



IRELAND

Statement

by

**H.E. Mr. Paul Kavanagh
Permanent Representative**

AT THE SECURITY COUNCIL OPEN DEBATE

ON CHILDREN AND ARMED CONFLICT

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Mr. President,

I would like to thank you, Mr. President, and the members of the Council for this opportunity to address the Council on the important issue of Children and Armed Conflict.

Ireland aligns itself with the statement made earlier by the distinguished Permanent Representative of the Czech Republic on behalf of the European Union.

Ireland welcomes Mexico's initiative in organising today's open debate. We strongly support all endeavours made at the United Nations – and at regional and national levels - which seek to address in an effective manner the situation of children in armed conflict.

Ireland commends ongoing efforts to ensure that this important issue remains firmly on the agenda of the Security Council. We support the implementation of the monitoring and reporting mechanisms on children and armed conflict established under Security Council resolutions 1539 (2004) and 1612 (2005) - as well as the significant work being carried out by the Security Council Working Group on Children and Armed Conflict.

Ireland warmly welcomes the current report of the Secretary General and the recommendations therein. In particular, we commend the significant progress made in mainstreaming the issue of children in armed conflict in UN peacekeeping and political missions.

The deployment of child protection advisers in a number of peacekeeping operations is a positive step and helps to enhance the monitoring of the situation, improve dialogue with parties to conflict and ensure systematic training on child rights and protection.

Ireland is the current Chair of the Human Security Network¹ and notes that the harmful and widespread impact of armed conflict on children has been one of the priority issues for the Human Security Network since its establishment.

As part of our Chairmanship, Ireland has chosen to focus on the theme of gender-based violence. The prevalence of gender-based violence during times of conflict where the rule of law is frequently absent and impunity is widespread remains a grave concern.

Successive resolutions of the Security Council have also recognised these egregious abuses. Security Council resolution 1325 (2000) highlights the human rights of girls and their right to protection from gender-based violence, particularly rape and other forms of sexual abuse.

¹ The Human Security Network is a cross-regional group of countries comprised of Austria, Canada, Chile, Costa Rica, Greece, Ireland, Jordan, Mali, Norway, Slovenia, Switzerland and Thailand, with South Africa as an observer.

Security Council resolution 1820 (2008) underlines the targeting of girls through the use of sexual violence and demands that all parties to armed conflict take appropriate measures to protect women and girls from sexual violence.

The Secretary General's report expressly acknowledges that Security Council Resolutions 1612 and 1820 are "mutually reinforcing" and that steps should be taken to streamline documentation and sharing of information on rape and sexual violence.

In this regard, the initiation of consultations between the Office of the Special Representative of the Secretary-General on Children and Armed Conflict and relevant UN agencies and Departments to devise a strategy to strengthen data collection and reporting is a positive development.

Ireland welcomes the attention given to rape and other grave sexual violence against children in armed conflict in the Secretary General's report.

The report reaffirms that rape and other forms of sexual violence are grave crimes and constitute a war crime or a crime against humanity if committed as part of a widespread or systematic attack against a civilian population under the Rome Statute of the International Criminal Court.

In particular, Ireland supports the Secretary-General's recommendation, set out in the present Report, that the Council expand the criteria for violations which would trigger the listing of a party in the annexes attached to such reports, and to include henceforth the parties that commit rape and other grave sexual violence against children, as well as intentional killing and maiming of children.

Ireland continues to support the valuable efforts of the Special Representative of the UN Secretary-General for Children and Armed Conflict, Ms. Radhika Coomaraswamy and her Office.

She has done great work by raising awareness, engaging with parties to conflict through field visits and ensuring that this issue is kept high on the international agenda.

Ireland further commends ongoing efforts made by UNICEF, other United Nations agencies, funds and programmes, along with Non-Governmental Organisations, regional organisations and national authorities on this crucial topic.

Mr. President,

Ireland is committed to working closely with the United Nations System, as well as all other relevant organisations to ensure that steps are taken and progress is achieved towards improving the deplorable situation faced by children in armed conflicts around the world.

Thank you.