

Security Council Open Debate on Children and Armed Conflict
18th June 2015, Security Council Chamber

Statement made by Thomas Schieb, Representative of Germany to the United Nations

I thank you, Madam President, for hosting today's debate. I also thank all the participants who have provided us with insightful briefings. Germany also extends its appreciation to the Secretary-General for his annual report (S/2015/409).

Germany aligns itself with the statement made on behalf of the European Union.

We consider it to be of great value that the Council continues to pay close attention to the children and armed conflict agenda. Parties to conflicts that hurt children for the sake of strategic advantage are guilty of some of the worst crimes imaginable. The perpetrators show an abominable degree of treachery and cowardice. They destroy not only the lives of children but the very foundation of societies. Germany therefore strongly believes that it is the Security Council's responsibility to firmly oppose such practices wherever they occur. We need to shed light on those who use and abuse children in the most horrible ways. We must hold them accountable and, even more importantly, we must redouble our efforts to prevent such crimes from being committed. Germany therefore welcomes the Council's decision to list abductions as a trigger for inclusion in the annex to the Secretary-General's annual report (see S/2015/409). As a strong supporter of the children and armed conflict portfolio, Germany was pleased to co-sponsor resolution 2225 (2015), adopted today.

Allow me to make three points. First, the Secretary-General's report notes that the number of abductions is increasing. That is a matter of great concern, all the more so because abductions are a precursor to other grave violations. The heinous abuse of children at the hands of such terrorist groups as Boko Haram and the Islamic State in Iraq and the Levant (ISIL), for example, shows this fact clearly. We hope that the additional trigger and the mechanism associated with it will be effective in preventing future abductions. We would find it particularly helpful if the next report of the Secretary-General indicated where abductions are occurring beyond the well-known cases in Nigeria, Iraq and Syria, and away from the media spotlight.

Secondly, we reiterate our call to use the existing sanctions regimes more effectively to increase accountability for grave violations against children. The sanctions committees must define designation criteria relating to children and armed conflict and encourage the Special Representative to share information with them. The Security Council must not shy away from 15-18380 57/96 18/06/2015 Children and armed conflict S/PV.7466 using the information collected through the monitoring and reporting process.

Thirdly, I would like to point out that those entrusted with the protection of children must never become perpetrators themselves. We condemn all cases of sexual abuse in the context of peacekeeping missions led or mandated by the United Nations. We therefore welcome the Secretary-General's zero tolerance approach. We call on all troop contributors and the Secretariat to hold all perpetrators accountable. We call for stronger internal oversight in the Secretariat and in its justice mechanisms, and for the protection of whistle-blowers. We look forward to the results of the independent external review initiated by the Secretary-General with regard to reported abuse.