



**PERMANENT MISSION OF THAILAND  
TO THE UNITED NATIONS**

**136 EAST 39<sup>th</sup> STREET, NEW YORK, NY 10016  
TEL (212) 754-2230 • FAX (212) 688-3029**

**Statement**

**by**

**His Excellency Dr. Suriya Chindawongse**

**Ambassador and Permanent Representative of Thailand**

**to the United Nations**

**at the United Nations Security Council Open Debate on  
Children and Armed Conflict: How to prevent and respond to  
grave violations against children in armed conflict**

**New York, 5 July 2023**

Mr. President,

1. I wish to congratulate the United Kingdom in assuming the Presidency of the Security Council for the month of July this year and to commend the United Arab Emirates for its successful Presidency of the Council last month. I wish to thank the United Kingdom for convening this important debate as well as to the Secretary-General for his recent report on children and armed conflict. I thank all the briefers for their contribution to our discussion today.

2. It is alarming that, according to the report by the Secretary-General, in 2022, the number of children affected by grave violations have increased when compared with 2021. Thailand joins other speakers in condemning all forms of violations and crimes against children in situations of armed conflict. Because coming from a country that has provided safe havens for tens of thousands of children fleeing armed conflict from elsewhere over the past decades, we Thais have been close witnesses to and fully understand the harm that befall children when conflicts occur. It is a harm that should always be avoided.

3. Because children are our future -- as such, they should be accorded the protection required, so that they can indeed have a future. And if they have a future, so will we. It is with this hope for a better future for children affected by armed conflict that Thailand underscores the importance of scaling up prevention and response efforts and, in this regard, wishes to underscore the following four points:

4. First, we must ensure strict compliance with and promote States' commitment to implement international law for the protection of children in armed conflict, including those contained in the Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC) and its Optional Protocol, as well as international humanitarian law and other relevant international human rights law.

5. Second, monitoring and reporting mechanism or MRM plays a crucial role in early detection of violations and paves the way for early engagement with parties to conflicts as part of prevention efforts. This will help the international community to better address challenges faced by children in a more comprehensive manner. So in addition to the six grave violations which have been identified as priority areas for MRM, we also support efforts to monitor and respond to other violations.

6. Third, we believe that effective data collection and data sharing are crucial. Data collected should be age- and sex- disaggregated, as much as possible, because boys and girls, across various age-groups, experience conflicts differently. This will enable us to scale up appropriate responsive measures required for effective prevention, response, recovery and sustainable reintegration.

7. Fourth and lastly, sustained support for the recovery and rehabilitation of children affected by armed conflict is critical. Now here, we need both hardware and software -- the infrastructure, the health facilities, the nutritional support are all critical to rebuilding children's physical health, on the one hand; as are psychological support, education and continued learning opportunities, and the caring by communities to rebuilding shattered lives and mental well-being, on the other. Special attention must also be given to help children who suffered from sexual violence which are exacerbated during times of armed conflict and have disproportionate effects on girls.

8. All such efforts, Mr. President, are necessary to ensure sustainable reintegration and prevention of re-victimization so that affected children can have hopes for a better future that is sustainable. Indeed, having a better future for children should naturally be an integral part of our Summit of the Future aspirations, because if their future is secured, our future will also be secured.

Mr. President,

9. To conclude, in order help attain this better future for children, we will need coordinated efforts across and amongst all stakeholders, including national governments, CSOs and affected communities, in strengthening the protection of the rights and well-being of children. We commend the Secretary-General's Special Representative for children and armed conflict for her continued engagements with the international community, partners and relevant parties.

10. In closing, you know we all love and care for our children -- this is part of being a human being. But we can also love and care for all children -- this is what it means to be part of humanity. So Thailand stands ready to share our experiences and best practices that could help enhance our collective efforts to protect children's rights and strengthen child protection as well as to address conflicts at their root cause.

11. Thank you Mr. President.

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