



**Statement by the Permanent
Mission of Chile to the United
Nations**

**Security Council Arria Formula:
Impact of the COVID-19 pandemic
on violations against children in
situations of armed conflict**

7 May 2021

Mr. President, Excellences, dear colleagues,

Chile extends its regards and thanks to H.E Sven Jürgenson, Permanent Representative of Estonia to the United Nations, and to Estonia for addressing this utmost important topic of the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic in violations against children in situations of armed conflict. Chile also joins the statement of Canadá on behalf of the Group of Friends of Children and Armed conflict.

For children in situations of armed conflict, the socio-economic crisis, in addition to the increase in hostilities, triggered by the COVID-19 pandemic has meant that due to schools' closures -in some cases after being targets of attacks- they face more obstacles to their access to education, while they also remain highly at risk of being recruited by armed actors. This foreshadows a future that won't benefit from their valuable contribution to the communities, the labor force or to a sustained peace.

It also means that when hostilities increase, added to the withdrawal of state and humanitarian actors in some areas due to the pandemic, children may find themselves without shelter, protection, access to healthcare and in some cases even losing their lives to a conflict they had little to do with.

In this context, we call for all parties of conflicts to respect and abide by IHL and IL and to refrain from attacking civilian infrastructure in conflict situations, including children facilities, hospitals and schools, as well as humanitarian and medical personnel.

Additionally, Chile expresses her deep concern for girls and adolescents who have suffered gender-specific consequences in armed conflicts. With the suspension of community-based child protection and essential services, reduced mobility, in addition to the loss of livelihoods and economic crisis triggered by the pandemic, girls have been particularly vulnerable to rape and other forms of sexual violence, as well as sexual exploitation, early marriage, domestic violence and human trafficking. My country also condemns the use of sexual violence as a weapon of war.

In this regard we highlight the importance of the implementation of a gender-lense to the child protection mandates to prevent and address such violations from a trauma-informed, need-based and survivor-centered approach.

In this regard, Chile would like to highlight that in conflict situations, children often are the most affected victims, losing their families, friendships, and often suffer serious physical and psychological damage as a consequence of atrocious violations of their fundamental human rights.

In this context, we would like to recognize that children, in particular those associated with armed forces/groups and former child soldiers, are to be treated as victims -not actors- of the conflicts. We therefore recognize the need to provide reintegration support so that they can be

empowered to heal and move forward from their painful past experience, and eventually be meaningful contributors and agents of change to their communities.

Mr. President.

Given the importance of responding to the specific needs of children on the ground, we encourage the United Nations and partners on the ground to continue to analyze 2020 grave violations through a COVID-19 lens, that is considering the long-term socioeconomic impacts of the pandemic and continue adapting programmatic and advocacy responses accordingly.

In this regard while being concerned by the fact that the monitoring and reporting mechanism (MRM) was most significantly impacted during the second and third quarter of 2020, we commend the UN Country Task Forces on Monitoring and Reporting for having managed to largely resume their monitoring activities. Its work is vital for not only understanding the situation of children in the ground who have been victims of one or more of the six grave violations, but also to ensure accountability for the perpetrators.

More importantly we owe it to these brave children to keep seeking for solutions. We must continue to keep strengthening an integrated response that contributes to build resilient societies that support their children all along from the origins of a conflict to the end of the cycle of violence, seeking full and systemic reintegration.

Thank you,