

Annual full-day meeting on the rights of the child

Theme: Rights of the child and violations of the human rights of children in armed conflicts

Concept note (draft as of 12 February 2026)

Date and venue: **Monday, 9 March 2026, 10.30 a.m. – 12.30 p.m. and 2.30 – 4.30 p.m.**
Assembly Hall, Palais des Nations, Geneva
(broadcast live and archived on <https://webtv.un.org>)

Objectives: The annual full-day meeting on the rights of the child will gather children, States, civil society organizations, high-level representatives of United Nations agencies and funds, human rights mechanisms and other stakeholders.

The meeting will feature two panels to consider the rights of the child and violations of the human rights of children in armed conflicts, a theme which has received in-depth examination by the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights in his most recent report [A/HRC/60/51](#) to the Human Rights Council on children's rights.

The first (morning) panel discussion is dedicated to the prevention of and protection against violations of children's human rights in armed conflicts. It will be an opportunity to:

- Examine the international legal obligations of parties to conflict to prevent violations, protect, assist and uphold the human rights of children affected by armed conflict;
- Discuss the coordinated action of stakeholders, including the United Nations system, national human rights institutions, international and civil society organizations in protecting, assisting and promoting respect for the human rights of conflict-affected children;
- Discuss how States and humanitarian actors can ensure that children's views meaningfully and systematically shape protection frameworks and early-warning mechanisms in ways that are safe, inclusive and age-appropriate.

The second (afternoon) panel discussion, dedicated to the recovery and reintegration of children affected by armed conflict, will:

- Uncover how justice and accountability mechanisms can safely and ethically include children's voices to promote physical and psychological recovery and social reintegration of child victims of armed conflict in line with their obligations under the Convention on the Rights of the Child.
- Discuss the critical importance of strengthening accountability by investing in monitoring, documenting and reporting on violations of children's rights in armed conflict committed by State and non-State actors.
- Reinforce the recognition under international law of the status of children allegedly or formerly associated with armed forces and non-State armed groups primarily as victims and the obligation to provide them with long-term, gender- and age appropriate, community-based reintegration and recovery services.

Panel discussion 1 ***Mainstreaming the rights of children in armed conflict: prevention and protection***
10.30 a.m. –
12.30 p.m.

Chair: **H.E. Mr. Sidharto Reza Suryodipuro**, President of the Human Rights Council or a Vice-President of the Human Rights Council (TBD)

Opening statement: **Ms. Nada Al-Nashif**, United Nations Deputy High Commissioner for Human Rights

- Panellists:**
- **Yansel** (15 years), child rights advocate from Colombia (*video message*)
 - **Ms. Vanessa Frazier**, Special Representative of the Secretary-General for Children and Armed Conflict
 - **Mr. Benoit Van Keirsbilck**, Member of the Committee on the Rights of the Child
 - **Ms. Cordula Droege**, Chief Legal Officer at the International Committee of the Red Cross
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Panel discussion 2 ***Mainstreaming the rights of children in armed conflict: reintegration and recovery, remedies and reparation***
2.30 – 4.30 p.m.

Chair: **H.E. Mr. Sidharto Reza Suryodipuro**, President of the Human Rights Council or a Vice-President of the Human Rights Council (TBD)

Opening statement: **Ms. Nada Al-Nashif**, United Nations Deputy High Commissioner for Human Rights

- Panellists:**
- **Sara** (16 years), child rights advocate from the Occupied Palestinian Territory (*video message*)
 - **Mr. Robert Nanima**, Special Rapporteur on Children in Conflict Situations of the African Committee of Experts on the Rights and Welfare of the Child (*video message*)
 - **Ms. Hazel de Wet**, Deputy Director of the Office of Emergency Programmes at the United Nations Children’s Fund
 - **Ms. Clara Sandoval**, Director of Programmes at the Global Survivors Fund

- Outcome:** The panel discussions will aim to:
- Promote the exchange of promising practices among States to address the challenges impeding respect for the rights of children affected by armed conflict, especially children in the most vulnerable situations, and to strengthen their protection and access to remedies.
 - Enhance understanding of the coordinated action of international and local humanitarian actors in implementing risk mitigation and child protection strategies, promoting accountability for rights violations and supporting the recovery and reintegration of conflict affected children.
 - Reinforce children’s safe, meaningful and systematic participation in the design, implementation and monitoring of prevention, protection, recovery and accountability measures.

Mandate: In its resolution 7/29 on the rights of the child adopted in March 2008, the Human Rights Council affirmed “its commitment to effectively integrate the rights of the child in its work and that of its mechanisms in a regular, systematic and transparent manner, taking into account specific needs of boys and girls” and “to incorporate into its programme of work sufficient time, at a minimum an annual full-day meeting, to discuss different specific themes on the rights of the child.” Pursuant to its resolution 55/29, the Human Rights Council requested the High Commissioner to prepare a report on the rights of the

child and violations of the human rights of children in armed conflicts ([A/HRC/60/51](#)) as it will focus its 2026 annual full-day meeting on the rights of the child on this theme.

Background:

In 2024, a record 520 million children, one in five worldwide, were living in active conflict zones, marking the highest number ever recorded for the third year in a row.¹ Armed conflict remains one of the gravest threats to children's rights, undermining nearly every protection guaranteed under the Convention on the Rights of the Child, with widespread, devastating and lasting consequences for children, their communities, and global peace and sustainable development.

Children's rights in armed conflict are comprehensively protected under international human rights, humanitarian and criminal law. This legal framework is further reinforced by Security Council resolutions, global political commitments and regional instruments. Many States have taken steps to fulfil these obligations, including by integrating the best interests of the child into national laws and policies relevant to conflict-affected children.

However, despite progress, compliance with international law is insufficient and significant gaps in codification and implementation persist, leading to continued violations and impunity. Given the severe and disproportionate impact of armed conflict on children, there is an urgent need for States and parties to conflict to uphold their existing obligations and fully implement legal protections—including the obligation to ensure that children's views are meaningfully heard, respected and acted upon in all matters affecting them, including in contexts of armed conflict, from prevention and response to recovery and reintegration.

Format:

The duration of the annual full-day meeting will be limited to two hours in the morning and two hours in the afternoon. For both panels, the opening statements and initial presentations by the panellists will be followed by an interactive discussion divided into two segments. A maximum of one hour will be set aside for the podium, including the opening statement, panellists' presentations, their responses to questions and concluding remarks. The remaining hour will be reserved for two segments of interventions from the floor, with each segment consisting of interventions from 14 States or observers, 2 national human rights institutions and 4 non-governmental organizations. Each speaker will have 1.5 minutes to raise issues and to ask panellists questions. Panellists will respond to questions and comments during the remaining time available.

The list of speakers for both discussions will be established through the online registration system and, as per practice, statements by high-level dignitaries and groups of States will be moved to the beginning of the list. Delegates who could not take the floor due to time constraints will be able to upload their statements on the online system to be posted on the HRC Extranet. Interpretation will be provided in the six United Nations official languages (Arabic, Chinese, English, French, Russian and Spanish).

Accessibility:

In an effort to render the Human Rights Council more accessible to persons with disabilities and to promote their full participation in the work of the Council on an equal basis with others, the panel discussion will be webcast and made accessible. International sign interpretation and real-time captioning in English will be provided and webcast. Participants can access live English captioning on the StreamText web page (<https://www.streamtext.net/player?event=CFI-UNOG>) during the event itself. Hearing loops are available for collection from the Secretariat desk. Oral statements may be embossed in Braille from any of the six official languages of the United Nations, upon request and following the procedure described in the *Accessibility guide to the Human*

¹ Save the Children, Stop the War on Children: Security for whom? Militaries funded, childhoods forgotten (2025), p. 8.

Rights Council for persons with disabilities (<https://www.ohchr.org/en/hr-bodies/hrc/accessibility>).

- Related documents:**
- [Human Rights Council resolution 55/29](#) of 5 April 2024 on rights of the child: realizing the rights of the child and inclusive social protection
 - Report of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights on the rights of the child and violations of the human rights of children in armed conflicts ([A/HRC/60/51](#)) and its [child-friendly version](#) (2025)
 - Committee on the Rights of the Child, General comment No. 12 (2009) on the right of the child to be heard ([CRC/C/GC/12](#))
 - Committee on the Rights of the Child, General comment no. 14 (2013) on the right of the child to have his or her best interests taken as primary consideration (art. 3, para. 1) ([CRC/C/GC/14](#))