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Volume I

CHILD CHILD PROTECTION IN UNITED NATIONS PEACEKEEPING PROTECTION




Office of the Special Representative
of the Secretary-General for

**CHILDREN AND
ARMED CONFLICT**



United Nations
DEPARTMENT OF
PEACEKEEPING OPERATIONS



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The Sudan: Children during a visit of the Special Representative of the Secretary-General Coomaraswamy to internally displaced persons camp in Darfur. UN Photo/Olivier Chassot

Acknowledgements

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PREFACE



Child Protection in United Nations Peacekeeping: Volume I is the first in a series illustrating the challenges and successes of protecting children in some of the most dangerous places on earth. In the following pages you will learn about the work of Dee, Svjetlana, James and Julie—peacekeepers and child protection advisers who rely on their diverse individual experience at home and in the field to introduce the relatively new concept of child protection to missions in distinct conflict and post-conflict situations.

The creation of this publication was initiated by Under-Secretary-General for Peacekeeping Operations Alain Le Roy and Special Representative of the Secretary-General for Children and Armed Conflict Radhika Coomaraswamy on the occasion of Universal Children’s Day when the two United Nations officials reaffirmed their commitment to protect innocent girls and boys faced with the brutality of war.

We hope that this publication will give you a glimpse into the important work of our committed peacekeepers.

Thank you,

Timothy La Rose and Muriel Gschwend
Office of the Special Representative of the Secretary-General
for Children and Armed Conflict

Ann Makome and Marianne Bauer
Department of Peacekeeping Operations

Pour les francophones: merci de noter que la version traduite sera disponible ultérieurement. Nous vous prions de nous excuser pour le désagrément.



The Department of Peacekeeping Operations has deployed over 120,000 blue helmets to 15 Peacekeeping Missions all over the world. Each and every one of those blue helmets has a unique story to tell about working with children in conflict situations.

Protecting those who are most vulnerable in conflict is one of the crucial duties the Security Council has entrusted to United Nations Peacekeeping Operations. Along with our partners, we are called to protect children from all the atrocities they fall victim to in conflict situations, such as killing, maiming, rape and other forms of sexual violence, and forced military recruitment.

The Department is committed to ensuring that every peacekeeper is aware of this responsibility, because every peacekeeper can and must contribute to the protection of children in conflict.

In *Child Protection in United Nations Peacekeeping: Volume I* you will meet a committed United Nations police officer in Haiti, a civil affairs officer who serves as child protection focal point in Lebanon, a child protection adviser in Afghanistan and a child protection officer in Southern Sudan, who used to be a child soldier himself.

The stories in this publication showcase the commitment of selected individuals. Multiplied by over 120,000, this commitment—backed by action, however small—can make a significant difference to the children on the ground.

I hope that these stories will inspire every reader to take action to contribute to the cause.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'A. Le Roy'.

Alain Le Roy
Under-Secretary-General
for Peacekeeping Operations



Since 2001, when the first child protection adviser was deployed to the Peacekeeping Mission in Sierra Leone, United Nations peacekeepers have played an ever growing role in protecting girls and boys in armed conflict. Today, roughly 75 child protection staff are posted in seven missions led by the Department of Peacekeeping Operations. These advisers, working directly in the field, are uniquely placed to advise the mission and especially its leadership on the needs of children during the transition to peace. They monitor and report child rights violations, negotiate agreements for the release of child soldiers, train staff members, troops and the police in the protection of children, advocate for the rights of the most vulnerable and enhance child protection.

Child Protection in United Nations Peacekeeping: Volume I explores the development of child protection in Afghanistan, Lebanon, Haiti, and the Sudan. Throughout the world, we have seen tangible achievements as the capacities of child protection grow. Last year alone, with the assistance of United Nations peacekeepers in the Democratic Republic of the Congo, armed forces and groups in the country released 1,656 girls and boys from their ranks. Together with UNICEF, child protection staff in Afghanistan successfully negotiated an agreement with the Afghan Government to release all children in the national security forces and to address other violations.

Our colleagues in Peacekeeping are essential to ending such practices as child recruitment, abduction, sexual violence, and the killing and maiming of girls and boys whose only crime is that they were born into conflict. The partnership between my Office and the Department of Peacekeeping Operations along with our field partners such as UNICEF has resulted and will continue to result in better protection of children.

In the following pages you will spend some time with our dedicated peacekeepers and learn what they are doing for children.

Radhika Coomaraswamy

Radhika Coomaraswamy

Under-Secretary-General

Special Representative of the Secretary-General
for Children and Armed Conflict

Zero Under 18



Towards Universal Ratification by 2012

Zero under 18 is the campaign aimed at achieving universal ratification of the Optional Protocol on the Involvement of Children in Armed Conflict by 2012 in order to establish a moral consensus, that:

- No child should participate in hostilities
- No child should be forced to serve in armed forces and armed groups
- Every former child soldier will be assisted in starting a new life free from violence

The campaign was launched by the Office of the Special Representative of the Secretary-General for Children and Armed Conflict in cooperation with UNICEF and the Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights in May 2010.

53 Member States still have to ratify the Optional Protocol before 2012.

Help us spread the word:

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“In Kabul, because of the extreme security situation, a prison is the only setting I have to chat with children. These interactions always remind me of what we are doing and why we are doing it.” – Dee Brillenburg Wurth



Afghanistan: Special Representative of the Secretary-General Coomaraswamy speaks to children participating in a Mine Education Programme in Kabul. Photo credit: Timothy La Rose

Afghanistan: Protecting children in security level V

In Pol-i-Charkhi Prison in Kabul, a detention center for those accused of endangering national security, Taliban inmates played volleyball in the courtyard. As the United Nations Assistance Mission in Afghanistan (UNAMA) child protection adviser passed by, on her way to meet juvenile detainees, the volleyball players stopped their game to look at the foreign visitor.

In 2009, Dee Brillenburg Wurth and her colleague interviewed child detainees in the youth ward—all accused of association with the Taliban—aged 15 to 17. Despite the relatively good conditions in the prison, the children arrived to the interview in shackles, which were quickly removed at the request of the UNAMA team.

Children in detention

Mohammed, an Afghan refugee in Pakistan, was working in a bakery when he was approached by older men and asked if he wanted to earn \$500 carrying narcotics into Afghanistan. What he realized, when he was caught by the border patrol, was that he was not carrying drugs, but explosives. After being arrested for allegedly working for the Taliban by the border police, he was handed over to international military forces and spent five months in Bagram detention facility. At

15, he was the youngest detainee and has since finished serving his sentence in a juvenile rehabilitation centre in Kabul.

Ali, 17, showed his prosthetic foot. During a raid on an alleged Taliban group, he and his friends were chased by pro-Government forces. As he fled, he was shot. He spent six months in prison in Bagram after his treatment.

“Children are detained for alleged association with the Taliban, but sometimes only because their uncle or their cousin is associated. Some boys are forced to serve in armed groups, others join the Afghan National Police. Many are sexually abused by commanders, politicians, and businessmen. We have to start somewhere to end these horrendous violations,” said Ms. Brillenburg Wurth.

Security challenges

In many Peacekeeping Missions, the Department of Peacekeeping Operations has placed highly skilled child protection staff who address issues such as child soldiers, sexual exploitation, and child detention. Through local networks, they monitor and report on the situation of children and the information collected is incorporated into the Secretary-General’s annual report to the Security Council on children and armed conflict and country specific reports to the Council.

In Afghanistan, the work is more challenging. “I would like to meet more children,” said Ms. Brillenburg Wurth, who has served as a child protection advocate in the Sudan, Sierra Leone, Burundi, Côte d’Ivoire, Guinea, Sri Lanka, and the Balkans. “In all of these countries,” she continues, “I have been able to walk in the street with children, hold their hands, listen to their stories. In Kabul, because of the extreme secu-

rity situation, a prison is the only setting I have to chat with children. These interactions always remind me of what we are doing and why we are doing it. There have been successes.”

Agreement with the Government

Ms. Brillenburg Wurth and her counterpart in UNICEF, Ratna Jhaveri were responsible for negotiating the details of the recent action plan signed by the Government of Afghanistan and the United Nations on recruitment and use of children. The signing ceremony this month was witnessed by Special Representative of the Secretary-General on Children and Armed Conflict Radhika Coomaraswamy and it aims to release all children from the Afghan National Security Forces and enhance the overall protection of children in armed conflict.

Reaching the unreachable

UNAMA is arguably one of the most difficult missions for child protection. While relationships with the Government

and the international forces are positive and constructive, the worst violators of children’s rights, like the Taliban, are unreachable. There is hope, however. On her visit at the beginning of the year, Ms. Coomaraswamy was able to get a message to the non-state actors through the High Peace Council—a group set up by Afghan President Hamid Karzai to bring these elements to the negotiating table. In February, a notorious militia commander separated seven children from his check points in the South. “It’s a start.”

“We can’t change things overnight, but with the action plan, we are planting a seed of change, not only on paper, but in attitudes. In five years, I hope the general populations will be as outraged by the situation of children in Afghanistan as I am. These abuses are against sharia; they are against national and international law,” said Ms. Brillenburg Wurth.

Child protection adviser Ms. Dee Brillenburg Wurth and her team of two was expanded to seven staff members in March 2011, in order to continue their work to improve the lives of girls and boys affected by the conflict.

Afghanistan: 12-year-old Afghan girl in a nomad camp. Photo credit: Mariam Alimi



UNAMA is arguably one of the most difficult missions for child protection. While relationships with the Government and the international forces are positive and constructive, the worst violators of children’s rights are unreachable.

“In a traditional mission, sometimes it can be a struggle to introduce new concepts of Peacekeeping such as child protection,”
- Svjatlana Jovic



Lebanon: Child protection focal point in UNIFIL Svjatlana Jovic with children. Photo credit: Eric Acquaye

Lebanon: Protecting children on the blue line

At a school in Southern Lebanon, armed peacekeepers rolled up in armored personnel carriers. They came to visit school children, teach them foreign languages, talk about the danger of mines which prevents them from playing freely outdoors, discuss hygiene practices and instruct them about road safety and traffic signs. When a UNIFIL soldier or civilian staff members entered a classroom, the children, who have lived through conflict, were intimidated. Yet, Peacekeeping has evolved since the 1978 creation of UNIFIL, with the mandate shifting from overseeing the Israeli withdrawal from South Lebanon 33 years ago to currently maintaining cessation of the hostilities, carrying out demining and humanitarian work as well as development projects, among other things. With the appointment of a child protection focal point, one of the oldest Peacekeeping Missions in the world starts to change.

Despite Lebanon’s turbulent past, child protection had not been a priority issue for UNIFIL. Still, the fact that children could be victims of violence in Lebanon is of great concern for the United Nations and Svjatlana Jovic who was appointed as child protection focal point for UNIFIL in 2008. Her job is to raise the sensitivity of the mission to the needs of those girls and boys caught amidst the hostilities in this area.

No stranger to conflict or Peacekeeping Missions herself, Ms. Jovic had her first contact with United Nations peacekeepers

in her home town of Zagreb. “The war in Croatia transformed my career; so instead of taking a job in a theatre, I joined the United Nations,” she said. After working on the UNICEF/ USAID funded project “Unaccompanied Children in Exile” in Bosnia and Herzegovina, Ms. Jovic served as human rights officer in Rwanda where she set to reunite children separated from their parents during genocide. She would later explain that these assignments were, “my baptism in child protection.”

A mission adapts

In Lebanon, Jovic faces different challenges. “In a traditional mission, sometimes it can be a struggle to introduce new concepts of Peacekeeping such as child protection,” she says. UNIFIL has no mandate for active child protection activities such as the monitoring of child rights violations; however, the mission is doing its best to build in-house knowledge and understanding of the role of peacekeepers in protecting girls and boys given the post-conflict environment and its effect on these children.

One method that Ms. Jovic employs is to organize a series of workshops on child rights and child protection in partnership with Save the Children Sweden.

Becoming advocates

“My idea was to introduce the concept of child protection across the mission, to all UN staff - from military and international civilians to local personnel by training them. Blue helmets and berets as well as the local translators and NGO

representatives are potential child protection advocates and should be used as resources to build child protection capacities within UNIFIL but also within their own local communities.” The focus of the training is on national staff since they are the ones who maintain the institutional memory within the field structure where battalions are deployed. They accompany military personnel on their daily patrols and can therefore serve as crucial child rights advocates. Acting at the forefront of UNIFIL, they are also UNIFIL’s main interlocutors with local communities.

Children face moments where their trust and instincts are put on trial, especially in conflict situations. The training therefore provides guidance and tools on how to become a credible protector. A key objective of the training is, according to Sanna Johnson, Save the Children Sweden’s Regional Director, “to enable UNIFIL’s military and civilian components to better understand why and how children react and respond to violence. This, in turn, will help peacekeepers formulate their response.”

The eight days of training included briefings and discussions on the concept of childhood, the international legal standards, national legislation, the impact of armed conflict on children, and existing protection measures.

Perceptions of the rights of a child vary, as reflected by the heated discussion among the 16 participants of the workshop, who came from different backgrounds and cultures. Yet all of the attendees were eager to learn. “As a UNIFIL staff member working in a Peacekeeping Mission in South Lebanon where more than 10,000 troops are deployed amid communities with children, it is an obligation to learn and improve my skills on child rights,” UNIFIL Civil Affairs Officer Sarah Al Khoury explains. Reflecting on the training, Monita Youssef, from the UNIFIL Welfare Office, viewed it as an opportunity “to better know the rights of the child according to the human rights charter and its legal status in Lebanese law.”

The first step down a long road

Ms. Jovic knows that this first training is only the beginning and she is also keenly aware that there is still a long way to go. Mainstreaming child protection remains a challenge for UNIFIL. Still, there is hope that with a better understanding of the rights of children through training, the mobilization of child advocates in the mission and in the local community, Lebanon’s children who have seen so much in their young lives will be better protected.

Lebanon: UNIFIL Finnish soldiers chat with local school children. UN Photo/John Isaac



“Blue helmets and NGO representatives are potential child protection advocates.”

- Svjetlana Jovic

“Recently, I met one former child soldier, while visiting a school to talk about child rights. The student stood up in front of his classmates and teachers and said, ‘this man helped me by removing me from the army when I was very young.’” - James Gatgong



The Sudan: People watch as UNMIS assists in training of Sudanese police officers. UN Photo/Tim McKulka

The Sudan: From child soldier to child protection officer

James Gatgong makes incursions into the field to investigate reported incidents of grave violations against children. He trains commanders, Southern Sudanese police officers, Government officials and community leaders. “I love to work for children, especially when it involves promoting their rights.” James has a special connection with child soldiers in the Sudan. He used to be one.

At 13, James was forced by his brother, who was then a village chief in Boor Mayendit County Unity State, to join the Sudan People’s Liberation Army (SPLA). “There was heavy pressure on local communities to join the SPLA in fighting the enemy,” he said.

Mr. Gatgong recalls joining the SPLA with *War Child* author and internationally acclaimed rapper Emmanuel Jal who comes from the same village. In 1987, Mr. Gatgong and thousands of other children trekked on foot down the long and treacherous route to Ethiopia. Many died of hunger and disease along the way. Upon arrival they became part of the Red Army which consisted mostly of children. He recalls being ordered to fight the war in the Equatoria region of Southern Sudan. “In 1993, I saw many children killed during the war. This is one of my most painful memories. I was seriously wounded and evacuated to Kenya by the Red Cross,” he said. Once in Kenya, he resumed school, where he studied social work.

Restoring peace in Southern Sudan

The SPLA began transforming into a conventional army in 2006 and integrated a number of different armed groups within its ranks. Despite the many improvements, there are still high illiteracy rates among the soldiers and limited knowledge and understanding of the rights of children. In his current role as child protection officer with the United Nations Mission in the Sudan (UNMIS), James Gatgong is, among many other assignments, responsible for training the United Nations Peacekeeping forces and soldiers in Southern Sudan on international and national child protection law.

The children in the Sudan also need to be made aware of their rights which is why Gatgong speaks to students. “Recently, I met one former child soldier, while visiting a school to talk about child rights. The student stood up in front of his classmates and teachers and said, ‘this man helped me by removing me from the army when I was very young.’ The boy told the class that he intends to work for children of Southern Sudan. I am proud of the help that I can give my own people. He will be too,” said Mr. Gatgong.

Child Protection Unit

The UNMIS Child Protection Unit has 25 national and international staff who hail from all over the globe. Several of the international staff bring conflict-specific expertise, while the Sudanese officers provide knowledge of their country’s incredibly diverse history, culture, languages and religions. What ties them all together is their dedication and com-

mitment to ensuring peace for the children of the Sudan. Their common goal is: to secure full implementation of commitments made by the parties to conflict related to child protection.

Following the referendum in early 2011, UNMIS child protection staff called on all parties to remember the progress made for children in Southern Sudan. UNMIS child protection advisers, along with UNICEF have worked hard to put in place comprehensive legislation protecting children including the criminalization of child recruitment. Decisions that the parties to the Comprehensive Peace Agreement are taking should build on these foundations and further strengthen the protective environment for children.

Moving forward, they will continue to focus on training and sensitizing communities and Government officials on the existence of these rights; more than 5,000 SPLA troops have been introduced to child rights issues through awareness campaigns disseminated via UNMIS Radio Miraya and in-person.

Agreement with the SPLA

At least than 1,500 children have left military barracks since the Comprehensive Peace Agreement between the North and the South was signed, but still many remain.

To date, a total of 210 boys associated with the SPLA have been verified, registered, officially demobilized and reunified with their families since the signing of the action plan witnessed by Special Representative Radhika Coomaraswamy. The SPLA leadership through the Office of the Director of Moral Orientation and SPLA Child Protection Unit is currently seeking ways to hold accountable those SPLA persons involved in the recruitment and use of children in the army.

In this constantly evolving environment, UNMIS staff, along with other protection actors, continue to adapt to the child protection needs of this complex country and to do their best to ensure that any changes in the political landscape will not roll back the recent gains for the children of the Sudan.

The Sudan: Children in the town of Labado where roughly 60,000 of the town's inhabitants had fled from violence and attacks. UN Photo/Evan Schneider



The UNMIS child protection unit has 25 national and international staff who hail from all over the globe.

“It is my duty to protect children from being sold and trafficked across the border.” - Julie Thériault



Haiti: The Under-Secretary-General for Peacekeeping Operations meets school children. UN Photo/Marco Dormino

Haiti: Blue beret works for children

“Since the terrible earthquake, Haiti’s children are clearly more vulnerable to abuse than before,” says Police Officer Julie Thériault of the United Nations Stabilization Mission in Haiti (MINUSTAH). The earthquake that struck Haiti in January 2010 destroyed families, schools, churches, and conventional security environments. Officer Thériault, from Canada, went to Haiti recently to join the United Nations Police Brigade for the Protection of Minors.

“Never have my 18 years of experience as a police officer in Canada been more requested than in today’s Haiti, where the post-earthquake shock still persists in the backbones of Haitian people, armed elements roam through the ruins and there are no zones of peace for the most innocent and vulnerable,” Officer Thériault describes.

Ms. Thériault is responsible for mentoring and training the Haitian police and for monitoring and reporting on child rights violations including sexual violence, abduction, trafficking in children, and the association of children with armed elements. This information is vital for the Security Council and the Office of the Special Representative for Children and Armed Conflict at United Nations Headquarters of the Secretary-General who follow these developments as a matter of peace and security.

Sexual violence and trafficking in children

In Haiti, armed elements sexually abuse girls and boys with impunity. Documenting these grave violations is therefore essential for bringing perpetrators to justice. Apart from monitoring sexual violence, Officer Thériault has visited many hospitals to ensure that sexually abused children are getting adequate treatment. The current situation is particularly precarious as earthquake survivors and infected people are also in desperate need of care. “I was shocked to see that medical equipment is rare and that basic medicines and supplies such as rape kits are lacking,” she says.

Another concern is the trafficking in children. “Many orphanages have sprouted up in the time after the earthquake in Haiti. It is my duty to check the legality of these institutions and to protect children from being sold and trafficked across the border,” Officer Thériault says. During the past few months, she has reported several illegal orphanages.

Children in detention

Frequently, children charged with criminal activities are kept in detention conditions that do not meet the juvenile standards established by international consensus. “I visit many prisons to make sure that children and adults do not share the same cells and that minimum standards of detention are in place. However, often, boys and girls are stuffed into very small cells, without a bed, without toilets, and without sufficient food,” the peacekeeper says. Any shortcomings are

reported to the MINUSTAH child protection team and to the Corrections Unit for follow-up.

Building Haitian police capacities

In an effort to create a more secure environment for the children of Haiti, one of Officer Thériault's key responsibilities is to rebuild the capacities of the national police, which have been seriously impaired by the earthquake. She works with the national police on a daily basis, conducts joint patrols and mentors them. Haiti was the first Caribbean country to throw


off the chains of colonialism and the desire of Haiti to stand on its own feet has always been strong. For MINUSTAH, it has therefore become even more pressing to build strong national capacities.

When asked what her most unforgettable moment was, Thériault paused and replied, "I have visited many regions in this country, in all those regions the common denominator is the children. Those children and other people I have met have provided me with memories that I will cherish my whole life. Their hugs, the look in their eyes, and their smiles will forever be engrained in my memory along with the hope that a better Haiti will be built by helping one person, one child at a time."

Haiti: Officer Thériault meeting children during a patrol in Haiti.
UN Photo / MINUSTAH



Frequently, children charged with criminal activities are kept in detention conditions that do not meet the juvenile standards established by international consensus.



Everyone in a Peacekeeping Mission has a role to play in protecting children from the effects of war.

Somalia: Child in an internally displaced persons camp in Basasso. Photo credit: Timothy La Rose

Questions and answers

Why is child protection a new concept in United Nations Peacekeeping?

In the early days of Peacekeeping, over 60 years ago, the idea was simple: the United Nations would stand between warring States and monitor peace agreements, including cease fires. However, as conflicts changed, our missions had to evolve as well. New aspects such as peacebuilding, human rights monitoring, demobilization and disarmament, and child protection were introduced into Peacekeeping. The missions have become multidimensional. Child protection specifically was introduced through Security Council resolution 1261 in 1999.

Conflicts disproportionately affect children. Many are subject to abductions, rape, military recruitment, killing, maiming, and other forms of exploitation, and are deprived of their basic rights to education, especially when schools are attacked.

Helping children breaks the cycle of violence that can occur when children—who have known violence throughout their lives—become adults. Peacekeepers, through their child protection advisers, are now able to cover issues such as the release of child soldiers, juvenile justice, and the reform of relevant legislation.

Who in Peacekeeping Operations is responsible for protecting children?

Everyone in a Peacekeeping Mission has a role to play in protecting children from the effects of war—from the blue helmet and the United Nations police to the international and national civilian staff member.

To ensure that mainstreaming takes place within the missions, child protection advisers are deployed.

What is the role and key function of child protection advisers in UN Peacekeeping?

Child protection advisers routinely perform the following tasks:

- **Mainstreaming and advising mission leadership** on making child protection an integral part of the mission's engagement including in peace processes and in the planning, strategies and the activities of all the mission components.
- **Training** of newly-deployed peacekeepers on child protection. Approximately 60 per cent of trainees are military personnel, 30 per cent United Nations police and 10 per cent civilian staff. This training complements the training on child protection every peacekeeper must receive prior to his or her deployment.
- **Monitoring and reporting** grave child rights violations: The Security Council established a mechanism to monitor and report on the most serious violations that are committed against children in conflict. This mecha-

nism referred to as the 1612 monitoring and reporting mechanism (MRM), after the Security Council resolution, reports on six grave violations: the killing or maiming, recruiting or use of child soldiers, attacks against schools or hospitals, rape or other grave sexual violence, abduction, and denial of humanitarian access for children.

Peacekeeping Missions through their child protection advisers and other capacities with monitoring mandates (e.g. human rights teams and military observers) contribute to the collection and verification of information related to the six grave violations. The MRM reports that are thereby compiled - with UNICEF and other partners - are critical, as they are the basis of action of the United Nations Security Council Working Group on Children and Armed Conflict and could ultimately result in sanctions.

- **Establishing dialogue with parties to conflict:** Child protection advisers play a key role in establishing dialogue with perpetrators and in developing action plans to end grave violations committed against children, in particular the recruitment of child soldiers, killing and maiming, and sexual violence.

Action plans and more informal negotiations led to the following numbers of child soldiers released in 2010: 1656 in the Democratic Republic of the Congo, 210 in Southern Sudan, 574 in Darfur.

- **Advocating:** The child protection adviser acts as an advocate, facilitator, and an adviser to the mission leadership on pertinent child protection issues.

Apart from these, actions of child protection advisers and the mission will vary along with mission mandates.

Where do child protection advisers operate today?

Child protection advisers currently work in the following missions led by the Department of Peacekeeping Operations:

UNMIS (Sudan), UNAMID (Sudan), MONUSCO (Democratic Republic of the Congo), MINUSTAH (Haiti), UNAMA (Afghanistan), UNMIL (Liberia), and UNOCI (Côte d'Ivoire).

Since 2001, the Department of Peacekeeping Operations has deployed child protection advisers in Sierra Leone, Burundi, Chad, the Democratic Republic of the Congo, Afghanistan, Côte d'Ivoire, Liberia, Haiti and the Sudan.

How do Peacekeeping Operations fit in the big picture of child protection in the United Nations?

"The protection of children must be central to the humanitarian, peacemaking and Peacekeeping policies of the United Nations, and should be given priority within existing human rights and humanitarian procedures."

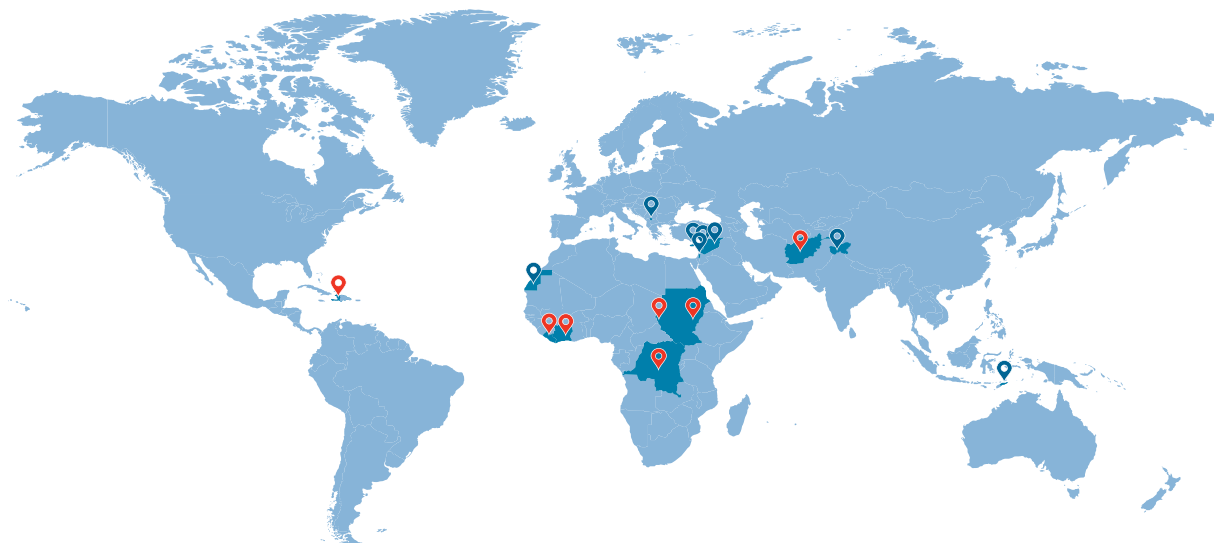
Graça Machel report *Impact of armed conflict on children* A/51/306


Haiti: MINUSTAH military personnel assists hurricane victims. UN Photo/Marco Dormino




Many children are subject to abductions, rape, military recruitment, killing, maiming, and other forms of exploitation, and deprived of their basic rights to education, especially when schools are attacked.

Deployment of child protection advisers



 Peacekeeping Mission with child protection adviser

 Peacekeeping Mission without child protection adviser

The work of the Department of Peacekeeping Operations is complementary to other actors in child protection. Cooperation with them is critical to provide a comprehensive response.

The child protection function within Peacekeeping does not implement programmes for the local government. This independence gives missions a certain leeway to spearhead highly political and sensitive activities on the ground.

Which documents govern the work of child protection in United Nations Peacekeeping Operations?

Since 1999, the Security Council has issued seven resolutions on children and armed conflict. Each of these resolutions assigns specific roles to the Department of Peacekeeping Operations in the area of child protection.

In addition, since 2001, specific provisions on child protection have been included in 13 Peacekeeping mandates and

peace agreements. In 2009, the Department of Peacekeeping Operations and the Department of Field Support issued a child protection policy, that has also been adopted by the Department of Political Affairs for political and peacebuilding missions.

All these documents govern the work of Peacekeeping Missions in protecting children:

Security Council Resolutions: 1261 (1999), 1314 (2000), 1379 (2001), 1460 (2003), 1539 (2004), 1612 (2005), and 1882 (2009)

Policy: DPKO/DFS Policy on mainstreaming the protection, rights and well-being of children affected by armed conflict within UN Peacekeeping Operations (2009)

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<http://www.un.org/peacekeeping/issues/children>



The Sudan: Special Representative of the Secretary-General Coomaraswamy on her mission to the Sudan to witness the signing of an action plan with the SPLA. UN Photo/Olivier Chassot

Joint statement

New York, 19 November 2010

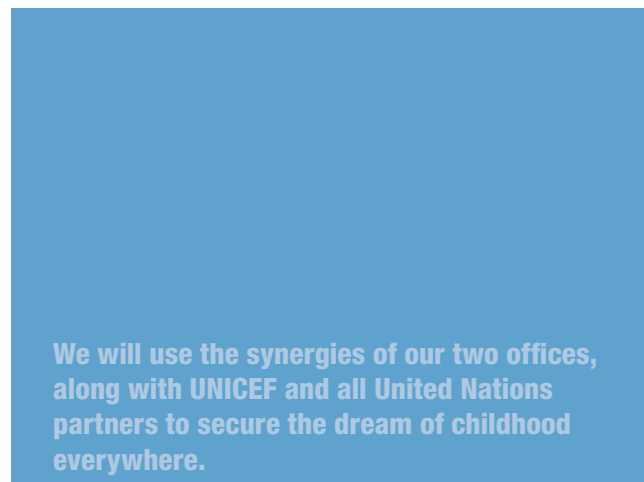
Tomorrow, 20 November, is Universal Children's Day, a day to celebrate youth and to demonstrate our universal belief that childhood is sacred for all girls and boys. Millions of children around the world, however, are denied a safe home and community, a functioning school and a protected playground. Growing up in conflict, their innocence is stolen when they are abducted from schools, recruited to fight, wounded or killed, separated from their families and emotionally as well as physically scarred for life.

We remember the needs of the children in Afghanistan, Burundi, the Central African Republic, Chad, Côte d'Ivoire, the Democratic Republic of the Congo, Haiti, Iraq, Lebanon,

Myanmar, Nepal, the Occupied Palestinian Territory and Israel, Somalia, the Sudan, and all other places in conflict and we reaffirm our commitment to be their voices and protectors.

In 1996, Graça Machel, an international advocate for the rights of children, reported for the first time on the nightmares that these children experience. Since then, we have come a long way as the protection of children in armed conflict has been firmly secured as part of the international peace and security agenda. Through the systematic monitoring and naming of child rights violators by the Secretary-General, the United Nations is acting as one and has secured the demobilization of thousands of children associated with armed forces and groups over the past 10 years. Moreover, in June 2010, the Security Council expressed its readiness to impose sanctions against those persistently listed as violating the rights of the innocent.

Haiti: Under-Secretary-General Le Roy visits the area around a border bridge between the Dominican Republic and Haiti. UN Photo/Marco Dormino



We will use the synergies of our two offices, along with UNICEF and all United Nations partners to secure the dream of childhood everywhere.





Joint statement on the occasion of Universal Children's Day by Special Representative of the Secretary-General Radhika Coomaraswamy and Under-Secretary-General Alain Le Roy.

Over the past decade, we have continually strengthened the partnership between our two offices as the role of child protection in Peacekeeping developed. In 2001, the first child protection adviser was deployed to the mission in Sierra Leone. Nearly 10 years later, child protection advisers and focal points are posted in nine missions led by the Department of Peacekeeping Operations, where they negotiate the release of children and ensure that United Nations blue helmets are sensitized to the vulnerabilities of war-affected children. Today, every single peacekeeper receives training on child protection and hence serves as the eyes and ears of the Office for Children and Armed Conflict in the field. In a joint effort by our offices, UNICEF and other United Nations partners, we have achieved notable success in protecting children affected by conflict. In 2010 alone, with the assistance of United Nations peacekeepers from the United Nations Organization Stabilization Mission in the Democratic Republic of the Congo, armed forces and

groups in the country freed over 1,000 girls and boys from their ranks. The United Nations Mission in Sudan (UNMIS) and UNICEF facilitated the demobilization of over 200 children and the African Union-United Nations Hybrid Operation in Darfur (UNAMID) played an important role in the release of close to 1,000 children over the last year. In Afghanistan, Myanmar and the Democratic Republic of the Congo, three agreements for the release of child fighters are currently being prepared.

While we celebrate these achievements, Universal Children's Day also reminds us that we still have to address many more challenges that children face during conflict. As long as schools become targets of attacks and children once freed are re-recruited or abused in the absence of the rule of law, we pledge to carry on this important work. We will use the synergies of our two offices, along with UNICEF and all United Nations partners to secure the dream of childhood everywhere, even in the darkest corners of conflict.



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