



**PERMANENT MISSION OF THE REPUBLIC OF MALTA
TO THE UNITED NATIONS**

**HE Ambassador Vanessa Frazier, Permanent Representative of the Republic of Malta
to the United Nations**

Arria Formula Meeting

Impact of the Covid-19 pandemic on Violations Against Children in Situations of Armed Conflict
7 May 2021
New York

Mr President,

I begin by thanking Estonia and the co-sponsors for convening this Arria Formula Meeting. Malta welcomes the new study published as well as its recommendations, by the Office of the Special Representative of the Secretary-General (SRSG) for Children and Armed Conflict (CAAC), and thank SRSG Gamba for all her work and efforts in seeking to address the plight of children affected by armed conflict amidst the pandemic.

We also thank today's briefers for sharing their valuable insights.

Malta aligns itself with the statements by the European Union and the Group of Friends on Children and Armed Conflict.

Malta remains fully committed to the protection of children and their right to education. If entrusted to serve as an elected member of the Security Council in 2023-24, Malta will give importance to education, literacy, and digital technology.

The COVID-19 pandemic has had a devastating impact across the world, particularly those affected by conflict, with a disproportionate negative impact on children. While we are already aware that the pandemic has severely impacted the monitoring and reporting of grave violations towards children in conflict zones, we will only become privy to the medium to long-term effects of the pandemic on children in armed conflict, once data becomes available. The pandemic has likewise hampered ongoing efforts to engage parties to conflict to end and prevent violence. We thereby echo the UNSG's call for a global ceasefire. An end needs to be brought to conflicts taking place world-wide to the detriment of innocent victims, including children. As stated in the report, a long-term, collaborative approach is needed to identify and respond to trends and patterns of violations resulting from this unprecedented pandemic, as its full impact on children's rights is likely to last for years to come, bearing in mind the most vulnerable, displaced and refugee children, girls and children with disabilities.

Malta is deeply concerned about the ongoing reports of denial of humanitarian assistance - a grave violation - affecting children in Afghanistan, Syria, and Yemen, as well as the attacks against schools and hospitals in Syria, Ethiopia and Myanmar.

The roles of both the UN and civil society to protect children from conflict and violence cannot be overlooked. Both have a key role in designing and implementing child protection response programs, and need to work hand in hand, to make child protection a priority

Malta continues to support the global call for peace made by the UN Secretary-in light of the COVID-19 pandemic and further underlines the need to implement the provisions in Resolution 2532. Furthermore, the protection of children, including through comprehensive rehabilitation and reintegration programs that are gender-sensitive, must be central in our ongoing response to the pandemic.

Thank you.