

# Countries in conflict must boost measures to protect children from violence – UN official

[UN news.un.org/en/story/2013/09/448562](http://news.un.org/en/story/2013/09/448562)

September 10, 2013



UNHCR/B. Sokol

Displaced Syrian children play among tents at the Domiz refugee camp.

10 September 2013

With millions of children unable to go back to school this year because of conflict in their countries, a senior United Nations official today called on the international community to step up measures to protect them from armed violence.

“Parties to conflict must do more and can do more to minimize killing and maiming of children in the conduct of military operations,” the Special Representative of the Secretary-General for Children and Armed Conflict, Leila Zerrougui, said at the 24th Session of the Human Rights Council, which began yesterday in Geneva.

“International treaties banning cluster munitions and chemical weapons must be respected.”

Ms. Zerrougui reminded the Council that as a new school year begins, millions of children are deprived of their right to education because of conflict. She added that traditional safe havens for children are now too often on the frontline and attacks on schools and hospitals remain of grave concern.

She said that during her recent visit to Syria and neighbouring countries, she had met many families and children – internally displaced or refugees – who expressed the horrors of conflict and their preoccupation for their children’s loss of education. While nearly two million Syrian children had dropped out of school since last year because of conflict, children in other parts of the world were dealing with equally grave and troubling circumstances.

The Special Representative also spoke of progress since her last report to the Council. She noted that the Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC) signed Action Plans to end the recruitment and use of children, as well as sexual violence against children. The Transitional Government of Somalia signed a similar Action Plan as well as another one to end killing and maiming of children, the first time a Government made such a commitment.

In addition, the Government of Yemen approved an Action Plan to end the recruitment and use of children by the country’s armed forces just last week.

“Of the eight Government security forces currently listed for recruitment and use of children in the Annex of the Secretary-General’s Annual report on Children and Armed Conflict, seven have now adopted Action Plans and there is an active dialogue with the Government of Sudan,” Ms. Zerrougui said.

In her statement, Ms. Zerrougui urged the Council to include the protection of children and monitoring of child rights violations in armed conflict in all its new and renewed mandates as well as Commissions of Inquiries.

“We must strengthen our collective action to respond to the plight of conflict-affected children,” she said. “If we fail to protect their rights, their schools and ultimately their future, we call into question our common and longstanding commitment to uphold human rights and international humanitarian law. We must do more to translate these commitments into action and to spare children from the scourge of conflict.”

- ◆ Receive daily updates directly in your inbox - [Subscribe here](#) to a topic.
- ◆ Download the UN News app for your [iOS](#) or [Android](#) devices.

<a href="#"><u>Children</u></a>
<a href="#"><u>conflict</u></a>

### News Tracker: Past Stories on This Issue

---



## **Syrian conflict preventing Palestinian refugees from going back to school - UN agency**

---

1 September 2013

Over half of the schools run by the United Nations Relief and Works Agency (UNRWA) in Syria are closed, affecting some 45,000 children, it was announced today.