



PERMANENT MISSION  
OF THE SLOVAK REPUBLIC  
TO THE UNITED NATIONS

**STATEMENT**

**by**

**H. E. Mr. Michal Mlynár**

**Permanent Representative of Slovakia  
to the United Nations**

**UN Security Council High-Level Open Debate  
on  
Children and Armed Conflict**

**28 June 2021  
New York**

Madam President,

Slovakia aligns itself with the statements of the European Union and of the Group of Friends of Children and Armed Conflict.

We commend Estonia for convening this Open Debate on Children and Armed Conflict and we thank the briefers for their insightful presentations. We also appreciate the role of the Secretary-General, and his Special Representative in child protection and promotion of their human rights, and for the strong and concrete engagement by all UN partners in advocating for practical measures to protect children.

We welcome the Secretary-General's report and voice our strong concern about the scale and severity of grave violations against children reflected in it. We may commemorate the 25<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the Children and Armed Conflict mandate, but children still remain the most vulnerable group in situations of armed conflict, and therefore we need to look ahead, on how to better implement the CAAC mandate.

Unfortunately, grave violations remain at a similar concerning level as last year and it is clear that urgent and effective measures to protect children in all situations of armed conflicts are needed. We firmly condemn the ongoing recruitment and use, killing and maiming of children as well as the denial of humanitarian access to them, as the three most prevalent grave violations verified in 2020. We express particular concern over dramatic increases in abduction and sexual violence, and the long-term negative impact these have on children. We also condemn wide-spread attacks on schools and hospitals, and strongly call on all parties to armed conflict to immediately cease those attacks. Strengthened monitoring and reporting of attacks on education as well as accountability and redress for it is crucial.

The COVID-19 has further exacerbated children's vulnerability to grave violations and complicated the implementation of child protection activities. We underscore the importance of prioritizing children's rights and needs in global COVID-19 response and recovery programmes. In this regard we welcome the study on the *Impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on violations against children in situations of armed conflict*, launched last May. With the long-term effects of the pandemic, the call for improved access to safe, quality education, including for girls, during armed conflict is even more acute.

Madam President,

We continue to reiterate our unwavering call for all parties to armed conflict to fully respect international humanitarian law and human rights law, and to end violations against children. Accountability for all these crimes must be ensured, and perpetrators brought to justice and punished. We simply cannot accept the prevalent impunity for grave violations against children. We call for criminalisation of grave violations in domestic laws and for the adoption of effective national accountability measures as well as for Member States to cooperate with international, regional and national accountability mechanisms.

Having ratified Optional Protocol to the Convention on the Rights of the Child on the involvement of children in armed conflict, endorsed the Paris Principles, the Safe Schools Declaration as well as the Vancouver Principles, Slovakia calls on others who have not yet done so to follow this action.

Thank you.