



Security Council

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Letter dated 18 December 2020 from the Chair of the Security Council Working Group on Children and Armed Conflict addressed to the President of the Security Council

I have the honour to transmit herewith the report of the Security Council Working Group on Children and Armed Conflict established pursuant to resolution [1612 \(2005\)](#), containing an account of the Working Group's activities from 1 January to 31 December 2020. The report, which was approved by the Working Group, is being submitted in accordance with the note by the President of the Security Council of 29 March 1995 ([S/1995/234](#)).

I should be grateful if the present letter and the report were brought to the attention of the members of the Security Council and issued as a document of the Council.

(Signed) Philippe **Kridelka**
Chair

Security Council Working Group on Children and Armed Conflict



Report of the Security Council Working Group on Children and Armed Conflict

I. Introduction

1. The present report of the Security Council Working Group on Children and Armed Conflict covers the period from 1 January to 31 December 2020.
2. The Bureau of the Working Group consisted of Marc Pecsteen de Buytsverve (1 January to 31 July), Karen Van Vlierberge (1 to 12 August) and Philippe Kridelka (13 August to 31 December) (Belgium) as Chair and a representative of the Niger as Vice-Chair.

II. Background

3. On 26 July 2005, the Security Council adopted resolution [1612 \(2005\)](#) on children and armed conflict. In paragraph 8 of that resolution, the Council decided to establish a working group to review the reports of the monitoring and reporting mechanism on children and armed conflict, to review progress in the development and implementation of the action plans to halt recruitment and use of children in violation of international obligations and to consider other relevant information presented to it. The Council also decided that the working group should:

(a) Make recommendations to the Council on possible measures to promote the protection of children affected by armed conflict, including through recommendations on appropriate mandates for peacekeeping missions and recommendations with respect to the parties to the conflict;

(b) Address requests, as appropriate, to other bodies within the United Nations system for action to support the implementation of the resolution in accordance with their respective mandates.

4. On 2 May 2006, the Working Group adopted its terms of reference, which were subsequently published as a document of the Security Council ([S/AC.51/2007/1](#)). On 8 September 2006, the Working Group adopted a list of options for possible actions, which is referred to as the “toolkit” ([S/AC.51/2007/2](#)).

5. Pursuant to resolution [1612 \(2005\)](#), the Chair of the Working Group has submitted periodic reports to the Security Council on developments in relation to the Working Group since 2006.

6. On 9 July 2018, the Security Council unanimously adopted resolution [2427 \(2018\)](#), which provided a comprehensive framework for mainstreaming protection, rights, well-being and the empowerment of children throughout the conflict cycle and emphasized the importance of the children and armed conflict agenda to conflict prevention and peacekeeping.

III. Summary of the activities of the Working Group

7. During the reporting period, the Working Group held three formal meetings, on 8, 27 and 31 January, and met once in informal consultations, in addition to conducting its work through written procedures and informal meetings.

8. In the light of the challenges posed to the Working Group’s usual procedures by the coronavirus disease (COVID-19) pandemic, including the limitations on holding in-person meetings, and to ensure the continuity of its work, the members of the

Working Group agreed, on an exceptional basis, to hold 18 virtual meetings in the form of closed videoconferences, on 8, 11 and 22 May, 27 and 30 July, 14, 21, 24 and 26 August, 17 September, 16 October, 6 and 20 November and 2, 4, 11, 17 and 18 December.

9. At its 89th meeting, held on 8 January, the Working Group discussed the third report of the Secretary-General on children and armed conflict in Iraq ([S/2019/984](#)), covering the period from 1 July 2015 to 30 July 2019. The Special Representative of the Secretary-General for Children and Armed Conflict introduced the report, recalling the main conclusions, after which the Permanent Representative of Iraq to the United Nations presented the views of his Government on the report.

10. At its 90th meeting, held on 27 January, the Working Group discussed the fourth report of the Secretary-General on children and armed conflict in Colombia ([S/2019/1017](#)), covering the period from 1 July 2016 to 30 June 2019. The Special Representative of the Secretary-General for Children and Armed Conflict introduced the report, recalling the main conclusions, after which the Deputy Permanent Representative of Colombia to the United Nations presented the views of his Government on the report. In addition, the Special Representative introduced the *Practical Guidance for Mediators to Protect Children in Situations of Armed Conflict*.

11. At its 91st meeting, held on 31 January, the Working Group heard a briefing by videoconference on the situation of children and armed conflict in South Sudan from the Co-Chairs of the country task force on monitoring and reporting. In addition, a representative of the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF) presented the global horizontal note by the Secretary-General covering the period from July to September 2019.

12. On 15 April, the conclusions on the Central African Republic were adopted by means of written procedure ([S/AC.51/2020/3](#)).

13. During the closed videoconference held on 8 May, the Working Group heard a presentation by a representative of UNICEF on the global horizontal note by the Secretary-General covering the period October–December 2019. During the closed videoconference, the Working Group also held an exchange of views with the Deputy Permanent Representative of Afghanistan to the United Nations following the adoption on 29 April, by means of written procedure, of the conclusions on children and armed conflict in Afghanistan ([S/AC.51/2020/2](#)).

14. During the closed videoconference held on 11 May, the Working Group heard a briefing on the situation of children and armed conflict in Iraq by the Co-Chairs of the country task force on monitoring and reporting. In addition, the Working Group held an exchange of views with the Deputy Permanent Representative of Yemen to the United Nations following the adoption on 8 April, by means of written procedure, of the conclusions on children and armed conflict in Yemen ([S/AC.51/2020/1](#)).

15. During the closed videoconference held on 22 May, the Working Group examined the fifth report of the Secretary-General on children and armed conflict in Somalia ([S/2020/174](#)), which covers the period from 1 August 2016 to 30 September 2019 and was introduced by the Special Representative of the Secretary-General for Children and Armed Conflict. The Permanent Representative of Somalia to the United Nations also addressed the Working Group. During the same meeting, the Working Group heard a joint briefing by the Special Representative of the Secretary-General and the Director of the Office of Emergency Programmes of UNICEF on the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on children and armed conflict.

16. During the closed videoconference held on 27 July, the Working Group examined the sixth report of the Secretary-General on children and armed conflict in the Sudan ([S/2020/614](#)), which covers the period from 1 January 2017 to 31 December

2019 and was introduced by the Special Representative of the Secretary-General for Children and Armed Conflict. The Permanent Representative of the Sudan to the United Nations also addressed the Working Group. In addition, the Working Group examined the second report of the Secretary-General on children and armed conflict in Nigeria (S/2020/652), covering the period from January 2017 to December 2019, and the Chargé d'affaires a.i. of the Permanent Mission of Nigeria to the United Nations addressed the Working Group.

17. During the closed videoconference held on 30 July, the Working Group held an exchange of views with the Chargé d'affaires a.i. of the Permanent Mission of Iraq to the United Nations following the adoption on 24 July, by means of written procedure, of the conclusions on children and armed conflict in Iraq (S/AC.51/2020/4).

18. During the closed videoconference held on 14 August, the Working Group held an exchange of views with the Permanent Representative of Colombia to the United Nations following the adoption on 29 July, by means of written procedure, of the conclusions on children and armed conflict in Colombia (S/AC.51/2020/5).

19. During the closed videoconference held on 21 August, the Working Group heard a briefing on the situation of children and armed conflict in Libya by the Co-Chairs of the country task force on monitoring and reporting. In addition, the Working Group held an exchange of views with the Special Representative of the Secretary-General for Children and Armed Conflict following the adoption on 11 August, by means of written procedure, of the conclusions on children and armed conflict in Somalia (S/AC.51/2020/6).

20. During the closed videoconference held on 24 August, the Working Group heard a briefing on the situation of children and armed conflict in Afghanistan by the Co-Chairs of the country task force on monitoring and reporting.

21. During the closed videoconference held on 26 August, the Working Group examined the fifth report of the Secretary-General on children and armed conflict in the Philippines (S/2020/777), which covers the period from 1 January 2017 to 31 December 2019 and was introduced by the Special Representative of the Secretary-General for Children and Armed Conflict. The Permanent Representative of the Philippines to the United Nations also addressed the Working Group.

22. During the closed videoconference held on 17 September, a representative of UNICEF presented the global horizontal note by the Secretary-General covering the period from January to March 2020. During the same meeting, the Working Group heard a briefing by the Special Representative of the Secretary-General for Children and Armed Conflict on the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on children and armed conflict.

23. During the closed videoconference held on 16 October, the Working Group heard a briefing on the situation of children and armed conflict in Yemen by the Co-Chairs of the country task force on monitoring and reporting. In addition, a representative of UNICEF presented the global horizontal note by the Secretary-General covering the period from April to June 2020.

24. During the closed videoconference held on 6 November, the Working Group held an exchange of views with the Permanent Representative of the Sudan to the United Nations following the adoption on 15 October, by means of written procedure, of the conclusions on children and armed conflict in the Sudan (S/AC.51/2020/7). The Working Group also examined the seventh report of the Secretary-General on children and armed conflict in the Democratic Republic of the Congo (S/2020/1030), which covers the period from 1 January 2018 to 31 March 2020 and was introduced by the Special Representative of the Secretary-General for Children and Armed

Conflict. The Permanent Representative of the Democratic Republic of the Congo to the United Nations also addressed the Working Group.

25. During the closed videoconference held on 20 November, the Working Group examined the third report of the Secretary-General on children and armed conflict in Mali (S/2020/1105), which covers the period from 1 July 2017 to 31 March 2020 and was introduced by the Special Representative of the Secretary-General for Children and Armed Conflict. The Permanent Representative of Mali to the United Nations also addressed the Working Group.

26. During the closed videoconference held on 2 December, the Working Group heard a briefing on the situation of children and armed conflict in Colombia by the Co-Chairs of the country task force on monitoring and reporting.

27. During the closed videoconference held on 4 December, the Working Group heard a briefing on the situation of children and armed conflict in Somalia by the Co-Chairs of the country task force on monitoring and reporting.

28. During the closed videoconference held on 11 December, the Working Group held exchanges of views with the Permanent Representatives of Nigeria and the Philippines to the United Nations following the adoption on 1 and 4 December, respectively, by means of written procedure, of the conclusions on children and armed conflict in Nigeria (S/AC.51/2020/8) and of the conclusions on children and armed conflict in the Philippines (S/AC.51/2020/9).

29. During the closed videoconference held on 17 December, the Working Group examined the third report of the Secretary-General on children and armed conflict in South Sudan (S/2020/1205), which covers the period from 1 July 2018 to 30 June 2020 and was introduced by the Special Representative of the Secretary-General for Children and Armed Conflict. The Permanent Representative of South Sudan to the United Nations also addressed the Working Group.

30. During the closed videoconference held on 18 December, a representative of UNICEF presented the global horizontal note by the Secretary-General covering the period from July to September 2020. The Working Group also held an exchange of views with the Chargé d'affaires a.i. of the Permanent Mission of the Democratic Republic of the Congo to the United Nations following the adoption on 10 December, by means of written procedure, of the conclusions on children and armed conflict in the Democratic Republic of the Congo (S/AC.51/2020/10)

31. Pursuant to the adoption of the aforementioned conclusions, the Working Group also released 10 public statements as Security Council press releases, containing messages in relation to Yemen (on 8 April), the Central African Republic (on 15 April), Afghanistan (on 29 April), Iraq (on 30 July), Colombia (on 14 August), Somalia (on 24 August), the Sudan (on 6 November), Nigeria (on 11 December), the Philippines (on 11 December) and the Democratic Republic of the Congo (18 December).

32. In 2020, in direct relation to the conclusions adopted by the Working Group, the Working Group sent 333 communications to 53 Member States and other stakeholders.

33. On 12 February, the President of the Security Council read out a statement on behalf of the Council, the draft text of which had been prepared by the Working Group, commending the *Practical Guidance for Mediators to Protect Children in Situations of Armed Conflict* (S/PRST/2020/3). On 23 June, the President issued a Council press statement, the draft of which had been prepared by the Working Group, to commemorate the fifteenth anniversary of the adoption of resolution 1612 (2005), by which the Working Group was established (SC/14224). On 10 September, the

President read out a statement on behalf of the Council, the draft text of which had been prepared by the Working Group, with respect to attacks on schools (S/PRST/2020/8).

34. Lack of interpretation continued to be an issue within the Working Group, as it undermined multilingualism as a core value of the Organization. Despite efforts made by the Chair, members expressed regret that the issue had been further accentuated in the virtual format and that no remote interpretation platform had been used.

IV. Secretariat administrative and substantive support

35. The Security Council Affairs Division provided substantive and procedural support to the Chair and the members of the Working Group. Induction briefings were also provided to incoming members of the Council to familiarize them with the specific issues relevant to the Working Group.

36. The Division worked with the Department for General Assembly and Conference Management and the Office of Information and Communication Technology of the Department of Management Strategy, Policy and Compliance to facilitate the conduct of virtual meetings held by the Working Group, through a variety of platforms.
