

## **UNSC Arria-formula meeting – 7 May 2021**

### **Impact of the Covid-19 pandemic on violations against children in situations of armed conflict**

- The State of Qatar fully aligns itself with the statement delivered by Canada on behalf of the Group of Friends of Children and Armed Conflict.
- At the outset, I would like to thank Estonia, France, Ireland, Niger, Ireland, St. Vincent and the Grenadines, Sweden and the Office of the Special Representative of the Secretary-General on Children and Armed Conflict for organizing this important Arria-formula meeting on the Impact on the COVID-19 pandemic on violations against children in situations of armed conflict.
- Thank you to all of the briefers for their comments and insights today. They were particularly poignant, given the terrible issues faced by children in these circumstances.
- The State of Qatar welcomes the study prepared by the Office of the Special Representative of the Secretary-General on Children and Armed Conflict on the same topic.
- In this regard, we would like to acknowledge the efforts of Country Task Forces on Monitoring and Reporting for the continued monitoring of violations and for overcoming some of the challenges brought by the pandemic - despite the lack of access to communities by the UN Monitoring and Reporting Mechanism on Grave Violations against Children in Situations of Armed Conflict.
- We are extremely concerned that among some of the emerging patterns are an increase in killing and maiming incidents by parties to the conflict, and an increase in children's vulnerability to recruitment, rape and other forms of sexual violence.
- As the world fights to contain the COVID-19 pandemic, children and youth in conflict zones remain among the most vulnerable to its devastating impact. The State of Qatar is deeply worried with the impact of the closure

of schools and reports of increased attacks on education, making children more vulnerable to child labor and child recruitment - destroying the hopes and ambitions of whole generation of children. Education can be a life-saver.

- The State of Qatar has often urged the international community to unite to protect education from attack. Moreover, we have called for enhanced monitoring, reporting and investigation of attacks so the perpetrators can be held to account.
- In July 2010, the State of Qatar introduced landmark resolution 64/290 calling on States to ensure right to education for affected populations in all phases of emergency situations. Adopted by consensus, Resolution 64/290 was the first of its kind.
- A year ago, the General Assembly adopted by consensus Resolution 75/275, again presented by the State of Qatar - following a call to action by Her Highness Sheikha Moza bint Nasser, Chairperson of Education Above All Foundation and UN Sustainable Development Goal Advocate - proclaiming 9 September the International Day to Protect Education from Attack. The International Day is a global platform for decision-makers to focus on safeguarding education in conflict and building peace, and a key annual benchmark to assess progress on an issue that is threatening a fundamental human right for every child.
- In September 2020, Qatar's based Education Above All Foundation, launched the Unite to Protect Campaign to create global awareness on the need to protect education, and to halt the continuous culture of impunity for education-related violations of international law and built on global justice, bringing the need to strengthen mechanisms for the protection of education to all agendas.
- As we fast approach the second anniversary of this landmark resolution, we would like to reiterate our call that it is crucial to strengthen law and

policy mechanisms for the protection of children and education from attack.

- We must unite to protect children and the right of education of children in situations of armed conflict.
- Thank you very much.