

**not freshman C**

TOPIC:Trafficking of child soldiers

SOCOMUN XXVIII

NOT FRESHMAN C

TRAFFICKING OF CHILD SOLDIERS

Hi delegates! My name is Sarah Ma and I am so excited to be your chair at SOCOMUN. I am currently a senior at SMCHS and this is my fourth year in MUN. Through MUN, I have gained a deeper knowledge of international politics, as well as the current issues that plague our society. This program has been a great way to meet and collaborate with other delegates while helping me hone my public speaking skills. I typically debate human rights topics; my favorites include enhanced interrogation, the legality of the death penalty, and fraudulent medicine trafficking. I have participated in the UCSD and UCSB conferences and will be traveling to Prague later this year. In my free time, I love dancing, going to the beach, doing yoga.

I hope that SOCOMUN will be a fun and educational experience for all of you, and that you will be encouraged to continue with MUN! Our committee is based off of the UNODC’s mandate areas in the E4JMUN program, specifically Human Trafficking and Migrant Smuggling. We will begin substantive debate where delegates will give speeches on their solutions regarding the trafficking of child soldiers. Delegates can motion for an unmoderated caucus to discuss their solutions more in depth that will be later implemented into resolutions. It is vital that you understand your country’s policy on the topic and, of course, the topic itself! If you have any questions, please do not hesitate to email me at socomunnotc@gmail.com I look forward to hearing your unique solutions! See you all in September!

Hello, my name is Sara Good, and I will be your vice-chair at SOCOMUN this year. I am a junior at SMCHS, and this will be my third year in MUN. Before starting MUN I was not a good public speaker and I was afraid to get in front of everyone to give a speech. But, throughout my amazing experiences I was able to overcome my fear and fall in love with MUN. Last year I got to experience MUN at so many places including USC, UCSB, and UCI. While this year I get to travel to London! I can’t wait to meet all of you in committee!

Hi delegates, my name is Davin Maas, and I am currently a sophomore at Santa Margarita Catholic High School. This is currently my second year in the MUN program and am thoroughly enjoying the experience. I look forward to meeting you all in committee and listening to your solutions that you come up with. Best of luck to you all and make sure to have fun!

**E4JMUN Resources from the UNODC**

The UNODC has provided some great resources for students involved with Model United Nations.

<https://www.unodc.org/e4j/mun/crime-prevention/trafficking-in-persons-and-smuggling-of-migrants.html> - Information about trafficking in persons and smuggling of migrants. Also information about trafficking in persons and smuggling of migrants and the sustainable development goals.

<https://www.unodc.org/e4j/mun/resources/trafficking-in-persons-and-smuggling-of-migrants.html> - Looks like the other link but scroll down and you will see some links to additional resources. (You might want to look through the table of contents of the documents that you find since many of the documents are very lengthy and only sections are related to your topic.) The Human Trafficking Knowledge Portal is very useful.

<https://sherloc.unodc.org/res/cld/bibliography/2018/countering_trafficking_in_persons_in_conflict_situations_html/17-08776_ebook-Countering_Trafficking_in_Persons_in_Conflict_Situations.pdf> - Countering Trafficking in Persons in Conflict Situations

**Background:**

The UNODC defines human trafficking as “the recruitment, transportation, transfer, harboring or receipt of people by improper means such as force, fraud, deception, abuse of power or abuse of a position of vulnerability, with the aim of exploiting them.” Migrant smuggling is a different area defined as “the procurement of financial or other material benefit of illegal entry of a person into a State of which that person is not a national or resident.” Of the EJ4MUN program, we will be discussing the trafficking of child soldiers. The most dangerous places for children to currently be are in war zones of unstable countries: Syria, South Sudan, Iraq and Yemen. The priority, if it matches your country policy, should be to safely remove children from these dangerous areas and successfully integrate them back into civilian life. Many believe that the reason why children are now considered more valuable in conflicts is because of the proliferation of light weapons, such as assault rifles, make it easier for children to be effective rather than having to teach them hand to hand combat.

Although the horrors of child soldiers were not brought to light until 2002 due to the UN’s press release on this issue, the use of minors in conflict date back to at least the Middle Ages. The first international standards had fifteen as the minimum age for a child to be directly in the line of fire in armed conflict with complies with the old Geneva Conventions. The UN began its campaign to end the use of child soldiers in the 1996 report on “The Impact of Armed Conflict Children” by Graca Machel. Other activists include Lorraine Schneider in 1967 when she made a poster with a flower and a statement: “War is not healthy for children and other living things.” Shortly after, the Geneva Conventions raised the age of children participating in the armed forces to 18, but most of the major world powers, particularly Britain and the United States, opposed this change.

The UN’s accepted definition of child soldiers from the Paris Principles on the Involvement of Children in Armed Conflict (2007) is any child under 18 years of age that is associated with an armed group who is recruited by an armed group in any capacity “including but not limited to children, boys and girls, used as fighters, cooks, porters, spies or for sexual purposes.” Child soldiers should be viewed as victims, whose involvement in armed groups bears serious consequences for their physical and mental health. Often, children who are trafficked into being child soldiers are abducted under the threat of force and death or with the use of mind-altering drugs. The most common reasons of child trafficking are labor exploitation and sexual exploitation. Many young girls are forced to marry male combatants, therefore putting them at a much higher risk of unwanted pregnancies and of contracting sexually transmitted diseases (STDs). The personal developments of these children are permanently damaged seeing as they are rejected by their home countries if they are able to return to their families. In addition to being forced to fight, children are trained to be spies, cooks, cleaners, and couriers. The reason why many armed groups use child soldiers is that children are easier to manipulate and “care” for: they have a less developed sense of danger and they do not eat as much food. Because these armed groups who illegally use child soldiers are considered “non-state” and anti-government, they are harder to negotiate with seeing as these groups have no functional government, often just a leader of their group. The most common way that child soldiers are used in the battlefield are as suicide bombers. Despite the necessity of child soldiers to anti-state groups, the UN’s Children and Armed Conflict report documents that many national governments are responsible for 9,000 violations of children’s rights in the armed forces.

The most common countries for child trafficking to occur are the United Kingdom, Albania, Vietnam, Afghanistan, and Eritrea. The most critical areas are Africa and Asia. Although 88 percent of countries have criminalized human trafficking, the rate of convictions are extremely low, and the victims often do not receive protection or health care services from their country of citizenship. Previous examples of child soldiers used in areas of conflict include the civil war in Sierra Leone: more than 25,000 children abducted to contribute to the armed groups. In Somalia, an al-Shabab extremist group abducted over 1,600 children as child soldiers where some became recruited and armed while others were subjected to sexual violence. According to the UN’s 2018 Annual Report on Children and Armed Conflict, the most common non-state armed groups are Al-Shabaab, Al Qaeda, Boko Haram, ISIS, and the Lord’s Resistance Army.

In their 2016 report, the UNODC estimates that 28 percent of all trafficking victims internationally are children, however in areas such as Central America, Sub-Saharan Africa, and the Caribbean, children are about 64 percent of the victims. Currently, UNICEF estimates that over 300 thousand children under 18 are forced to participate in 30 armed conflicts spread over at least 20 countries. The ages of most child soldiers are between 15 and 17, but the youngest can be around 7 or 8 years old. 40% of all child soldiers are girls An estimated 10,000 children were killed in 2017 alone in armed conflicts. In the same year, over 21,000 violations of children’s rights were reported which is a much sharper increase compared to 2016. The UN believes that a U.S.-backed Arab coalition in Yemen accounts for over half the 1,300 child deaths in Yemen due to aerial and ground attacks by the United Arab Emirates and Saudi Arabia on the Houthis who oppose Yemen’s current government. Chair of Security Council’s children and armed conflict group, Sweden is the primary country that has been significantly contributing resources and time to engage with countries that are willing to address this issue and cooperate with regional organizations.

The United Nations has had a significant role in reducing the number of child soldiers internationally, in addition to raising awareness on this issue. Between the years 2008 and 2009, UNICEF has helped 24,000 former child soldiers reintegrate into society. There are six “grave violations” that the UN has released to serve as the basis for violations reported against children: killing/maiming, recruitment as soldiers, attacks against hospitals or schools, denial of humanitarian access, sexual violence, abduction. Resolution 2427 (2018) and the Paris Principles are the primary documents that relate to reintegration programs. Resolution 1261 emphasized the involvement of the UNHCR and UNICEF. UNICEF handles raising awareness while the UNHCR supports the resettlement and protection of newly rescued child soldiers. The UN also includes the Optional Protocol on the Involvement of Children in Armed Conflict that stipulates recommendations to nations to protect children from recruitment. Through the UN’s campaigns, the main goal of most nations is to reach an international consensus that children should not be in armed conflict with the nations that disagree. Implemented in Afghanistan, the Central African Republic, Chad, Cote d’Ivoire, the Democratic Republic of the Congo, Mali, Myanmar, Nepal, Nigeria, Philippines, Somalia, South Sudan, Sudan, Sri Lanka, Uganda, and Yemen, Action Plans within the campaign are currently successful in Yemen and Afghanistan through the cooperation of many industrialized countries such as the United States and the United Kingdom. An action plan is written and signed commitment between the parties committing the six grave violations and the UN. Should the countries bound by the action plan further violate the terms of the agreement, the UN then has the power delist that government from the UN. Action plans are specifically created to fit every country’s current situation and can be amended to adapt to new developments. They also outline concrete, time-sensitive steps that comply with international law to allow for a more permanent and protected future for these children. As of 2018, the previously listed countries have signed twenty-nine action plans totaling to the involvement of eleven government forces and seventeen non-state armed groups. Of the twenty-eight countries, twelve have fully completed their action plans and so the plans were delisted after.

**Possible Solutions:**

The UN established a Monitoring and Reporting Mechanism (MRM) in 2005 which is a system that digitally monitors, documents, and reports violations committed against children internationally. The Secretary-General can then use the names from the MRM to include in his annual report and make recommendations for countries to better remove and protect children from these situations. Technology, especially in this age, will be crucial in tracking and finding the root of the child soldier trafficking network. The UNODC released a paper titled “Providing Effective Remedies for Victims of Trafficking in Persons” which is based on the research of the inter-agency coordination group (ICAT) and complies under international law. The action plan that the UN used could provide the base of many solutions: (step 1) issuing military orders that prohibit the recruitment and use of children in conflicts, (step 2) release every child currently in the armed forces, (step 3) ensure the child’s safe reintegration into civilian society, (step 4) criminalize those recruiting and using children in armed conflicts, (step 5) integrate age-verification technology to verify that those drafted are above 18.

On February 12 every year, Red Hand Day stands as the international day against using child soldiers where pleas are sent to political leaders and events are staged to raise awareness to this issue. Because of how often child soldiers are recruited in armed conflicts in developing countries, funds and reports play a major role in rescuing child soldiers. Similarly, UNICEF established the “Children, Not Soldiers” campaign in 2014 to generate international support. At the time of creation, the campaign focused on helping Afghanistan, Myanmar, South Sudan, Yemen, Chad, and the Democratic Republic of Congo.

The Global Coalition for Reintegration of Child Soldiers, within UNICEF, provides psychosocial support, education, and training for child soldiers using sensitization and reconciliation techniques. Despite the UN and every nation’s success in rescuing child soldiers, the aftermath of rescuing them remains an issue. The program’s successes depend on the dependable and predictable funding of their reintegration programs, particularly in emergency situations. The Paris Principles stipulate that the reintegration programming need to be at least three years while the actual programs themselves can be at least six months.

For this committee, your solutions do not have to include funding, but rather focus on the actual application of the solution. For example, there are many questions you can ask yourself to strengthen your solutions: where will it take place, why is this needed, how will it be successful, what determines success in your solution, what NGOs and organizations are good to work with, how will this appeal to countries who support child soldiers, how will this be implemented in developing countries and why should countries help you with your solution? It will be assumed that the UN’s Fifth Committee and the World Bank are going to take care of the funding of your solutions.

**Questions to Consider:**

1. What are NGOs and other organizations that have had success in rescuing children in the past?
2. How do you plan on better reintegrating children back into society once they are rescued?
3. How can the governments of developing countries, where most of the child soldiers are abducted, be more efficient in locating and preventing child abductions?
4. What has your country done to mitigate child soldiers and give aid to victims?
5. Is the trafficking of child soldiers a prevalent issue in you nation and why is that?
6. What can you do to locate the root of the child soldier trafficking network?
7. How can your solution be realistic enough to match the demand that supplies/resources cost and the number of children it plans to help?
8. What has your country done in the past regarding this issue?
9. Any recent developments on rescuing or new programs that help child soldiers?
10. What is you country policy on this issue? Has the policy changed?

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