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Promotion and protection of the rights of children

Report of the Special Representative of the Secretary-General for Children and Armed Conflict

Summary

The present report is submitted to the General Assembly pursuant to its resolution [78/187](#) on the rights of the child, in which it requested the Special Representative of the Secretary-General for Children and Armed Conflict to continue to submit reports to the Assembly on the activities undertaken in the fulfilment of her mandate, including on the progress achieved in advancing the children and armed conflict agenda. In the report, which covers the period from August 2024 to July 2025, the Special Representative describes trends, issues of concern and progress made. She also provides information on raising global awareness and building partnerships, including her engagement with regional and subregional organizations and international partners. She outlines challenges and priorities relating to the children and armed conflict agenda and concludes with recommendations to enhance the protection of children affected by armed conflict.

* [A/80/150](#).



I. Introduction

1. In its resolution [78/187](#), the General Assembly requested the Special Representative of the Secretary-General for Children and Armed Conflict to continue to submit reports to it and to the Human Rights Council on the activities undertaken in the fulfilment of her mandate, including on progress achieved and challenges remaining with regard to the children and armed conflict agenda. The request stemmed from the mandate given by the Assembly in its resolution [51/77](#), in which it recommended, *inter alia*, that the Special Representative raise awareness and promote the collection of information on the plight of children affected by armed conflict and foster international cooperation to ensure respect for children's rights.

2. In line with that mandate, and as requested by the General Assembly in its resolution [78/187](#), in the present report, the Special Representative provides information on current trends regarding children affected by armed conflict and gives an overview of emerging issues and challenges. She also highlights the ongoing engagement with parties to conflict to end and prevent grave violations, as well as efforts undertaken with a broad range of actors to raise global awareness of and catalyse action on the issue. She emphasizes, ahead of its renewal, the mandate's contributions to maintenance of international peace and security for nearly 30 years.

II. Global overview of trends, emerging issues and challenges

3. Multidimensional conflicts, including across regions, protracted conflicts, the emergence of new armed actors and the use of new technology have continued to adversely affect the protection of children in conflict situations. Grave violations against children have continued to increase. In 2024, for the third consecutive year, grave violations against children in armed conflict reached unprecedented levels, with a staggering 25 per cent surge compared with 2023. Children bore the brunt of relentless hostilities, indiscriminate attacks, failure to respect international humanitarian and international human rights law, disregard for ceasefires and peace agreements, and deepening humanitarian crises.

4. The United Nations verified 41,370 grave violations, of which 36,221 were committed in 2024 and 5,149 were committed in previous years but verified in 2024 only. Violations affected 22,495 children, one third of them girls. While non-State armed groups were responsible for nearly 50 per cent of these violations, government forces were the main perpetrators of the killing and maiming of children, attacks on schools and hospitals, and the denial of humanitarian access. A 17 per cent increase in the number of children subjected to multiple violations through the convergence of abduction, recruitment and sexual violence represented an alarming escalation in brutality.

5. United Nations data showed a persistent and blatant pattern of grave violations induced by a lack of respect for the special protections afforded to children by conflict-affected States and armed groups, compounded by the use of private security companies. Warfare strategies included deliberate attacks on children, the deployment of increasingly destructive weapons, the use of explosive weapons in populated areas and the systematic exploitation of children through their participation in hostilities. Deliberate harm was inflicted on children, instilling terror among entire communities, affecting their mental health and recovery opportunities, and driving mass and prolonged displacement. The urbanization of conflicts and their intensification across borders, the climate emergency and regional insecurity increased the vulnerabilities of children. State and non-State armed actors continued to commit grave violations

with impunity, depriving children not only of justice and reparations but also of their fundamental rights to life, protection, education, health and a future.

6. The violations verified at the highest levels were the killing (4,676) and maiming (7,291) of 11,967 children, denial of humanitarian access (7,906), the recruitment and use of children (7,402) and abduction (4,573). The number of children detained for actual or alleged association with armed groups, including those that are currently under sanctions enacted by the Security Council, or for national security reasons surged from 2,491 in 2023 to 3,018 in 2024, further depriving children of their rights. The highest number of grave violations were verified in Israel and the Occupied Palestinian Territory (8,554), the Democratic Republic of the Congo (4,043), Somalia (2,568), Nigeria (2,436) and Haiti (2,269). The sharpest percentage increase in violations was verified in Lebanon (545 per cent), Mozambique (525 per cent), Haiti (490 per cent), Ethiopia (235 per cent) and Ukraine (105 per cent).

7. Children were killed and maimed in appalling numbers using explosive ordnance, including explosive remnants of war, mines, explosive weapons in populated areas and improvised explosive devices, and by crossfire between parties to conflict, often creating lifelong disabilities, if not death. The conflicts in Israel and the Occupied Palestinian Territory, the Sudan, Myanmar and Burkina Faso were the deadliest for children.

8. Denials of humanitarian access reached an alarming scale, with more humanitarian workers, including United Nations personnel, killed in 2024 than ever before and unprecedented numbers of children prevented from gaining access to basic and humanitarian services, including life-saving services. Parties to conflict attacked aid convoys and personnel and water and sanitation facilities, arbitrarily detained humanitarian personnel, restricted humanitarian activities and movements, adopted bureaucratic and administrative barriers, and interfered with humanitarian operations, leaving children without access to healthcare, education, protection and life-saving assistance. The destruction of critical infrastructure deepened crises and exacerbated malnutrition, preventable and non-preventable diseases, and the displacement of children. The highest numbers of denial of humanitarian access were verified by the United Nations in Israel and the Occupied Palestinian Territory, Afghanistan and Haiti.

9. Recruitment and use of children persisted at very high levels, with 7,402 children recruited and used by State and non-State actors, most commonly in the Democratic Republic of the Congo, Nigeria and Somalia. The violation was often compounded by other grave violations, such as killing and maiming, abduction and sexual violence. Abduction was the fourth highest verified violation in 2024, affecting 4,573 children. Nigeria, Somalia and the Democratic Republic of the Congo had the highest numbers of abducted children.

10. Rape and other forms of sexual violence increased by 35 per cent compared with 2023, with cases of gang rape increasing dramatically, underlining the systematic use of sexual violence as a deliberate tactic of warfare to enhance territorial control, displace populations and target the specific ethnicity or gender of children, among others. Girls were disproportionately affected by sexual violence. The persistent underreporting of this violation due to stigma, risk of retaliation, harmful social norms, absence or lack of access to services, and impunity and safety concerns in a context of limited and eroding legal protections underscores the urgent need for age- and gender-sensitive responses and strengthened accountability mechanisms. The United Nations verified the highest numbers of cases of sexual violence in Haiti, Nigeria and the Democratic Republic of the Congo.

11. Attacks on civilian objects and infrastructure, including schools and hospitals, significantly heightened the vulnerability of children and increased by 44 per cent during 2024. A total of 2,374 attacks on schools and hospitals were verified, with most attacks verified in Ukraine, Israel and the Occupied Palestinian Territory and Haiti.

12. Similar trends and patterns with regard to grave violations against children were observed in the first half of 2025. The drawdown of United Nations peace operations and the global decrease in humanitarian funding had a negative impact on child protection by significantly reducing the capacity of the United Nations to verify and respond to grave violations. Sustained and reinforced funding for child protection should be prioritized at a time of unprecedented humanitarian and protection needs of children. Any further reductions in resources will have direct and devastating impacts on the lives of conflict-affected children, straining operations and protection capacities and limiting children's access to life-saving assistance.

III. Nearly 30 years of contributions of the children and armed conflict mandate to maintaining international peace and security

13. Through actions taken over the nearly 30 years since the establishment, in 1999, of the mandate on children and armed conflict, the General Assembly and the Security Council have both affirmed the mandate's role in contributing to the peace and security pillar of the work of United Nations. The Secretary-General has stated that the protection of children in armed conflict is central to the United Nations peace and security agenda and is at the core of its prevention efforts. Centring the protection of conflict-affected children and the prevention of violations and abuses against them, the mandate's inherent intention is to break the cycles of conflict and violence and facilitate support for sustainable peace. Through their ownership of the mandate, both the Assembly and the Council have equipped it with the tools and the political space necessary to achieve this intended goal, the implementation of which has resulted in concrete contributions of the mandate to the maintenance of international peace and security.

14. Critically, the mandate is uniquely empowered with the space for the Office of the Special Representative of the Secretary-General for Children and Armed Conflict as a key convener. Moreover, those entities implementing the monitoring and reporting mechanism are empowered to engage in dialogue with parties to conflict who commit violations and abuses against children towards the development and implementation of action plans with the United Nations. To date, more than 40 action plans have been signed, and the dialogue has resulted in the release of over 220,000 children from armed forces and groups. Facilitating the release of children and offering them sustainable alternatives ends their instrumentalization for military use in conflict, addresses the risk of their re-recruitment and recurrence of conflict, and ensures their future contributions to societies exiting from and rebuilding after conflict.

15. The process of negotiating and securing the release of children, as well as advocacy of ending their recruitment and use, has shifted norms and altered the behaviour of parties responsible for recruiting and using children over time. The Office of the Special Representative has advocated sustainable reintegration in a consistent and structured manner, as summarized in the publication issued in April 2025 entitled *2018–2025: Engagement by the Office of the Special Representative of the Secretary-General for Children and Armed Conflict on the Reintegration of Children Associated with Armed Forces and Armed Groups – from the Global*

Coalition for Reintegration of Child Soldiers to the Nairobi Process and the Financing Innovation Forum. That publication captures the multi-year, multitrack work that capitalized multiple partnerships within the United Nations system, international financial institutions, academia and national non-governmental organizations to place the issue of child reintegration across the humanitarian-development-peace nexus.

16. As a result of the development of prevention plans with parties to conflict and additional commitments to ending and preventing violations and abuses, notable changes have occurred in recent years, with a visible reduction in grave violations resulting from those commitments in the Philippines, Pakistan and Iraq.

17. The Special Representative also played a critical role in mediation and peace processes. Child protection issues have been seen as an effective entry point to build confidence between parties at the negotiating table and to generate political will to resolve or mitigate conflict. Commitments have been made in the Central African Republic, Colombia, Myanmar, Nepal, the Philippines, South Sudan and the Sudan during peace processes. To support Member States through the inclusion of children and armed conflict in initiatives aimed at preventing and ending conflicts, the Office of the Special Representative produced a set of unique guidelines in 2020, available in all official languages of the United Nations, entitled *Practical Guidance for Mediators to Protect Children in Situations of Armed Conflict*. Practice has shown that putting children at the centre of mediation and peace efforts improves the chances of sustainable peace.

18. The mandate advances peace and security in many other ways. As the General Assembly considers the renewal of the children and armed conflict mandate, it is invited to consider the mandate's distinctive nature and characteristics rooted in peace and security and protection through its dedicated working group in the Security Council and its 14 Council resolutions adopted by consensus. The concrete and effective impact that the mandate brings from actions on the ground and the consensus that it has enjoyed throughout its existence to date cannot be overlooked or underestimated.

IV. Dialogue, action plans and commitments with parties to conflict

19. Despite the changing nature, complexity, expansion and intensification of armed conflict, the United Nations country task forces on monitoring and reporting and the Special Representative maintained sustained engagement with parties to the conflict to adopt concrete measures on and make progress towards ending and preventing grave violations, often in contexts of great hardship, under difficult circumstances and during a deadly year for the United Nations personnel and aid workers. The continuous engagement of the United Nations, including through the implementation of action plans with government forces and armed groups, led to such progress.

A. Addressing grave violations against children by government forces

20. In Burkina Faso, the advocacy of the United Nations led to the appointment of a senior child protection focal point within the Defence and Security Forces to be a primary interlocutor for the prevention of grave violations while raising awareness among commanders and units in operation of protecting children in armed conflict. The United Nations supported training alongside the Government to strengthen the capacity of the Defence and Security Forces and Volunteers for the Defence of the

Homeland to protect children and prevent grave violations during military operations against armed groups.

21. In Cameroon, the Government, through the national disarmament, demobilization and reintegration committee, reintegrated a group of 447 children (246 boys and 201 girls) who had exited armed groups in the Far North Region, from a caseload of over 1,300 children currently in a Disarmament, Demobilization and Reintegration Centre. In December 2024, the Government validated the road map for the implementation of the Safe Schools Declaration.

22. In the Central African Republic, in September 2024, the Government and the United Nations signed a protocol for the handover to civilian actors of children associated with armed forces and armed groups. In August 2024, the Government established a judicial commission of inquiry on violations of international law, including grave violations against children, committed in Haut-Mbomou Prefecture.

23. In Colombia, in November 2024, the Special Jurisdiction for Peace indicted six former commanders of the Revolutionary Armed Forces of Colombia – People's Army for war crimes, including for recruitment and use, sexual violence and violence based on sexual orientation or gender identity against children.

24. In the Democratic Republic of the Congo, in February 2025, the Ministry of Defence issued an internal memo to the Armed Forces of the Democratic Republic of the Congo reaffirming the prohibition of child recruitment and the importance of age verification. Cooperation between the Government and the United Nations continued with regard to screening, age assessment and identification of children prior to enrolment with the Armed Forces of the Democratic Republic of the Congo and the Congolese National Police. Efforts to hold perpetrators of grave violations accountable continued, including for sexual violence and recruitment and use, while magistrates were trained on handling children detained for alleged association with armed groups and age assessment procedures.

25. In Haiti, the United Nations continued to provide capacity-building support to national and international police forces.

26. In Iraq, the Government adopted measures to protect children.

27. In the Lake Chad basin, the Chadian Ministry of the Armed Forces and the Ministry of Women and Protection of Early Childhood, in collaboration with the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF), trained the newly recruited military personnel on child protection in armed conflict.

28. In Mozambique, the United Nations provided training and technical support to the armed forces on the prevention of grave violations and human rights.

29. In Nigeria, UNICEF established strategic partnerships with the Armed Forces Command and Staff College, the Nigerian Defence Academy, and the Training and Doctrine Command to support the swift implementation and institutionalization of the 2022 handover protocol, including by updating the Nigerian military doctrine and standard operating procedures.

30. In Pakistan, in June 2025, the Government agreed to a road map setting out its commitments regarding the protection of children in situations of armed conflict and to continue to engage with the United Nations on measures to protect children.

31. In the Philippines, in June 2025, the Government agreed to a road map setting out its commitments regarding the protection of children in situations of armed conflict and to continue to engage with the United Nations on measures to protect children.

32. In Somalia, the United Nations conducted training sessions on children and armed conflict, including on monitoring and reporting, the standard operating procedures for the handover of children allegedly associated with armed groups, and the age assessment guidelines and standardized checklist, to various stakeholders, including the Ministry of Defence, military battalions, the Jubbaland government, and other security and judicial counterparts. Cooperation between UNICEF and the Ministry of Internal Security led to the identification and handover of children formerly associated with Al-Shabaab.

33. In South Sudan, in September 2024, the Government, with the support of the United Nations, organized a national conference on protection of children against recruitment and use.

34. In the Sudan, the United Nations continued to engage with the focal points of the Sudanese Armed Forces and the National Council for Child Welfare and coordinated the release of 71 children detained for their alleged association with armed groups. A technical committee was formed to collaborate with UNICEF on screening children and facilitating their release and reintegration. The Government appointed a military focal point to engage with the United Nations on the development of a new action plan.

35. In Ukraine, the Government and the United Nations extended the joint prevention plan to end and prevent grave violations against children for another year, until August 2025. The Government adopted laws to support those affected by the conflict, in particular children and survivors of sexual violence.

36. In Yemen, in October 2024, the Government signed a handover protocol for the transfer to civilian child protection actors of children allegedly associated with armed groups, which has been incorporated into the training for military officers.

B. Addressing grave violations against children by armed groups

37. In Afghanistan, the engagement of the United Nations with the Taliban led to the release from their ranks of 58 children and their reintegration.

38. In the Central African Republic, in October 2024, following dialogue with the United Nations, a command directive was issued by the spokesperson for Azande Ani Kpi Gbe, who is also a part of the leadership of Wagner Ti Azande, prohibiting Azande Ani Kpi Gbe and Wagner Ti Azande elements from committing grave violations against children, committing to the nomination of focal points within Azande Ani Kpi Gbe and Wagner Ti Azande to implement the directive, and committing also to releasing and handing over children to child protection partners for family reunification and reintegration.

39. In Iraq, the Government repatriated 1,529 Iraqi children (783 boys and 746 girls) from the north-eastern Syrian Arab Republic.

V. Raising global awareness and building partnerships

A. Awareness-raising, advocacy and country visits

40. The Special Representative continued to use her voice as the leading United Nations advocate for the protection of conflict-affected children, including through the issuance of over 30 press releases and statements, some jointly with partners. For instance, in February 2025, to mark the International Day against the Use of Child Soldiers, she issued a joint statement with the European External Action Service. In

April 2025, together with the Special Representative of the Secretary-General on Sexual Violence in Conflict, the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) and the United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA), she issued a press release on the impact of conflict in the Democratic Republic of the Congo on women and children, including the increased risks of conflict-related sexual violence.

41. The Special Representative engaged with the media in the course of her advocacy efforts, including such national and international media outlets as United Nations News and Qatar Television. In October 2024, the Analysis and Outreach Hub on Children and Armed Conflict in Doha of the Office of the Special Representative organized a workshop for journalists; in December 2024, the United Nations Liaison Office for Children and Armed Conflict (Europe) briefed journalists on the issue of children and armed conflict.

42. The Special Representative continued to raise awareness through participation in high-level events. In September 2024, she spoke at a high-level event to commemorate the International Day to Protect Education from Attack, co-organized by Qatar, the Education Above All Foundation, the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) and UNICEF. During the same month, she shared a video message for the national conference on the protection of children against recruitment and use in South Sudan. The Special Representative also spoke at the third national forum for human rights organized by the National Human Rights Committee of Qatar. In November 2024, she spoke at a high-level conference co-organized by Belgium, UNICEF Belgium and Plan International Belgium. In December 2024, she participated in the Doha Forum. In March 2025, she co-sponsored an event with the delegation of the European Union in Geneva, the Geneva Group of Friends of Children and Armed Conflict and five civil society partners. In April 2025, she shared a video recording for a conference organized by Kazakhstan on the theme of cross-regional dialogue on the prosecution, rehabilitation and reintegration of returnees from conflict zones.

43. Amplifying the voices of conflict-affected children remained central to the work of the Special Representative. In April 2025, she endorsed the Strategic Vision for Promoting and Protecting the Rights of Child Human Rights Defenders. Stories about conflict-affected children were included in the summary of the most recent report of the Secretary-General on children and armed conflict ([A/79/878-S/2025/247](#)). The Office of the Special Representative is also working with Northwestern University in Doha on student-led advocacy initiatives.

44. In March 2025, the Office of the Special Representative and its partners launched a new advocacy campaign entitled “Prove It Matters”, with children’s voices at the centre, aimed at rallying the international community behind the Convention on the Rights of the Child.

45. The photo exhibition entitled “From despair to hope: children beyond armed conflict”, featuring portraits taken by photojournalist Paddy Dowling, was showcased between July and September 2024 on the premises of, and in cooperation with, the European External Action Service. In September 2024, a video on potential risks pertaining to the six grave violations against children, developed in consultation with young people in Africa and in collaboration with the Special Envoy on Youth of the African Union, was showcased in the lobby of the General Assembly Building.

46. To advocate the protection of conflict-affected children and raise awareness, the Special Representative travelled to Argentina, Austria, Belgium, Denmark, Greece, Italy, Malta, Qatar and Switzerland. No country visits were conducted to conflict-affected countries during the reporting period.

B. Building and supporting global alliances

47. The Special Representative actively engaged with Member States and other stakeholders to build and support global alliances aimed at ending and preventing grave violations against children. She continued to advocate the ratification by Member States of the Optional Protocol to the Convention on the Rights of the Child on the involvement of children in armed conflict. She encouraged Member States to endorse the Principles and Guidelines on Children Associated with Armed Forces or Armed Groups (the Paris Principles), the Safe Schools Declaration, the Vancouver Principles on Peacekeeping and the Prevention of the Recruitment and Use of Child Soldiers, and the Political Declaration on Strengthening the Protection of Civilians from the Humanitarian Consequences Arising from the Use of Explosive Weapons in Populated Areas. In May 2025, together with eight Member States, UNICEF, the International Committee of the Red Cross and seven civil society partners, her Office co-sponsored an event on using all of these tools to protect children affected by armed conflict. The Office of the Special Representative also continued to participate in the Paris Principles Steering Group.

48. The Special Representative and her Office regularly exchanged information with Groups of Friends of Children and Armed Conflict, including in Brussels, Geneva, New York and Vienna, as well as in countries on the children and armed conflict agenda. In November 2024, the Special Representative met with the Group of Friends to the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE) in Vienna and the Group of Friends in Brussels. In December 2024, the Special Representative held a videoconference with the Group of Friends in Nigeria. In March 2025, she met with the Groups of Friends in Brussels and Geneva. In June 2025, the Special Representative met with the Group of Friends in New York. Her Office met regularly with Groups of Friends at the expert level in these locations and in Colombia in May 2025.

49. The Office of the Special Representative continued its engagement as part of the Inter-Agency Coordination Group against Trafficking in Persons, including by participating in its annual principals meeting in December 2024. In April 2025, in cooperation with the Special Rapporteur on trafficking in persons, especially women and children, her Office presented the joint study entitled “Child trafficking and armed conflict” to the Inter-Agency Coordination Group.

50. As a member of the United Nations task force on the global study on children deprived of liberty, the Office of the Special Representative collaborated on preparing a thematic task force advocacy brief. In December 2024, the Special Representative shared a video statement for the Global Conference on Justice for Children Deprived of Liberty organized by the Office of the Special Representative of the Secretary-General on Violence against Children, UNICEF, Defence for Children International and the Non-governmental Organization Panel for the Global Study on Children Deprived of Liberty.

51. The Office of the Special Representative pursued its collaboration with the Alliance for Child Protection in Humanitarian Action, including through regular participation in its advocacy working group and annual meeting.

52. In July 2025, in cooperation with the United Nations System Staff College, the Office of the Special Representative launched the Arabic translation of the children and armed conflict primer – a self-paced online introductory course on the children and armed conflict agenda, which is supported by Malta and freely accessible through the web page of the College. In November 2024, the Office of the Special Representative launched an advanced training course aimed at complementing the knowledge acquired through the primer.

C. Building partnerships with regional and subregional organizations

African Union

53. The Special Representative continued her strong partnership with the African Union. In September 2024, she met with the Chairperson of the African Union Commission to discuss strategic engagement between her Office and the African Union on child protection matters, including early warning, child-sensitive mediation, engagement with regional economic communities and mechanisms, and advocacy to end and prevent grave violations against children. In October 2024, she led a session on children affected by armed conflict during the annual exchange between the Security Council and the Peace and Security Council of the African Union.

European Union

54. In September 2024, the Special Representative met with the Vice-President for Democracy and Demography of the European Commission and the Managing Director for the Global Agenda and Multilateral Relations at the European External Action Service. In November 2024, she met with the Coordinator on children's rights of the European Parliament and the Commissioner-designate for intergenerational fairness, youth, culture and sport; in March 2025, she met with the Commissioner for equality and for preparedness and crisis management. In June 2025, the Special Representative provided a video recording for the European Forum on the Rights of the Child.

55. The Europe Liaison Office of the Special Representative provided information on children and armed conflict to interested stakeholders, followed relevant policy discussions and met regularly with the Permanent Representations and staff members of the institutions of the European Union. The Europe Liaison Office provided the following briefings: to the European Parliament Subcommittee on Human Rights in December 2024; to staff of the European Union Directorate-General for European Civil Protection and Humanitarian Aid Operations; to delegations and States members of the European Union in May 2025; to human rights and gender advisers to Common Security and Defence Policy missions and operations in June 2025; and to the Council of the European Union Working Party on Human Rights and to members of the cabinets of several European Commissioners and of the High Representative of the Union for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy in July 2025. The Europe Liaison Office also provided briefings in the context of the European Security and Defence College training on human security in Common Security and Defence Policy missions and operations and the Common Security and Defence Policy orientation course in April and May 2025, respectively.

North Atlantic Treaty Organization

56. The Europe Liaison Office of the Special Representative continued to engage with the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) on the implementation of its policy on children and armed conflict. In November 2024, the Special Representative met with the NATO Special Representative for Women, Peace and Security, who also covers the protection of conflict-affected children. In December 2024, the Europe Liaison Office provided an induction session on children and armed conflict to the informal group of friends of NATO allies on human security and, in March 2025, participated in the United Nations-NATO staff talks.

Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe

57. In November 2024, the Special Representative briefed the Permanent Council of OSCE and met with representatives of the OSCE secretariat. The Europe Liaison

Office continued to provide support to the Group of Friends to OSCE, including in relation to the voluntary questions on children and armed conflict annexed to the questionnaire on the OSCE Code of Conduct on Politico-Military Aspects of Security.

League of Arab States

58. In February 2025, the Analysis and Outreach Hub in Doha of the Office of the Special Representative and UNESCO convened a regional workshop in Cairo with the League of Arab States to strengthen child protection and education in conflict-affected settings, attended by staff from key departments of the secretariat of the League. A follow-up workshop in Doha in the same month, organized with the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime, raised awareness among selected States members of the League of the growing risks of online child exploitation and recruitment in conflict zones. In September 2024, the Special Representative virtually addressed the Arab Childhood Committee of the League and met with League officials; in November 2024, she delivered a video statement at an international conference organized by the League on protecting the rights of Palestinian children.

D. Building partnerships with civil society and academia

59. The Special Representative continued to prioritize enhancing partnerships with civil society organizations and academia. She remained engaged with non-governmental organizations based in New York, Europe and Doha. The Special Representative participated in dozens of events organized by civil society organizations, and dozens more were attended by representatives of her Office.

60. In August 2024, the Office of the Special Representative participated in the Geneva Policy Workshop on Children and Armed Conflict organized by Watchlist on Children and Armed Conflict and the Geneva Human Rights Platform. In October 2024, the Special Representative shared a video message for a side event on the margins of the thirty-fourth International Conference of the Red Cross and Red Crescent organized by Save the Children International, Watchlist on Children and Armed Conflict, the International Committee of the Red Cross, the International Federation of the Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies and six Member States. In January 2025, the Special Representative shared a video statement for the annual policy workshop of Watchlist on Children and Armed Conflict.

61. In May 2025, together with the All Survivors Project, the Liechtenstein Institute on Self-Determination at Princeton University and seven Member States, the Office co-sponsored a side event during Protection of Civilians Week in New York. In June 2025, the Office of the Special Representative renewed its partnership with the All Survivors Project.

62. The Special Representative continued to support the work of the Malta Foundation for the Wellbeing of Society, including the launch of its *Manual on Conducting a National Consultation Process on Children and Armed Conflict*, in which she participated in March 2025.

63. The Special Representative and her Office continued to collaborate with the Universities Network for Children in Armed Conflict. In October 2024, the Special Representative spoke at an event organized in New York by the Network and Italy. In November 2024, the Office provided training sessions as part of the Network's advanced course on mediation in international conflicts. In March 2025, the Special Representative spoke in Geneva at an event organized by the Network, Italy, Kazakhstan, the Philippines and Slovenia. In April 2025, she gave an expert lecture on enhancing child protection in armed conflict at University Niccolò Cusano in

Rome. In June 2025, she delivered opening remarks, and her Office delivered a training session, as part of the Network's advanced training course on international criminal jurisdiction and children in armed conflict.

64. In October 2024, through its Analysis and Outreach Hub in Doha, the Office of the Special Representative organized a workshop on children and armed conflict for students from Georgetown University, Northwestern University and Hamad Bin Khalifa University. In February 2025, it organized training for students from the Center for Conflict and Humanitarian Studies and staff from the Qatar Fund for Development and, in April 2025, for students of the Qatar University law school. In March 2025, the Office of the Special Representative met with students of the Graduate Institute of International and Development Studies in Geneva to present the children and armed conflict mandate and the "Prove It Matters" campaign.

65. In September 2024 and March and June 2025, the Europe Liaison Office delivered a module on children and armed conflict as part of generic training in civilian crisis management organized in Belgium by the Egmont Royal Institute for International Relations. In November 2024, the Liaison Office provided training on children and armed conflict for Belgians deployed as part of European Union crisis management missions.

66. The Office of the Special Representative continued to collaborate on research projects with the Liechtenstein Institute on Self-Determination at Princeton University within the framework of the memorandum of understanding signed in April 2024, including on two forthcoming publications on aspects of reintegration, namely gender, and justice and accountability.

E. Building partnerships within the United Nations system

67. The Special Representative continued to work with the Security Council and its relevant subsidiary organs. Her Office supported the negotiation and adoption of resolution [2764 \(2024\)](#) in December 2024 and the organization of the annual open debate of the Security Council on children and armed conflict, held in June 2025 under the presidency of Guyana. With the support of her Office, the Secretary-General issued country reports on children and armed conflict in Burkina Faso ([S/2025/101](#)), the Democratic Republic of the Congo ([S/2024/705](#)), Mali ([S/2024/883](#)), Myanmar ([S/2025/81](#)) and the Philippines ([S/2024/626](#)). Four global horizontal notes were issued to the Working Group on Children and Armed Conflict. The Office of the Special Representative supported the organization of a visit by the Working Group to Colombia in December 2024, organized an induction session on children and armed conflict for incoming members of the Security Council in January 2025 and co-sponsored, with Belgium, Malta and Norway, a capacity-building retreat for the Working Group organized by Security Council Report and Watchlist on Children and Armed Conflict in February 2025.

68. The Special Representative deepened her cooperation with other United Nations entities. She met with senior officials of the Department of Peace Operations, the Department of Political and Peacebuilding Affairs, the Development Coordination Office and UNICEF. For the preparation of the latest annual report of the Secretary-General on children and armed conflict, she coordinated two task force meetings at the principal level comprising various United Nations partners that contribute to the monitoring and reporting mechanism on children and armed conflict. The Office of the Special Representative and UNICEF, as co-chairs, organized one principal-level and three technical-level meetings of the Monitoring and Reporting Mechanism Technical Reference Group on grave violations against children in armed conflict, which brings together the Office of the Special Representative, UNICEF, the

Department of Peace Operations and the Department of Political and Peacebuilding Affairs. The Technical Reference Group and the Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs, as an observer, met an additional eight times in the context of developing *Denial of Humanitarian Access to Children: A Guidance Note for the Children and Armed Conflict Agenda* and its companion piece, a background note entitled “Denial of humanitarian access in the context of the children and armed conflict agenda”, launched at a high-level event held in June 2025 at the United Nations Headquarters.

69. The Office of the Special Representative continued to cooperate with the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR), the International Labour Organization, UNHCR, the World Health Organization and the Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs regarding their participation in the monitoring and reporting mechanism on children and armed conflict and common initiatives. In March 2025, the Special Representative met with the UNHCR Assistant High Commissioner for Protection and the United Nations Deputy High Commissioner for Human Rights. In April 2025, she met with the Head of the Independent Institution on Missing Persons in the Syrian Arab Republic.

70. Her Office contributed to OHCHR reports on child rights mainstreaming across the United Nations (A/HRC/59/38); accessible, inclusive, equitable and quality education for peace and tolerance for every child, especially children in the most vulnerable situations (A/HRC/59/33); and the rights of the child and violations of the human rights of children in armed conflicts. In the light of the call to action on human rights of the Secretary-General, the Office of the Special Representative continued to participate in the work of the task team responsible for the implementation of the Guidance Note of the Secretary-General on Child Rights Mainstreaming.

71. Implementation of the memorandum of understanding signed in September 2022 between the Office of the Special Representative and UNESCO continued, including through the launch, in January 2025, of the joint guidance for teachers and educators on education for children and young people affected by armed conflict, in particular those formerly associated with armed forces and groups. In September 2024, the Special Representative met with the UNESCO Assistant Director-General for Education and, in September and October 2024, she engaged with the Head of the UNESCO Doha Office for the Gulf States and Yemen.

72. The Special Representative regularly exchanged information with the Special Representative on Violence against Children and the Special Representative on Sexual Violence in Conflict. Alongside the Office of the Special Representative on Violence against Children, the Office of the Special Representative briefed Third Committee delegates on their respective mandates at a special briefing organized in New York in June 2025 by the Delegation of the European Union to the United Nations and the Permanent Mission of Uruguay to the United Nations, in their capacity as co-penholders of the biennial resolution on the rights of the child. The Special Representative continued to serve on the Steering Committee of United Nations Action against Sexual Violence in Conflict and, in February 2025, she participated in a high-level meeting of the Committee, chaired by the Special Representative on Sexual Violence in Conflict. In June 2025, the Special Representative spoke at a high-level event to commemorate the International Day for the Elimination of Sexual Violence in Conflict, which her Office had co-organized with Argentina and the Office of the Special Representative on Sexual Violence in Conflict. The Special Representative and her Office continued to participate in the system-wide working group on sexual exploitation and abuse.

73. Regular communication with the Human Rights Council regarding child rights violations in situations of conflict continued. In March 2025, the Special

Representative presented her annual report to the Council ([A/HRC/58/18](#)). During the reporting period, her Office provided input to the universal periodic reviews of Lebanon, Libya and Myanmar. The Special Representative and her Office continued to cooperate with the Council's special procedure mandate holders and engaged with nine of its special rapporteurs and independent experts on common areas of concern. The Office provided input used in the preparation of the visit to Somalia of the Special Rapporteur on the promotion and protection of human rights and fundamental freedoms while countering terrorism, as well as of the reports of the Special Rapporteur on minority issues in November 2024 and the Independent expert on the situation of human rights in Somalia in June 2025. In collaboration with the Special Rapporteur on trafficking in persons, especially women and children, the Office of the Special Representative developed a research study on child trafficking in armed conflict, launched in October 2024 during a high-level event co-organized with the Special Rapporteur, Colombia, Greece, Panama and the Philippines. The Special Representative and her Office also met with the Independent International Commission of Inquiry on the Syrian Arab Republic.

74. The Office of the Special Representative cooperated with the Committee on the Rights of the Child on the inclusion of children affected by armed conflict in reviews of the implementation by States Parties of the Convention on the Rights of the Child, including by providing input to the Committee's country-specific concluding observations on Burkina Faso and Colombia. In August 2024, the Office contributed to the Committee's draft general comment No. 27 on children's rights to access justice and effective remedies. In September 2024, the Office of the Special Representative and the Committee formalized their cooperation through a memorandum of understanding and issued a press release expressing their alarm at the execution of four young people in Somalia for crimes committed as minors. In November 2024, the Special Representative and the Chair of the Committee marked the thirty-fifth anniversary of the entry into force of the Convention on the Rights of the Child with a press release. In July 2025, the Special Representative met with the newly elected Chair of the Committee.

75. The Office of the Special Representative closely followed system-wide processes, including those associated with the Pact for the Future, leading efforts under action 14 (b) to track implementation in the peace and security working group, as well as the discussions on a legally binding instrument on the prevention and punishment of crimes against humanity, advocating the inclusion of language on children and armed conflict. Her Office provided input to the ongoing review of the United Nations human rights due diligence policy framework and participated in the inter-agency working group on gender and disability inclusion.

VI. Recommendations

76. The Special Representative remains deeply alarmed by the scale and severity of the grave violations committed against children, including killing and maiming, the denial of humanitarian access, recruitment and use, and abduction as the violations with the greatest number of verified cases during the reporting period. She urges all parties to immediately prevent their occurrence and reoccurrence. She urges Member States to adopt and implement legislation criminalizing violations and abuses against children, and to strengthen accountability and end impunity.

77. The Special Representative is concerned by the continued trend of killing and maiming of children by explosive weapons and remnants of war, including the use of explosive weapons with wide-area effects, including in populated areas,

as well as the use of improvised explosive devices, landmines and bombs. She calls upon Member States to become parties to and fully implement international legal instruments pertaining to those weapons, including anti-personnel mines and cluster munitions, and to comply with international humanitarian law. Armed groups must also refrain from their use. The Special Representative calls upon Member States to endorse and implement the Political Declaration on Strengthening the Protection of Civilians from the Humanitarian Consequences Arising from the Use of Explosive Weapons in Populated Areas and to promote and prioritize mine clearance and the clearance of explosive remnants of war, mine-risk education programmes for children, victim assistance and stockpile destruction, including prior to any movement of internally displaced persons back to contaminated areas.

78. The Special Representative calls upon parties to conflict to allow and facilitate safe, timely and unimpeded humanitarian access, as well as access by children to services, assistance and protection, and to ensure the safety and security of humanitarian personnel and assets. Recalling their civilian character, she urges Member States to do their utmost to protect schools, students and teachers, as well as hospitals, healthcare institutions and health workers, in the conduct of their operations.

79. The Special Representative calls upon Member States to ensure that child protection provisions and capacity are included in all relevant mandates of the United Nations peacekeeping operations and special political missions in line with the 2017 policy on child protection in United Nations peace operations. During mission transitions, including start-ups, reconfigurations, drawdowns or withdrawals, child protection frameworks should be upheld, and data and capacity preserved and transferred.

80. The Special Representative calls upon all Member States to ratify and implement the Convention on the Rights of the Child and accede to its Optional Protocol on the involvement of children in armed conflict, and to endorse and implement the Paris Principles, the Safe Schools Declaration and the Vancouver Principles.

81. The Special Representative reiterates calls for long-term, holistic, gender- and age-sensitive reintegration programmes for children formerly associated with armed forces or armed groups, calling upon Member States and other reintegration actors to provide sustainable support for such efforts across the humanitarian-development-peace spectrum.

82. The Special Representative underlines the importance of data analysis and data management for the prevention of grave violations and, in addition to the Third Committee, encourages the Security Council, the Fifth Committee and the Advisory Committee on Administrative and Budgetary Questions, as well as donors, to ensure that child protection priorities are concretely translated into the budgeting and staffing resources necessary to support data analysis, data management, monitoring and reporting.

83. The Special Representative calls for increased capacity-building for technical support and advice on the children and armed conflict agenda to relevant national, regional and subregional and international partners, including governments, military personnel, the United Nations and civil society, and invites Member States to support this process.