



XXXVI
LATIN AMERICAN MODEL
OF THE UNITED NATIONS

**LATIN AMERICAN MODEL OF THE UNITED NATIONS
LAMUN XXXVI**

UNITED NATIONS INTERNATIONAL CHILDREN'S EMERGENCY FUND

Topic B Handbook

"Renovating protective policies to prevent the recruitment of children in armed conflicts from Africa and the Middle East."

Chairwomen: María Carmina López Tajonar
maria.lopeztr@udlap.mx

Vice Chair: Luis Samuel Uriza Ricano
luis.urizaro@udlap.mx

Conference Official: Jaqueline Silva Martínez
jaqueline.silvamz@udlap.mx



XXXVI
LATIN AMERICAN MODEL
OF THE UNITED NATIONS

Dear delegates,

The Bureau wants to officially welcome you to the United Nations International Children's Emergency Fund. We feel really honored to lead the delegations participating in this committee at the Thirty-Sixth edition of the Latin American Model United Nations. As members of the Chair, our main role is to provide corresponding guidance in the development of the exchange of proposals and ideas, so that a meaningful discussion on our topics of interest can be achieved.

The mission of UNICEF is to advocate for the protection of children's rights, for them to fulfill their basic needs, and to amplify their opportunities so they can flourish in their potential. Care, respect, integrity, trust, accountability, and sustainability are the core values that guide communication and interaction within this agency. The Bureau encourages delegates to consider the mission and use the core values, helping maintain a professional and courteous environment that allows us all to develop our capacities.

Finally, the Bureau would like to thank you all for your participation; the presence, sharing, and cooperation of each of the delegations is fundamental for the correct development of the UNICEF committee. Do not be afraid to share and express your ideas; remember that each contribution can help diversify and enrich the debate. It will be a significant learning experience for all of us. Once more, the Bureau is pleased and excited to form part of this meaningful experience for your academic, professional, and personal development. We will meet you at LAMUN XXXVI!

Sincerely,

María Carmina López Tajonar
Chairwomen of the UNICEF Committee



XXXVI
LATIN AMERICAN MODEL
OF THE UNITED NATIONS

UNITED NATIONS INTERNATIONAL CHILDREN'S EMERGENCY FUND (UNICEF)

The United Nations International Children's Emergency Fund was established on December 11, 1946, after the end of the Second World War, by the United Nations General Assembly (UNICEF, n.d.). With this global scenario, there was a huge need to help youths and children whose lives and futures were exposed, without taking into consideration the role their country had taken in the war. From the ashes of the war till today's globalized world, the main objective has been to protect children's rights, so they survive, prosper, and flourish in all their capacities (UNICEF, n.d.).

Since 1996, UNICEF programs and actions have been guided by the Convention on the Rights of the Child, seeking children's rights to become the basis for the national and international standards of behavior towards them. This document presents who children are, their rights, and the responsibility of governments to protect them. All the rights of infants are interconnected and have equal importance (UNICEF, n.d.-a).

Throughout its history, this agency has had various achievements. They have developed diverse historical documents that promote policy discussion and guidance for decision-making for countries where infants' safety and dignity are at risk. This United Nations agency won the Nobel Prize for Peace in 1965 (UNICEF, n.d.-b). Today, UNICEF is working in over 190 countries to defend and promote children's rights, emphasizing at 1) child protection and inclusion, 2) child survival, 3) education, 4) social policy, 5) emergencies, 6) gender, 7) innovation for children, 8) supply and logistics and 9) research, evidence, and analysis (UNICEF, n.d.-c).

UNICEF has considered it fundamental to pay specific attention to the disadvantaged children living in underdeveloped countries, urging the international community to continue working together to create appropriate policies that help deliver qualified and specialized services for infants and their families (UNICEF, n.d.). At this committee, delegates will discuss two problems experienced by children living in disadvantaged societies: A) Child marriage in underdeveloped countries and B) Renovating protective policies to prevent the recruitment of children in armed conflicts from Africa and the Middle East.



TOPIC B

Renovating protective policies to prevent the recruitment of children in armed conflicts from Africa and the Middle East.

The recruitment of children in armed conflict is a global concern that particularly affects the African and Middle Eastern regions. Over the decades, this practice has devastated the lives of countless children, compromising their future and perpetuating cycles of violence. Conflicts and crises in the Middle East and North Africa have led to an increase in child labor throughout the region, including the involvement of children in armed conflict and other illicit activities.

According to the UN Secretary-General's Report on Children and Armed Conflict 2023, children have been affected by the splintering of armed groups and inter-communal violence, contributing to a 135% increase in grave violations in South Sudan and 85% in Burkina Faso. They also increased in areas such as Israel and the State of Palestine, Lebanon, Libya, Mali, Nigeria, the Syrian Arab Republic, and Sudan. However, in Afghanistan, the Philippines and the Central African Republic, grave violations have declined significantly. For example, the truce signed in Yemen contributed to a 40% decrease in violations of human rights, underlining the importance of peace in achieving child safety.

The actors involved in the recruitment of children in armed conflict are varied and may include:

- **Non-State Armed Groups:** organizations such as Boko Haram in Nigeria, Al-Shabaab in Somalia, and the Islamic State (ISIS) in the Middle East have been responsible for the systematic recruitment of children. Non-state armed groups in Syria have used children as young as 15 years old to fight in the battlefield, sometimes recruiting them under the pretext of providing education (Human Rights Watch, 2014)
- **Governments:** In some cases, governments in Africa and the Middle East have employed minors in their armed forces, often due to a lack of resources for adult recruits or as a desperate response to the threat of insurgent groups (United Nations, 2019).



- Disadvantaged Communities: Poverty and the lack of access to education often make children more vulnerable to recruitment. Families may be pressured to allow their children to join armed groups as a way to secure their livelihood (UNICEF, 2015).

The use of child soldiers in armed conflict has significant implications not only at the local level but also on the global stage, with profound effects on national and international politics. This essay will delve into these impacts, focusing on regional destabilization, international engagement, and legal liability.

One of the most noticeable consequences of involving children in armed conflicts is the potential for regional destabilization. When children are recruited into the ranks of armed groups, it can exacerbate and protract conflicts, ultimately leading to the destabilization of entire regions. The presence of such child soldiers can hinder peaceful conflict resolution efforts and perpetuate cycles of violence, making it exceedingly difficult for regions to achieve stability and security.

The international community plays a significant role in responding to the recruitment of child soldiers. Countries and groups that engage in such practices often face international criticism and sanctions. This international condemnation can strain diplomatic relations and tarnish the image and prestige of responsible governments. The United Nations Security Council, in 2007, highlighted the global community's commitment to addressing this issue and the importance of holding those responsible accountable.

Furthermore, the recruitment of children into armed conflict is not only morally reprehensible but also carries legal consequences. This practice constitutes a grave violation of international humanitarian and human rights law. Individuals and leaders involved in recruiting child soldiers can be subject to prosecution for war crimes and crimes against humanity. This underscores the severity of the issue and the need for accountability on a global scale.

The use of child soldiers in armed conflicts has far-reaching implications, extending beyond the immediate local context. It has the potential to destabilize entire regions, provoke international condemnation and sanctions, and lead to legal consequences for those responsible. Addressing this issue is not only a matter of moral obligation but



also a necessity for maintaining peace and upholding the principles of international law and human rights.

The recruitment of children in armed conflicts in Africa and the Middle East is a complex problem with serious political and economic implications. Renewed and strengthened child protection policies are essential to address this challenge. Measures taken at the international level, such as the Optional Protocol to the Convention on the Rights of the Child and UN Security Council resolutions, are significant steps towards preventing this unacceptable practice.

International developments since 2015, such as UN Security Council Resolution 2225, demonstrate a continued commitment to eradicate this inhumane practice. However, a sustained and coordinated global effort is needed to protect children and promote peace and security in these affected regions.

Guiding questions

1. What is the situation of my delegation regarding this problem?
2. What actions is the government taking (both nationally and internationally)?
3. What is the relationship of my delegation with the countries in Africa and the Middle East most affected by this problem?
4. How do children in armed conflicts impact the international system?
5. What global agreements has my delegation signed to protect children's rights?
6. What national measures have been implemented to protect the rights of children?



References

1. Human Rights Watch (2014). Syria: Armed Groups Send Children into Battle. <https://www.hrw.org/news/2014/06/22/syria-armed-groups-send-children-battle>
2. Human Rights Watch (2016). Extreme Measures. Abuses against Children Detained as National Security Threats. <https://www.hrw.org/report/2016/07/28/extreme-measures/abuses-against-children-detained-national-security-threats>
3. UNICEF, (2015). Education Under Fire: How Conflict in the Middle East is Depriving Children of Their Schooling. <https://resourcecentre.savethechildren.net/document/education-under-fire-how-conflict-middle-east-depriving-children-their-schooling/>
4. UNICEF. (n.d.). UNICEF history. Retrieved September 26, 2023, from <https://www.unicef.org/history>
5. UNICEF. (n.d.-a). The Convention on the Rights of the Child: The children's version. Retrieved September 26, 2023, from <https://www.unicef.org/child-rights-convention/convention-text-childrens-version>
6. UNICEF. (n.d.-b). Historical documents and publications. Retrieved September 26, 2023, from <https://www.unicef.org/history/documents>
7. UNICEF. (n.d.-c). What we do. Retrieved September 26, 2023, from <https://www.unicef.org/what-we-do>
8. United Nations (2019). Children and armed conflict. Report of the Secretary-General. <https://undocs.org/Home/Mobile?FinalSymbol=S%2F2019%2F509&Language=E&DeviceType=Desktop&LangRequested=False>
9. United Nations (2023). Children and armed conflict. Report of the Secretary-General. <https://documents-dds-ny.un.org/doc/UNDOC/GEN/N23/144/96/PDF/N2314496.pdf?OpenElement>
10. United Nations Security Council. (2005). Resolution 1612 (2005). [https://undocs.org/Home/Mobile?FinalSymbol=S%2FRES%2F1612\(2005\)&Language=E&DeviceType=Desktop&LangRequested=False](https://undocs.org/Home/Mobile?FinalSymbol=S%2FRES%2F1612(2005)&Language=E&DeviceType=Desktop&LangRequested=False)