

UNODC STUDY GUIDE - GCMUN 2024

Agenda: Discussing The Recruitment and Admission of Minors into Extremist Groups in The Middle East and Africa

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LETTER FROM THE EB

The Executive Board of The United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC) welcomes each one of you to GCMUN 2024.

For many, it may be the first-ever MUN conference in your educational experience, and we strongly encourage you to go through the study guide that has been prepared for you as a part of the resources provided, to get an in-depth understanding of the issues that will be discussed in committee. However, there is a lot of content available beyond the study guide. You are expected to research, collate, list down possible points of discussion, questions, and plausible responses and be prepared to enjoy the intellectual energy in the room. At the same- time it is not only about speaking and presenting but also the ability to listen, understand viewpoints and learn from each one's perspective.

The UNODC is a technical committee that requires resilience accompanied by a fierce mind-set and the ability to address aspects of a larger situation with utmost empathy. The issue being-discussed in the committee requires a balance of all traits to ensure the best results. The committee deals with sensitive topics like human trafficking, abuse of minors and the ill treatment of victims of organized crime. It is thus imperative to understand the importance of sensitivity and situational awareness while addressing these subjects. Remember that you can be a powerful delegate and still be diplomatic and respectful of member nations.

The executive board strongly encourages all delegates to actively participate in the committee regardless of their experience, and engage in debate. The executive board will also remain approachable at all times for any doubts or queries that you may have or any grievances you may be facing.

We, the executive board, ensure a thrilling experience and wish all our enthusiastic delegates the very best!

*Regards,
The Executive Board of UNODC,*

*Gia Fernandes (CHAIRPERSON)
Vihaan Arora (VICE-CHAIRPERSON)*

INTRODUCTION TO THE COMMITTEE

UNODC was established in 1997 as a result of the merging of the United Nations Centre for International Crime Prevention and the United Nations International Drug Control Programme. It was established by the Secretary-General of the United Nations to enable the Organization to focus and enhance its capacity to address the interrelated issues of drug control, crime, and international terrorism in all its forms.

The United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC) is committed to achieving health, security, and justice for all by tackling threats from illicit drugs, organized crime, and terrorism worldwide. UNODC is a global leader in the struggle against illicit drugs and organized and serious crime, and the lead United Nations entity for delivering legal and technical assistance to prevent terrorism. Headquartered in Vienna, UNODC operates more than 50 field offices around the world, covering over 150 countries.

Crime, drugs, and terrorism are high-priority issues for the United Nations. At a time when these problems without borders are becoming widely recognized as threats to individuals and nations alike, requests for coordinated UNODC initiatives at the national, regional, and transnational levels continue to grow. Our work enhances security and improves the everyday lives of people across the globe. The United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC) is a global leader in the fight against illicit drugs and international crime. The UNODC has approximately 500 staff members worldwide. It relies on voluntary contributions, mainly from governments for 90 percent of its budget.

The three pillars of the UNODC work programme are:

1. Normative work to assist States in the ratification and implementation of the international treaties, the development of domestic legislation on drugs, crime, and terrorism, and the provision of secretariat and substantive services to the treaty-based and governing bodies;
2. Field-based technical cooperation projects to enhance the capacity of Member States to counteract illicit drugs, crime, and terrorism;
3. Research and analytical work to increase knowledge and understanding of drugs and crime issues and expand the evidence base for policy and operational decisions.

LIST OF KEY TERMS

UNODC (United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime): A UN office that helps countries fight illicit drugs, crime, and terrorism, including preventing minor recruitment into extremist organizations.

Child Soldier: A minor who is recruited by armed groups and used in various roles including combat, logistics, or support.

Extremist Organizations: Groups that use radical ideologies to justify violence and terrorism, often recruiting and exploiting minors.

Radicalization: The process through which individuals, including minors, adopt extremist ideologies and beliefs that justify violence.

Recruitment: The process by which extremist organizations target and enlist minors to join their ranks, often involving coercion or manipulation.

Propaganda: Information, often biased or misleading, used by extremist organizations to influence beliefs and actions, especially of minors.

Rehabilitation and Reintegration: Programs aimed at helping former child soldiers and minors reintegrate into society through psychological support, education, and vocational training.

Human Trafficking: The illegal trade of humans for forced labor, sexual exploitation, or recruitment into armed groups, particularly affecting minors.

Counter-Terrorism: Strategies and actions to prevent and respond to terrorist activities, including preventing the recruitment of minors.

De-radicalization: Programs aimed at changing the beliefs of radicalized individuals, including minors, to prevent extremist activities.

Psychosocial Support: Services addressing the psychological and social needs of individuals affected by conflict or recruitment into extremist groups.

Child Protection: Measures to safeguard children from violence, exploitation, abuse, and neglect, including recruitment by extremist groups.

Disarmament, Demobilization, and Reintegration (DDR): Programs to disarm and demobilize combatants, including child soldiers, and assist their reintegration into civilian life.

Violent Extremism: Actions and ideologies advocating violence for political, ideological, or religious goals, often involving minor recruitment.

International Humanitarian Law (IHL): Rules limiting the effects of armed conflict, protecting those not participating in hostilities, including minors.

Social Cohesion: The strength of relationships and solidarity among community members, undermined by the recruitment of minors into extremist groups.

Conflict Zones: Areas with ongoing armed conflict, where minors are vulnerable to recruitment by extremist organizations.

Child Rights: Rights recognizing the special needs and protections required by minors, as outlined in international treaties like the Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC).

Prevention Strategies: Policies and programs to prevent the recruitment of minors into extremist organizations through education and community engagement.

Human Rights Violations: Breaches of international human rights laws, including the recruitment and use of minors in armed conflict by extremist organizations.

Child Abduction: The illegal taking of minors by force or deception, often for recruitment into extremist groups.

Child Exploitation: The use of minors for labor, sexual exploitation, or participation in armed conflict.

Forced Recruitment: Compelling minors to join armed groups or extremist organizations against their will.

Community-Based Interventions: Localized programs aimed at preventing the recruitment of minors by engaging communities in protective measures.

Transnational Crime: Criminal activities affecting multiple countries, including the trafficking of minors for recruitment by extremist groups.

Non-State Armed Groups (NSAGs): Armed organizations not officially part of state military forces, often recruiting minors.

Peacebuilding: Efforts to establish lasting peace in conflict areas, including initiatives to prevent the recruitment of minors.

Security Sector Reform (SSR): Programs to improve the effectiveness and accountability of security forces, reducing minor recruitment risks.

Asylum and Refugee Protection: Legal frameworks and practices to protect individuals, including minors, fleeing conflict zones and recruitment.

Gender-Based Violence (GBV): Violence directed at individuals based on gender, including the exploitation of minors by extremist organizations.

Early Warning Systems: Mechanisms to detect potential recruitment or radicalization of minors, enabling timely interventions.

Inter-Agency Coordination: Collaborative efforts among UN agencies, NGOs, and governments to address minor recruitment.

Monitoring and Evaluation (M&E): Processes to assess the effectiveness of programs preventing minor recruitment.

Legal Frameworks: National and international laws designed to protect minors from recruitment and exploitation by extremist groups.

Public Awareness Campaigns: Initiatives to inform communities and minors about recruitment risks and signs by extremist organizations.

Protective Legislation: Laws specifically designed to safeguard minors from recruitment into extremist organizations.

Conflict Prevention: Strategies and actions aimed at avoiding conflict outbreaks, reducing minor recruitment risks.

Reintegration Assistance: Support to former child soldiers and minors to help them return to civilian life, including education and vocational training.

Social Reintegration Programs: Initiatives to help minors involved with extremist groups reintegrate into their communities.

Mental Health Services: Psychological support provided to minors affected by recruitment or involvement with extremist organizations.

Economic Empowerment: Programs providing minors and their families with economic opportunities to reduce extremist group appeal.

Education Access: Ensuring minors have access to education to prevent recruitment by extremist groups.

Family Tracing and Reunification: Efforts to locate and reunite minors with their families after involvement with extremist organizations.

Victim Support Services: Assistance to minors who have been victims of recruitment or exploitation by extremist groups.

Child-Friendly Spaces: Safe areas in conflict zones where minors can receive support and protection from recruitment.

Survivor Testimonies: Accounts from minors involved with extremist organizations, used to raise awareness and inform prevention strategies.

Capacity Building: Efforts to strengthen local organizations' and governments' ability to prevent minor recruitment.

Youth Empowerment Programs: Initiatives engaging young people in positive activities to counter extremist influence.

Legal Aid Services: Providing legal support to minors recruited by extremist groups, ensuring their rights are protected.

Humanitarian Aid: Assistance to conflict zone populations to reduce vulnerabilities exploited by extremist groups for recruitment.

Surveillance and Intelligence Sharing: Collaborative efforts among international and local agencies to monitor and share recruitment activity information.

Restorative Justice: Approaches focusing on rehabilitating minors involved with extremist groups, rather than punitive measures.

Parental Engagement: Involving parents and guardians in efforts to prevent their children's recruitment by extremist organizations.

Grassroots Advocacy: Local efforts to raise awareness and mobilize communities against minor recruitment by extremist groups.

Reconciliation Processes: Initiatives to heal divisions within communities affected by conflict and minor recruitment.

Vocational Training: Providing skills and training to minors to enhance employment opportunities and reduce extremist group allure.

Conflict Resolution Education: Teaching minors and communities peaceful dispute resolution methods to prevent recruitment.

Protective Asylum Procedures: Special measures to protect minors seeking asylum from recruitment by extremist groups.

Community Resilience Building: Strengthening community capacity to resist extremist organizations' influence and recruitment tactics.

Strategic Communication: Targeted messaging to counter extremist propaganda and prevent minor recruitment.

INTRODUCTION TO THE AGENDA

The recruitment and admission of minors into extremist groups is a critical issue that has plagued the Middle East and Africa for decades. This phenomenon represents a grave violation of human rights and has severe implications for regional stability, security, and development. Extremist organizations, such as ISIS, Boko Haram, and Al-Shabaab, have systematically targeted and manipulated vulnerable children and adolescents, exploiting their circumstances to swell their ranks. This introduction aims to provide an overview of the factors driving the recruitment of minors, the methods employed by extremist groups, and the profound impacts on the minors involved and broader society.

Factors that Drive Recruitment:

The recruitment of minors by extremist groups in the Middle East and Africa is influenced by a complex interplay of social, economic, and political factors. Chronic poverty, lack of education, and limited economic opportunities create a fertile ground for extremist ideologies to take root. In regions where state institutions are weak or non-existent, extremist groups often fill the vacuum, providing basic services and a semblance of order. Additionally, ongoing conflicts and political instability displace families, leaving children orphaned or separated from their guardians, thereby increasing their susceptibility to recruitment.

Psychological factors also play a significant role. Extremist groups are adept at exploiting feelings of marginalization, frustration, and revenge among youths. The promise of belonging, identity, and purpose is a powerful lure for minors who feel alienated from their communities or societies. In some cases, indoctrination begins in schools or community centers controlled by extremists, where children are exposed to radical ideologies from a young age.

Methods of Recruitment

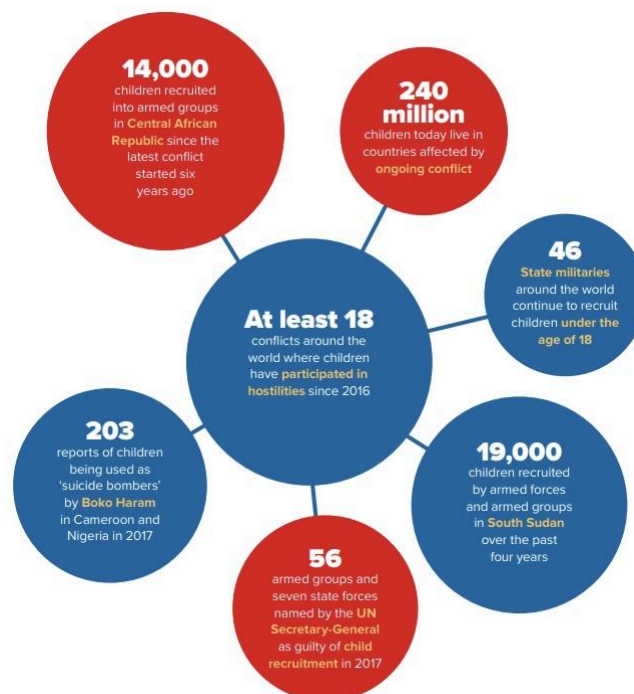
Extremist groups employ a variety of methods to recruit minors, ranging from coercion and abduction to voluntary enlistment driven by ideological persuasion or financial incentives. Abductions are common in conflict zones, where children are forcibly taken from their homes or schools. Boko Haram's mass kidnappings in Nigeria, such as the infamous Chibok schoolgirls' abduction, exemplify this tactic.

Voluntary recruitment, however, is often rooted in economic desperation or ideological indoctrination. Extremist groups offer financial rewards, food, shelter, and security to entice children and their families. Propaganda through social media, local leaders, and peer networks plays a crucial role in spreading extremist ideologies and glorifying martyrdom, making it an appealing option for impressionable youth.

Implications on Minors and Society:

The consequences of recruiting minors into extremist groups are devastating and far-reaching. For the children involved, the impact is immediate and severe: exposure to violence, psychological trauma, and loss of educational and developmental opportunities. These children are often trained as soldiers, suicide bombers, or in supportive roles, all of which have long-term detrimental effects on their physical and mental health. The societal impact is equally profound. The cycle of violence and instability perpetuates as these children grow into adulthood with deep-seated radical beliefs and traumas that are difficult to rehabilitate. Communities suffer as a result of the loss of their younger generations to violence and extremism, hindering social cohesion and economic development. Moreover, the normalization of child soldiers undermines international norms and laws designed to protect children, posing a significant challenge to global efforts in promoting peace and human rights.

Addressing the recruitment and admission of minors into extremist groups requires a multifaceted approach that tackles the root causes of vulnerability and provides sustainable alternatives. Strengthening education systems, improving economic opportunities, and enhancing the capacity of state institutions to protect and support children are essential steps. Additionally, community-based interventions and international cooperation are critical in countering extremist ideologies and reintegrating former child soldiers into society. Only through comprehensive and concerted efforts can we hope to disrupt the cycle of exploitation and violence that endangers the future of children in the Middle East and Africa.



HISTORY OF THE AGENDA

The issue of recruiting minors into extremist organizations has been a persistent global problem. Historically, the enlistment of children in conflicts was widespread, till the matter surfaced at a Convention in Geneva in 1949, which addressed the welfare of children in conflict zones by prioritizing their safety and ensuring they received humanitarian aid. This was further expanded in 1977, with clauses prohibiting the recruitment of minors under 15 for any conflict-related role. Additional Protocol II explicitly stated that children under 15 should not be recruited into armed groups or forces, representing one of the first international acknowledgments of this issue.

However, the exploitation of child soldiers continues in numerous conflicts. Children are used as attackers, suicide bombers, mules, and in various other roles. Female minors often face additional abuse, including sexual violence. Such practices have been documented in multiple conflict scenarios.

In Afghanistan, the Taliban, classified by the United Nations as an extremist organization, has actively recruited children. Under Taliban rule, traditional schools were replaced with madrassas—religious schools where the curriculum promotes the Taliban ideology.

The Taliban frequently recruits children from these madrassas, training them from a young age and indoctrinating them to ensure their loyalty. These children are often deployed in suicide missions, particularly targeting the Afghan government.

Similarly, ISIL has resorted to the abduction of children to use them as fighters. Lacking a formal hierarchy and territory, ISIL often immediately deploys these children as suicide bombers or militia fighters.

Many of the ISIL operatives involved in recent attacks, such as the attack on Moscow, were indoctrinated as children. This indoctrination process involves the teaching of religious texts and a biased historical narrative that supports ISIL's extremist and militaristic views.

Education plays a crucial role in the recruitment of child soldiers. The manipulation of educational curricula and the exclusive use of specific schools and teachers have been tactics used to indoctrinate children, shaping their beliefs and actions in support of extremist organizations. This weaponization of education has been a consistent element in the exploitation of minors throughout history.

TIMELINE OF EVENTS

YEAR	EVENT/ REGION	DESCRIPTION
1979	Iran	During the Iranian Revolution, children were recruited into the Basij, a paramilitary volunteer militia established by Ayatollah Khomeini. They played significant roles in the Iran-Iraq War (1980-1988).
1980- 1988	Iran- Iraq War	The Iranian Basij used child soldiers extensively, with many young boys participating in human wave attacks against Iraqi forces.
1980s	Lebanon	During the Lebanese Civil War, various factions, including Hezbollah and Amal, recruited children as fighters.
1991- 2002	Sierra Leone	The Revolutionary United Front (RUF) notoriously recruited child soldiers during the Sierra Leone Civil War.
1990s	Somalia	Following the collapse of the Somali government in 1991, various warlords and militant groups, including Al-Shabaab, recruited children.
2000s	Democratic Republic of Congo	Various armed groups, including the Congolese army, recruited child soldiers during the Second Congo War and its aftermath.
2002	Uganda	The Lord's Resistance Army (LRA), led by Joseph Kony, abducted and used children as soldiers and sex slaves during the Ugandan civil conflict.
2011- Present	Syria	The Syrian Civil War saw numerous factions, including ISIS, the Free Syrian Army, and Kurdish forces, recruiting children. ISIS, in particular, used children as fighters, suicide bombers, and in propaganda.
2014	Nigeria	Boko Haram, an Islamist militant group, increased the recruitment and use of child soldiers and suicide bombers, especially after the abduction of over 200 schoolgirls from Chibok.

YEAR	EVENT/ REGION	DESCRIPTION
2014- Present	Yemen	The Yemeni Civil War led to the recruitment of children by various factions, including the Houthis, al-Qaeda in the Arabian Peninsula (AQAP), and government forces.
2020- Present	Ethiopia	The Tigray conflict involved the recruitment of child soldiers by both the Tigray People's Liberation Front (TPLF) and the Ethiopian government forces.
2021- Present	Mozambique	The Islamist insurgency in the Cabo Delgado province saw increased recruitment and use of children by militant groups linked to ISIS.
2024 Ongoing	Sahel Region	Various Islamist militant groups, including those linked to ISIS and al-Qaeda, continue to recruit children in Mali, Burkina Faso, and Niger.
2024 Ongoing	Somalia	Al-Shabaab remains a significant recruiter of child soldiers, using them in various capacities, including as fighters and suicide bombers.
2024 Ongoing	Libya	Post-Gaddafi Libya has seen various militias and armed groups using children in combat roles.

KEY PLAYERS - GROUPS INVOLVED

BOKO HARAM

With prime control in Nigeria, Niger, Chad and Cameroon, this notorious extremist organization uses a mix of force and coercion through manipulation to lure children into the organization. They typically target vulnerable youth from poverty-stricken backgrounds, offering a misguided sense of belonging and purpose. They may also kidnap children from schools, villages and markets. Brutal use of force and indoctrination are often used to solidify control over minors. They are known for violent attacks on civilians, government officials and kidnapping minors. They use child soldiers in these brutal attacks, including as suicide bombers.

AL- SHABAAB

The organization operates primarily in Somalia with some influence in Kenya. Similar to Boko Haram, Al-Shabab employs a combination of force and manipulation. They may exploit clan loyalties, religious ideologies and poverty as ways to create a sense of desperation and urgency to aid recruitment and entice children to join. They engage in armed insurgency against the Somali government and African Union Peacekeeping Forces. They deploy children for combat, bombings and as props to lure more children.

ISLAMIC STATE OF IRAQ AND SYRIA (ISIS)

The organisation has territorial control in Iraq and Syria, and while their territorial control has diminished significantly in recent years, they retain sleeper cell presence in not only Iraq and Syria but also have affiliates in other regions. ISIS uses sophisticated propaganda to target children both online through web browsers as well as through abductions and physical encounters. They portray violence and the concept of 'jihad' as heroic, while promising a sense of community and purpose.

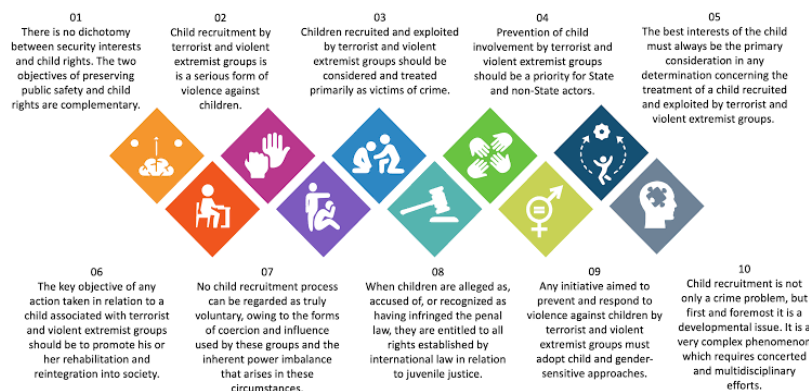
They may also exploit modern outlets like social media to groom and radicalize children. They previously held vast territories and also engaged in brutal warfare. Now, they focus their resources on insurgency tactics like bombings and assassinations. ISIS has vast documented use of child soldiers in their activities and propaganda.

AL- QAEDA

While Al-Qaeda itself doesn't have a centralized structure for the recruitment of child soldiers, some of its affiliated groups in various regions have been accused of the practice. The affiliate branches operate in Yemen, Syria and The Sahel region which encompasses countries bordering the southern Sahara desert in Africa. They also have a notable presence in areas with active insurgencies. Being a highly advanced group, information on specific recruitment methods can be difficult to obtain. However they are believed to use common practices like indoctrination by preying on religious beliefs and grievances in order to create a 'common enemy'. This tactic often fasttracks recruitment. They also resort to radicalization through extremist teachings. They often target children from poor backgrounds or conflict zones offering a sense of belonging or purpose, sometimes even financial gain. Exploiting existing social structures is a common practice to pressure or coerce children into joining. Similar to ISIS, some affiliates may use online propaganda and social media to target and radicalize vulnerable youth. The activities of Al Qaeda affiliates vary based on region, but they often involve bombings, assassinations and ambushes.

SYRIAN DEMOCRATIC FORCES (SDF)

The organization primarily operates in northeastern Syria. The SDF is a US backed alliance of Kurdish and Arab militants that played a key role in defeating ISIS in Syria. They currently control a significantly vast majority of northeastern Syria and are engaged in maintaining security in the region. However, according to scathing UN Reports Like the 2022 Report by the UN Secretary Generals Special Representative for Children and Armed Conflict, have documented cases of child recruitment by the SDF and associated groups. These reports raise concern about the groups lack of compliance with international law on child soldiers. The group has denied these allegations and claims to have measures in place to prevent child recruitment.



CASE STUDIES

Amina Mohammed- Escaped Boko Haram Captive

Amina Mohammed was abducted by Boko Haram at the age of 11 while attending school in Nigeria. She was forced to convert and become a 'bride of jihad', she endured horrific abuse and indoctrination. Amina eventually escaped with her infant son and sought refuge. Her story highlights the trauma inflicted on girls and the dire need for effective rehabilitation programmes.

Mohammed Eissa- ISIS Child Soldier

Mohammed Eissa, a 12 year old Syrian boy was recruited by ISIS after his family fled the war. He was convinced of the righteousness of their cause and trained as a soldier. After witnessing the atrocities and disillusioned by reality, Mohammed escaped. His story sheds light on how extremist groups exploit displacement and insecurity.

Yasmin - Former Al-Shabab Recruit

Yasmin, a young Somali woman, was lured into joining Al-Shabab by promises of belonging and purpose. After witnessing violence and realizing the groups true agenda, she defected with great difficulty. Yasmin's story highlights the psychological manipulation used by extremist groups and the courage it takes for victims to leave.

The Lost Boys of Sudan

Thousands of boys, some as young as 7 years old, were forced to flee their villages in South Sudan during the civil war. Many ended up in refugee camps in neighboring countries, left vulnerable to recruitment by armed groups. The "Lost Boys" represent a generation of children who lost their childhood to violence and displacement at the hands of extremist groups

The Chibok Schoolgirls and the Fight for Education

The kidnapping of over 200 schoolgirls by Boko Haram in 2014 brought international attention to the plight of children in conflict zones. While some victims have either escaped or been released, many remain missing. The Chibok schoolgirls case underscores the importance of safety around areas with heavy footfall of children. It also emphasizes the importance for

education so that children are not susceptible to radicalisation and indoctrination through widespread mass misinformation or hysteria.

BLOC POSITIONS

UNITED STATES (USA)

The United States of America has a zero tolerance policy for terrorism and recognises minors' vulnerability. The Child Soldiers Prevention Act (2008) prohibits US aid to governments using child soldiers. The US Department of State works with international partners on counter-recruitment efforts and developing programmes to protect minors at risk. The country has provided counterterrorism training and resources to partner countries to disrupt recruitment networks. They've also supported education initiatives in conflict zones to address root causes of radicalisation. Critics argue that the US drone strikes in the Middle East and their current funding of Israeli attacks in Palestine create instability and inadvertently fuel recruitment. Additionally some suggest the US focus on military intervention overshadows addressing social and economic grievances that make youth vulnerable. On an International platform the US is a leading voice in efforts to counter terrorism and child soldier recruitment. They are active participants in initiatives like the UN Working Group on Children and Armed Conflict.

INDIA

India has faced its share of terror induced violence and condemns child recruitment. The Juvenile Justice Act (2015) aims to protect children from exploitation, including abuse at the hands of extremist organizations. India is highly cooperative with regional partners to counter terror financing and dismantle recruitment networks. India has launched multiple initiatives like the "Operation Smile" program to counter radicalization in Jammu and Kashmir. The program focuses on education, skill development, and promoting social harmony. Many analysts argue however, that the Indian government's counterterrorism measures in Kashmir often infringe on human rights. Additionally some suggest limited educational and economic opportunities in certain regions make youth more susceptible to extremist narratives. India actively participates in regional counterterrorism initiatives like the Shanghai Cooperation Organization (SCO)

SAUDI ARABIA

Saudi Arabia views child recruitment as a heinous act and has a strong stance against terrorism. They have implemented counter terrorism strategies focused on education and deradicalization programs. Saudi Arabia has established rehabilitation centres for individuals caught engaging or at risk of extremist activities. They have also invested in religious education reforms to counter extremist interpretations. Human rights groups heavily condemn the lack of transparency in Saudi counterterrorism measures to silence dissent rather than solely tackling extremism. Saudi

Arabia is a member of the Global Counterterrorism Forum (GCTF) and works with other members to share best practices in countering terrorism.

UNITED KINGDOM (UK)

The UK has a robust counter terrorism legislation that criminalizes terrorist recruitment and training. The Prevent strategy focuses on early intervention and diversity vulnerable individuals away from extremism. The UK has established programs that engage with communities at risk of radicalisation. They also work with internet companies to remove extremist content from online platforms. However it's important to note that the implemented strategy is too broad and could lead to profiling of Muslim communities. Concerns also exist regarding the effectiveness of deradicalization programs. Being a leader in international counterterrorism efforts, they participate in initiatives like the Five Eyes intelligence-sharing alliance and contribute to UN efforts to counter terrorism.

PAKISTAN

Pakistan has been a victim of terrorism itself and has taken steps to address child recruitment. The National Action Plan (NAP) Includes measures to counter extremist narratives and dismantle militant networks. The Pakistani government has cracked down on extremist religious schools suspected of promoting radicalization. They've also launched media campaigns to counter extremist propaganda. The effectiveness of Pakistan's NAP has been questioned multiple times due to the continued presence of extremist groups in the country. According to many, the government has not done enough to dismantle these groups or address the underlying causes of terrorism. Pakistan works with international partners like the Financial Action Task Force (FATF) to counter terror financing. However, their relationship with some countries has been strained due to accusations of harboring terrorist groups.

SUDAN AND SOMALIA

Both states are often referred to as fragile states face challenges due to internal conflicts and the presence of terrorist groups. While neither has well developed legal frameworks specifically addressing child recruitment, they are increasingly working with international partners to counter terrorism and create programs to protect vulnerable youth. Both countries have received international assistance for counterterrorism training programs aimed at promoting education and social development in conflict affected areas. The ongoing instability in these countries makes it the need of the hour to find solutions that may be implemented by poorer states with fewer resources.

IRAN

Iran's position on child recruitment by terrorist groups is ambiguous. While they condemn some terrorist organizations, they've also faced accusations of supporting others. Iran does have programmes focused on youth education and social development, which could potentially counter extremist narratives. However, the overall lack of clarity regarding their stance on child recruitment by terror groups raises concerns.

IRAQ

Iraq has been a breeding ground for terrorist organizations like ISIS, making child recruitment a major concern. The ongoing instability hinders efforts to establish a secure environment. However, the Iraqi government has taken steps to counter terrorist propaganda and promote education in war-torn areas. International assistance plays a crucial role in supporting Iraq's fight against child recruitment by terror groups.

SYRIA

Syria's brutal civil war has created a power vacuum exploited by terrorist groups like ISIS. The complex web of actors involved in the conflict makes it difficult to establish a clear picture of how each views child recruitment. However, international efforts focus on promoting child protection and education in war-torn regions to counter the vulnerability of young people to extremist groups.



CURRENT SCENARIO

The specter of terrorism continues to cast a long shadow across the Middle East and Africa, and a particularly disturbing trend is the recruitment of minors into these violent organizations. These children, often facing poverty, lack of opportunity, or the trauma of war, become pawns in a deadly game. Terror groups exploit a complex web of factors to target minors. Poverty, lack of education, and a sense of marginalization create fertile ground for extremist narratives. ISIS, Boko Haram, and Al-Shabaab are just some of the groups notorious for using online propaganda, religious indoctrination, and even kidnapping to lure children into their ranks. Once recruited, children are subjected to brutal training, indoctrination, and desensitization to violence.

They are often used as foot soldiers in attacks, suicide bombers, or spies due to their ability to blend in and evade suspicion. This not only robs them of their childhood but also exposes them to immense physical and psychological harm. Combating this issue requires a multifaceted approach. Countries in the region are increasingly working with international partners to disrupt recruitment networks, counter extremist ideology, and address the root causes of radicalization.

Programs promoting education, social development, and economic opportunities for youth are crucial in creating alternatives to the allure of extremist groups. The rise of online radicalization poses a significant challenge. Governments and tech companies need to collaborate on countering extremist content online while ensuring freedom of expression. Additionally,

dismantling terror group financing networks is vital to limit their ability to recruit and exploit vulnerable youth.

Moving on, there are positive developments. International organizations like UNICEF and UNODC are actively involved in supporting regional efforts. Programs such as those that empower communities, promote religious tolerance, and provide psychological support to former child soldiers offer a glimmer of hope for the future which holds both challenges and opportunities.

Ending the recruitment of minors into terror groups requires sustained commitment from governments, international organizations, and civil society. By investing in education, promoting social development, and countering extremist narratives, we can create a future where children are not targeted by the forces of terror.

PAST ACTION TAKEN BY THE UN

The UN's efforts span legal frameworks, advocacy, monitoring mechanisms, field operations, and global campaigns, reflecting a deep commitment to protecting the most vulnerable. Over the years, the United Nations has embarked on a comprehensive and multi-faceted approach to address this grave issue, particularly in the Middle East and Africa. Central to the UN's strategy are robust legal frameworks designed to establish international norms against the recruitment of child soldiers.

The Optional Protocol to the Convention on the Rights of the Child on the involvement of children in armed conflict (OPAC), adopted in 2000, is a seminal instrument. OPAC prohibits the compulsory recruitment of individuals under the age of 18 into armed forces and their participation in hostilities, setting a clear legal standard.

The Monitoring and Reporting Mechanism (MRM), created by Resolution 1612, plays a pivotal role in the UN's efforts. This mechanism collects and verifies information on grave violations against children in armed conflict, including recruitment as soldiers. The MRM's data informs the annual reports of the Secretary-General on children and armed conflict, ensuring that the international community remains aware of ongoing abuses and can respond appropriately. Advocacy and the development of action plans are critical components of the UN's strategy. The Office of the Special Representative of the Secretary-General for Children and Armed Conflict (OSRSG-CAAC), established in 1996, spearheads efforts to promote and protect the rights of children affected by armed conflict. This office engages with governments and non-state actors to secure commitments to end violations against children and implement action plans for their release and reintegration.

These action plans typically include specific commitments from parties to conflict to release children from their ranks, prevent future recruitment, and support reintegration efforts. Such plans are essential for translating international norms into practical, on-the-ground changes. The UN's field operations, particularly through peacekeeping missions and the work of UNICEF, are vital for addressing the recruitment and use of child soldiers. Several peacekeeping missions in Africa, such as the United Nations Mission in South Sudan (UNMISS) and the United Nations Multidimensional Integrated Stabilization Mission in Mali (MINUSMA), include mandates to protect children. These missions monitor, report, and work to prevent the recruitment of child soldiers, often under challenging conditions.

UNICEF is at the forefront of these efforts, providing technical support for the MRM, advocating for the release of child soldiers, and implementing programs to support their demobilization, disarmament, and reintegration (DDR). UNICEF's programs are comprehensive, offering education, vocational training, psychosocial support, and family reunification services, which are crucial for the successful reintegration of former child soldiers into their communities.

In regions plagued by conflict, the UN has tailored its approach to meet specific challenges. In the Central African Republic, the UN has supported DDR programs aimed at demobilizing child soldiers and reintegrating them into society, with special emphasis on securing commitments from armed groups to release children. In the Democratic Republic of the Congo, the UN has collaborated with the government and armed groups to end the recruitment of child soldiers, implementing action plans and supporting DDR programs. Similarly, in South Sudan, UNMISS, UNICEF, and other partners have been actively involved in securing the release of child soldiers and providing necessary reintegration support.

The UN's commitment to ending the recruitment and use of child soldiers is also reflected in global campaigns and initiatives. The Children, Not Soldiers Campaign, launched in 2014 by the OSRSG-CAAC and UNICEF, aimed to end the recruitment of children by government security forces by 2016. This campaign has achieved significant progress, including commitments from several countries to cease this practice and the release of thousands of child soldiers.

Furthermore, the Paris Principles and Commitments, adopted in 2007, provide comprehensive guidelines for protecting children from recruitment and ensuring their release and reintegration. Endorsed by many countries and organizations, these principles reinforce global efforts to combat the use of child soldiers.

Number of children separated from armed groups and armed forces

with support from current peacekeeping missions

3,200+

children released in
SOUTH SUDAN



since 2015, through
UNMISS's engagement
with parties to the conflict

17,000+

children released in the
**CENTRAL AFRICAN
REPUBLIC**



since 2014, through
MINUSCA's advocacy with
armed groups

10,000+

children released in the
**DEMOCRATIC
REPUBLIC OF CONGO**



since 2018, through
MONUSCO's advocacy with
armed group leaders and
Congolese armed forces

peacekeeping.un.org

PAST RESOLUTIONS

UNSC Resolution 1261 (1999):

The first major United Nations resolution to address the topic of child recruitment in conflict, particularly in extremist organizations. This resolution noted that at the time, almost 300,000 children were formally identified to be part of conflict as gorillas, soldiers or in other supporting roles. The resolution took actions including resettling displaced children, and re-affirmation of international law protocols that stood against child labour.

UNSC Resolution 1539 (2004):

The resolution firmly established a broad framework against recruitment of children into any conflict, with special notations for extremist organizations as well. The resolution as well called for the sharing of information regarding children in warzones between nations in order to coordinate rescue missions and more.

UNSC Resolution 1612 (2005):

This resolution continued to take action on child recruitment into extremist organisations. The council through this resolution established a mechanism to be able to monitor the recruitment of children into these organizations. The council however, focused on 50 countries (and/or organizations) that were violating resolution 1539, with the mechanism being focused around them.

UNSC Resolution 2225 (2015):

The resolution aimed to encourage more nations to have legal measures in place to tackle the use of children in extremist organizations and conflict in general, with focus put on awareness campaigns to be able to spread information and protections for children.

UNSC Resolution 2427 (2018):

This resolution, which is the most recent and most important passed on the topic in recent times, focused on measures which nations could take in order to achieve the rehabilitation of children who were previously part of these extremist organizations or recruited young, to ensure they would have ways to rejoin society as functioning members.

QUESTIONS A RESOLUTION MUST ANSWER (QARMA)

For first time MUNNERS, these questions essentially serve as fundamental pointers regarding the points your resolution could address, in order to make it comprehensive and relevant. Delegates may however, come up with other angles and viewpoints to construct solutions with.

- What community-based strategies can effectively prevent the recruitment of minors?
- How can local communities be empowered to resist militant recruitment efforts?
- What legislative and policy measures can governments implement to combat the recruitment of minors?
- How can the international community monitor and report on the recruitment of minors in conflict zones?
- What role can technology and social media play in both the recruitment and prevention of recruitment of minors?
- How can cross-border and regional cooperation be enhanced to address the recruitment of minors by militant groups?

IMPORTANT LINKS

-UNODC Mandate

<https://www.unodc.org/romena/en/mandate.html>

-UN charter

<https://www.un.org/en/about-us/un-charter>

VALID SOURCES OF INFORMATION

- Al Jazeera
- UN Articles/ UN Libraries
- Amnesty International
- Britannica
- Times of India
- Official Country Websites (and) Statements or Speeches made by Heads of State.
- UNODC Reports

RESOLUTION GUIDELINES

Resolutions:

- Use 12 point Times New Roman and 1.0 spacing throughout
- Do not exceed four pages in length, for committee convenience
- The heading at the top of the resolution, must include three main components, in the following order: COMMITTEE; QUESTION OF; MAIN AUTHOR + 2 CO AUTHORS
- After the title of the resolution, a single line spacing is places, followed by the full name of the committee written in capital letters with a comma at the end
- Acronyms and a abbreviations are spelled out the first time they are mentioned, in the following manner: United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO)
- Use formal, 3rd person, diplomatic language at all times

Perambulatory Clauses:

- The introductory word/phrase of each perambulatory clause is *italicized*
- Only a selected set of phrases can be used as introductory words/phrases
- The first letter of the introductory word/phrase is capitalized
- No introductory word/phrase can be repeated in a resolution
- Commas separate the preambulatory clauses from each other

Preambulatory Phrases:

Acknowledging	Expressing its appreciation	Noting with appreciation
Affirming	Expressing its satisfaction	Noting with approval
Alarmed by	Fulfilling	Noting with deep concern
Approving	Fully alarmed	Noting with regret
Aware of	Fully aware	Noting with satisfaction
Believing	Fully believing	Observing
Bearing in mind	Further deploring	Pointing out
Confident	Further recalling	Reaffirming
Congratulating	Guided by	Realizing
Contemplating	Having adopted	Recalling
Convinced	Having considered	Recognizing
Declaring	Having considered further	Referring
Deeply concerned	Having devoted attention	Reminding
Deeply conscious	Having examined	Seeking
Deeply convinced	Having heard	Taking into account
Deeply disturbed	Having received	Taking into consideration
Deeply regretting	Having studied	Taking note
Deploring	Keeping in mind	Viewing with appreciation
Desiring	Noting further	Welcoming
Emphasizing		
Expecting		

Operative Clauses:

- Each operative clause is numbered: 1, 2, 3, 4,
- All operative clause and sub clauses are indented
- The introductory word/phrase of each operative clause is underlined
- The first letter of the introductory word/phrase is capitalized
- Only a selected set of phrases can be used as introductory words/phrases
- The following starters are only applicable to UNSC; ‘condemns’, ‘demands’
- This is because DISEC is a suggestive body and cannot take action
- No introductory word/phrase can be repeated in a resolution (but may be re-used with the addition of "strongly" or "further" as in: "Further requests...")
- Semicolons separate operative clauses from each other
- Sub clauses are lettered: a, b, c, d,
- Sub sub clauses are numbered with Roman numerals: i, ii, iii, iv,
- Sub-clauses and sub-sub-clauses are indented by using tabs, NOT by using individual spaces (sub-clauses are tabbed once and sub-sub-clauses are tabbed twice)
- First letters of sub-clauses and sub-sub-clauses are not capitalized
- Single sub-clauses are not allowed
- A period is used at the end of the final word of the operative clause

Operative Phrases:

Accepts	Encourages	Recommends
Affirms	Endorses	Regrets
Approves	Expresses its appreciation	Requests
Asks	Expresses its hope	Resolves
Authorizes	Further invites	Seeks
Calls for	Further proclaims	Strongly affirms
Calls upon	Further recommends	Strongly condemns
Condemns	Further requests	Strongly urges
Congratulates	Further resolves	Suggests
Confirms	Hopes	Trusts
Deplores	Proclaims	Transmits
Designates	Proposes	Urges

For grammar aficionados:

- The resolution is one very long sentence. It begins with the committee (the subject of the sentence), e.g. THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY
- After the subject, come the perambulatory clauses. These are participle (or adjectival phrases modifying the subject (modifying by describing the committee's intent, motivation, and frame of mind in writing the resolution).
- The operative clauses make the predicate of the sentence (i.e. describe the action of the resolution); thus operative clause starters should be present tense verbs in the third person singular.
- The last operative clause should be completed with a period to mark the end of the very long sentence.

General Points to note:

- A GSL speech lasts 90 seconds, it may address any aspect of the agenda
- The delegate may even use their GSL as an extended way to respond to comments made prior in committee
- Delegates are to speak in 3rd person by addressing their country as the core voice; The delegate of the United States of America believes xyz.....

- One does not use personal pronouns in committee for the simple reason that you are not a representative of your own views and personal biases, but the views of the government that represents your country
- Foul language is not permitted in committee and will lead to suspension (barring)
- It is important to enjoy the conference.
- The EB will always be at your disposal for any assistance you may require.

-END OF GUIDE-