most likely be in favour of adopting legal frameworks to hold violators accountable or the implementation of severe measures against the recruitment of child soldiers. These countries provide significant funding for child safeguarding initiatives, usually involving education or psychological support for those affected. Resolutions supported by this bloc show great alignment with UNICEF mandates and guidelines, as they constantly call upon international cooperation through bodies like the United Nations.

African Countries

The position of African nations can be vastly different depending on their individual needs, principles, and sociohistorical context. Countries like South Africa and Nigeria may opt for international cooperation with blocs like the European Union as both place great importance on education and technological development, while others may oppose foreign involvement to preserve a greater degree of sovereignty. Also, it will be worthy to mention how countries in Sub-Saharan Africa are particularly at risk, as terrorism continues to be a prominent issue in the area. Nevertheless, a combination of short-term relief efforts or other forms of humanitarian aid and long-term development schemes are repeatedly called upon across the continent. Moreover, given the cultural diversity of the region, nations in this bloc will work tirelessly to ensure solutions, particularly regarding those which involve any form of education, are culturally sensitive and respectful of their traditions.

Latin American and Caribbean Countries

The Latin American and Caribbean bloc will often strive to shed light on the effects of social and political instability, as well as economic inequality. Countries in this region are often permeated by gang violence, or similarly *guerrillas*, which result in high rates of youth soldier recruitment. This can be observed in El Salvador, which fell prisoner to the *Maras* group in previous years. Thus, it will be imperative for these nations that resolutions include stringent measures to combat the use of children in armed forces. On the other hand, given their diverse landscapes and contexts, it will be necessary to draft targeted plans at regional level to design and implement truly effective solutions. Finally, many of these countries will repeatedly stress the need for aid in order to combat social and economic factors such as poverty that continuously make way for conflict to occur.

Asian Countries



Similar to Africa, Asian countries involve a wide range of economic and political contexts. Nations like Japan and South Korea with thriving economies will adopt a position similar to Western countries, by focusing on long-term aid to nations in need, and most likely in partnerships with international organisations. On the other hand, countries experiencing internal violence and rigid governments such as Myanmar and Afghanistan will probably lean towards short-term aid and low levels of foreign involvement in domestic affairs.

Middle Eastern Countries

For decades, countries in the middle east have been in the global spotlight for their seemingly unceasing conflicts. Therefore, children in this region are constantly victims of the horrid effects of war. Because of this, nations in this bloc will advocate for the provision of humanitarian aid and the need for international organs to step in to settle conflicts diplomatically. However, most governments will emphasise the need to safeguard national sovereignty and for resolutions that consider the strong presence of religion, culture and tradition in the area.

Non-Aligned Movement

The Non-Aligned Movement (NAM) was established after World War II, in order to protect the interests of newly independent nations that were born after colonial powers were starting to weaken. Members of NAM often strive to address the underlying causes of the issue, such as economic and social inequalities and political instability. But most importantly, these countries will focus on guaranteeing that any form of foreign intervention is in the best interest of the aided country rather than working to benefit the ‘big powers’.



Suggestions for Further Research

We hope that this background guide has laid out the foundations for you to begin your research. A thorough investigation and comprehension of the topic will be a crucial tool to reach success and thrive in the committee. Below you will find a list of guiding questions and resources that you can utilise to guide you through your investigation.

Guiding Questions:

1. What are your country's most prominent issues regarding children's rights violations amidst conflict?
2. What underlying causes of child rights violations are most present in your country and how are they being addressed?
3. What underlying causes of conflict and instability are most present in your country and how are they being addressed?
4. Which past actions and strategies have been most successful and effective for the mitigation of child rights violations?
5. In what ways can solutions be adapted to be implemented in countries of different development levels or socioeconomic priorities?

Resources:

- United Nations Press Releases:
https://www.un.org/en?_gl=1*tw9h7t*_ga*MTU3NTI3NjMwOS4xNzIyMjExNjEx*_ga_TK9BOL5X7Z*MTcyMjM3OTg5MC40LjAuMTcyMjM3OTg5MC4wLjAuMA..
- UNICEF Website: <https://www.unicef.org/>
- UN Children and Armed Conflict: <https://childrenandarmedconflict.un.org/>
- Special Rapporteur on Extreme Poverty and Human Rights:
<https://www.ohchr.org/en/special-procedures/sr-poverty>
- Montessori MUN Study Guide on Children in Armed Conflict:
http://montessori-mun.org/wp-content/uploads/2013/09/BG_UNICEF_Children-in-armed-conflict.pdf
- Human Rights Watch Page on Children in Armed Conflict:
<https://www.hrw.org/topic/childrens-rights/children-and-armed-conflict>



Position Paper Requirements

A position paper is a one-page document that will need to be presented before the conference, the requirements of it are as follows.

Font: Times New Romans (size 11)

Margins (centimetres): 2.54 from all sides

Line Spacing: 1.15

Heading: Committee's name, topic, delegate's name, delegation, and allocation.

First paragraph: Introduction to your nation's perspective on the topic and should not be confused with an introduction to the topic. How does your nation see the issue discussed at hand?

Second paragraph: Past actions which relate to the topic and have been taken either by your country nationally, or with the UN. What effects did these have on the conflict in general?

Third paragraph: Solutions to the problem, more than one of these are encouraged to fully encompass the issue presented. Remember to remain within policy and within the scope of what your country can do.

Bibliography: The sources used to produce this position paper should be presented in MLA9 citation format. If a delegate fails to present sources for their position paper, it will be assumed to be plagiarised work and they will become ineligible for awards.

Deadline: All position papers must be sent in pdf form to unicef@sansilvestre.edu.pe before 11:59 pm the 30th of August, 2024.

Eligibility for awards: Position papers will be used as a way for the chair to ensure your participation previous to the conference. For such, position papers must be submitted before the deadline for the delegate to be eligible for an award. However, they will not be a factor which contributes when choosing awards for your participation during the conference.

A note on artificial intelligence usage: We know in recent times many tools have been devised to automate tasks such as the development of literary texts. It would be ignorant to completely prohibit the use of such devices as they are tools created for the enhancement of human intelligence. For such, we believe that many times these devices can be used to improve your work, and we encourage the **healthy, moderated, and smart** usage of these aids. Let it be known, that although AI can be of big help for redaction purposes, **it should not be the sole source of your research** due to the obvious constraints that it possesses, which included but are not limited to; bias, lack of data from recent years, and false information. Furthermore, it is important to note that we **completely prohibit** the use of, for example, Chat GPT **during the conference** to create speeches at real-time speed. Our chairs will make sure to value your improvisation and public speaking skills over a perfectly redacted speech made by an AI tool. With this in mind, make sure to research thoroughly, find different perspectives and sources to devise a proper position paper.

If you have any doubts about the policies in more detail please email your chair or the Secretary-General lxu86@sansilvestre.edu.pe



Recommendations and Closing Remarks

To ensure a successful participation in SSMUN 2024's UNICEF committee it is crucial that you not only read the background guide but also complement this understanding with further research from various other sources. This study guide itself and the resources it provides can be a good starting point, but to be able to truly grasp the issue at hand you are advised to diversify your knowledge by seeking additional information from other reliable sources.

When beginning your research, focus on your country's role in the fight against children's rights violations and their past or previous experience with conflict. Research your country's past involvement, laws, schemes and overall solutions, and how they have contributed and can contribute to the mitigation of insecurity. While researching ourselves we found an infinite amount of news articles, studies and data collections on this topic. Use these to your advantage to find out which sub-issues should not only be discussed but prioritised. Additionally, you should figure out who your allies are, and learn about countries with similar views, interests and policies with which you can form blocs and draft solutions. Furthermore, you can more thoroughly explore the sources cited in this study guide to get a deeper understanding of the topic. From this, you can go on to acknowledge the specific niches with the help of additional external resources.

For drafting resolutions, we advise that you skim through as many recent UNICEF resolutions addressing this topic as you find helpful, and read any articles that comment on either the resolutions themselves or their effects. To be able to propose a successful resolution, it is beneficial to be aware of which policies are truly functional and which aren't. Being knowledgeable on the topic of past actions will also help you to avoid proposing already existing solutions. Avoiding this repetition will allow you to move the committee forward and foster development and innovation. Also, your solutions must primarily reflect the beliefs and interests of your country which may not necessarily be your own.

Finally, please always be mindful of democracy. If the debate gets tempestuous at any time, remind yourself, and even others, of the ultimate purpose of this committee: to find a compromise and work together for our children. At the same time, we still hope to see delegates engaging in fruitful debate.

Without further delay, we would like to wish you the best of luck and remind you that with adequate research, determination, and a strong desire to participate and learn, SSMUN 2024 will be a very enriching experience for you all.

Best wishes,
Camila and Kirsten



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