



البعثة الدائمة للجمهورية التونسية
لدى منظمة الأمم المتحدة
بنيويورك

SECURITY COUNCIL – ARIA FORMULA
IMPACT OF THE COVID-19 PANDEMIC ON VIOLATIONS AGAINST CHILDREN IN SITUATIONS
OF ARMED CONFLICT
7 MAY 2021

Mr. President,

At the outset, I would like to thank Estonia for organizing this timely meeting on this very important issue related to one of the most concerning impacts of the covid-19, since it is about violations against children in situations of armed conflicts.

We are all aware, every child needs Stability, Safe and secure surroundings, good education, nutritious food, wellbeing, peaceful and Healthy living environment and appropriate guidance and discipline. This means they should not be in situations of armed conflicts, violence, and hostilities.

Unfortunately, today in many regions of the world the reality is grim with millions of children who are not only trapped in conflict situations but also are victims of heinous crimes and violations.

This already dire situation of children victims of such violations, has been exacerbated and worsened by the COVID-19 pandemic, which increased their vulnerabilities and will have devastating short, medium and long-term consequences on their physical and mental health, protection, education, and their future in general.

the number of grave violations against children remains unacceptably high while respect for international humanitarian law, international human rights law and children's rights continues to erode in conflict zones.

Violations such as rape and other forms of sexual violence, forced recruitment by State and non-State actors and use of children because of schools' closures, loss of family income or the withdrawal of state, abductions and attacks on schools and hospitals are generally under-reported due to their nature, and due to access restrictions and inability of the MRM staff to interview survivors of grave violations and witnesses.

In the same vein, many of these children are in detention for actual or alleged association with parties to conflict and are under high risk of contamination due to the lack of hygiene and medical care in detention facilities.

The pandemic has also challenged the ability of Child Protection staff deployed in situations on the CAAC agenda to work with parties to the conflict on developing and implementing commitments to end child rights violations

As we renew our appreciation of the valuable study prepared by the office of the Special Representative of the Secretary-General on Children and Armed Conflict, and the commendable role of the UN Monitoring and Reporting Mechanism (MRM) and Country Task Forces on Monitoring and Reporting (CTFMRs) despite the big challenges imposed by the pandemic, we would like to stress the urgent need to give greater attention to violence against children as a PRIORITY, and to put prevention and response to violations against children on the top of the political agenda in the context of recovery planning.

In the same context, donors should prioritize the allocation of funding for broader child protection activities, including flexible funding to address operational challenges encountered in the framework of the engagement with parties to conflict to end and prevent grave violations.

Children have a key role to play in building a present and a future where peace will prevail. It is our responsibility to enable them to be such agents of change

and not the main victims of the devastating impacts of the pandemic the armed conflicts.

It is therefore important to conduct a follow-up study in 2022 to determine the overall impact of COVID-19 on the MRM and on the engagement with parties to conflict to end and prevent violations.

In conclusion, as we recall the SG call for a global ceasefire and resolution 2532, we do believe that the most urgent priority to protect children and put an end to their suffering is ending conflicts and hostilities and making peace.

Thank you very much