

## 28. Children and armed conflict

In 2019, the Council held one meeting in connection with the item entitled “Children and armed conflict”, which took the form of an open debate.<sup>555</sup> The Council did not adopt any decisions under this item during the period under review. More information on the meeting, including on participants and speakers, is given in the table below.

On 2 August 2019, the Council held an open debate at the initiative of Poland, which held the Presidency for the month.<sup>556</sup> At the meeting, the Council heard briefings by the Special Representative of the Secretary-General for Children and Armed Conflict, the Executive Director of the United Nations Children’s Fund (UNICEF), the UNICEF Canada Ambassador and a child protection professional.<sup>557</sup>

The Special Representative of the Secretary-General gave a briefing to the Council further to the report of the Secretary-General on children and armed conflict for 2018.<sup>558</sup> The Special Representative recalled that 20 years had passed since the Council had adopted resolution 1261 (1999), the first resolution on children and armed conflict, and 10 years since the adoption of resolution 1882 (2009), by which it had decided to increase the focus of the children and armed conflict mandate on killing, maiming and rape and other forms of sexual violence. She provided an overview of her engagement with the parties to conflict, the most tangible outcome of which had been three new action plans signed with non-State actors. The Special Representative informed the Council that although there were fewer violations against children across four of the six categories of violations in 2018, there was an increase in killing and maiming, with approximately 40 per cent of incidents caused by unexploded ordnance, and similar levels of sexual violence. In terms of positive developments, she highlighted the record number of children who had benefited from reintegration assistance and had been separated from parties to conflict thanks to the engagement of protection actors as part of the implementation of action plans or as result of emerging peace processes. The Special Representative requested the Council’s support to engage with parties to conflict in order to end and prevent violations and ensure that there existed the requisite child protection capacity to give children affected by conflict the support they needed.

The Executive Director of UNICEF noted that, as presented in the report of the Secretary-General, there had been 24,000 documented violations against children in 2018, up from 21,000 in 2017, half of which involved killing or maiming. She gave an overview of the support provided by UNICEF, including emergency education in humanitarian crises, psychosocial support and sustainable and evidence-based reintegration programmes, and called on Member States to reintegrate children associated with armed groups into society and to support holistic reintegration programming. In her remarks, the UNICEF Canada Ambassador recalled her experience as a child victim of the conflict in Sierra Leone, as well as her experience of working with UNICEF. She underscored the need for the Council to do more to protect children, including by supporting training, education, counselling and other reintegration tools for children and by specifically addressing the needs of children disabled in conflict. The child protection professional described his experience as a child soldier during the Sudanese civil war and called on the Governments represented in the Security Council Chamber to promote the right to mental health and psychological well-being in international and national forums and to invest in child protection systems and services. He also encouraged Governments to ensure that United Nations peace operations had the necessary resources to advance the children and armed conflict agenda and urged them to take action to address the ongoing violations of children’s rights, including by calling on all countries to endorse the relevant international instruments, to end and prevent grave violations against children and to prioritize justice for crimes against children.

During the subsequent discussion, speakers expressed regret that, 10 years after the adoption of resolution 1882 (2009), violations against children persisted and had in fact increased in 2018. They condemned the killing and maiming of children and sexual violence committed against children, and called on parties to conflict to uphold the rights of children in accordance with international law. Speakers welcomed the increase in the number of children released into reintegration programmes and underscored the importance of such programmes being comprehensive and providing educational, health-care, vocational, psychosocial and other forms of support. They reiterated the need for children associated with armed groups to be treated as victims. Many speakers noted the connection between conflict prevention and addressing the root causes of conflict and the child protection agenda and called for accountability for violations and access to justice for victims. Speakers

<sup>555</sup> For more information on the format of meetings, see part II, sect. I.

<sup>556</sup> The Council had before it a concept note annexed to a letter dated 30 July 2019 (S/2019/605).

<sup>557</sup> See S/PV.8591.

<sup>558</sup> A/73/907-S/2019/509.

drew attention to the many tools at the disposal of the Council and the United Nations for child protection, including the deployment of Child Protection Advisers and the strengthening of child protection mandates in peacekeeping operations, the listing of parties in the annexes to the reports of the Secretary-General on children and armed conflict, and the conclusion of action plans with parties to conflict. The representative of Belgium said that as Chair of the Working Group on Children and Armed Conflict, Belgium had helped to build consensus on two sets of conclusions regarding serious violations of children's rights in the Syrian Arab Republic and Myanmar, and had engaged with the sanctions committees to follow up on previous conclusions. She proposed that the Special Representative of the Secretary-General for Children and Armed Conflict regularly address the Council on national situations, as had already been the case for Yemen and the Central African Republic.

Speakers underlined that the primary responsibility for the protection of children lay with Member States and called on those States that had not already done so to sign and ratify the relevant international instruments. The representative of China stated that the international community should fully respect the leadership of the countries concerned, enhance dialogue and communication and provide effective support and assistance. The representative of

the Russian Federation added that the Council should not duplicate the work of other United Nations entities in the consideration of issues related to the rights of children in a context outside the maintenance of international peace and security.

In 2019, the Council addressed the children and armed conflict agenda in a number of its country- and region-specific decisions and in decisions relating to thematic items. Selected provisions of decisions in which the Council explicitly referenced actions or measures in relation to the children and armed conflict agenda during 2019 are listed in table 2. Implicit references or mere reiterations of actions or measures that may have been undertaken in previous years are not featured in table 2. In this regard, in 2019, the Council, among other things: (a) condemned and demanded the cessation of and accountability for violations and abuses against children and compliance with international instruments; (b) called for the implementation of action plans and programmes on children and armed conflict; (c) underscored the importance of taking into account child protection concerns in demobilization, disarmament and reintegration processes and security sector reform; (d) requested monitoring, analysis and reporting on child protection concerns; and (e) called for the introduction of protection of children as a cross-cutting issue in the United Nations system.

**Table 1**  
**Meetings: children and armed conflict**

<i>Meeting record and date</i>	<i>Sub-item</i>	<i>Other documents</i>	<i>Rule 37 invitations</i>	<i>Rule 39 and other invitations</i>	<i>Speakers</i>	<i>Decision and vote (for-against-abstaining)</i>
<b>S/PV.8591</b> 2 August 2019	Report of the Secretary-General on children and armed conflict ( <a href="#">S/2019/509</a> )  Letter dated 30 July 2019 from the Permanent Representative of Poland to the United Nations addressed to the Security Council ( <a href="#">S/2019/605</a> )		61 Member States <sup>a</sup>	Eight invitees <sup>b</sup>	All Council members, <sup>c</sup> all invitees <sup>d</sup>	

<sup>a</sup> Afghanistan, Andorra, Angola, Argentina, Armenia, Azerbaijan, Bahrain, Bangladesh, Brazil, Bulgaria, Canada, Colombia, Ecuador, Egypt, El Salvador, Estonia, Ethiopia, Fiji, Georgia, Guatemala, India, Iran (Islamic Republic of), Iraq, Ireland, Israel, Italy, Japan, Jordan, Kazakhstan, Kenya, Liberia, Liechtenstein, Luxembourg, Malaysia, Maldives, Mexico, Montenegro, Morocco, Myanmar, Norway, Pakistan, Philippines, Portugal, Qatar, Republic of Korea, San Marino, Saudi Arabia, Sierra Leone, Slovenia, Spain, Sudan, Switzerland, Syrian Arab Republic, Thailand, Turkey, Ukraine, United Arab Emirates, Uruguay, Venezuela (Bolivarian Republic of), Viet Nam and Yemen.

<sup>b</sup> Special Representative of the Secretary-General for Children and Armed Conflict; Executive Director of the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF); UNICEF Canada Ambassador; Chargé d'affaires a.i. of the Delegation of the European Union to the United Nations; North Atlantic Treaty Organization Special Representative for Women, Peace and Security; Permanent Observer of the Holy See to the United Nations; Permanent Observer of the State of Palestine to the United Nations; and child protection professional.

<sup>c</sup> Poland (President of the Council) was represented by its Minister for Foreign Affairs.

<sup>d</sup> The representative of Canada spoke on behalf of the Group of Friends of Children and Armed Conflict; the representative of Estonia spoke also on behalf of Latvia and Lithuania; the representative of Norway spoke on behalf of the Nordic countries; the representative of Viet Nam spoke on behalf of the Association of Southeast Asian Nations; and the Chargé d'affaires a.i. of the Delegation of the European Union spoke on behalf of the European Union and its member States, as well as Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Georgia, North Macedonia, Montenegro, the Republic of Moldova, Serbia and Ukraine.

Table 2

**Selection of provisions relevant to children and armed conflict, by theme and agenda item**

	<i>Agenda item</i>	<i>Decision</i>	<i>Paragraph</i>
<b>Condemnation of and demands for cessation of and accountability for violations and abuses against children and compliance with international instruments</b>			
<b>Country- and region-specific</b>	The situation in the Central African Republic	Resolution <a href="#">2499 (2019)</a>	24, 25
	The situation concerning the Democratic Republic of the Congo	Resolution <a href="#">2463 (2019)</a>	10, 11
		Resolution <a href="#">2502 (2019)</a>	6, 11, 12, 13, 50 (c)
	The situation in Guinea-Bissau	Resolution <a href="#">2458 (2019)</a>	19
	Peace consolidation in West Africa	<a href="#">S/PRST/2019/7</a>	twenty-second paragraph
	The situation in Mali	Resolution <a href="#">2480 (2019)</a>	7, 55, 57
	The situation in the Middle East	<a href="#">S/PRST/2019/9</a>	second paragraph
	The situation in Somalia	Resolution <a href="#">2461 (2019)</a>	15, 17
		Resolution <a href="#">2472 (2019)</a>	15, 29
		Resolution <a href="#">2500 (2019)</a>	20
Reports of the Secretary-General on the Sudan and South Sudan		Resolution <a href="#">2459 (2019)</a>	27, 35
		Resolution <a href="#">2469 (2019)</a>	26
<b>Thematic</b>	Cooperation between the United Nations and regional and subregional organizations in maintaining international peace and security	Resolution <a href="#">2497 (2019)</a>	26
		<a href="#">S/PRST/2019/11</a>	twelfth paragraph
	Protection of civilians in armed conflict	Resolution <a href="#">2474 (2019)</a>	4
	Women and peace and security	Resolution <a href="#">2467 (2019)</a>	5, 15, 18, 25, 32

**Part I. Consideration of questions under the responsibility of  
the Security Council for the maintenance of  
international peace and security**

<i>Agenda item</i>	<i>Decision</i>	<i>Paragraph</i>
<b>Action plans and programmes on children and armed conflict</b>		
<b>Country- and region-specific</b>		
The situation in Afghanistan	Resolution <a href="#">2489 (2019)</a>	5 (g)
The situation in the Central African Republic	Resolution <a href="#">2499 (2019)</a>	24
The situation concerning the Democratic Republic of the Congo	Resolution <a href="#">2463 (2019)</a>	9, 18, 29 (i) (b), 30 (i) (a) and (d), 31
	Resolution <a href="#">2502 (2019)</a>	11, 29 (ii) (k)
The situation concerning Iraq	Resolution <a href="#">2470 (2019)</a>	2 (f)
The situation in Mali	Resolution <a href="#">2480 (2019)</a>	57
The situation in Somalia	Resolution <a href="#">2461 (2019)</a>	15, 17
	Resolution <a href="#">2472 (2019)</a>	29
Reports of the Secretary-General on the Sudan and South Sudan	Resolution <a href="#">2459 (2019)</a>	27, 28
<b>Thematic</b>		
Protection of civilians in armed conflict	Resolution <a href="#">2475 (2019)</a>	4
Women and peace and security	Resolution <a href="#">2467 (2019)</a>	25, 28
<b>Child protection in disarmament, demobilization and reintegration processes and security sector reform</b>		
<b>Country and region-specific</b>		
The situation in the Central African Republic	Resolution <a href="#">2499 (2019)</a>	12, 33 (c) (i), 43
The situation concerning the Democratic Republic of the Congo	Resolution <a href="#">2463 (2019)</a>	18, 30 (i) (a) and (c), 30 (ii) (b), 31
	Resolution <a href="#">2502 (2019)</a>	17, 19, 29 (ii) (g) and (i), 31
The situation concerning Iraq	Resolution <a href="#">2470 (2019)</a>	2 (f)
The situation in Mali	Resolution <a href="#">2480 (2019)</a>	28 (a) (ii), 57
Reports of the Secretary-General on the Sudan and South Sudan	Resolution <a href="#">2459 (2019)</a>	27, 28
<b>Thematic</b>		
Cooperation between the United Nations and regional and subregional organizations in maintaining international peace and security	Resolution <a href="#">2457 (2019)</a>	17
Women and peace and security	Resolution <a href="#">2467 (2019)</a>	16 (c)
<b>Monitoring, analysis and report on violations and abuses against children</b>		
<b>Country and region-specific</b>		
The situation in Afghanistan	Resolution <a href="#">2489 (2019)</a>	5 (g)
This situation in the Central African Republic	Resolution <a href="#">2499 (2019)</a>	33 (d) (ii)
The situation concerning the Democratic Republic of the Congo	Resolution <a href="#">2463 (2019)</a>	29 (i) (b), 46 (ii)
	Resolution <a href="#">2502 (2019)</a>	31
The situation in Mali	Resolution <a href="#">2480 (2019)</a>	28 (e) (ii)

	<i>Agenda item</i>	<i>Decision</i>	<i>Paragraph</i>
	The situation in Somalia	Resolution <a href="#">2498 (2019)</a>	21
	Reports of the Secretary-General on the Sudan and South Sudan	Resolution <a href="#">2459 (2019)</a>	7 (c) (ii)
		Resolution <a href="#">2469 (2019)</a>	27
		Resolution <a href="#">2495 (2019)</a>	3 (iii)
		Resolution <a href="#">2497 (2019)</a>	27
<b>Thematic</b>	Women and peace and security	Resolution <a href="#">2467 (2019)</a>	5, 7, 18, 32
<b>Introduction of child protection as a cross-cutting issue in the United Nations system, including through the deployment of Child Protection Advisers in United Nations peace operations</b>			
<b>Country and region-specific</b>	The situation in Afghanistan	Resolution <a href="#">2489 (2019)</a>	5 (f) and (g)
	The situation in the Central African Republic	Resolution <a href="#">2499 (2019)</a>	32 (a) (iii), 33 (c) (i), 43
	The situation concerning the Democratic Republic of the Congo	Resolution <a href="#">2463 (2019)</a>	30 (i) (a), (c) and (d), 30 (ii) (b), 31
		Resolution <a href="#">2502 (2019)</a>	11, 17, 29 (i) (c), (ii) (g), (i) and (k), 31
	The situation concerning Iraq	Resolution <a href="#">2470 (2019)</a>	2 (f)
	The situation in Libya	Resolution <a href="#">2486 (2019)</a>	5
	The situation in Mali	Resolution <a href="#">2480 (2019)</a>	28 (a) (ii), (c) (iii), 55, 57
	Reports of the Secretary-General on the Sudan and South Sudan	Resolution <a href="#">2459 (2019)</a>	7 (a) (i), (vi) and (vii), 18, 28
		Resolution <a href="#">2469 (2019)</a>	27
		Resolution <a href="#">2497 (2019)</a>	28
<b>Thematic</b>	Women and peace and security	Resolution <a href="#">2467 (2019)</a>	7, 12, 18, 25

## 29. Protection of civilians in armed conflict

In 2019, the Council held three meetings to consider the protection of civilians in armed conflict, including one high-level meeting, which took the form of an open debate.<sup>559</sup> The Council adopted two resolutions under this item. More information on the meetings, including on participants, speakers and outcomes, is given in table 1 below.

On 23 May 2019, the Council held a ministerial-level open debate<sup>560</sup> at the initiative of Indonesia, which held the Presidency for the month,<sup>561</sup> to mark the twentieth anniversary of the inclusion of the item on the agenda of the Council.<sup>562</sup> At the meeting, the Council heard briefings by the Secretary-General, the

<sup>559</sup> For more information on the format of meetings, see part II, sect. I.

<sup>560</sup> See [S/PV.8534](#).

<sup>561</sup> The Council had before it a concept note annexed to a letter dated 8 May 2019 ([S/2019/385](#)).

<sup>562</sup> See [S/PV.3977](#).