



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

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SECURITY COUNCIL - ARRIA-FORMULA MEETING ON 'IMPACT OF THE COVID-19 PANDEMIC ON VIOLATIONS AGAINST CHILDREN IN SITUATIONS OF ARMED CONFLICT'

STATEMENT BY GEORG SPARBER, DEPUTY PERMANENT REPRESENTATIVE

PERMANENT MISSION OF THE PRINCIPALITY OF LIECHTENSTEIN TO THE UNITED NATIONS

Excellency,

Thank you for convening this meeting. Many have called the COVID-19 pandemic an 'x-ray' for inequalities in society. But we would contend that for those that are already marginalized, the conditions created by the pandemic may further obscure their suffering and stifle opportunities to provide assistance and accountability. We appreciate your effort to make us focus on violations against children in situations of armed conflict and to discuss good practices that can better protect children in the future.

The COVID-19 pandemic has led to a significant further undermining of the right to education in conflict situations – already one of the most gravely affected human rights during conflict. Lockdowns across the world have led schools to close; in too many cases children will never return. The socio-economic effects of an early end to education in conflict areas will lead to heightened vulnerabilities for child labour, recruitment and use by armed forces or armed groups, and forced marriage, human trafficking and modern slavery. Depriving children of access to education has a devastating long-term impact on sustainable development, in particular SDG 4, and inflicts irreparable damage on children, families, communities and societies.

Excellency,

Liechtenstein remains concerned about the impact that COVID-19 has had on the ability of the Monitoring and Reporting Mechanism to record violations, while we compliment the SRSG and the UN Country Task Forces on Monitoring and Reporting on Grave Violations against Children for resuming their work after a few months with some adjustments. This being said, Liechtenstein notes the particular difficulty in monitoring more sensitive violations, such as recruitment and use and sexual violence. Data assessing the prevalence of these violations have always been difficult to gather given their sensitivity, in particular with regard to sexual and gender-based violence. The additional constraints created by COVID-19 exacerbate the power dynamic that perpetrators look to exploit.

Quarantine, curfews and other restrictions on movement are weakening protection mechanisms and heightening risks of domestic and sexual violence for women and girls as well as men and boys in crisis affected communities. We reiterate our strong support for the work of the Secretary-General's Special Representative on Children and Armed Conflict to shed more light on marginalized victims and survivors of conflict-related sexual violence, in line with Security Council Resolution 2467.

Going forward, it is vital that training is made available to allow all monitoring staff to carry out remote verification of incidents of violence where necessary. In addition, we reiterate that the protection of the SRSG's independence and integrity is crucial to its effectiveness and credibility, which also includes the objective, consistent and transparent practice of listing parties that have committed grave violations against children.

I thank you.