

-STUDY GUIDE-



UNICEF

Child Recruitment in War Matters



PADUAMUN2024

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Letter from the Secretary General

Hello and welcome to PADUAMUN 2024! My name is Mariagrazia Elena Pascarella Burger, and I am thrilled and deeply honored to be your Secretary-General for the 2024 edition of PADUAMUN. The journey leading up to this moment has been filled with excitement and anticipation as our team has worked tirelessly to ensure that this year's conference surpasses all expectations. We have left no stone unturned in our quest to make PADUAMUN 2024 truly exceptional.

My Model UN journey started in 2021, my first Virtual MUN where I received a Verbal Mention in the SOCHUM committee. But my first time enjoying and understanding what really Model United Nations is about was in the PADUAMUN 2022, I remember being extremely nervous from hours of practicing and memorizing, even tho I won Outstanding Delegate it was not until the PUCPMUN in Lima that I understood that I didn't need to memorize everything or be so nervous, it was also there when found my committee Disec securing a Verbal Mention. In 2023, my MUN journey expanded with participation in four conferences all of them being the Disec committees always working in doubles. In Lima, I attended NewtonMUN, SanSilvestreMUN, and MarkhamMUN, earning Honorable Mention, Best Position Paper Award, and Outstanding Delegate respectively. At PaduaMUN, I clinched the Best Delegate title. My most recent challenge was preparing and debating in the NHSMUN in New York, where I represented my skills in the LEGAL committee. As I look ahead to PADUAMUN 2024, To all participants, both seasoned veterans and newcomers alike, I offer a word of encouragement: seize this opportunity to shine. Showcasing your leadership, creativity, and collaboration skills will not only enrich your own experience but also contribute to the collective success of the conference. Together, let us engage in thought-provoking discussions, foster creative solutions, and forge lasting friendships. With that said, I extend my warmest wishes for a memorable and rewarding experience at PADUAMUN 2024. May this conference inspire you to reach new heights and leave an indelible mark on your MUN journey. I eagerly anticipate the vibrant debates, innovative ideas, and camaraderie that await us in August.

Until then, let us make PADUAMUN 2024 an unforgettable chapter in the annals of Model United Nations. I look forward to seeing you all in August!

Letter of the Director

Dear delegates,

Welcome to the UNICEF Committee! My name is Bruno Bambarén and I'll be your director for this edition of Padua Model UN. It is always a great pleasure for me to be part of these amazing academic and human experiences. I am eager to see you debate at the highest level, with impactful speeches, positive leadership, and feasible proposals.

So you may know me a bit better, I am a third-year student of International Relations at Universidad Peruana de Ciencias Aplicadas (UPC), also coursing a double major in Philosophy, Politics, Economics, and Law at the University of Arizona (UA). As evidenced by my two chosen careers, I am highly interested in foreign policy, international trade, economics, power dynamics, and overall, the endeavors that shape the world we live in. I have participated in Model UN since 2019, debating at several national conferences and three Havard Conferences hosted in Paris, Boston, and Panama. Also, as not everything is debate and books in life, I spend my free time watching movies, going on long walks with my dog and noise-canceling headphones, and playing board games with my friends and family.

As a chair I value argumentative debate, specifically, I would look forward to hearing contentful ideas and solution-oriented negotiations. In that sense, I encourage you to do your best effort during research to really understand the root causes of the issue and address them appropriately. I consider coherent solutions to be a **must** at Model UN, thus, it is crucial for you to deeply understand your country's policy and how its foreign council addresses the issue.

Finally, I encourage you to make friends and have a lot of fun during the committee! As a disclaimer, Paris, Mikelly and I will be alert for disrespectful and discriminatory behaviors as we want to make this committee a great experience for everyone.

See you soon!

Letter from the chairs

Dear delegates, it is our great pleasure to welcome you to Padua Model United Nations 2024!

We are Mikelly and Paris, and we are more than honored to be your chairs at this UNICEF committee, with the multiplex topic of Child Recruitment in War Matters, an issue we are specifically captivated by due to its nature, requiring thinking beyond what may initially seem to be the only necessary material, for gaps closing on Children's Rights violation.

Therefore, Model UN did not take our entire heart from the start. We both share the experience of starting shaking and remember watching the clock every 2 seconds waiting for it to end. Nonetheless, as we started speaking up more, MUN suddenly changed our lives. And yes, we do still shake when giving a brain-cracking speech; however, if there is something at least we have learned throughout this journey, it is to enjoy the process and take the risk! Remember that to make it happen some sacrifices should be made. Besides getting an award (which is consistently satisfying), it taught us we weren't the only ones who got scared when walking up to the speaking floor with handwritten ideas pasted in post-its.

Today, we cannot be more thankful for how MUN shaped us. From trying to understand complex global issues, to having the chance to meet such kind people during the process. Anyhow, we do maintain some other interests and passions. More specifically, listening to 1D as many times as we have the possibility to (their songs were our musical background while doing this guide). And remember, this is just the beginning! Use this guide to launch your research and delve deeper into the topic staying within your countries' policies, knowledgeable of in-depth background information, mindful of diplomacy, and full of energy throughout the conference. We wish you all the best during your preparation, and in what solutions you will come up with to a pertinent topic in today's society.

Can not wait to meet you all, our very best wishes!

Mikelly Rodriguez and Paris Alban

History of the committee

The primary goal of this section of the study guide is to ensure that delegates comprehend the functions, powers, and limitations of the committee. After reviewing it, delegates should be able to grasp the types of solutions the dais anticipates.

The United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF) is a United Nations organization responsible for delivering humanitarian and development assistance to children worldwide. The devastation and turmoils of World War II brought light to the issue of civilian protection and quality of life within the scope of situations of conflict.



The disparate and inefficient management of resources exacerbated structural violence against those in the most conflict-affected areas, deeping into despair and further from the prospect of recovering. To establish easier global-scale support systems, and to provide aid to every child regardless of their country's position in the war, the creation of the United Nations Children's Emergency Fund was proposed by the General Assembly in 1946.

Therefore, its main objective is to promote Children rights, ensuring their well-being in their autonomy mural regardless of their origin. It is the only organization specifically referred to in the Convention on the Rights of the Child as a source of specialist assistance and advice.

On that count, as the world became increasingly globalized, Children's rights became integrated into national development plans and consequently UNICEF has

become an international device capable of liberating hundreds of millions of children from ignorance, disease, malnutrition and warlike matters.

Role and powers

In the years following, up until the present day, UNICEF has expanded to 190 countries while maintaining its mission to provide depoliticized and equal aid to children across war and conflict in every country.

UNICEF actively involves everyone in creating safe environments for children. The organization intervenes promptly during emergencies and in any situation where children are at risk, ensuring that no child is subjected to violence, abuse, or exploitation, making certain that children have the best start in life and can thrive in an environment free of poverty, inequality, discrimination and indoctrination.

Committed on 3 main pillars:

- a) Education: UNICEF's goal on education is to promote access to quality education for all children, including those in marginalized communities or affected by emergencies, it supports every child's right to an education no matter where they must learn, under a tent in a refugee camp, at a local school or at home using a parent's mobile phone. They advocate for inclusive and equitable education systems to support initiatives that enhance learning opportunities for children globally.
- b) Health: UNICEF focuses on improving child health and nutrition worldwide. They work to ensure access to essential healthcare services, vaccinations, clean water, and nutritious food, regarding war matters they aim to prevent outbreaks by immunizing displaced and refugee children against diseases like measles and polio. Moreover, they highlight the importance of protecting mental health by spreading well-being programs to children who have gone through traumatic experiences or scenes.
- c) Protection: They advocate for children's rights and support legal frameworks that safeguard children's well-being, aiming to create protective environments where children can grow and thrive safely. This pillar is based to give children the respect they need, to avoid ignoring children and disrespecting them. UNICEF also works globally to empower girls and women, ensuring their full participation in political, social, and economic systems, advocating for gender equality.

UNICEF Agenda

In order to provide governance and oversight over UNICEF's activities, ensuring that the organization operates efficiently, effectively, and in accordance with its mandate and values, a series of principles are followed. Through its decisions and actions, the board amplifies UNICEF's advocacy efforts for children's rights and well-being at global, regional, and national levels.

By working with others to overcome the obstacles that poverty, violence, disease and discrimination have the power to put in a child's path. Additionally, advocating for measures to give children the best start in life, based on that proper care from an early age is the strongest foundation for a person's future.

This committee is also in search of the actions so that all children are immunized against the most common childhood diseases, preventing a child from suffering or dying from an illness. Avoiding the spread of HIV/AIDS among young people following their right to protect from harm. But mainly:

- Laboring for everyone to design protective environments for children. There to highlight suffering during emergencies and wherever children are threatened since no child should be exposed to violence, abuse or exploitation.

Committee limitations

The UNICEF committee focuses on advocating for the rights of the ones who are not able to do it, they fought to achieve the approval of laws to protect them. Nonetheless, UNICEF has some restrictions that may limitate their power but not their aim to help.

- UNICEF heavily depends on voluntary donations from governments, organizations, and individuals, which means that changes in funding levels can directly influence the reach and effectiveness of its programs.
- As a member of a large global organization, UNICEF encounters bureaucratic hurdles that can delay the process of making decisions and carrying out programs in local communities.
- UNICEF doesn't have the authority to create new laws since it is an international organization that operates under the framework of the United Nations and the responsibility for creating and enforcing laws lies with the individual member states of the United Nations, as they maintain jurisdiction over their legal frameworks and governance systems.

- UNICEF does not engage in military operations or peacekeeping activities. This distinct focus allows UNICEF to maintain its role as a neutral and impartial humanitarian organization dedicated to serving the needs of children worldwide.

Introduction to the topic

Throughout history, there has been recruitment and passive participation and active role of boys and girls in hostilities, a presence that has increased in recent years and that worries the International Community.



Specifically, it is estimated that 468,000 boys and girls participate in armed disputes, where they are often forcibly recruited or kidnapped to join armed groups. It is estimated their age goes under 10 years old; however, they also witness terrible deeds of violence or even participate in these by committing acts that

seriously escape their understanding, sometimes against their families or communities.

As Virginia Gamba, representative of the vulnerable population on armed conflicts discussed: Children are the main victims of armed conflicts. They are the objectives of those conflicts and are increasingly becoming instruments of them. Their suffering takes on many aspects, both in the midst of armed conflict and after.

Children are killed or mutilated; they are orphaned; are kidnapped; they are deprived of education and healthcare; and they remain with deep traumas and scars emotionally. Children are recruited and used as child soldiers, forced to express the hatred of adults. Being uprooted from their homes, displaced children become very vulnerable. With girls facing extra risks, especially sexual violence and exploitation.

Likewise, in order to reduce serious violations of the rights of boys and girls in time of armed conflict, six types of crimes have been identified that, in addition, are considered as war crimes: the murder or mutilation of children; their recruitment and use of child as soldiers; attacks against schools and hospitals; the denial of access to humanitarian assistance for children; as well as the kidnapping and rape of minors and their subjection to other acts of sexual violence.

Key Words

Child soldiers: It refers to any boy or girl under age 18 who is recruited or used by an armed force or armed group in any capacity. It does not refer only to a child who is taking a direct part in hostilities, which represents the tragic end of childhood.

Coercion: The use of force to persuade someone to do something that they are unwilling to do. Coercion is defined as force or violence that is practiced on someone to oblige a certain behavior or will. It is a phenomenon that has accompanied man since its dawn, yet now it is still used.

War supporting roles: Children can become involved in armed conflicts in direct combat roles, but also in supporting roles; being forced to become cleaners, porters, intelligence gatherers and spies, sex slaves, or used in acts of terror. Regardless of their role, the experience for both girls and boys is still devastating.

Displacement: When individuals are forced to flee their homes due to violence or insecurity, they often face physical, mental, and emotional hardships. International humanitarian law plays a crucial role in protecting displaced persons during times of war by establishing guidelines and provisions to ensure their safety and well-being.

Child Trafficking: It involves the exploitation of children for various purposes, such as forced labor and sexual exploitation. Victims of child trafficking are often coerced, threatened, or manipulated into these situations and find it difficult to leave due to the control exerted over them.

Protracted conflicts: This can be episodic, cyclical, 'frozen' or long-lived insurgencies. Protracted matters can be long standing occupations or wars at low simmer, oscillating between resolution and relapse. Although war should be an exceptional circumstance, one feature of protracted armed conflicts is that they progressively become normalized.

Suicide bombers: A person who commits suicide by exploding a bomb in order to kill other people. Various revolutionary and separatist movements are active in South Asia from Pakistan, and across India's tribal belt to Sri Lanka.

Historical Background

The use of child soldiers is deeply related to human history and specifically the history of armed conflicts. One of the oldest cases is the famous "Children's Crusade" at the beginning of the 13th century. This crusade gets its name because the Europeans, in their attempt to recover the holy land, made extensive use of child soldiers and even used the sale of these as slaves. However, despite the

presence of young people in many of the most important conflicts of humanity, their role is commonly ignored.

Second World War (1939-1945)

During this conflict, several countries employed child soldiers in different capacities:

- **Nazi Germany:** During World War II, the Nazi regime recruited and used children in different capacities, in addition to teaching them in schools what the Nazis wanted them to know, like the genocide of non-Germanic races. The Hitler Youth were youth organizations that prepared young people for military service and Nazi ideology. In that context, as the war progressed and resources were in short supply, Germany reportedly increasingly resorted to recruiting children and adolescents in the final stages of the conflict.



- **Soviet Union:** The Soviet Union also employed child soldiers during the Second World War. Before the German invasion, youth units of combat forces known as the “young partisans”, were composed mainly by teenagers. These young soldiers were considered heroes in the fight against the German occupation.

Vietnam War (1955-1975)

During the conflict both sides, the US and South Vietnam as well as North Vietnam employed young people to advance their goals at different degrees of severity.

- **Use as informants:** both sides used children to spot the enemy or report on their movements. USA, specifically, encouraged them to report if they noticed the presence of guerrillas after their towns
- **Use in guerrilla tactics:** Made exclusively by North Vietnam, children were indoctrinated at ages 13-14 years old and taught to use firearms to eliminate soldiers from South Vietnam or the United States. These even had an honor system that young people could receive like awards and “glorious titles” such as “Children of iron fort”.
- **War-related activities:** Both sides also employed children for a plethora of different things to help them. In the north, it was common for them to help knit hats for

soldiers. Meanwhile in the south, these were used for barricade forts or strategic positions or build roads between clue points.

Sierra Leone War (1991 - 2002)

During this conflict, rebel groups, such as the RUF, recruited and used thousands of children as soldiers. These children were subjected to military training and forced to commit atrocities, such as murder and rape.

They were used as fighters, weapon carriers, machine gunners and sometimes as sexual slaves. Child soldiers in Sierra Leone were responsible for commit terrible acts, including murder, mutilation, rape and looting. Indoctrinated with extreme violence and forced to commit atrocious acts against their own communities.

- **Mass recruitment:** During the civil war in Sierra Leone, the rebel group known as the Revolutionary United Front (RUF) recruited and used thousands of child soldiers. These children were kidnapped, brainwashed, coerced, and violence to forced their participation in the conflict.

After the end of the conflict, efforts were made to release and rehabilitate child soldiers in Sierra Leone. Programs were established for reintegration to help these children return to society, receive education, psychological support and development opportunities. The use of child soldiers in the Sierra Leone war was widely condemned by the international community due to the serious violations of human rights that were implied. Since then, measures have been taken to combat and prevent recruitment and use of children in armed conflicts globally.

Current Situation

UNICEF estimates that there are some 300,000 child soldiers in the world participating in more than 30 armed conflicts. This is in a variety of countries such as: Afghanistan, Iraq, the Democratic Republic of the Congo, Rwanda, Sierra Leone, Somalia, Ethiopia, Sudan, Palestine and Yemen. Since 2010, there has been a 34% increase in the number of children living in conflict-affected areas, as well as

a staggering 170% increase in the number of reported grave rapes committed against children in conflict.

In 2018 alone, UNICEF participated in helping more than 18,000 children involved and affected by war conflicts. With the proliferation of armed conflicts reaching all parts of the world, the protection of these children remains a priority for UNICEF, allocating vast resources to the reintegration of these young people into their societies, services to reunite them with their families and supporting them with



health services. physical and mental. As an organization also providing specialized help for cases of gender violence.

A study led by Michael von Normann's Central Directorate of Strategic Plans and Policy estimates that more than 18,000 children have been recruited since 2014.

Adding that for the most part, control is ensured in the mentality of young people with the attempt to follow 4 principles:

- Addressed to children under 9 years of age since they have not reached the age at which critical thinking is completed.
- Exploitation of the power of authority and the use of respected and recognized people for the indoctrination of children.
- The constant repetition of ideas and thoughts to be adhered to that "need" to be transmitted at the group level
- Exercise of strong psychological pressure through a system of rewards and strong punishments.

But, in spite of that, delegates should bear in mind present bloodshed conflicts. As a sample, during the Russo-Ukrainian War, Russia has forcibly transferred almost 20 thousand Ukrainian children to areas under its control, assigned them Russian citizenship, forcibly adopted them into Russian families, alongside the creation of obstacles for their reunification with their homeland; alarm on the focus on if current mechanisms combating children indoctrination have efficiently work.

Points of Contention

Indoctrination

Indoctrination is the process of inculcating (teaching by repeated instruction) a person with ideas, attitudes, cognitive strategies or professional methodologies (see doctrine). In warlike matters, it refers to the process by which children are manipulated, influenced, and psychologically conditioned to participate in armed conflict or support militant ideologies.

Children are indoctrinated with a specific ideology or belief system that legitimizes the use of force and advocates for the group's aims. This often entails distorting historical or religious narratives to align with the group's agenda, while also instilling a profound sense of duty or honor in their involvement in armed conflict. The indoctrination process involves the severing of young children from their families, which leads them to view the school cleric or teacher as a new authority figure.

A most recent worrying case that's been happening is in Russia where president Vladimir Putin incentivizes the "Yunarmia" (Young Army) program to encourage youth participation in military-style training camps and activities, this initiative has raised comments from the press criticizing Putin's government.



reinforcing the fundamental narrative.

Furthermore, focusing on countries from the middle east, indoctrination of children often starts at a young age with some Taliban commanders recruiting children as young as 5, 6, and 7 years old. Moreover, there are schools called "Madrasas" that also foster a culture of martyrdom, where the acts of suicide bombers and jihadist fighters are glorified and presented as heroic, further

Recruitment consequences

With almost 80% of the fighting forces composed of child soldiers, which constitute the dominant form of violent conflict that has emerged only over the last few decades. The development of light weapons, such as automatic guns suitable for children, was an obvious prerequisite for the involvement of children in modern conflicts.

Children brandishing arms is indeed by no means a new development. The Spartans took boys from their family homes at the age of seven to train in the military whilst the Ottoman Empire stole children from its subjects in the Balkan states to fill out the ranks of its Janissary army. In more recent history, when the Iranian regime began to falter in the Iran-Iraq war of the 1980s children from the ages 12 upward were called up to fight Saddam Hussein's Iraq in the new Holy War. But in present times, the training and use of child soldiers has become more commonplace than ever.

What has become most worrying in modern times is how the impacts of conflict do not always affect children as passive actors. In many countries where war is present, children are increasingly assuming more active roles in the conflicts that persist in their communities. Child soldiers are more often killed or injured than adult soldiers on the front line. They are less costly for the respective group or organization than adult recruits, because they receive fewer resources, including less and smaller weapons and equipment. Thus, they are raised in an environment of severe violence, experience it, and subsequently often commit cruelties and atrocities of the worst kind.

Psychological impact

This repeated exposure to chronic and traumatic stress during development leaves the children with mental and related physical ill-health, notably PTSD and severe personality changes. Such exposure also deprives the child from a normal and healthy development and impairs their integration into society as a fully functioning member.

- Depression and suicidality: 52% of formerly abducted children suffer from depression symptoms.
- Dissociation and derealization: Used as the most readily accessible response to the pain of trauma, by dissociative mechanisms, involving disengagement from the external world.
- Exposure to Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD)

- Anti-social and disruptive behavior: Child soldiers have difficulties in controlling aggressive impulses and have little skills for handling life without on-going aggressiveness.
- Transgenerational effect: After having experienced organized violence, affected parents can leave an imprint in their grandchildren's generation.

Drug consumption

Systematic drug taking is especially reported among West African-based militia movements. In fact, hallucinatory drug intake is a critical factor that has contributed to the punishment at any time by execution if they disobey during their prolonged exposure to violent aggression and to prepare them for combat.

Due to the terrible situations these children have to go through, the problems do not end once they are released. Save the Children estimates that more than half of indoctrinated adolescents internationally suffer from deep depression. These children require deep psychological support to deal not only with the repercussions of what they saw in combat but also to try to undo the strong indoctrination they suffered. This process can take years. However in some cases, as also mentioned previously, it generates addictions to the stimulants they used during combat, so as special cases they also have to deal with their dependence on these elixirs.

Reintegration to society

The recruitment and use of children by armed forces or armed groups is one of the six grave violations against children in times of war, as it was identified by the United Nations Security Council. The reintegration of former child soldiers is very important to enable children into a healthy and successful rebuilt life after their time spent in war and ensure that the communities can live without armed conflicts, maintaining peace.

Within the UN system, UNICEF is in charge of the reintegration of former child soldiers and their first priority is to prepare them for a return to civilian life. Psychosocial support, education and training are important aspects of long-term reintegration programmes. Attempting to reunite children with their families and communities are also essential, but sensitization and reconciliation efforts are sometimes necessary before a child is welcomed back at home. Otherwise children might decide to return to the armed forces. Instead of feeling lost and as an outsider, they decide to go back to a well-known environment, the armed group they could hardly escape from.

Most children get freed from captivity or from armed groups during combat. A significant number has stayed out in the bush for several years during key phases of their development, making them feel unfamiliar and at times afraid of civilian life.

Rights violation

Children become part of an armed force or group for various reasons. Nevertheless, the violations of the rights of children are at large during and after an armed conflict. Some are abducted, threatened, coerced or manipulated by armed actors. Still others associate themselves for survival or to protect their communities. No matter their involvement, violations of the basic rights of minors make them prone to be illegally recruited for hazardous chores, including work as child soldiers.

While grave violations affect boys and girls differently, girls too are severely affected during armed conflicts. Whereas most children recruited and used are boys, surely all sexual violence is perpetrated against girls. Due to cultural norms and stigmatization, sexual violence remains vastly underreported. Of the 317 grave violations verified in Sudan in 2020, nearly half targeted were girls.

The case of using children during war is not new to the international community. The international law dealing with child rights is enough to cope with this issue, however the realization of such rights guaranteed has also shown to be contentious. International law provides no explicit guidelines for whether or at what age child soldiers should be prosecuted for grave violations of international humanitarian law such as genocide, war crimes, and crimes against humanity. Due to increasing numbers of children participating in armed conflict and engaging in serious human rights breaches, a coherent policy response consistent with international legal standards, including states' duties to promote children's well-being and to prevent and prosecute human rights abuses, is necessary.

In 2020, the United Nations verified a total of 26,425 violations against children in conflict situations across the globe. This corresponds to 72 violations occurring every single day or three violations every hour. It also marked the seventh year in a row with at least 20,000 verified violations, with the true figures undoubtedly much higher.

Case in point, in recent past, the use of children as suicide bombers especially in Pakistan has raised a few eyebrows. These children are being cajoled or coerced into joining jihad and are recruited precisely because their very youth can be exploited. Immediately recognized as a threat violation, they are the perfect foil for terrorists; so naïve they do not have a clear idea of what is expected of them until it is too late. Children so often are brainwashed by the militants in order to recruit

them to be suicide bombers. Hence, article 14 of the Convention on the Rights of the Child claims States Parties to respect the right of the child to freedom of thought, religion and conscience, completely outlawing the process made by this situation's signs.

However, from widespread killing, maiming, abduction and sexual violence to recruitment into and use by armed forces and armed groups and attacks on basic facilities, including water, children living in conflict zones around the world continue to come under attack on a shocking scale. Breaking vicious cycles of armed conflict is crucial for providing the building blocks for the development of societies and a peaceful country. Making pinnacle to the fact that children have the right to be protected at all times, in particular during armed conflict

Past Actions

The UN has taken significant steps to address the worrying global problem. Starting by:

1864: The **First Geneva Convention** was first held on August 22, the objective of this convention is to improve the conditions of the wounded and sick members of the armed forces during wartime. This landmark agreement laid the foundation for subsequent conventions that aimed to protect and provide assistance to wounded soldiers, setting standards for humane treatment in times of conflict.

1949: The **Fourth Geneva Convention**, established on August 12, aims to protect civilians during times of war and conflict. It specifically focuses on the treatment of civilians, including those who find themselves under the control of an enemy force.

1977: These International treaties complement the conventions mentioned before, in this year two protocols were established. **Protocol I**, adopted in 1977, focuses on the protection of victims of international armed conflicts, while **Protocol II**, also from 1977, is dedicated to the protection of victims of non-international armed conflicts.

1998: The UN adopted the **International Humanitarian Law** that mentions that recruiting and using children under 15 years of age as soldiers is strictly prohibited and is considered a war crime under the Rome Statute of the International Criminal Council.

2000: To ensure compliance with these standards, the UN General Assembly adopted **Resolution A/RES/54/263** on May 25. This resolution has been ratified by the majority of the world's countries and establishes clear provisions in this regard. These include measures to protect children from being illegally recruited, as well as

to rehabilitate and reintegrate those who have been victims of such practices. This resolution has been ratified by most countries in the world.

2005: A **third protocol** was adopted to further strengthen the safeguards provided by the Geneva Conventions. Ending the three protocols, these are crucial components of international humanitarian law, aiming to mitigate the impact of armed conflicts on civilians and combatants alike.

Case Studies

Yemen: The Houthi

On March 22, 2015, a devastating, tragic and brutal civil war began in the state of Yemen between the Huzi, a known insurgent group, and the government of Abdrabbuh Mansur Hadi. By November 2018, more than 6,000 people had been killed and more than 10,000 injured.



As in any conflict, this has already had a direct impact on young people, in August 2018 an air attack in the Dahyan market, in northern Yemen, hit a school bus and caused the death of 26 children. In order to increase their forces, the groups involved have not shied away from using the indoctrination of minors to support their war aims.

Of the 7,500 young people who have been killed or maimed during the conflict, the vast majority have been adolescent combatants. This war machine that employs minors is largely run by the Huzi rebels, who in their controlled areas are an excellent case study due to their use and corruption of educational systems to ensure the recruitment of child soldiers, even those under 15 years of age. to fight.

At school level, children are forced to sing the Huzi hymn every day, a great example of the problem. In educational spaces, discrimination against the non-religious is promoted, perpetrating a cycle that drives young people to become radicalized. In addition, school workers are provided with material that they have to use in class, which includes lectures on Huzi leaders and heroes who fell in combat, in addition they also present graphic material on the air strikes by the Arab coalition to incite hatred. to them.

Emphasizing that any teacher who is not convinced or refrains from promoting such teaching is sent to indoctrination camps.

Michael von Normann in his study describes the mission of the Huzi as follows: "The ultimate goal is to secure a group of fighters willing to give their lives for the cause. If these young fighters die in battle, they will become martyrs and heroes. However, if they do not die, they will join the ranks of the most loyal servants of the Houthi cause and the most fervent defenders of the system".

Once the minors are indoctrinated, they are sent to military camps where they begin to receive their training. They are instructed in how to use firearms, plant explosives, identify coalition airstrikes and avoid impacts, and use stimulants to relieve combat stresses.

The DRC's civil war

In the course of the prolonged civil war in the Democratic Republic of the Congo, several armed groups have recruited child soldiers. These children have been used as combatants, weapons carriers, spies and sexual slaves. It has involved multiple actors and has given rise to a wide range of human rights abuses. The conflict in the DRC has its roots in the fall of Mobutu Sese Seko's regime in 1997 and the problems of governance, control of natural resources and the struggle for power that followed his overthrow. Various armed groups have clashed for control of the country's territory and resources.

The conflict has involved multiple actors, including rebel groups, local militias, Congolese government forces, foreign military forces, and transnational armed groups. Some of the most prominent groups have been the Democratic Forces for

the Liberation of Rwanda (FDLR), the March 23 Movement (M23), and the Lord's Resistance Army (LRA), among others.

During the conflict, serious human rights violations have been committed. These include murder, rape, forced recruitment of child soldiers, mass population displacement, looting and destruction of property, as well as other abuses and war crimes.

Since 1998, more than five million people have died in the prolonged conflict in the Democratic Republic of the Congo and more than 30,000 boys and girls have been recruited as soldiers. The humanitarian and human rights crisis has worsened terribly in recent weeks and has intensified the problems of children. For every 2 boys or girls who had



been released thanks to a national demobilization program, 5 are kidnapped in the North Kivu region. It is precisely their previous experience that makes them valuable recruits and puts them in particular danger. Furthermore, women and girls are subjected to constant physical and sexual abuse in the context of the conflict, despite promises from both the government and armed groups to put an end to these atrocities.

Child soldiers who try to escape are killed or tortured, sometimes in front of other children to discourage further escape attempts. It is estimated that there are still between 3,000 and 7,000 child soldiers in Congo, a number that may increase due to the recent escalation of the conflict.

Bloc Positions

As UNICEF, our collective goal is to develop proposals and solutions that prioritize the rights and well-being of children. While nations may differ in their approaches, policies, and perspectives on children's role in hostilities, our focus remains on fostering collaboration and finding effective solutions to address this critical issue.

When forming blocs, it is essential to align with your country's policies and work towards common objectives. We encourage diverse representation within blocs, as discussions and negotiations benefit from a variety of cultural, religious, and national perspectives. Effective negotiation skills are crucial in bridging differences and complementing each other's proposals within the bloc.

Some countries, like the USA and its allies, prioritize international cooperation in addressing children's military exploitation, while others, such as China and its allies, may focus more on national interests while prioritizing internal stability and security concerns.

Western nations typically emphasize human rights and collaborate with international organizations to combat child recruitment, especially in conflict zones. African countries have diverse approaches, with some implementing national strategies and legislation; anyhow, with challenges on the enforcement path due to various factors.

Overall, as delegates representing UNICEF, you must work by hand in order to find common ground and develop comprehensive solutions that prioritize the protection and well-being of children in danger. Regarding proposed solutions, for its address there are existing requirements that concert efforts on multiple fronts. Approaches involve the establishment of unions to advocate for preventing the recruitment of children by armed forces, secure the release of child soldiers, support their reintroduction into society and adopt measures to avoid the indoctrination and future use of children in conflicts. Moreover, increasing access to education is paramount, requiring widespread implementation of reliable education programs that emphasize and incentivize children to pursue learning opportunities. By addressing these multifaceted challenges, the global community can work towards safeguarding the well-being and future prospects of vulnerable children worldwide.

Questions A Resolution Must Answer (QARMA's)

1. How can the recruitment of minors be stopped in countries that are in the development of war, without going out of the committee jurisdiction?
2. How could the rights of children and adolescents be guaranteed in terms of warlike conflicts, in accordance with the Convention on the Rights of the Child?
3. What measures can be taken to guarantee the release of young combatants in conflicts that are still ongoing?
4. Taking into account the physical and psychological effects that children suffer, how can counteract the effects of indoctrination, to ensure effective reintegration into society?
5. What solutions can be deliberately implemented to prevent future use of child soldiers in the event of a conflict erupting?
6. Will the committee opt for a one-size-fits-all resolution, or will it strive for a more tailored approach suited to specific countries or regions? Therefore, how will funding be obtained, given the severe constraints on national budgets?

Closing Remarks

First of all, if you have reached here, we want to tell you, we are really really glad; here you can see all of our effort to give the best for you to understand the topic and to have a deeper knowledge. As for our expectations for each of you, we advise you to be original. If you have debated at UNICEF previously, there are always delegates presenting the same bland proposals. We do want you to be strategic and to put this committee on fire, with evidence when backing up. Research as much as you can, we truly want fruitful information going deeper than what is simply seen.

Moreover, as much as the committee is able to receive multiple donations and support, we highly encourage you to bear in mind the limitations it has in order to avoid problems during the conference solutions proposing. And do remember that this has to be a passionate debate, and what can be more satisfying than seeing delegates defend their ideals until the concrete end? Thus, don't be afraid of firing the debate but always remember diplomacy is first.

1. No overnight drafting: Please do not draft overnight, besides being unfair we want to make sure each one of you is well rested for the next day!

2. No AI: Nowadays, artificial intelligence can provide ideas during research, but the information given can be untrustworthy; reason why, we ask you not to use it and keep all your ideas and research AI-free.

3. Respect: One of the most important remarks, make sure to be respectful to every single one of the delegates to make your and the others' experience in the committee as comfortable as possible. We know that sometimes debating gets heated but remember to keep it clean and respectful. In the case that a delegate is disrespectful to another delegate, please make sure to approach so we can solve the problem and follow the required sanctions.

4. Honesty: Somewhat connected with AI usage but also with not to copy and paste information, instead use it to create original arguments for the committee. Be honest with what you submit as your work.

Position Paper Requirements

A Position Paper is a political statement in which delegates analyze and present the opinion of their assigned country on the issue under discussion, focusing on national

actions and international affairs of the past and in the development of viable proposals for the topic. Furthermore, a position paper consists of:

- **Paragraph 1:** Description of the topic's history, without giving an exhaustive account of it, but rather focus on the details that are most important to the delegation's policy.
- **Paragraph 2:** UN and national policies in plain terms and inclusion of relevant statements, statistics, and research that support the effectiveness of the policy. Comparisons with other global issues are also appropriate here.
- **Paragraph 3:** Detail of the delegation's proposed solutions to address the topic. Each idea should clearly connect to the specific problem it aims to solve and identify potential obstacles to implementation and how they can be avoided, as a natural extension

Failure to include a bibliography with any position paper will result in instant disqualification and be considered plagiarism. Furthermore, this document has a specific format, which we strongly request delegates to follow otherwise they will not be accepted.

- Font: Times New Roman 11 pts
- Line Spacing: 1.15
- Margins: 2.54 cm from all extremities (standart)
- Bibliography format: APA 7th edition

Lastly, all position papers are to be delivered by August 16th in PDF format to the following email address: unicefpadumun@gmail.com To ensure no position papers are lost in spam, please send all of them with the subject "Position Paper - Your Country".

Delegates who do not submit their position papers will NOT be eligible for awards.

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