



**PERMANENT MISSION
OF THE PRINCIPALITY OF LIECHTENSTEIN
TO THE UNITED NATIONS
NEW YORK**

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CHECK AGAINST DELIVERY

SECURITY COUNCIL - OPEN DEBATE

CHILDREN AND ARMED CONFLICT

STATEMENT BY MR. GEORG SPARBER, CHARGÉ D'AFFAIRES, A.I.

PERMANENT MISSION OF THE PRINCIPALITY OF LIECHTENSTEIN TO THE UNITED NATIONS

Mr. President,

One fifth of all children live in conflict zones today, and a record number of children were killed and maimed in conflict last year. UN reports and today's briefings are alarming: in Syria, thousands of children have been killed and maimed – many as a result of indiscriminate or disproportionate attacks in populated areas. Others became victims of unlawful siege tactics or of chemical weapons, which have been internationally prohibited for a long time. There is an urgent need for accountability for the atrocity crimes committed in the Syrian conflict. Liechtenstein applauds the IIM for its important work in this respect. The progress achieved in the collection of evidence and the building of case files constitutes an essential step towards justice for all victims of the conflict, in particular for children.

In Yemen, 11,779 UN verified grave violations were committed against children between 2013 and 2018, pointing to much higher actual figures. Killing and maiming as a result of air strikes remains the most prevalent violation, but also child recruitment, and attacks on humanitarian facilities, schools and hospitals prevail. The Council has the responsibility to stop these violations, to enforce compliance with its own resolutions and respect for international humanitarian law. In addition, Liechtenstein sees great value in political commitments by States such as the Safe

Schools Declaration to improve children's lives during armed conflict.

Mr. President,

Liechtenstein remains deeply concerned at the high occurrence of rape and other forms of sexual violence against children, including trafficking for sexual enslavement. Such violence is often underreported owing to the fear and stigmatization associated with it, in particular if perpetrated against boys. A culture of silence continues to impede accountability and justice, and contributes to further cycles of violence and persistent harmful gender stereotypes. Liechtenstein welcomes the important work done in this field by non-governmental organisations. We support the work of Justice Rapid Response and its child rights experts, who have investigated grave violations against children in Myanmar, the Central African Republic and Syria, amongst others. The Liechtenstein-based NGO All Survivors Project conducts research and advocacy to improve global responses for every victim and survivor of sexual violence, including men and boys, in situations of armed conflict and forced displacement.

Mr. President,

International criminal justice mechanisms, in particular the ICC, have done ground-breaking work to address grave violations against children. The ICC case against Dominic Ongwen illustrates the possible complexity of such violations. Indicted for war crimes, Ongwen began on his path as a child soldier himself, kidnapped and forced into military service at a young age. The judgement in the case of Bosco Ntaganda, released this July, represents another milestone in international criminal justice. The Court held the crimes against male child soldiers to the same standards as female child soldiers, and was explicit in determining that the acts committed against male child soldiers amounted to rape, and needed to be addressed accordingly. This provides a new basis to address sexual and gender-based violence in conflict for this Council and other stakeholders.

Mr. President,

Liechtenstein reiterates its strong support for the Secretary-General's Special Representative on Children and Armed Conflict and thanks her for her briefing today. Protecting the independence

and integrity of the SRSG's mandate is crucial to its effectiveness and credibility. An essential feature of the mandate is evidence-based and impartial listing, which has proven to result in concrete improvements by State and non-State actors in their protection of children. The strong support expressed today for the SRSG is also a call on the Security Council to do more to preserve the key tenets of the SRSG's mandate. In addition, more effective monitoring, documenting, investigating and reporting of violations against children by all relevant UN entities would help broaden the mandate's reach and depth.

I thank you.