

XXXVII

TECMUN

Office of the Special
Representative of the
Secretary General for
Children in Armed
Conflict

XXXVII TECMUN
Session Schedule

Monday, April 15th

Registration	8:00 – 9:00 h.
Opening Ceremony	9:00 – 10:00 h.
Break	10:00 – 10:30 h.
First Session	10:30 – 12:30 h.
Break	12:30 – 13:00 h.
Second Session	13:00 – 15:00 h.
Meal	15:00 – 16:00 h.
Third Session	16:00 – 18:00 h.

Tuesday, April 16th

Master Conference	8:30 – 9:30 h.
Break	9:30 – 10:00 h.
Fourth Session	10:00 – 12:30 h.
Break	12:30 – 13:00 h.
Fifth Session	13:00 – 15:00 h.
Meal	15:00 – 16:00 h.
Sixth Session	16:00 – 18:00 h.

Wednesday, April 17th

Seventh Session	8:00 – 9:30 h.
Break	9:30 – 10:00 h.
Eighth Session	10:00 – 12:00 h.
Break	12:00 – 12:30 h.
Ninth Session	12:30 – 14:40 h.
Meal	14:40 – 16:00 h.
Closing ceremony	16:00 – 18:00 h.

XXXVII TECMUN
General Agenda

Secretary General: Santiago Gutiérrez Caycedo

GENERAL COORDINATION

Subsecretary of General Coordination: Lía Naomi Mejía Vargas

*Supervisor of General Coordination for Media Content: Celic Regina Ramírez
Garduño*

*Supervisor of General Coordination for Co. Secretariat: Samuel Alejandro Herrera
Tapia*

GENERAL ASSEMBLY

Subsecretary General: Monserrat Ríos Fernández

Supervisor of General Coordination: María Fernanda García Bautista

United Nations General Assembly

President: William Vázquez Hernández

- A)** Measures to prevent disagreements and warlike conflicts between the nations that border the Arctic Circle coming from the militarization and exploitation of natural resources as a consequence of climate change in the region of the Arctic.
- B)** Strategies to halt the violation of human rights to the Uyghur Muslim ethnic minority in the Xinjiang province in the region of the People's Republic of China with emphasis on the concentration camps referred to as vocational education centers.

Fourth Commission of Special Political and Decolonization

President: Miranda Senties Carmona

- A)** Strategies to consolidate the Independence of Western Sahara after the territorial conflict with the Kingdom of Morocco, emphasizing the maintenance of peace and the protection of the human rights of civilians.

B) Measures to assure the national security in New Caledonia due to the protests caused by the political instability, prioritizing its total sovereignty.

Sexta Comisión Jurídica

Presidente: María Sigaru Alcántara Nieva

A) Mecanismos para contrarrestar el uso inadecuado de inteligencia artificial en los Estados Unidos de América y el Estado de Israel con enfoque en los ataques cibernéticos Stuxnet, Equifax y Solarwinds a fin de instaurar disputas legales.

B) Estrategias para reforzar el sistema legal internacional con el objetivo de erradicar las redes globales de prostitución de mujeres y niñas, con énfasis en la República Federal de Nigeria y la República de Níger.

Alto Comisionado de las Naciones Unidas para los Derechos Humanos

Presidente: Gael Santiago Pérez Guzmán

A) Medidas para salvaguardar los derechos humanos en América Latina y el Caribe, con énfasis en las recientes protestas en la República de Nicaragua, la República de Perú, la República de Colombia, la República de Chile, la República de Honduras, los Estados Unidos Mexicanos, entre otros.

B) Medidas para frenar las infracciones de derechos humanos en el continente africano respecto a la mutilación genital femenina, haciendo énfasis en la región de la República Democrática Federal de Etiopía.

United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East

President: Yamir Bandala González

A) Strategies to prioritize the education and health of refugees in the Near East following the Israel-Palestine conflict in Gaza.

B) Actions to enhance the internal infrastructure for post-pandemic established refugees in Gaza and the Near East.

Liga de los Estados Árabes

Presidente: Jorge Roel Rodríguez Alcántara

A) Acciones para contrarrestar el aumento de secuestros y decesos en la República Democrática de Somalia debido a la presencia del grupo extremista Al-Shabaab, enfocándose en la protección de civiles.

B) Mecanismos para contrarrestar el Tráfico de Armas hacia los Hutíes con énfasis en la protección de la población de Yemen ante la aún presente Guerra civil.

Counter-Terrorism Committee

President: Aranza Rodríguez Chagoya

A) Measures to halt the growing menace of attacks with chemical components in the Middle East, focusing on the Syrian Arab Republic.

B) Strategies to control attacks caused by cybernetic interventions in the Middle East, with an emphasis on the Islamic Republic of Iran.

ECONOMIC AND SOCIAL COUNCIL

Subsecretary General: Catherine Romina Espinoza Mora

Supervisor of General Coordination: Emilio Guillen López

Entidad de las Naciones Unidas para la Igualdad de Género y el Empoderamiento de las Mujeres

Presidente: Mariana Carolina Guerrero Zárate

A) Estrategias para frenar la mutilación de genitales a niñas y mujeres de África Occidental a causa de la creencia de salvaguardar su castidad y reprimir su deseo sexual con énfasis en la República Democrática de Somalia y la República de Mali.

B) Medidas para erradicar cualquier sistema de tortura a las mujeres en el Medio Oriente con un énfasis en el Reino Hachemita de Jordania.

Commission on Narcotic Drugs

President: Sofía Juanico Ocegüera

A) Measurements to manage the production of narcotic drugs and alteration of fentanyl-based medication in the United Mexican States, with distribution to the United States of America.

B) Actions to eradicate drug trafficking in the Middle East to minimize the misuse of drugs for medical and recreational purposes.

Consortio Internacional contra los Delitos de la Vida Silvestre

Presidente: Laura Mariana González Beltrán

A) Estrategias para frenar la caza furtiva del elefante africano y el comercio ilegal de marfil en la Sabana africana, con énfasis en la promoción del desarrollo económico y social en las comunidades colindantes.

B) Acciones para frenar el comercio ilegal de especies en los Estados Unidos de América y Latinoamérica, haciendo hincapié en las especies de aves, reptiles y anfibios que habitan la región del Pacífico y la Amazonia.

Department of Peace Operations

President: Paulette Mayen Álvarez

Unique Topic) Measurements to counteract violence towards the civilians from the Republic of Cambodia to safeguard them from the communist regime.

United Nations Office for Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs

President: Frida Michelle Valadez García

A) Measures to improve access to humanitarian aid for the communities of Ituri and North Kivu following the rising wave of violence caused by armed groups in the Democratic Republic of the Congo.

B) Actions to optimize humanitarian aid intervention during epidemics in developing African countries with emphasis on the cholera infection.

Organización para la Cooperación y el Desarrollo Económicos

Presidente: Yésika Pamela García Trejo

A) Acciones para mantener el nivel de empleo y el desarrollo de las fábricas automotrices de la Unión Europea reduciendo la emisión de carbono.

B) Medidas para regular la competencia laboral enfocado en la brecha de género situada en la República de Turquía y en los Estados Unidos Mexicanos.

**Comité de Expertos en Transporte de Mercancías Peligrosas y en el Sistema
Globalmente Armonizado de Clasificación y Etiquetado de Productos Químicos**

Presidente: Valeria Arroyo Jerez

- A) Medidas para moderar el uso de las sustancias perfluoroalquiladas y polifluoroalquiladas en las industrias Europeas debido a su impacto negativo en el medio ambiente y la salud humana.
- B) Estrategias para prevenir los accidentes ferroviarios y carreteros de transporte de mercancías peligrosas con énfasis en los Estados Unidos de América.

Historical Commission on Crime Prevention and Criminal Justice

President: Paulo Souto Núñez

- A) Strategies to mitigate tensions between the extremist group Al Qaeda and the United States of America, following the onslaughts held against the United States of America, emphasizing on the prevention of crime through terrorist attacks. (1998 - 2001).
- B) Measures to eradicate the extremist criminal behavior of the Balochistan Liberation Army (BLA), addressing the attacks of the organization inside the territory of the Islamic Republic of Pakistan. (2000 - 2011).

SPECIALIZED AGENCIES AND REGIONAL ORGANISMS

Subsecretary General: Bruno Ramírez Barcelata

Supervisor of General Coordination: Brenda Noreña Mejía

Comunidad Caribeña

Presidente: María José Parra Meza

- A) Medidas para contrarrestar la violencia y salvaguardar los derechos humanos de los habitantes de la República de Haití, con énfasis en el tráfico de armas, tráfico de narcóticos y corrupción en la región del Caribe.
- B) Estrategias para frenar el reclutamiento de menores para el turismo sexual con énfasis en la región del Caribe.

North Atlantic Treaty Organization

President: Regina Covarrubias Rosales

- A)** Fostering defense capacity programmes for NATO's partners, such as the Republic of Moldova, emphasizing on Transnistria's occupation by Russian forces regarding the Ukrainian conflict.
- B)** Perspectives on reinforcement for seabed warfare, undersea infrastructure and security, ensuring NATO's members safeguard regarding the damage made to Finland-Estonia submarine pipeline.

Conseil de l'Europe

Président: Sofia Dominique Morin Anguiano

- A)** Renforcement des mesures de prévention du trafic humain concernant la route du Nigeria vers l'Europe Occidentale.
- B)** Actions pour arrêter le blanchiment des moyens financiers en Europe.

Organización de las Naciones Unidas para Asuntos del Espacio Ultraterrestre

Presidente: Abril Victoria Rodríguez Aguirre

- A)** Acciones para responder al cambio de paradigma y sistema internacional en materia de los tratados de no proliferación del armamento espacial con énfasis en las normas y regulaciones de estos con el fin de prevenir la militarización del espacio y desarrollo e implementación de armamento en el mismo.
- B)** Medidas para facilitar el acceso equitativo y sostenible al espacio y sus recursos con énfasis en garantizar la inclusión de las naciones y el aprovechamiento de los recursos y la tecnología por medio de prácticas sostenibles.

Security Council

President: Aranza Michelle Castro Rivero

- A)** Actions to stop armed attacks on civilians in the Gaza Strip due to the conflict between the State of Israel and the State of Palestine.
- B)** Measures to avoid the indiscriminate use of weapons, violent clashes and reincorporation of armed groups in the region of Tripoli after the civil conflict in the State of Libya.

Office of the Special Representative of the Secretary General for Children in Armed Conflict

President: Arantza González de la Peña

- A) Strategies to cease the recruitment of children in armed forces in the Syrian Arab Republic as a consequence of the civil warlike conflict, as well as ensure the fulfillment of the human rights of the affected children residing in the country.
- B) Actions to put an end to the exploitation and abuse of children in the Democratic Republic of the Congo due to the ongoing conflict and state of anarchy in the country, while ensuring the fulfillment of their human rights and basic needs.

United Nations Office on Genocide Prevention and the Responsibility to Protect

President: Sara Sofía Govantes Cruz

- A) Strategies to curb incitement of genocide and inter-ethnic violence by armed groups, due to the multifaceted crisis in the Democratic Republic of the Congo.
- B) Measures to slow down genocidal practices towards the Uyghur community in the People's Republic of China, along with the repercussions it brings.

Corte Africana de Derechos Humanos y Personas

Presidente: Beatriz Mena Torres

- A) Dominick Damian v. República Unida de Tanzania.
- B) Samia Zorgati v. República de Túnez.

Background

The Office of the Special Representative of the Secretary General for Children in Armed Conflict was formed in 1996 after the publication of the “Impact of Armed Conflict on Children”, a report written by Graça Machel, where it was exhibited the way children were affected by armed conflict. It was created by the General Assembly, with the purpose of advocating for the well-being of children in these situations. In 1999 the United Nations Security Council decided that this matter was a threat to the peace and security, and gave the organism tools to be able to respond to the children's rights violations. Every year, SGCAC reports back to the General Assembly, the Human Rights Council and the Security Council about the latest threats to this sector of the population.

Faculties

- Establish action plans with the parties involved in the armed conflict, where a list of measures to fulfill the children's rights is listed.
- Creation of reintegration programs for children formerly recruited in armed conflicts.
- Promotes the access to education and psychological help for the children involved
- with armed organizations and children residing in affected countries.
- Provides legal training to governments for the development of laws and policies to protect children in armed conflicts.
- Engages with legal actors to promote the penalization of the parties responsible for the violations of children's rights, such as international courts.

- Collaborates with non-governmental organizations and United Nations organisms to address the unfulfillment of children's rights and basic needs, and strengthen mechanisms to ensure the security of the affected children.

Topic A

Strategies to cease the recruitment of children in armed forces in the Syrian Arab Republic as a consequence of the civil warlike conflict, as well as ensure the fulfillment of the human rights of the affected children residing in the country

Introduction

The Syrian Arab Republic has been in a constant state of violence since March of 2011 when the civil warlike conflict began. The dispute started when a group of pro-democracy citizens peacefully protested against the repression of the State, the corruption, and the lack of political freedom. The situation rapidly escalated after the Syrian government responded with lethal force, depriving the protestors of their lives. Protests in-discontent with the government response to the pacific uprising erupted nationwide, and rebel groups started surging as the resistance against the State. As the armed conflict developed, it became entangled with foreign interests, and extremist organizations, further complicating the situation. It's been twelve years since the beginning of the dispute and it has cost the lives of over half a million Syrian citizens, of which according to the United Nations Human Rights Office an estimated 27, 126 were children, without counting the casualties due to not having access to a proper alimentation and healthcare.

Since 2020 there has been a constant wind down in the conflict in Syria, nevertheless the numbers of the use of child soldiers has risen over the past years. During the twelve years of the bellic conflict there have been reports that all the major parties were using child soldiers. The exact number of victims is unknown since gathering information hasn't been feasible in the ongoing conflict. The United Nations Human Rights Office, The Syrian Observatory for Human Rights (SOHR), alongside other organizations have estimated that approximately between 2,000 and 4,000 children have been recruited since the beginning of the conflict in 2011 to 2021. On the other hand, children residing in the country are also victims of the dispute, having their human rights violated and having to live in precarious conditions.

Background

To understand the development and the aftermath of the conflict, it is important to take into consideration that this is a multifaceted dispute that has a range of causes. The main causes are an authoritarian¹ regime, economic hardships, political repression, among others. Another important factor is the influence of neighboring successful uprisings. As a result of these, children all around the country have been subjected to precarious life conditions and some are recruited to join armed forces, furthering the violation of their rights and needs.

The Syrian government has been controlled by the Assad family since 1970 when Hafez Al-Assad, father of the current president Bashar Al-Ásad, came to power after a military coup². Ever since, the country has been in a constant state of corruption and political repression. For the last four decades, the Assad family has led the Ba'ath political party, which has given them the power to maintain influence in the politics, military forces and the economy of the republic. Under this authoritarian government, Syrian citizens lived oppressed by the State, where any sign of political opposition was silenced and freedom of speech was very limited. In addition to this situation, the government keeps a very strict security system, that includes surveilling, arbitrary arrest, and torture to the participants of any display of opposition.

The civil warlike conflict in the Syrian Arab Republic

The ongoing conflict in Syria is a direct consequence of the authoritarian government that has controlled the country for over fifty years. It erupted in february, 2011 after a group of fifteen teenagers were arrested, tortured and kept in prison for over a month after they spray-painted

¹ **Authoritarian**: Demanding that people obey completely and refusing to allow them freedom to act as they wish. (Cambridge Dictionary, 2023)

² **Coup**: A sudden, violent, and unlawful seizure of power from a government.(Oxford Dictionary, s.f)

“It's your turn now doctor” on a wall in their high school in Dara'a, a small southern town in Syria. The message written in the wall was a reference to the Arab Spring, a protest movement that sought democratic reforms and basic human rights, that had successfully removed from the power the dictators in the Arab Republic of Egypt and the Tunisian Republic. The Assad regime was known for silencing any form of political opposition, therefore the local police arrested the children responsible for the message inciting an uprising against the government. The authorities tortured the minors for over a month, causing protests in Dara'a demanding the release of the children, political freedom and democracy.

In March of 2011 the government responded with lethal force to one of the protests in Dara'a, which later evolved and uprisings started emerging all around the country demanding the resignation of the president Bashar al-Ásad. Along with the uprisings, opposition groups started counter attacking the police forces in the country, which spreaded the violence further and the civil warlike conflict began. Throughout the development and progression of the conflict, different parties have joined the dispute. These divisions, based on ideological, ethnic, religious and territorial differences, have created a scenario where various factions are fighting for their own interpretation of Syria's future.

Parties involved

Since the beginning of the conflict, many international parties have taken a political position in the Syrian armed conflict according to their economic, political and cultural interests. In the government coalition, the main supporters throughout the conflict have been the Russian Federation and the Islamic Republic of Iran. Russia previously having military bases in the country gave them political reasons to support Bashar al-Ásad, attacking what allegedly is

their target, extremist groups; although there have been accusations by activists claiming they constantly deprive civilians from their lives. Iran on the other hand has finance, alongside the Republic of Iraq, the Islamic Republic of Afghanistan and the Republic of Yemen, militias to support the Syrian military forces.

In the opposition coalition, the international parties that stand out are the Republic of Türkiye, the State of Israel and the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, each with different reasons to support them. In the case of Saudi Arabia and Israel, their motivation to help the opposition comes from a rivalry against Iran. Both countries main goal is to stop the irani influence and military expansion. The nations have financed the rebellion at some point of the conflict, either by giving troupe or weapons to these militias. Turkiye incentive to support the opposition lies in the contention of Kurdish militia working and partially controlling the Syrian Democratic Forces (SDF), due to the supposition of it being an extension of a rebel group that attacked turkey.

Developed countries such as the United States of America, the French Republic and the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland have also gotten involved in the dispute. Although their first interactions were to finance rebel groups, as the armed conflict evolved, they focused on social aid and non-lethal assistance. Finally, since 2014 a global coalition, led by the United States of America, has deployed special forces to assist the SDF take back territory from extremist groups, such as ISIS and Al-Qaeda.

Extremist Organizations

Insurgent and non-state armed groups maintain a strong presence in Syria; while some just stand a front of insurgency to defend the local population, others are extremist groups inspired by religion that have become complex political organizations, as well as foreign

jihadist ³groups that see an opportunity to take territory and spread their ideology. The presence of these groups in Syria, represents another threat to the civilian population, and has caused the involvement of different international parties. This keeps feeding the dispute and increasing its level of complexity, making it harder to arrive at a resolution and cease the violence in the country.

Some of the extremist groups that hold presence in Syria are:

Islamic State (ISIS). A group emerged in Iraq that began its offensive on Syria in 2014. At some point, the Islamic State possessed one third of the Syrian territory but in 2019, they lost Baghouz, the last territory under their control. Although their activities continue to drop year by year, they have numerous active cells in Syria.

Al-Qaeda and affiliates. Al Qaeda origins go back to anti-Soviet jihad in the 1980s. When the Syrian conflict began in 2011, the group sent representatives that soon established secure operations and began recruitment. One of its affiliates, Hay'at Tahrir al-Sham (HTS) distanced itself from the organization which weakened its operations in the country. Small factions of Al-Qaeda still operate in Syria to this day.

Hay'at Tahrir al-Sham (HTS) is an active group that maintains control in northwestern Syria that arose from a coalition of Sunni Islamist insurgent groups. The organization and its affiliates continue to thrive in the chaotic environment that results from the Syrian conflict. Its main focus is to attack the Assad regime and aims to take power of Syria ruled by a fundamentalist interpretation of the Islam.

Hezbollah. A muslim political party and militant group based in Lebanon that has been

³ **Jihadist:** An Islamic fundamentalist who participates in or supports jihad, especially armed and violent confrontation. (Dictionary. com, s.f)

deemed as an extremist group due to its part-take in global attacks. The organization maintains a complex relationship with the Syrian government. Hezbollah's intervention in Syria began in 2012 after the regime deemed necessary to rely on Hezbollah and Iran for its survival.

Recruitment of child soldiers

The recruitment of children in armed forces is one of the most distressing consequences of the dispute. Throughout the civil war-like conflict there have been multiple cases of recruitment of minors by the main parties, such as the SDF, the Syrian military forces, extremist organizations and the Syrian government. There are a variety of reasons and situations on why they are recruited, some join out of economic necessity, ideological reasons, tribal family loyalties or abduction of the minors. Children's participation in armed conflict subjects them to violations of their human rights. They are used as soldiers, messengers or even as human shields, suffering physical and psychological wounds. There are multiple reasons on why children are used in armed groups. Unlike adults, children are more vulnerable and easily manipulated to fulfill the organization's agenda, they also can be recruited at minimal cost, so they represent a cheaper alternative for the adult soldiers.

Despite the wind down of the conflict, the number of recruited children have continued rising in the last three years. According to the United Nations last report on child soldiers, in 2022 there were reported 1696 recruitment of minors in Syria. According to the said report, about a third of the total number of children recruited were by hands of the SDF, 611 to the military forces of the country, about 383 to extremist groups and the rest to different militias and the Syrian government. Non-governmental organizations estimate the death of around 20,000 minors, not taking into account those who have been deprived of their

freedom in prisons and rehabilitation centers as a punishment towards their parents due to their activities, opinions, and decisions. This constitutes a violation of the Convention on the Rights of the Child, which condemns any form of discrimination or punishment. However, these acts are carried out, endangering their integrity and exposing them to experiences of sexual violence, gender-based violence, trafficking, or enslavement.

Impact on the civilians

The devastation in Syria goes beyond the loss of human life. The country's basic infrastructure, such as hospitals, schools and drinking water systems, has been damaged. This destruction has triggered an unprecedented humanitarian crisis, with millions of people displaced internally or seeking refuge in neighboring countries. In 2022 the civilians in need of humanitarian assistance reached an unprecedented number since the beginning of conflict, with 14.6 million Syrian citizens, from which 6.5 million were children. The increase in this number is a consequence of the ongoing conflict, the economic crisis, the COVID-19 pandemic and the forced displacements.

Children all around the country are not able to receive basic services, like healthcare, purified water, education, shelter, among many others. According to the United Nations International Children's Emergency Fund (UNICEF) around 2.4 million children aged 5-17, are not receiving any form of education. One third of the schools in the country are no longer used for educational purposes, since they are either destroyed or used as shelters for displaced citizens and military bases. Another important factor to consider is the displacement out of the country of teachers and educational staff, which causes a shortage of licensed personnel.

In the health aspect, half of the system is not currently operational, which puts the

citizens in a chokehold, since the only way to access health services is by traveling large distances that are not in their economical possibilities. Just as in the education case, health staff has emigrated from the country, where only 20,000 doctors remain. The absence of medical personnel has oversaturated health clinics, and furthermore making the access to healthcare even more scarce. In addition to the healthcare system collapse, the access to purified water is very limited, forcing people to depend on contaminated water supplies, causing a range of diseases and compromising the immune system, making children more prompt to suffer from malnutrition.

As a result of the ongoing conflict, children all around Syria suffer from physical and psychological injuries and are forced to find refuge in neighboring countries. Minors live with the fear of the insecurity there is in the republic. The limited access to basic services put the children in danger of child labour, trafficking, early forced marriage, recruitment in armed forces, among many other dangers that compromises their integrity. Due to the feasible conditions and the dangerous environment they live in, getting them the assistance needed opposes a challenge to International organisms.

International Response

The number of children recruited to join armed forces and militant groups has seen an steadily increase in the past couple of years. The Syrian Democratic Forces (SDF), regardless of their history of recruiting child soldiers, signed in 2019 a United Nations Action Plan with the purpose of stopping the use of child forces. Not much was accomplished as the Syrian Justice and Accountability Center reported that the SDF continues with the recruitment of children and are still responsible for the recruitment of 35% of children soldiers in Syria.

UNICEF actively aids the children in Syria by assisting with medical care, education

and helping to provide better living situations. They also help with assistance for children after their release from armed forces. More humanitarian aid and investment by the international community is needed to really make a positive impact when it comes to reducing and stopping the recruitment of child soldiers. It is important to acknowledge that the more vulnerable the children are, the more likely they are to be persuaded to join an armed group. Although in some cases children are taken by force, there are many others that willingly join because they or their families are in need of the salary.

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Topic B

Actions to put an end to the exploitation and abuse of children in the Democratic Republic of the Congo due to the ongoing conflict and state of anarchy in the country, while ensuring the fulfillment of their human rights and basic needs

Introduction

The Democratic Republic of the Congo is a country that is in a constant crisis of waves of violence that have caused the forced displacement of thousands of refugees to the neighboring countries. It is a multifaceted situation with a vast number of causes, beginning with political instability that dates back to the independence of this territory. Likewise, it is important to emphasize the vast amount of minerals in the region such as diamonds, gold and coltan, so they are at constant risk of being a target for the looting of these by armed groups, militias, among others. On the other hand, the conflict between militias and ethnic groups has brought thousands of casualties and precarious living conditions for the inhabitants of the western part of the country. Added to this situation is insecurity, lack of food and shelter that turn these conflicts into a high-profile humanitarian crisis importance.

The ongoing conflict in the Democratic Republic of the Congo has serious consequences for children, leaving them in unstable situations and subject to various forms of exploitation. Armed groups recruit them as soldiers and put them on dangerous missions, effectively stealing their childhood and innocence. Due to precarious conditions and the lack of alternatives, many children are forced into child labor to support their families, jeopardizing their health, education and overall development. On the other hand, children, especially girls, in conflict face the additional trauma of sexual violence, which leaves lasting physical and psychological scars and social stigma. This systemic exploitation deprives them of their basic rights and future prospects.

Background

The current armed conflict in the Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC) is resultant from

decades of political instability that has led to a state of anarchy in half of the country's territory and has cost the lives of over six million people, including women and children. The beginning of this instability can be traced back to the independence of the DRC from the Kingdom of Belgium in 1960, where there was a five year long conflict that concluded with Joseph Mobutu as president of the republic and a very divided society. Mobutu took over the country and created a dictatorship that ended in 1997, during this time the United States of America (USA) helped the DRC by deploying military forces and with economic resources in general. The reason the USA were helping Congo was due to the country's geographical position that was a strategically helpful location for them in the so-called "Cold War ". In 1994, one of Congo's neighboring countries, the Republic of Rwanda, suffered from a massive genocide after the two main ethnicities in the country, the Hutus and the Tutsis, began an armed conflict. People were forced to emigrate to the DRC; bringing, in a smaller scale, the conflict with them.

After the Cold War ended, the United States withdrew their intervention in the country, causing an economic crisis. This crisis added up to the ethnic rivalries and the situation with Rwanda's refugees, weakened Mobutu's regime. In 1996, The Alliance of Democratic Forces for the Liberation of Congo, a revolutionary armed organization, began an attack against the government that was later named "First Congo War", with the purpose of ending Mobutu's dictatorship. In said conflict, many international parties got involved such as the Republic of Uganda, the Republic of Rwanda, the Republic of Chad, the Republic of Namibia, the Republic of Zimbabwe, Rwanda's Hutus and Tutsis, among others. After 6 months, the rebellion successfully removed Mobutu from power in 1997.

Laurent-Desiré Kabila took on the role of president and decided to expel all

international parties that remained in the country, especially Rwanda and Uganda who were the most involved in the country. This upsetted said republics and the “Great African War” came to be, where the countries and organizations that participated in the previous armed conflict, got involved again. After three years of conflict, in the year 2000 the DRC settled with Rwanda and Uganda in the extraction of their military forces. nevertheless congolese territory was divided and the government only had control over the occidental half of it, whilst the oriental one came to a state of anarchy. As a result of decades of continuous conflict, Congo’s citizens got divided and the political instability continued growing, causing precarious life conditions for the residents and resulting in a humanitarian crisis.

The conflict in the oriental provinces in the Democratic Republic of the Congo

After forty years of ongoing conflict in the DRC and the loss of control over the oriental portion of the congolese territory, armed groups have taken over the provinces of Ituri, North Kivu, South Kivu and Tanganyinka. The armed groups are conformed mainly by ethnic and militia rivalries that have taken advantage of the lack of government control. The last census showed that over 120 armed groups reside in the country, constantly attacking mainly the previous mentioned provinces. Each region has a specific cause behind the attacks against them, although each conflict is fueled by the vast amount of minerals the land contains, such as diamond, gold and coltan, which are constantly looted.

The Ituri province conflict is mainly a ethnic dispute between the Hemas, livestock farmers and the Lendu, agriculturalist farmers. Their rivalry is a long and tense dispute that focuses on the control of the territory. Although it has been a long dispute, in 1998 it got involved with the ongoing armed conflict, in which both ethnicities got trained by Uganda,

and the conflict grew wider. After that, the conflict began to pace down; until armed groups influenced by the ethnic rivalry and the access to the minerals, started to systematically attack the province's citizens. These strikes happen mostly at night, where villages are raided using firearms and machetes.

North Kivu on the other hand, started to get attacked again in 2022 and since then it has caused the forced displacement of over 500,000 people to south Kivu. The armed groups residing in these provinces are part of territorial disputes, as well as looters of the natural resources of the country, such as gold and coltan, minerals that are highly demanded by the international market. By selling them, they can continue financing their attacks and keep spreading their ideals. North Kivu is the province where there have been the most reports of sexual abuse against children by armed forces.

Effects on Congolese children's lives

The Congolese dispute have disrupted the lives of thousand of minors, where they have to live in precarious conditions, suffer from sexual violence, abduction, recruitment in armed forces, trauma, and a general display of violence. According to the latest report of the Secretary-General for Children in Armed Conflict, 3,377 grave violations against 2,420 children were reported in 2022; and it shows that in the first half of 2023, the number of verified violations have increased by 41 percent, comparing it to the same period of time in the previous year. Children in the country have been forced to internally emigrate due to constant attacks in their villages. Nevertheless, the conditions in the refugee camps are not optimal, since the capacity of said camps has been overpassed and there is not enough supplies such as clean water, food, basic hygiene products, among others. Another factor to

consider is that temporal camps are also attacked by armed groups, so children's integrity is constantly in danger.

The Democratic Republic of the Congo in both, 2021 and 2022 had the world's highest verified cases of sexual violence against children perpetrated by armed forces, and the number of cases keep rising. Although studies show that girls are more prompt to suffer this type of violence, boys are also at risk of experiencing it. All these different displays of violence, as well as being forced to leave their homes, friends and families to find refuge in the occidental part of the DRC has had a significant on children, where they have to deal with the psychological trauma that comes after living in the dire conditions they are exposed to every day. The conflict has also deprived them from accessing basic services such as school and healthcare. An estimated 750,000 Congolese children have been reported to not be attending school in the beginning of 2023, this is due to several reasons such as constant attacks in school facilities, the displacement of the families, a lack of economic resources, recruitment in armed forces and child labor.

Child labor in the DRC

As a consequence of the ongoing conflict in the DRC, the economy of the country has been greatly affected, which has forced people to work in hazardous conditions. Militias have taken advantage of the country's mineral richness such as gold, coltan, cobalt and diamond and have looted these resources using illegal labor to finance their organisms. They hire people and make them mine in circumstances that compromises their health for a minimum paycheck. Although in most cases people are not being forced, the economic conditions of

the country gives them no alternative. Artisanal miners⁴ are exposed to situations that can endanger their lives; there are about 15,000 mining tunnels that were dug by hand without the required equipment and regulations to keep them operating, nevertheless they are functional and they represent a threat to the lives of the workers. On the other hand, handling some types of metals such as cobalt, which is one of the main minerals mined in the DRC, can be a health hazard to the miners, since being in close contact to it can have serious negative impact on their short and long-term health.

Children in the Democratic Republic of the Congo have to face the consequences of the current situation of the country and are forced to work in conditions that represent a danger to their integrity. Unlike adults that in most cases it is somewhat a choice, the majority of minors are forced to labor in the mines. “...So children are the most heavily exploited of all the people down there. They're the most vulnerable and oftentimes trafficked and exploited in some cases in very violent circumstances.” (Gross, 2023). Children are heavily exploited due to their vulnerability and accessibility. Militias and armed groups abduct children from all around the country, especially in the North Kivu and Tanganyika. They have to work without breaks or any protection measures in underground environments that puts them in constant risk of suffocating, being buried by a landslide,

Child Soldiers in the Democratic Republic of the Congo

With the increase of violence perpetrated by armed forces in the Democratic Republic of the Congo, children have been highly affected becoming victims of this violence in various ways. Congolese children are often recruited in armed forces being exposed to traumatic

⁴ **Artisanal miners:** “freelance workers who do extremely dangerous labor for the equivalent of just a few dollars a day.”()

situations and highly endangering their lives. “Recruitment and use of children in armed groups has spiked by 45 per cent in the first six months of the year. In 2022, 1,545 children – some as young as 5 years old – were verified as having been recruited and used by armed groups.” (UNICEF, 2023). There are many ways armed organizations recruit children to their forces, in some cases they promise economic compensation and food to the minors and their families, in other cases families are the ones who pressure them into joining due to their ideologies, but inmost of the cases children are abducted from their homes or schools and forced to join the organization.

As children are more vulnerable and easily manipulated, armed groups use them as a cheaper alternative to adult soldiers. Recruited children suffer from violence and abuse during their training, where they undergo an intense physical and physiological education. Children of five years and older are forced to learn how to fight, use firearms and body to body weapons, as well as to follow orders. Congolese recruited children actively fight; they are used as soldiers, as body shields and messengers. They witness abductions, sexual harassment, homicide and a general display of violence, and are forced to continue spreading it.

International response

There are international organizations that are giving social and political aid to help solve the humanitarian crisis the Democratic Republic of the Congo has been suffering for the last decades. There are many aspects and branches of the problem that need to be urgently attended to, such as security, education, healthcare, famine, political instability, psychological care and reintegration. The United Nations International Children’s Emergency Fund (UNICEF) has been the first respondent in children safesake in the DRC. This United Nation

organism has given assistance in Congo for over 60 years, by deploying volunteers to develop different social campaigns.

In conflict zones and displacement camps, UNICEF sets up temporary schools to ensure children can continue their education. These safe spaces provide essential learning materials and psychosocial support. They also provide teachers with trauma-relevant pedagogy and resources to better support students who have experienced conflict and violence. This approach can help children process the emotional impact of their experiences and continue their learning journey. In the health aspect malnutrition is a major threat to children in the Democratic Republic of the Congo, UNICEF implements programs to distribute therapeutic foods and educate communities, especially mothers and young children, about correct nutritional practices. They also work to raise awareness about HIV/AIDS prevention and ensure that children affected by the virus have access to treatment. This includes supporting HIV-infected mothers to safely breastfeed their babies.

In the child soldiers aspect, they work with communities to raise awareness of the dangers of armed groups and their recruitment tactics. This includes educating children and families about their rights and how they can protect themselves from exploitation. On the other hand, action have been made to stop illegal child labour in mines; in october 2022, the Inter-ministerial Commission to Combat Child Labor in Mines and Artisanal Mining Sites launched the Child Labor Monitoring System. In this regime they trained over 2,000 labor inspectors to conduct inspections in mine sites. The president of the DRC, Félix Tshisekedi, promulgated a law “No° 22/067 Prevention and Fight Against Trafficking in Persons” that further penalizes the trafficking of humans. Besides the effort to put an end to this situation, results have not been reflected in the latest reports.

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XXXVII TECMUN
Glossary of Forbidden Words

Forbidden Words

Defined by the United Nations, are non diplomatic terms participants must avoid to mention during their speeches on the debate and in the writing of resolution projects.

Forbidden Words	Permitted equivalents
First world countries	Developed countries
Third world countries	Developing countries
Gay	Member of the LGBTIQ+ community
War ⁵	Belic conflict
Rape	Sexual Harassment
Terrorist	Extremist
Kill or murder	Deprive someone of their life
Death	Casualties
Assassination	Homicide
Army	Military forces
Money	Economic resources
Poor	Lack of resources
Okay	Yes or agree
Black ⁶	African American

⁵ The word war can be used in order to refer to historical contexts, such as the Cold War, the First World War, etc. It can only be used in the Security Council to refer to armed conflicts.

⁶ The word black, with regard to race, is not forbidden but it is recommended to limit its use and refer to this sector as African American or Afrodescendants.

XXXVII TECMUN
Glossary for Resolution Projects

Preambulatory Phrases

Preambulatory Phrases are used at the beginning of every Resolution Paper in order to give context about the resolutions made for the topic. Preambulatory Phrases must be written in italics followed by a sentence that gives said context. For each Resolution Paper there must be five sentences beginning with a Preambulatory Phrase.

Affirming	Desiring	Noting with deep concern
Alarmed by	Emphasizing	Noting with satisfaction
Approving	Expecting	Noting further
Bearing in mind	Expressing its appreciation	Observing
Believing	Fulfilling	Reaffirming
Confident	Fully aware	Realizing
Contemplating	Further deploring	Recalling
Convinced	Further recalling	Recognizing
Declaring	Guided by	Referring
Deeply concerned	Having adopted	Seeking
Deeply conscious	Having considered	Taking into consideration
Deeply convinced	Having examined	Taking note
Deeply disturbed	Having received	Viewing with appreciation
Deeply regretting	Keeping in mind	Welcoming

XXXVII TECMUN
Glossary for Resolution Projects

Operative Clauses

Operative Clauses are used at the beginning of every resolution within the Resolution Paper on the debated topic. They must be written in italics and bold.

Accepts	Endorses	Notes
Affirms	Draws the attentions	Proclaims
Approves	Emphasizes	Reaffirms
Authorizes	Encourages	Recommends
Calls	Expresses its appreciation	Regrets
Calls upon	Expresses its hope	Reminds
Condemns	Further invites	Requests
Confirms	Further proclaims	Solemnly
Congratulates	Further reminds	Affirms
Considers	Further recommends	Strongly
Declares accordingly	Further requests	condemns
Deplores	Further resolves	Supports
Designates	Has resolved	Takes note of
		Transmits
		Trusts

