



Resolution 2601 (2021)**Adopted by the Security Council at its 8889th meeting, on
29 October 2021**

The Security Council,

Reaffirming its resolutions [1261 \(1999\)](#), [1314 \(2000\)](#), [1379 \(2001\)](#), [1460 \(2003\)](#), [1539 \(2004\)](#), [1612 \(2005\)](#), [1882 \(2009\)](#), [1998 \(2011\)](#), [2068 \(2012\)](#), [2143 \(2014\)](#), [2225 \(2015\)](#), and [2427 \(2018\)](#), and all relevant Statements of its President, which contribute to a comprehensive framework for addressing the protection of children affected by armed conflict and facilitating the continuation and the protection of education in armed conflict,

Reiterating its primary responsibility for the maintenance of international peace and security in accordance with the Charter of the United Nations, and, in this connection, its commitment to address the widespread impact of armed conflict, including the disruption of access to education, and the long-term consequences this has for durable peace, security and development,

Recognizing the need for States to foster an enabling and secure environment to ensure safe access to education; and recalling the international humanitarian law obligations involving the protection of schools and educational facilities in situations of armed conflict,

Stressing the primary role and responsibility of Governments in providing protection and relief to all children affected by armed conflict and *recognizing* the importance of strengthening national capacities in this regard,

Remaining however deeply concerned over the lack of progress on the ground in some situations of concern, where parties to conflict continue to violate with impunity the relevant provisions of applicable international law relating to the rights and protection of children in armed conflict,

Underlining in this regard the importance of the implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, and recognizing that a strong focus is needed on combating poverty, deprivation and inequality to prevent and protect children from all violations and abuses in particular in the context of armed conflict and to promote the resilience of children, their families and their communities, and the importance of promoting education for all and peaceful and inclusive societies for sustainable development,

Reaffirming the right to education and its fundamental contribution to the achievement of peace and security and further recognizing that investment in universal, and inclusive education and training is an important investment that States



can make to ensure the immediate and long-term development of children, and reiterating that access to inclusive, equitable and quality formal and non-formal education are important factors that enable children and youth to acquire the relevant skills and to build their capacities,

Expressing concerns that children account for many of those adversely affected by armed conflict, including as refugees and internally displaced persons, and that the disruption of access to education and future economic opportunities has a dramatic impact on durable peace and reconciliation,

Expressing grave concern about the significant increase of attacks against schools and education facilities in recent years and the alarming number of children denied their right to education, as well as about attacks on schools and their infrastructure, rising instances of abduction of children, and the targeting of schools for the purposes of abductions, as reported by the United Nations, the severity and frequency of threats of attacks and attacks against schools and civilians connected to schools, including children and teachers, the use of schools for military purposes, as well as the immediate negative impact of attacks on the safety of students and their ability to enjoy their right to education, with long-term negative consequences for them as individuals, their families and their communities,

Acknowledging the disproportionate negative impact of the COVID19 pandemic, notably the socio-economic impact, and the adverse effects on children in armed conflict and children formerly associated with armed groups and armed forces who are undergoing reintegration assistance and *noting* the heightened risk for children in armed conflict, of not resuming their education following school closures, particularly girls, making them more vulnerable to child labor, child recruitment as well as forced marriage,

Expressing deep concerns that girls and women may be the intended victims of attacks targeting their access to and continuation of education, and *expressing* concern about the specific consequences of such attacks including but not limited to incidents of rape and other forms of sexual violence including sexual slavery, threats of attacks, at school and on the way to and from school, abductions, forced marriage, human trafficking, and any resulting stigma and grave consequences on their health, all of which may further impede the continuation of their education,

Expressing deep concern that many children in armed conflict, in particular girls, lack access to education owing to attacks and threats of attacks against schools, damaged or destroyed school buildings, mines and explosive remnants of war, insecurity, the prevalence of violence, including sexual and gender-based violence against children, in and around schools and loss or lack of civil documentation,

Stressing that all parties to armed conflict must comply strictly with the obligations applicable to them under international law for the protection of children in armed conflict, including those contained in the Geneva Conventions of 12th August 1949 and the Additional Protocols of 1977 as well as in the Convention on the Rights of the Child and its Optional Protocol on the involvement of Children in armed conflict, *welcoming* the steps taken by a number of Member States to make commitments to protect children affected by armed conflict, including the ratification of the Optional Protocol to the Convention on the Rights of the Child on the involvement of children in armed conflict,

Taking note of ongoing international and regional initiatives on Children and Armed Conflict, including the international conference held in Paris in 2007 on protecting children from unlawful recruitment or use by armed forces or armed groups and the follow-up conference held in Paris in 2017, and the commitments during the conferences, the African Charter on the Rights and Welfare of the Child, and the commemoration of the International Day to Protect Education from attacks,

Taking note of efforts aimed at facilitating the continuation of education in armed conflict, including the efforts of Member States that have endorsed the Safe Schools Declaration,

1. *Strongly condemns* all violations of applicable international law involving the recruitment and use of children by parties to armed conflict as well as their re-recruitment, killing and maiming, rape and other forms of sexual violence, abductions, attacks against schools and hospitals as well as denial of humanitarian access by parties to armed conflict and all other violations of international law, including international humanitarian law, human rights law and refugee law, as well as human rights abuses committed against children in situations of armed conflict and demands that all relevant parties immediately put an end to such practices and take special measures to protect children;

2. *Strongly condemns* the continued attacks as well as threats of attacks that are in contravention of international humanitarian law against schools and civilians connected with schools, including children and teachers, and *urges* all parties to armed conflict to immediately cease such attacks and threats of attacks and to refrain from actions that impede access to education;

3. *Calls on* all parties to safeguard, protect, respect, and promote the right to education, including in armed conflict, and *reaffirms* its contribution to the achievement of peace and security, and *emphasizes* the invaluable role that education has for individuals and society including as life-saving safe spaces and *acknowledges* that providing and protecting as well as facilitating the continuation of education in armed conflict should remain a key priority for the international community and Member States, and in this regard *urges* Member States, United Nations bodies and civil society to take specifically into account girls' equal access to education;

4. *Urges* Member States to develop effective measures to prevent and address attacks and threats of attacks against schools and education facilities, and, as appropriate, develop domestic legal frameworks to ensure respect for their relevant international legal obligations as applicable to them, and *encourages* Member States to ensure that national strategic frameworks include, as appropriate, comprehensive measures to prevent attacks and threats of attacks against schools and ensure the protection of schools and civilians connected with schools, including children and teachers during armed conflict as well as in post-conflict phases, with the support of relevant United Nations entities;

5. *Underlines* the importance of coordination between the United Nations, regional and subregional organisations in preventing violations and abuses against children affected by armed conflict, including supporting national authorities to develop and establish appropriate strategies for the protection of schools and continued access to education in situations of armed conflict, as well as to ensure that these strategies strengthen coherence between political, security, human rights, development and rule of law activities, which remain the primary responsibility of Member States;

6. *Condemns* the military use of schools in contravention of international law, and recognizes that use by armed forces and armed groups may render schools legitimate targets of attack, thus endangering children's and teachers' safety as well as their education, and in this regard:

(a) *Urges* all parties to armed conflict to respect the civilian character of schools and educational facilities in accordance with international humanitarian law;

(b) *Encourages* Member States to take concrete measures to mitigate and avoid the use of schools by armed forces, as appropriate, and deter the use of schools

by armed groups, and to facilitate the continuation of education in situations of armed conflict;

(c) *Calls upon* United Nations country-level task forces to enhance the monitoring and reporting on the military use of schools;

7. *Calls upon* Member States to ensure that their armed forces and security forces, within their respective competencies under domestic law, take practical measures for facilitating access to and the continuation of education and the protection of schools and civilians connected to schools, including children and teachers into the planning and conduct of their operations, including through refraining from using schools for military purposes in contravention of international law;

8. *Condemns* the lack of accountability for violations of international law, including international humanitarian law, and for abuses, committed against civilians connected to schools, including children and teachers, in armed conflict, and condemns attacks and threats of attacks against schools and educational facilities in contravention of international humanitarian law, which in turn may contribute to the recurrence of these acts; and urges Member States to ensure that such violations are investigated and those responsible duly prosecuted;

9. *Encourages* Member States affected by armed conflict to take immediate measures to rehabilitate, repair, or replace schools that have been subject to attack and restore children's safe access to schools, emphasizing the importance of protecting and supporting teachers, who play an important role in this regard, and calls for the continued support of relevant United Nations entities, as well as international and regional bodies, in assisting Member States, upon request;

10. *Calls upon* Member States to protect schools as spaces free from all forms of violence, noting that girls may be the intended victims of attack on their education, which can lead to serious violations such as abduction and rape and other forms of sexual violence, and urges Member States to take steps to address girls' equal enjoyment of their right to education;

11. *Calls upon* member states to halt and prevent recruitment and re-recruitment of children contrary to the obligations of parties to conflict, through, inter alia, quality education provided in a safe environment in conflict areas, noting the particularly high recorded numbers of boys being subject to recruitment and use in this regard;

12. *Urges* Member States to provide necessary protection and assistance to children including those in vulnerable situations such as internally displaced persons, children undergoing reintegration assistance, refugees and children with disabilities, teachers and other persons entitled to protection who are connected to schools affected by attacks on schools, or by the military use of schools in contravention of international law;

13. *Underlines* the importance of providing sustainable, timely, appropriate, inclusive and accessible assistance to children with disabilities who are affected by armed conflict, including reintegration, rehabilitation, and psychosocial support, to ensure that their specific needs are effectively addressed, and *encourages* Member States to take appropriate measures to ensure access to education on an equal basis provided in the context of armed conflict;

14. *Calls on* Member States to take necessary steps, within their national jurisdictions, to provide assistance for the continuation of education for refugee and displaced children in realizing their right to education, and calls on national, regional, and international partners to support efforts for including refugees into schools with adequate financing and specialized support;

15. *Stresses* the deleterious effects of humanitarian emergencies and forced displacement due to armed conflict on the mental health and psychological wellbeing of children; and further *stresses* the importance of long-term and sustainable funding for mental health and psychosocial programming in humanitarian contexts and ensuring that those who are affected receive timely and sufficient support, and *encourages* Member States, donors, and relevant parties to integrate mental health and psychosocial services in all humanitarian responses;

16. *Emphasizes* the need for Member States to facilitate continuation of education during armed conflict, including, when feasible, through distance learning and digital technology, and in this regard *encourages* Member States to promote the adoption of remote learning solutions, including digital learning, literacy, and skills to facilitate continuity of education in armed conflict by utilizing the innovations and lessons learned during the COVID-19 education response, including when schools are subject to attack;

17. *Encourages* Member States and relevant United Nations agencies as well as regional and international partners to strengthen coordination, cooperation, and investment in support of distance learning facilities, digital literacy and education in armed conflict, as well as digital infrastructure and technology, relevant skills and supporting infrastructure, to close the digital divide across and within regions, while ensuring the protection of personal data and continuing to provide alternatives for those not reached by digital solutions;

18. *Reiterates* its call on parties to armed conflict listed in the annexes of the Secretary-General's report on children and armed conflict that have not already done so to prepare and implement, with support of the United Nations, without further delay, action plans to prevent and halt attacks or threats of attacks on schools and persons entitled to protection who are connected to schools, in contravention of international humanitarian law;

19. *Encourages* the Secretary General, together with his Special Representative for Children and Armed Conflict, UNICEF, and relevant United Nations bodies and child protection actors, to carry out and include in his relevant reporting lessons learned and best practices on the children and armed conflict mandate, including the protection and continuation of education in armed conflict, local and community-based initiatives to protect schools and ensure that children are safe, and the prevention of the military use of schools;

20. *Stresses* the importance of regular and timely consideration of violations and abuses committed against children in armed conflict, in this regard welcomes the sustained activity of its Working Group on Children and Armed Conflict, and invites the Working Group to make full use of tools within its mandate to promote the protection of children affected by armed conflict, including through increasing engagement with concerned Member States in light of ongoing discussions on enhancing compliance;

21. *Requests* Member States, the Office of the Special Representative of the Secretary General for Children and Armed Conflict, United Nations peacekeeping and political missions and United Nations country teams, and *calls on* regional and subregional bodies, within their respective mandates and in close cooperation with the Governments of the countries concerned, to establish appropriate strategies and coordination mechanisms for information exchange and cooperation relating to facilitating access to and the continuation of education as well as the protection and prevention of attacks against schools, bearing in mind paragraph 2 (d) of its resolution [1612 \(2005\)](#) and relevant conclusions by the Security Council Working Group on Children and Armed Conflict;

22. *Recognizes* the role of United Nations peacekeeping operations and political missions in the protection of children, particularly the crucial role of child protection advisers in mainstreaming child protection and leading monitoring, prevention and reporting efforts in missions, and in this regard reiterates its decision to continue the inclusion of specific provisions for the protection of children in the mandates of all relevant United Nations peacekeeping operations and political missions, encourages deployment of child protection advisers to such missions, and calls upon the Secretary-General to ensure that the need for and the number and roles of such advisers are systematically assessed during the preparation and renewal of each United Nations peacekeeping operation and political mission, and that they are speedily recruited, expeditiously deployed, and properly resourced where appointed, in a transparent manner, and encourages the United Nations Secretariat, including DPO and DPPA, to take into account child protection when briefing the Council on country-specific situations;

23. *Underlines* the importance of providing military, police and civilian peacekeepers, with adequate pre-deployment and in-mission training on mission specific child protection issues, including on attacks on schools, and on appropriate comprehensive prevention and protection responses;

24. *Calls upon* Member States and donors, and *encourages* all concerned institutions to consider increasing their contributions to ensuring continuation of education in armed conflict, based on and in proportion to assessed needs, as a means of ensuring adequate, timely, predictable, flexible and needs-based resources;

25. *Calls for* full, safe, and unhindered humanitarian access, without delay, for humanitarian personnel and medical personnel, their equipment, transport and supplies, in order to facilitate, inter alia, COVID-19 vaccinations, as appropriate, as it is critical for the continuation of education and calls for the protection, safety, and security of such humanitarian and medical personnel, and in this regard urges all parties to protect civilian infrastructure which is critical to the delivery of humanitarian aid for essential services concerning vaccinations and related medical care, in order to facilitate timely return to education in situations of armed conflicts and complex humanitarian emergencies;

26. *Emphasizes* the unity, common origin and solidarity of humanity, and the need for intensified international collaboration in the face of the common threat of the COVID19 pandemic, and *recognizes* that the COVID19 pandemic as well as the inequitable access to vaccines have exacerbated existing inequalities in access to education and the continuation of education in armed conflict; *acknowledges* the adverse short, medium and long term negative impacts of the COVID19 pandemic on the present and future of access to education in armed conflict for all children; *requests* that measures, inter alia by enabling equitable global access to quality, safe, efficacious and affordable diagnostics, therapeutics, medicines and vaccines, and essential health technologies, and their components, as well as equipment for the COVID-19 response, are duly accounted for in facilitating access to education in armed conflict;

27. *Further requests* that preventative and corrective measures be urgently undertaken to ensure equal access to education and the continuation of education in armed conflict, and *recognises* the essential role of education for the prospects of peace and security;

28. *Decides* to remain actively seized of this matter.