

**Security Council Open Debate on Children and Armed Conflict**  
**18<sup>th</sup> June 2015, Security Council Chamber**

*Statement made by Mohamed Ali Alhakim, Representative of Iraq to the United Nations*

*(Spoke in Arabic):* At the outset, allow me to congratulate the delegation of Malaysia on its assumption of the presidency of the Council for this month. I also wish to pay tribute to the Mission of Lithuania for its excellent stewardship of the Council's work last month. I would also like to say how much my country's delegation appreciates the annual report of the Secretary-General on children and armed conflict (S/2015/409), which has been presented to the Council.

We fully align ourselves with the statement to be delivered on behalf of the League of Arab States. We also congratulate all Muslims on the celebration of Ramadan.

A simple glance at the issues debated in the Council concerning Iraq — the direct threat to international peace and security, the threats to Iraq's national unity and stability, the humanitarian crisis, the issue of foreign terrorist fighters and the violations of the rights of women — leads us to note that all of those phenomena stem from one single source, namely, terrorism. The Council and the international community can bear witness to the fact that Iraq is under threat because of Daesh. We are all unanimous in recognizing that as an international problem, because there is an international coalition that supports Iraq in its efforts to combat that international terrorist organization, which is putting the region and even the entire world at risk.

Today we are addressing the issue of the protection of children in armed conflicts. Regardless of the reality — there are no actual conflicts in Iraq, because there are no warring parties — Iraq is suffering from the scourge of international terrorism, which is affecting all of its citizens. The crimes committed by Daesh fall under the six categories of the grave violations identified by the Security Council, namely, the killing and maiming of children, the recruitment and use of children as soldiers, sexual violence against children, attacks on schools and hospitals, the denial of humanitarian assistance and the abduction of children. Daesh has also carried out the displacement of and trafficking in Iraqi children in the regions under its control.

My country's delegation would like to make the following comments concerning the portion relating to Iraq in the report of the Secretary-General. My country's delegation subscribes to the report's finding that underscores the exacerbation of the level of violence in my country beginning in the second half of 2014. There was, indeed, during that period an unprecedented increase in accidents and security incidents and violence targeting civilians in general and children in particular, owing to the barbaric attacks perpetrated against a large portion of my country by the Daesh terrorist organization, especially after Daesh occupied the city of Mosul and other Iraqi cities and towns. Daesh has committed the worst crimes and attacks against Iraqi children, which has reached alarming levels in their cruelty and criminality and can be classified as crimes against humanity, in accordance with the reports drafted by the competent international bodies.

Daesh has also targeted the educational sector in many ways. It has closed many schools and put them to use for their criminal ends. It has also changed the educational curriculum by adding subject matter that fuels hatred and incites violence and extremism and terrorism so as to influence the beliefs and values of children through miseducation and prepare them to accept terrorist and extremist ideas with a view to creating a new generation of terrorists and murderers.

Daesh recruits children by force to commit acts of war in the service of that terrorist organization by carrying out widespread brainwashing operations in order to use children at a later point for suicide attacks and in other acts of war and terrorist acts. Beyond the above-mentioned crimes, the attacks by Daesh against peaceful Iraqi cities have led to the greatest wave of internal displacement that Iraq has ever experienced, as civilians have fled the terrorist cruelty of Daesh. That has increased the suffering of children in Iraq, who have become displaced persons and have been deprived of their education and a peaceful life in their cities.

The Government of my country affirms its appreciation for the role played by the Office of the Special Representative of the Secretary-General on Children and Armed Conflict and its role in monitoring of the situation of children in armed conflict and protecting them from the horrors of war. However, we would like to express our reservations concerning certain paragraphs in the report that do not faithfully reflect the current reality in Iraq and that weaken the international front of solidarity aimed at combatting terrorism, as they lack precision and objectivity. In fact, we have sent an official letter in that regard to the Under-Secretary-General.

The Iraqi Government, has done its best, within its resource constraints, to ensure the protection of children and to promote their rights. The Iraqi law on military service punishes anyone who uses children under 18 in the military for any reason, because this deprives them of their childhood. We would like to underscore that three days ago, the Iraqi entity that deals with issues related to children, under the leadership of Mr. Haider Al Abadi, held a conference with broad participation at the regional and international levels, including the United Nations and other international organizations involved with children, on the protection of children. The conference focused on the need to move children far away from conflict zones and to prevent their recruitment in Iraq, highlighting the forced recruitment of children by Daesh in the areas that they control. Iraq also extended an official invitation to Ms. Leila Zerrougui to attend the meeting.

To conclude, my delegation would like to reaffirm that Iraq is currently the victim of the most horrific attacks that this society has ever seen. Daesh is seeking to change human values, thoughts and ideas to make them extremist and barbaric, thereby victimizing all of society. It is also trying to put an end to all of the national and regional relationships on which Iraqi society has always been based, as peaceful coexistence was always its fundamental pillar.

We would therefore ask the international community to support all of the segments of Iraqi society in foiling these barbaric attacks, so that Iraqi children can return to their families and live in dignity.