

2



0

BACKGROUND PAPER

Topic: “ Providing humanitarian aid to children in conflict zones ”

UNICEF

2

Chair and Moderator

Ana Carla Balleza Vázquez and Victoria Narvárez Rodríguez

6



INDEX

Committee Background	03
Introduction of the Topic	04
Evolution of the Topic	05
External Actions	06
Committee Focus	07
Conclusion	08
Countries Position	09
Participation List	10
References	12



Committee Background

UNICEF, the United Nations Children's Fund, was established by the UN in 1946 to provide emergency relief to children and mothers in post-World War II.

Our mandate was clear: to help children and young people whose lives and futures were at risk – no matter what role their country had played in the armed conflict. Its mandate expanded to focus on long-term child welfare, health, education, and rights in developing countries. Guided by the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child, UNICEF now operates in over 190 countries, providing vital humanitarian aid, promoting children's rights, and working to ensure every child is healthy, educated, and safe from danger.

Impartial, non-political and neutral, we focus on reaching every child in need. UNICEF was established in the aftermath of World War II to help children whose lives and futures were at risk regardless of their country's role in the armed conflict.

Introduction of the Topic



It is not inevitable that children are direct targets in conflict, or that indiscriminate attacks that cause casualties or injure them are a by-product of war.

As the number and duration of wars continue to grow, humanitarian workers are increasingly denied safe access to children, leaving millions to suffer from severe acute malnutrition and deadly diseases related to unsafe water, or because they cannot access life-saving medical treatment and routine immunization. They may be recruited by armed forces – not only as fighters, but as scouts, cooks, porters, guards, messengers and more. Especially for girls and women, the threat of gender-based violence soars.

Children represent the future and the foundation of every nation. When war forces them to endure suffering, displacement, and the loss of stability or protection, the consequences extend far beyond their immediate circumstances. The absence of safety, education, and emotional support during such formative years can severely affect their psychological well-being, limit their access to opportunities, and hinder their personal development. This committee



Evolution of the Topic

In 1996, twenty-five years ago, Graça Machel presented her seminal report on the impact of armed conflict on children to the United Nations General Assembly. The report exposed what was until then the invisible impact of armed conflict on children's lives, and painted a grim picture of the scale and scope of how children's rights are violated in situations of armed conflict. For the first time, the UN General Assembly heard the full story of how children are recruited and used by armed actors, displaced, exploited, and sexually abused. The story of children deprived of their right to life, to liberty, health and education, their right to be with their family and community, to develop their personalities and to be nurtured and protected.

The 1999 Resolution 1216 established the protection of children in armed conflict as a core peace and security concern, marking one of the first times a human rights issue was added to the Security Council's agenda. Following this, Resolution 1379 (2001) requested the Secretary-General to identify in his Annual Report the parties to conflicts that recruit and use children, strengthening global monitoring and accountability.

Later, Resolution 1539 (2004) called for the development of a monitoring and reporting system on grave violations against children and encouraged time-bound Action Plans to end child recruitment. Building on this, Resolution 1612 (2005) created the Monitoring and Reporting Mechanism (MRM) to gather accurate information on six grave violations against children in armed conflict, ensuring coordinated international action and accountability.



External Actions

In the conflicts zone, UNICEF had external actions to support all the children in this zones. The organization provides emergency relief by delivering essential supplies such as food, clean water, medical kits, and sanitation resources, often through mobile health and nutrition teams that reach remote or dangerous areas. Also to ensure the following of this education, UNICEF establishes temporary learning spaces when schools get damaged or aren't accessible for a long period of time. Protection programs are central to their mission, including the monitoration and the reporting the violations of children's rights, offering all kind of psychological support to help them recover from their trauma, and the reunion of families that where separated by a conflict. UNICEF also participates in the promotion of peace by taking part in the conflict prevention education, improving local governance to rebuild the trust in institution. On global scale, UNICEF speaks up to ensure that more humanitarian aids get to more children, working with NGO's to be more effective. These efforts focus on protecting children's rights, restoring access to essential services such as education and healthcare, and promoting long-term stability and peace in regions affected by conflict and violence.





Committee Focus

UNICEF, the United Nations agency for children, works to protect the rights of every child, especially the most disadvantaged and those hardest to reach. Across more than 190 countries and territories, we do whatever it takes to help children survive, thrive and fulfil their potential. We provide and advocate for education, health and nutrition services. Protect children from violence and abuse. Bring clean water and sanitation to those in need. And keep them safe from climate change and disease.

The world's largest provider of vaccines, UNICEF also runs the world's largest humanitarian warehouse.

Before, during and after emergencies, we're on the ground with life-saving help and hope.

KEY FOCUS STATEMENTS TO DISCUSS:

- Child rights violations and recruitment
- Displacement and family separation
- Emergency relief and medical aid
- Education access and trauma support
- UN resolutions and accountability
- Limited humanitarian access
- Protection, neutrality, and recovery



Conclusion

Overall, the issue of providing humanitarian aid to children in conflict zones highlights one of the most critical challenges of our time: protecting the most vulnerable in the midst of an armed conflict. Since its creation in 1946, UNICEF has played a leading role in safeguarding children's rights, ensuring access to food, clean water, education, and medical care even in the most dangerous conditions. Through its neutral and impartial approach, UNICEF has become a symbol of hope for millions of children affected by armed conflict.

The implications of these humanitarian efforts are profound. By delivering emergency relief, establishing temporary schools, reuniting families, and providing psychological support, UNICEF not only addresses immediate needs but also promotes long-term recovery and stability. These actions, supported by international resolutions and monitoring systems, demonstrate the global commitment to ending child suffering and ensuring accountability in war.

This topic reflects the urgent need to strengthen international cooperation and humanitarian access. Discussing it encourages delegates to explore how organizations like UNICEF can continue to promote peace, protect human rights, and rebuild trust in war-torn societies. Ultimately, it reminds the world that safeguarding children is both a moral responsibility and a foundation for lasting peace.



Countries Position

Afghanistan: Years of war and political instability have left millions of children without access to education, healthcare, or protection. UNICEF works extensively here to support girls' education, nutrition, and trauma recovery.

Palestine: Children face extreme violence, displacement, and lack of basic services. UNICEF provides emergency medical aid, psychosocial support, and safe learning spaces.

Sudan: Civil war and ethnic violence have displaced millions. Children suffer from malnutrition, recruitment by armed groups, and disrupted education. UNICEF is deeply involved in emergency nutrition and protection efforts.

Ukraine: The ongoing war has caused mass displacement and trauma among children. UNICEF offers mental health support, mobile education units, and emergency supplies.

Nigeria: Violence from extremist groups like Boko Haram has led to abductions, school closures, and displacement. UNICEF provides reintegration programs and emergency aids.

Iraq: Post-conflict recovery is ongoing, with children still facing trauma, poverty, and limited access to services. UNICEF works on rebuilding education and health infrastructure.

Cameroon: Armed conflict in the northwest and southwest regions has endangered children's safety and access to education. UNICEF supports child protection and health services.

Israel: While not a conflict zone in the same way, children in border areas and affected communities face psychological stress and disruption. UNICEF advocates for protection and mental health support.

Donor, diplomatic or policy roles: Countries like United States, UK, France, Germany, China & Russia contribute funding shape international humanitarian policy, and support global advocacy efforts led by UNICEF and other UN bodies.

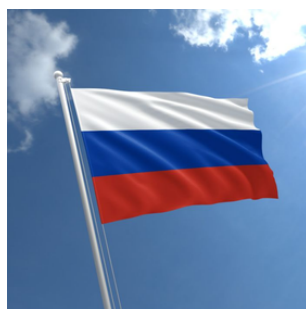
Participation List



Germany



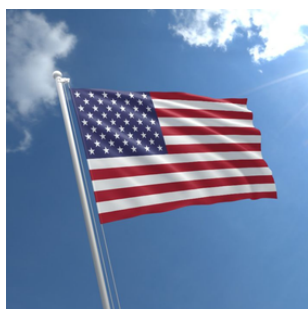
France



Russia



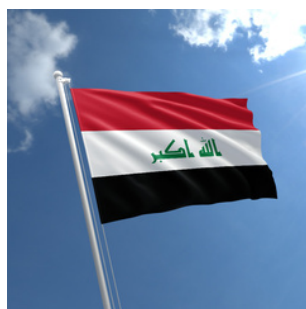
United Kingdom



USA



Afghanistan



Iraq



Finland



China



Palestine



Venezuela



Denmark

Participation List



Israel



Nigeria



Switzerland



Cameroon



Norway



Ukraine



Sudan



References

- C, R. (2025, November 3). Crimes against children in conflict zones reach record levels. TodoAlicante. <https://www.todoalicante.es/english/crimes-against-children-conflict-20251103111102-nt.html>
- Hallam, M. (2025, November 4). Over half a billion children live in conflict zones — report. dw.com. <https://www.dw.com/en/over-half-a-billion-children-live-in-conflict-zones-report/a-74613454>
- Prasad, A., & Prasad, P. (2009). Children in conflict zones. Medical Journal Armed Forces India, 65(2), 166–169. [https://doi.org/10.1016/s0377-1237\(09\)80134-2](https://doi.org/10.1016/s0377-1237(09)80134-2)
- UNICEF. (n.d.). Who we are. <https://www.unicef.org/who-we-are>
- UNICEF. (2024, December 28). ‘Not the new normal’ – 2024 ‘one of the worst years in UNICEF’s history’ for children in conflict. <https://www.unicef.org/lac/en/press-releases/not-new-normal-2024-one-worst-years-unicefs-history-children-conflict>
- United Nations Children’s Fund. (2022, June). 25 years of children and armed conflict: Taking action to protect children in war (J. Vigne & K. Cocco, Authors). <https://www.unicef.org/sites/default/files/2022-06/UNICEF-25-years-children-armed-conflict.pdf>